



The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992 and a charity registered in Scotland)

The Sapper Charity

Minutes of the Meeting of the Royal Engineers Board of Trustees on Friday 05 May 2023 at Minley.

Attendees

In person

Alastair Dickinson President
Matt Bazeley Chair REA and Benevolence
Claire James, Chair Recruitment
Martin Heffer, Finance Committee
Colin Basnett Trustee
Jeffrey Jupp Trustee
Rowan Adams Chair Fundraising
Ken Kirk CEO REA Chair Management Committee
Ian Sidebottom Corps Treasurer
Nick Gunnel Ops Director REA

Online

Marc Elliott Trustee
Mark Ruddy, Honorary Treasurer

Apologies

Jane Thomson Trustee
Richard Hawkins Trustee
Mark Lancaster Trustee

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed Rowan Adams joining the board as a Trustee for the first time and Nick Gunnell as Operations Director.

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were advised.

3. Confirm minutes of Previous meeting of the Board of Trustees on 20 Jan 2023

AD requested that the minutes of the previous meeting to be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Proposer Martin Heffer Seconded Matt
Bazeley Agreed

4. Matters Arising from previous meeting.

There were no matters arising.

5. Take note of the minutes of the REA Benevolence committee of 14th March 2023

Minutes attached - brief update on current benevolence position.

MB as chair of the benevolence committee advised that he had nothing to add to the report of the Benevolence committee.

6. Take note of the Minutes of the REA Recruitment Committee of 08 March 2023

CJ as chair of the recruitment committee advised that she had nothing further to add to the report of the recruitment committee.

7. REA Operations Update

CEO introduced the REA Dashboard which will now be produced monthly.

Notes benevolence has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, notification of death is high reflecting the substantial number of members in the older veterans age group.

Digital Marketing, we have good visibility of the performance of our website and social media. Sappercom plans are progressing well with planned launch during the Sapper games.

a. Outreach

This is an area of significant improvement with Nick in a full-time role as operations director he can devote a minimum of two full days to outreach activities visiting branches and units. Connecting with them encouraging events and recruiting.

Developing a comms plan with the comms hub and up our game in terms of maximise the return on our involvement in events, benevolence, and welfare activities to generate greater awareness and participation.

The introduction to affiliate groups - enabling the formation of less formal groups that do not require the full structure of branch officials - connecting and organising themselves on social media, with just a group lead - meeting informally perhaps at events or just in the pub. The first of these groups to form are Sappers in the City. The target of this is to connect with the growing population of working veterans to provide them with a more practical and attractive option that fits within current lifestyles.

b. Dashboard

Board questions - Sappercom does it provide push notifications? - this function is coming but still in development.

Dashboard - could we show the total number of active members on the dashboard and total numbers of records held?

Could we show members by classification - Serving, Veteran,

Associate, Family. with average age of new members and overall average age of the membership.

Action CEO report Sept Board

Outreach the focus on the serving soldier is important to maintain an irreversible momentum in the membership recruitment space. Increase in awareness at Regimental awareness through events, funding of resources.

Action Recruitment committee CEO. update Sept Board.

The president requested an update on family/associate members connecting older members with less digital/social media awareness by encouraging family members to connect to the Association. This is an area where Sappercom would be extremely useful. Matt Bazeley described how the CSSC use linked members to assist in connecting in this way and invited the Ops Dir to discuss this further.

What benefits are we going to provide to the Affiliate branch? Action CEO/Ops Dir. report Sept board.

c. Unit and Branch Support Grants

We have approved £33,474.79 of grants in Q1.

In Q2 we have £92,340 worth of grant applications

d. Group and Branch Structure Sub-committee

It has been identified that the changes to the Group Structure introduced four years ago created group areas that the critical mass of branch and member numbers was not considered, and some groups are too small to operate effectively. Groups that have only five small branches have insufficient numbers to organise AGM's and any other events. It has also been difficult to engage Regiments in this process and there has been considerable feedback from the branches and members affected asking for the situation to be addressed. Further changes are being considered which would envisage the amalgamation of some groups to create groups of around ten branches and the appointment of Regimental Liaison members who would support the Deputy Group Director and provide an additional link to the regiments.

Action: REA HQ update at next board meeting.

8. Take note of the meeting of the REA Finance Committee on 18 April 2023

Noted

No comments by the board

a. Letter of Representation

The letter of representation and accounts were approved and accepted by the board.

