



Minutes

REA Board of Trustees

📅 Fri May 14th, 2021

🕒 11:00am - 2:00pm BST

📍 Online Meeting

👥 **In Attendance**

1. **Chairmans Introduction**

AD welcomed all attendees to the meeting and advised board members of the resignation of Brian Simm and thanked Brian for his time on the committee and service to the association.

The president thanked Brian for his service on the Board and for both Brian and Sues, tireless work in the Cambridge branch and Cycling Triathlon branch

a. **Thank you letters**

AD asked that the CO of Spr Connor Lewis should be made aware of the thank you letter he (Connor) had written to the association for the support given for biathlon training

MQ advised that he would be in touch with the regiment

2. **Apologies**

Jane Thompson advised she was unable to attend

a. **Conflict of interest**

Ask the committee members to declare any conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were advised

none

3. **Confirm Minutes of the January Board meeting**

Decision: AD asked the board to confirm that the minutes were a true record of the last board meeting. The board confirmed they were a true and accurate record.

a. **Matters Arising from January Board meeting**

i. **MOD Laptops Para 8 Minutes of the Management Committee**

No further progress on this issue MOD have been silent since the proposal was first published. No further action at this time

KK confirmed that there had been no further progress on procuring laptops from the MOD and that it was likely we should now investigate other solutions

ii. **REA App development Para 10**

Being considered in our overall strategy development

KK advised that this has been subsumed into the strategy development

iii. **Cecil Ballard Legacy Para 10**

Cecil Ballard served from 1936 to 1975 an archive of his service appeared on ebay on 06 May 2021.

He served in Indian Army, and Bomb Disposal.

Proposal - A Ballard Award is created discuss under AOB

KK explained that the REA had now acquired a small archive of Cecil Ballard material and would use this to publish an article in Sapper magazine in due course. It was also explained that the Ballard property had only recently sold and that the remainder of legacy was still to be paid.

iv. **Property Aquisition Para 11 a**

IS and KK are now exploring alternative locations for a property as the development at Rochester is unlikely to be available this year

Task: No further progress on this item. AD suggested that there was no particular urgency in buying a property. CD suggested we should consider more eco friendly property investment speak with CD regarding routes to making an eco-property investment. AC also felt there was no need to rush, IS explained that the return on investment from existing properties was very strong and that the diversification would assist in the sustainability of our long term income. MH felt that buying a quality property will ensure a good income and protect the long term value of the investment. MQ reminded the board that if we were buying with the RECCT we could obtain a larger discount on the purchase by committing to both.

5 users

08/31/2021

v. **Ocean Rowing Para 12 b**

Understanding the appetite for continued ocean rowing competition within the Corps beyond 2021. At the moment we have one bid. No further action at this time

Update on Salty Sappers:

Now within £30K of funding target and confident that they can make this and working hard to secure further funding.

Training going well they have an entry in the IOW Round the Island Race on 03 July 2021

would like to undertake a Roadshow visiting units/Branches events - perhaps they should be at the Corps Memorial Weekend - give an opportunity to showcase to Veterans, Families, Cadets and the Corps.

No further action

The ocean rowing team is on the correct track with £30k funding to secure.

vi. **Change of Title Assistant Controller Para 13b**

Asst Controller will change to Operations Manager following the change of title of Controller to CEO

Decision: board agreed that Controller changes to CEO and Asst Controller to Operations manager and that this should be highlighted in our Annual Report published for the AGM

4. **Corps Update**


Update on current Corps issues, ops and deployments.

MQ gave a brief Corps update on the current status of the Corps and integrated review. Main work going on is the integrated review. Apart from this the Corps is well manned and recruitment has remained strong. Activity continues across the Corps with many overseas deployments still happening. Sport, adventure training depressed due to Covid restrictions. Focus on lived experience and retention, which the REA has played a significant part in already. VO remains low but there is a slow rise in this area which places more emphasis on the lived experience to reduce vulnerability in this area. Chief Royal finishes as Commander Home Command.

AC suggested that members of the REA HQ team should be considered in recognition of the work carried out over the pandemic and how the team has kept things running without interruption despite the restrictions. AD endorsed this and requested that we put in place a system for considering these rewards.

MQ said the Corps System was in place, KK suggested that we board that considers Chief Royals Commendation in December and that we should merge the Chief Royals Commendation with the administration of the BOM and should do this once a year in December.

Task: MQ requested that the REA should propose candidates for the award of the Chief Royals Commendation, it was agreed that this should now form part of the REA award process and be considered annually in line with the BOM for the New year awards

 3 users

11/12/2021

Task: AD asked MQ if the Corps would remain at 10% of the Army, but he was as yet unaware, AD asked if we could establish this before the next board meeting.

