

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed the attendees in particular Brigadier (ret'd) Matt Bazeley OBE joining the board as Vice President and Chair of the benevolence committee and Brigadier, the Lord Lancaster TD Mark Lancaster, and Col Richard Hawkins MBE joining the board in his role as Corps Colonel. He thanked the RBLI for hosting the meeting at their offices in Aylesford and the opportunity to visit Sapper House.

### Apologies

Jane Thompson JT

Colin Basnett CB

Richard Hawkins RH

Marc Elliott ME

### Online

Jeffrey Jupp JJ

Claire James CJ

Mark Lancaster ML

### In person

Alastair Dickinson AD

Mark Ruddy MR

Matt Bazeley MB

Martin Heffer MH

Ken Kirk KK

Ian Sidebottom IS

#### a. RBLI Intro

This item was covered in the Presidents introduction.

## 2. Conflicts of Interest

Trustees' attention was drawn to the Conflict-of-Interest notes and asked to declare any conflicts of interest.

## 3. Confirm minutes of Previous meeting of the Board of Trustees on 23 September 2022

The board confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record

Proposer: Mark Ruddy

Seconder: Claire James

## 4. Matters Arising from previous meeting.

The following points were raised:

#### a. Risk Register progress

The President noted that we had not completed the review of the risk register for this board and asked if we were able to review the Risk Register. It was agreed that the Honorary treasurer would review the Risk Register with the CEO and Claire James and Martin Heffer.

MH pointed out that the Management committee was not the place to review risk as they do not operate at that level.

A draft will be presented at the next board meeting.

Action KK to arrange meeting with MR MH and CJ to discuss risk register and report to board.

#### **5. Take Note of the minutes of the 138th Management Committee of 12 January**

**2023** Main point from the management committee is becoming more effective as the deputy group directors gain a greater understanding of their roles and are contributing more effectively.

6. Take note of the minutes of the REA Benevolence committee of 8th December 2022 the board acknowledged the minutes. KK pointed out that benevolence cases are returning to pre-pandemic levels with a very modest increase in cost-of-living type claims from serving soldiers and veterans.

#### **7. Take note of the Minutes of the 39th REA Recruitment Committee of 02 November**

**2022** CJ highlighted Mission Activate as now reaching into groups and getting some traction and activity. The president mentioned that the formation of new branches, including the Swimming and Water- polo branch.

It was suggested that Nigel Spence of Fenland Sappers be brought on to the recruitment committee.

The difficulty in finding volunteers to accept posts as treasurers and other officials in branches was raised by AD and there was discussion regarding the future structure of branches and how this was within our gift to look at the group and management's structure.

Action KK to discuss with Group structure sub-committee.

#### **8. Take note of the meeting of the REA Finance Committee on 15 September 2022**

The board noted the minutes of the REA Finance committee.

#### **9. Financial update Balance Sheet and Investment Valuation**

Despite the difficulties of the financial markets the Associations investments remain in good health and dividends have been maintained. The property investment at Ebbsfleet is achieving 5.1% return.

#### **10. Unit and Branch Support Grants 2022/23**

In 2022 the Association distributed twenty-five grants with a total value of £45,000. Take up of the grants has been low, with a number of applications being rejected as they did not fall within the criteria. Reasons for rejection include the application being for operational or training resources, the application having insufficient information, and applications for large complex capital projects which are unlikely to be realised. In addition, we also supported the Corps Sports Pavilion development at Brompton with a Grant of £500,000. The pavilion will be opened in time for this year's Sappers Games.

AD and MB proposed speaking to the chain of command to encourage take up of the unit and branch support by discussing with Comd 8 Bde. Action AD by next board meeting.

Action KK to report to board on 2023 grants. MH suggested that we should have a review of the Unit and Grant support grant to ensure that we are reaching the correct people with an appropriate message.

## 11. REA Events 2023

A comms plan is being developed for each REA event in the coming year.

## 12. AOB

## 13. REA Update and Strategy for 2023 See Presentation

KK presented an update of the current strategy and various projects that REA HQ are working on.

### a. New Appointments

Nick Gunnell has been appointed as the new Operations Director replacing Iain George on his retirement in March 2023. Iain's last day in work will be 16 March 2023

#### i. New Trustee

Rowan Adams has accepted a position as a trustee on the board of the REA with specific responsibilities around fund raising.

### b. Group and Branch Structure, Branch Officials see presentation.

A sub-committee of the Management and recruitment committee has been appointed to examine the current group and branch structures with a view to reforming the existing structure which has proved to have some functional problems. We are seeking to develop a structure that supports the branches within the groups more, enables more active connection between regiments and branches with more focus on events and activity together.

AD asked if we are exploiting existing organisations such as Sappers in the City and breakfast clubs. Action KK to report back at the next meeting.

### c. REA App - Community Platform - "Sappercom" "RE-Chat"

Sappercom development is progressing well, and we will be able to launch in early summer. The Beta test phase will initially start with a role out to fifty individuals then from 01 June a soft launch accompanied by a briefing video to around fifty branches, with the full launch taking place over the Sapper Games 03-05 July 2023.

Sappercom will point to other useful sites. ML pointed out that the site should have unique content and not replicate other existing sites. KK emphasised that the App is a community hub for sharing information on events, activities, and branches.

KK to report on how Sappercom will move forward at the next board meeting. How are we going to define success over the next three-year period?

Sappercom colour scheme KK to provide alternative colour scheme in Corps colours for the board to consider.

Action KK to update board on Sappercom development at next board meeting.

### d. Website

The new website has been received well and traffic to the website has improved significantly. Usage of the website is 300% up on previous period.

### e. Outreach

KK explained that we are not reaching.

f. Tass and sports

This has gone well with twenty-seven athletes supported. This is a strong area of access for the Association with both the serving Corps and veterans. ML raised the issue of recognising female participation in Corps Sport. AD proposed that we should consider prizes at the Sapper games for female athletes.

g. Benevolence.

KK advised the board that the number of annuities awarded on an annual basis has continued to fall and that we are actively seeking new branches.

h. Group and Branch funds

KK will bring forward a proposal for the centralisation of group funds with a fund manager coordinating at REA HQ

i. Mission Activate.

This has begun to gain traction with several branches planning events for the near future.

**14. Date of Next Meeting: 05 May 2023 10:30 Gibraltar Barracks Minley**

Please note the location of this meeting has been moved to 3 RSME at Gibraltar barracks following the senior soldiers conference.

Signed

*Kenneth Kirk* PP 05 May 2023

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A Dickinson

President

Royal Engineers Association