

The Royal Engineers Association

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Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



All correspondence to:

CEO
RE Association
Brompton Bks
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 4UG
Telephone: 01634 847005
Website: www.reahq.org.uk
Email: info@reahq.org.uk

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See Distribution

01 August 2022

MINUTES OF THE 137th MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION HELD ON TUESDAY 19th JULY 2022 AT MARNE BARRACKS CATTERICK AND ON ZOOM.

PRESENT

Mr Kenneth Kirk	CEO REA – Chairman
Col M Quare MBE	Corps Colonel
Lt Col M Heffer RE TD	Reserve Officer - Zoom
WO1 (CSM) M Elliott MBE	Corps Sergeant Major
WO1 (RSM) S Eardley	1 RSME Regt
Capt D Bell	South Wales Group - Zoom
Mr M Payne BEM	Central Southern Group - Zoom
Mr A Brown	Southern Group - Zoom
Mr R Bardsley	South East Group - Zoom
Mr P Luscombe	North Midlands Group - Zoom
Lt Col P Taylor	Airborne Engineers Branch - Zoom
Mr J Allerhead BEM	London Group - Zoom
Mr M Forder	North Eastern Group - Zoom
Mr K Street	South Midlands Group - Zoom
Mr D Ormsby	East Anglia Group - Zoom

IN ATTENDANCE

Maj (Retd) I Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer
Maj (Retd) IL George	Operations Manager and Secretary

APOLOGIES

Maj P Marsh	Serving Officer
WO1 (SMI) M Higgins	170 (Infra Sp) Engineer Group
WO1 (RSM) P McBride	3 RSME Regt
Mr R Tootle	NI & Scotland Group
Mr S Wilson	North West Group
Mr E Hargreaves	Trustee

1. The CEO opened the meeting and welcomed those present. The CEO said it was great to be at the Sapper Games in Catterick where 1,990 soldiers are competing and is looking forward to next year when it is at Chatham. The REA has supported the Sapper games at Catterick with £20,000.

2. The CEO noted that apologies had been received from those listed above.

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 136th MEETING

3. The Committee accepted that the minutes of the 136th meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The CEO signed the minutes.

Proposed: Mr D Ormsby – East Anglian Group

Seconded: Mr R Bardsley – South East Group

Carried

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 136th MEETING

4. **Item 9: Grants to Annual events:**

- Grants have been made for the Gibraltar weekend, Chatham weekend and for the Platinum Jubilee event. Overall £25,000 has been granted to Regiments for Jubilee events.
- It was decided that the Minley and Chilwell summer events would not happen as the Regiments would not be able to commit to both a Jubilee event and these weekends.
- There will be a Chilwell Winter Ball on the 26 Nov 2022 and a grant of £8,500 has been agreed. The event will just be on the evening and not over the weekend as last year.
- The Gibraltar weekend was a great success with 410 attending the weekend including veterans and serving members. The event was delivered under budget.

ITEM 3 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE

5. The Operations Manager presented the Benevolence report for the Quarter March-May 2022. The minutes from the June 2022 meeting were available to the committee members.

6. The Operations Manager gave an update on benevolence and discussed the following areas:

- The amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 March – 31 May 2022 was £46,421.97. The total for the year so far is £71,310.97. 96 grants were made in the quarter and 18 were declined.
- Cases have been low due to lack of SSAFA caseworkers which is down to caseworkers leaving and not being replaced. The new Mosaic caseworker system has not helped as some of the old caseworkers did not want to be trained on the new system. SSAFA have now introduced Regional Hubs to ensure that all clients are assisted. The number of cases in June and July 2022 has now picked up.
- The Operations Manager discussed the need for new members on the Benevolence Committee and this was being worked on.
- Examples of reasons for grants in this quarter that has been given to serving soldiers and veterans were presented. Reasons for cases being declined were also explained. Overseas clients were assisted in Cyprus, Malaysia, Thailand and Malta. Some very nice thank you letters have also been received.