5. Financial Report

Notes

6 x Unit and branch support grants authorised in Q1 totalling £16,774.42. Included a grant to a group of Sapper families refurbishing the Wethersfield Community Centre near Wimbish. One bid of £38,000 from Sport parachuting/23 Para Engr Regt for a new Clubhouse at Netherhaven was rejected as the full project details had not been provided.

Gibraltar 2022 250th anniversary of the Corps in Gibraltar

The annual grant of £8500 was increased to £10,000 plus a £2000 contingency for the 250th anniversary commemoration events in Gibraltar in May 2022

IS drew the boards attention to pages 16 SOFA and 17 Balance sheet of the 2020 report, the charity reported a deficit of £220k in 2020 compared to a surplus of £273k in 2019. Income was consistent with £25k increase, expenditure decreased by £28k, Corps activities increased by £214k. Dividends from investments \$430k. When considered with investment gains for 2020 the REA is has a net worth of £13.4 million which is an increase of £360.

AC thanked IS for his very clear report, but wished that we highlight the amount of funds we grant to Corps activities in the end of year report.

AD asked if we were making effective use of the communications hub and that we should focus on the marketing effort.

CB asked if £13 million were perhaps to great a level of

Decision: IS drew the boards attention of the TAR and asked them to approve this as a true record of our financial activities in 2020

Task: KK to increase awareness of the REA support for Corps Activities in the annual report and in our marketing efforts

a. TAR

Vote on acceptance of TAR

The board approved the Trustees Annual report

i. **Key Findings**

Annual Financial Summaries 2020

There was a significant Covid impact on the return process with branch meetings and Group AGM's not taking place. With many of the treasurers and branch officials shielding this led to the normal process being disrupted. The introduction of online submission was a success for those branches who used it around 60% but many branches had not met and were unable to complete. The lack of formal AGM's meant that at a group level documentation was not prepared. Group returns have been a significant problem as they are normally prepared by the Group Secretary who is often not aware of the requirement as the incumbent changes every 18 months.

Annual Financial Summaries - 2021

They will be online only.

There will be a series of online briefings for branch and group secretaries and treasurers to explain the process and ensure that all branches/groups understand the importance of and how to complete the forms. The deadline for submission will be 31 Jan 2022.

Task: IS drew the boards attention to the auditors comments on the Annual financial summaries and issues in 2020 with returns. AD requested that the CEO ensure that the performance in this area was significantly improved in 2021. KK to improve AFS returns from groups and branches in 2021

6. **Reports of Committees**

a. **Management Committee**

KK gave a brief update on the Management committee

b. **Benevolence Committee**

AC gave a brief update on the Benevolence committee highlighting the fall in benevolence applications as a result of the pandemic. AD drew the boards attention to the success of the benevolence meetings with many observers still attending online and taking an active part in the committee meetings. AD identified that out of committee cases continue to be dealt with and subject to scrutiny at the committee meetings. AD expressed his thanks to the team at REA HQ and asked that the thanks of the board to the REA HQ team be recorded in the minutes

CD asked if the loss of SSAFA caseworkers following the introduction of the new CMS Mosaic was contributing to the fall in benevolence cases in the short term. KK stated that there had been a particular impact in May and June but was confident that SSAFA would overcome, and that we were managing the slow down in information flow and cases would be caught up.

c. Recruitment Committee

Task: CJ gave a brief on the work of the recruitment meeting. CJ advised the board of her intention to get in touch with CO's who are group directors annually to update them on the REA.

7. Governance

Task: AD brought the board up to date with the Risk Management architecture for the REA and modernising the language of our risk assessment as previously outlined by CJ and MH. AD proposed that the document should form part of our submission to the commission by KK

a. Risk Management

Consider any issues that affect our exposure to risk and any follow up on Risk Appetite documentation

8. Strategy presentation

KK drew the boards attention to our mission and vision statements and sought the boards agreement that these met the current needs of the Association. The board agreed.

Kk requested comments on the scale of our operations in terms of the areas we operate, the budgets, our engagement and the size of the operation. AD felt that the organisation should only be large enough to support those that need to be supported in the benevolence process. AC felt that we were a lean organisation but effective in our delivery, we work well with other charities and are a strong team player and that this gives us a good reach in this area.

KK introduce the research undertaken to develop the strategy and identified key factors that will affect our future operations such as fall in veteran numbers, increase in the number of working age veterans. Looking internally we have identified some significant changes in who we are and what the membership

looks like down from a perceived 71,000 members to 25,000 with 5000 active. With between 80-100,000 former sappers in the veteran population. Identifying a significant gap between those we are in routine contact with and the numbers in the general population and thus the significant potential of improved outreach.

Task: CT and KK presented the Strategy proposals to the board.