Proposed Jeffery
Jupp Seconded
Claire James

b. TAR

The Corps Treasurer gave an overview of the TAR and the key elements of the figures including the SOFA and balance sheet.

Income increased across the board; expenditure also increased in our key areas in support of our objects. Tangible fixed assets fell.

Investment property generating 5% return.

Market losses were £1.8million overall deficit of £2.3 million unrestricted reserves stand at

£11.5m

9. Fundraising committee

Rowan Adams introduced the proposal for the introduction of fund-raising activity as part of the REA's operations. The purpose not just to raise money but also to reinvigorate the REA through action and events, making the process of fundraising a systemic part of the Association. By raising the profile of the REA and reaching into the social impact space that forms part of the modern business culture.

Questions for the board having looked at the proposed fundraising strategy: Is it the correct strategy?

Are there areas that we have missed?

Are there other charities and organisations from which we could learn? Do we have the correct metrics in the proposal?

MB asked to have we considered how best to present fundraising is it to be for specific items or individuals or to be more generically for "the REA"?

CB suggest that we need to explain through specific cases what the REA does with the money raised.

AD suggested we should adopt "The Sapper Charity" and encourage those REA members currently raising funds for other charities should be encouraged to raise funds for the REA instead.

JP suggested linking to those former sappers who have gone on to successful second careers in business - alumni funding.

ME pointed out that during lock down many serving soldiers took part in fundraising activities and he felt that this would be a good opportunity to link the serving corps to action and making a tangible impact.

It was agreed by all the board the effective communication will form a critical part of our fundraising activities.

It was proposed by AD that this should be a long-term strategy over the next two to three years.

In conclusion it was agreed that there was upside and downside. It was agreed that a fundraising subcommittee should meet led by RA, JJ and CB volunteered to be co-opted to this committee supported by the CEO and Ops Dir.
Action CEO to arrange first meeting of Fund-raising committee.
Corps SM request that Corps Col be part of the fundraising committee.

10. REA Fund Manager

Whether REA HQ should fund a Group / Branch Fund Manager (to be titled REA Fund Manager (REA FM)) to take on and deliver the existing roles of Group & Branch Treasurers. Essentially providing a banking function to the branch network.

The board approved the appointment of an REA Fund Manager

Proposed Martin
Heffer Seconded
Matt Bazeley

Action CEO to recruit.

11. REA Risk Register

The risk register is currently under review and a work in progress document is attached.

MR introduced an updated, revised risk register, and drew the boards attention to the key risks. Further evolution is required before the document is finalised but as a group of trustees, we have a comprehensive and

AD suggested we could consider risks 14,15 and 6 at the next board meeting. RA suggested he could support elements of the investment advice to the board.

MH suggested that we the board members should be involved in a certain amount of Horizon scanning for future risks and when aware should bring them to the attention of the board.

AD suggested we should review our progress against our strategy at each board meeting.

Action CEO to provide report on progress against strategy for the next board meeting.

12. Legacies

We currently have legacies which have either been received in 2023 or are still in the hands of solicitors.

We have received £1.2million from the McCabe legacy, and another £400k in various states of legal process.

There was discussion around the possibility of investment in

property for respite/holiday home for serving soldiers and veterans like the 36 Engr Regt Romney Sands caravan.

MR - free will

Action CEO to bring forward a plan for the use of the McCabe legacy and legacy policy for next board meeting.

13. REA responsibility for Corps memorials

The REA has taken over responsibility for the survey and maintenance of those memorials that belong to the Corps. The memorials are in good condition however the major memorials in Brompton barracks will require a program of significant renovation over the next few years. I would propose that a plan is prepared, and this is considered by the Finance committee.

Action: CEO to check the Holdfast contractual commitment to the maintenance of memorials.

Action: CEO to present budget to REA Finance committee for memorial repair.

14. REA Diary 2023/24

The main events coming up in 2023 are listed in the attached document.

KK asked that if any trustees wish to attend events that they contact him at REA HQ

15. AOB

Proposal that strategy meeting is held after the next board meeting in the afternoon.

It was agreed that a 3-hour strategy meeting would be held following the next board meeting.

16. Date of next meeting 22 September 2023

JJ offered the use of his London Chambers for the next board meeting.

 Ken Kirk, CEO

Signed

PP

Maj Gen (retd) Alastair Dickinson CBE
President REA

22 September 2023