7. The CEO discussed the Kitchener and Gabriel Fund. The Kitchener fund is currently supporting 13 children from 11 families and makes a huge difference to the families giving them

security and support. The Gabriel fund is supporting two veterans and there is one application that could be supported.

8. The CEO spoke about the RBLI Village at Aylesford which the REA has supported with £880k grant and supporting 28 Sappers. Sapper House is complete and will be occupied soon. The Corps Treasurer confirmed that he had heard from RBLI and that a Sapper was moving into Sapper House today.

ITEM 4 - TO NOTE THE CORPS COLONEL'S REPORT ON THE CORPS

9. The Corps Colonel's highlighted the following areas:

- The Corps Colonel explained that there is not a written report due to the sensitivity of the information he will discuss.
- The Corps Colonel discussed the size of the Army and the future soldier strength. The report on the Army uplift will be out at the end of the year. He also discussed the manning changes to certain units.
- The good diversity news is the number of female soldiers at 102 and female officers at 106. There is also 18 female soldiers in the recruiting pipeline. There has been a campaign to increase the number of female soldiers which is now working.
- The Corps Colonel spoke on the operations and exercises that units are involved with all over the world.
- The book which is being presented to the Queen for the Platinum Jubilee has now been completed and waiting to be presented. There will be limited copies for sale at the Sapper Shop.
- The Afghanistan Memorial for the 25 RE soldiers killed on operations will be unveiled on the 18 September at Rochester Cathedral. 15 families have already accepted the invitation.

ITEM 5 – RECRUITING COMMITTEE

10. The CEO discussed the Recruiting minutes which had been sent to all committee members. However the main area he wanted to discuss was Mission Activate which is an initiative from the Recruiting Committee and is a programme to encourage more recruits into the branch network. There will be more work for the Deputy Group Directors and branches but this will be rewarded with a financial incentive and new members. The intent is to encourage, stimulate branch growth and activate the membership of serving soldiers on the Day's Pay Scheme. There are four areas to the scheme:

- Start-up is a single payment of £1500, awarded to new branches within six months of forming.
- Activate grant of £500 for Deputy Group Directors to deliver events within RE Units and/ or the local branch/Group Areas, for the benefit of activating the membership of serving soldiers.
- Booster reward of £10 paid to every branch for every new veteran that joins.
- Merger grant of £500 awarded to branches that merge within 6 months of merging.

The Recruiting committee were keen for this initiative to start and required the thoughts and agreement from the Management Committee. After much deliberation from the Management Committee and some very good input from Mr K Street, Mr M Payne BEM and the RSM I RSME Regt it was voted that the Mission Activate should go ahead but the Booster reward should be £25.

Proposed: Mr R Tootle – NI & Scotland Group

Seconded: Mr M Forder– Eastern Group

Carried

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

11. The Corps Treasurer briefed the members on the value of the REA and the total funds which are at £11,967,040. He explained that the restricted fund (which is the Kitchener Fund) is worth £608,028 and the Investment property at Ebbsfleet is worth £475,000 and yields 5.2%. He also discussed the cash reserves, dividends and investments and explained that due to the climate the investments have dropped. The Corps Treasurer then explained that having the reserves is a major source of income and that we are in a very fortunate position.

12. The CEO stated that the even though the markets are up and down the fund is in a good position. He then spoke about the Branch Annual Financial summaries for 2021 which were 98% completed this year and quite a few were completed on line. Next year they will only be able to be submitted on line. The CEO confirmed that the Treasurers Guide is now in a booklet form and will be sent out to all branch treasurers.

13. The CEO discussed the Yordex card which is the Deputy Group Directors responsibility and is held and controlled by him. It has the Group grant of £1,750 on it to be used for Group events during the year. It will take a while to get use to but is a good system and the accounts are dealt directly with by HQ REA.

14. The CEO discussed the Unit and Branch Support grant with the next quarter's applications being dealt with by the end of the month. The Brompton Sports Pavilion was given a grant of £500,000 but there has been a delay and will now be completed by December 2022.