AC commented that the objects presented a clear and concise description of the role of the REA.

a. **Results of 2021 Survey**

CT introduced the REA survey with some additional insights. We had a good response from both serving and veterans. Technology uptake was good with access to the website and potentially an app. The emotional response to the Association identified camaraderie and branch activities being the most clearly important areas. When contrasted between serving and veteran, the two groups placed Camaraderie at the top but benevolence was higher among the serving community. In information it was sport and AT for serving and branch activity for veterans. Membership status showed that there was a gap in understanding of how individuals join the REA and both among veterans and serving soldiers how individuals were unsure if they were members or not. There is an opportunity for improvement in this area.

Task: CT introduced the Net Promoter Score - a benchmark on how you are doing in your community. This looks at promoters and detractors. This showed that among veterans we are engaged with we are doing well, however amongst the serving community there is considerable work to be done. This will be a useful performance indicator for the future.

CT then went into the strategy highlighting evolution not revolution. KK looked at our deployment of our resources and how we spend very little on the administration of the Association. We spend very little on administration but in the short term we may need to increase this to improve technology gaps, website, branch communications, app development and content of these areas and

marketing of the association. This includes the language which we use to present ourselves to our community.

KK then introduced the proposed strategic aims and how these were reflected in our surveys.

Benevolence sits at the top

Engagement

Support

Sustainability

AD felt that there needed to be a stronger commitment to engaging with those who need help. AC felt that it was wider than engagement and that reach was a stronger term defining an important aim. CJ also supported strengthening the reach and communication under engagement. CJ also felt we should soften the benevolence statement as it currently appears.

CB and MH expressed that perhaps the order of the strategic aims should be reviewed.

AD looked to what we currently class as welfare into support to include AT, sport

MQ suggested inclusion of phrases such as "lived experience"

AD suggested another look at the the order and some of the wording.

KK agreed that work on the language needed to be adapted to the drive the message.

b. **2021 Goals**

AD requested that KK present to the board a finalised strategy for the next board meeting

AD asked what KK saw as a budget for for the proposed development costs
- KK estimated £40k for this year.

AC felt publicity and marketing needed to form part of the goals and that reach is an important word that encapsulates the message we need to convey.

AD stated that the the developments over the past 4 years should be acknowledged and that the process undertaken has been thorough and also recognises the work that still has to be done. AD asked that we note this in the annual report. CJ commented that we should launch the strategy in the annual report and presented in the AGM.

CT stated that digitisation was only a tool and does not replace direct connection, hopefully it enables more direct connection.

Decision: AD asked what KK saw as a budget for for the proposed development costs - KK estimated £40k for this year

The board authorised a spend of up to £40k on the development costs for the strategy.

Task: KK went through the goals including marketing, branch/group town hall meetings - process to start this year.

Staff training to start now.

Revision of membership journey

Digital transformation - SCRM, Website refresh and preparation for the app.

Task: AD suggested that we should have a name for the strategy. KK and CT to propose

9. **Events 2021/22**

Corps Memorial Weekend 17-19 September 2021

AGM 09 October 2021

Sapper Sunday 10 October 2021

Field of Remembrance 11 November 2021

Remembrance Sunday 14 November 2021

RE Awards Dinner November 2021

Talisker Challenge - Salty Sappers Dec 2021

Gibraltar 250 May 2022

Chilwell 2022

Minley 2022

Chatham 2022

AGM 2022

Sapper Sunday 2022

RE Awards Dinner 2022

AD drew the boards attention to the events list. KK identified the CMW in September being the first major event since 2019 and Gibraltar 250.

10. **AOB**

Ballard Expedition Grant - A grant of up to £20K to support a Sapper led "extreme" adventure training expedition, awarded by a panel that would include a well known "adventurer" and presented to the most ambitious and challenging proposed expedition in the year.

Decision: PC advised the board that it was his last meeting as a trustee, and AD thanked him for his input during his time on the board and as Corps SM.

MQ thanked the REA for supporting the RE Excellence awards. MQ advised the board of the army charity strategy and the review of civil servants and how those jobs will be moved over to grant in aid in time.

AD raised the subject of the Ballard legacy could be identified for support of an annual extreme AT award of upto £20,000 that could be presented annually, perhaps at the RE Excellence awards. This would be aimed at exceptional adventurous training expeditions. AD asked if the board felt this was suitable recognition of the Ballard legacy. AD supported the idea but also suggested renaming the Gabriel fund as the Ballard fund. MH supported the general idea but in particular if it supports the serving soldier. MQ identified an expedition that involved sailing and mountaineering to South Georgia. AD asked if the board if they required a full report or if this was sufficient information to proceed with the proposal for the Ballard Legacy.

11. **Date of next meeting 03 September 2021**

Meeting moved to 10 September 2021

Kenneth Kirk

10 September 2021