ITEM 7- THE AGENDA FOR THE 2022 AGM.

15. The Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees the Agenda for the 2022 AGM. The committee agreed the agenda. The Operations Manager confirmed there will be no Zoom facility at this meeting.

Proposed: WO1 (RSM) S Eardley

Seconded: Lt Col M Heffer RE TD

Carried

ITEM 8 – REA STRATEGY

16. The CEO explained the REA strategy and covered the following:

- The launch of the new website which had a few problems but is now up and running with a few glitches that are being sorted.
- Matt Gadd is a new member of staff who is the digital marketing assistant and been heavily involved with the new website. The website will assist the digital transformation of the Association to improve our outreach and connection as wide as possible to the Sapper family.
- The app is a work in progress that has some issues but we have a lot of work to do before it is completed.
- The REA has been completing REA Roadshows at various units which has worked really well especially when branches come along as well. The CEO has also presented to the RSM conference.

- Development of the REA team to have skill sets so branches can be more supported.

ITEM 9 – CORPS MEMORIAL WEEKENDS AND EVENTS FOR 2023

17. The Operations Manager discussed the following event for 2022 and gave an update:

2022 Diary. Events of interest for 2022 have been notified to HQ REA.

16 - 18 September	Corps Memorial Weekend*
20 September	REA Benevolence meeting
08 October	REA AGM and Annual Dinner *
09 October	Sapper Sunday at Royal Hospital Chelsea
02 November	Recruiting Meeting
10 November	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
13 November	Remembrance Sunday
26 November	Chilwell Winter Ball
06 December	REA Benevolence Meeting

*National Events

2023 Diary. Events of interest for 2023 have been notified to HQ REA.

The following events of interest for 2023 have been notified to HQ REA.

March	Army v RAF Rugby Kingsholm Gloucester
April	Army v Navy Rugby Twickenham
26 – 29 May	Gibraltar Weekend
08 June	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day
3-6 July	Sapper Games at Chatham
TBC	Chilwell Weekend*
TBC	Minley Weekend*
15-17 September	Corps Memorial Weekend*
07 October	REA AGM and Annual Dinner *
08 October	Sapper Sunday at Royal Hospital Chelsea
09 November	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
12 November	Remembrance Sunday

*National Events

ITEM 13 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18. The CEO asked for any other business from the committee:

- Mr David Bell proposed that with the fuel prices remaining high the MMA should be increased from 30p to 45p. There was a healthy debate with the Corps Treasurer reminding everyone how much soldiers, civil servants and charities receive for MMA and how generous companies are with their MMA. However the Chair said it would be wrong for us to raise the MMA when the rest of the Sapper family cannot and they have to stay as they are unless significant changes are made. Lt Col Martyn Heffer RE TD asked for the Chair to reach out to COBSEO and see what other charities are paying their members for MMA. The CEO is attending a COBSEO meeting at the end of August and will pose the question. It was also decided that a review of MMA claims over the last few years should take place to see how much is spent annually and put before the Finance Committee for their thoughts.

- The CEO proposed that Deputy Group Directors should carry out a three year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms and then a break of at least one year. This was discussed by the committee and agreed.

Proposed: Mr A Brown

Seconded: Mr J Allerhead BEM

Carried

ITEM 14. – FINAL POINTS FROM THE CEO.

19. The CEO thanked everyone for attending the meeting and that the Management Committee is very important as it determines the way the Association works over the year. This was so Deputy Group Directors did not stay in the role for a long time and new Deputy Group Directors will bring fresh ideas.

ITEM 15. - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20. The next meeting will be held at the RE Museum at 1000hrs 12 January 2023 followed by a Management Committee lunch.

02 August 2022

Operations Manager

Minutes Approved

Dated

Chairman

Distribution:

Management Committee Members
Board of Trustees
Group Directors
Deputy Group Directors
Group Secretaries
Branch Secretaries
CEO REA
Corps Treasurer

Signed
Ken Kirk
CEO REA

