

ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION



**All communications to be
addressed to:**

The CEO
RE Association
Brompton Barracks
Chatham
Kent ME4 4UG
☎ 01634 847005
💻 www.reahq.org.uk
✉ info@reahq.org.uk

THE SAPPER CHARITY

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

See Distribution

12 Jan 2023

MINUTES OF THE 141st MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD AT THE RE MUSEUM AND ON ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 10th JAN 2024

PRESENT

Mr Kenneth Kirk
Mr N Gunnell
Mr J Allerhead
Mr R Bardsley
Mr M Facchini
Col R Hawkins
WO1 (RSM) P McBride
Mr M Payne
Mr I Sidebottom
Mr S Scott
Mr P Taylor

CEO REA – Chairman
Operations Director - Secretary
South East Representative
Committee Member
Committee Member
Corps Colonel
3 RSME Regt
Central Southern Group Representative
Corps Treasurer
Eastern Group Representative
National Branch Representative

Apologies

Mr A Brown
WO1 S Eardley
Mr M Heffer
Mr P Luscombe
Rick Tootle

Deputy Group Director Southern Group
Corps RSM
Trustee
North Midlands Group
Scotland and NI Representative

1. The CEO opened the meeting and welcomed those present.
2. The CEO noted that apologies had been received from those listed above.

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 140th MEETING

3. The Committee accepted that the minutes of the 140th meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The CEO signed the minutes.

Proposed: Mr P Taylor

Seconded: Mr R Bardsley

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The committee was updated on the following matters:
 - a. Membership changes were refined and accepted out of Committee by Management Committee members. Details published in the Circular.
 - b. Ripon Weekend & Ripon 75 Events no longer attracting funding - due to no extraordinary activity being put on.
 - c. SapperCom now linked from the REA website
 - d. Review of National Branches receiving funding is ongoing and will be reviewed once branch accounts have been received.

ITEM 3 - HQ REA UPDATE

5. Kitchener and Gabriel funds - No Change

ITEM 4 – Benevolence Summary

6. The Ops Director presented an overview of the Benevolence that was granted from Jan – Dec 2023. The report can be found in annex A.

Action: The CEO has requested that the reasons why benevolence requests are refused is recorded – **ACTION Ops Director**

ITEM 5 - CORPS COLONEL UPDATE

7. The Corps Colonel provided an update on:
 - a. Activity including support to Ukraine and the UK Govt.
 - b. Recruiting and retention challenges.
 - c. Acknowledged the part the REA plays in the Corps.

ITEM 6 - THE BADGE OF MERIT AWARDS 2023

8. The Committee reviewed the Badge of Merit scores and approved 6.

ITEM 7 - FINANCIAL UPDATE – Mr Ian Sidebottom

9. The Corps Treasurer provided an update of Corps and REA funds.

ITEM 8 - THE UNIT AND BRANCH SUPPORT FUND

10. **Unit Branch Support Grant.** UBSG Fund will be renamed the McCabe Fund. A combination of the £1.1million left by Major McCabe and additional funds will be used to generate £100,000 for UBSG. The UBSG will be renamed the Community, Unit and Branch Support Grants (CUBS). This is to reflect the broad range which the fund can be used for.

ITEM 9 – BALLARD FUND¹

- 11. An application for funding to row from the West Coast of the USA to Hawaii.

ITEM 10 – EVENTS

- 12. The following updates were given by the Ops Director:
 - a. Sapper Sunday is taking place on 19th May 2024. There is no REA event occurring the evening before and currently Sapper Sunday is not a national event.
 - b. Annual Dinner is taking place at Chatham on the Saturday evening of Corps Memorial Weekend, 14th September 2024. This is to encourage participation and reduced the consecutive months where branch members would have to travel to the south east to attend REA events.
 - c. Gibraltar Weekend - Details tbc

ITEM 11 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Rick Bardsley asked for clarification as to whether widows of All Arms members can become REA members. The Ops Director answered - yes.
- b. Phil Taylor will be handing over to Jim Leach

ITEM 13. – FINAL POINTS FROM THE CEO & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 13. The CEO thanked everyone for attending and the next meeting will be 4th June 2024.

12 Jan 2024 Operations Director

Minutes Approved

Dated Chairman

Annex A – Benevolence Summary Jan – Dec 23

¹ The Ballard Fund is a specific fund for extreme expeditions.

ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION



THE SAPPER CHARITY

**All communications to be
addressed to:**

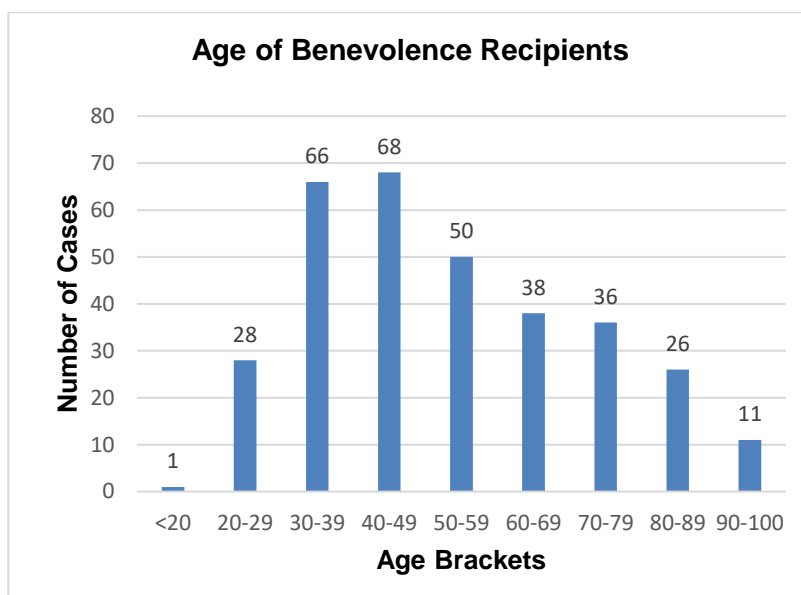
The CEO
RE Association
Brompton Barracks
Chatham
Kent ME4 4UG
☎ 01634 847005
🌐 www.reahq.org.uk
✉ info@reahq.org.uk

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

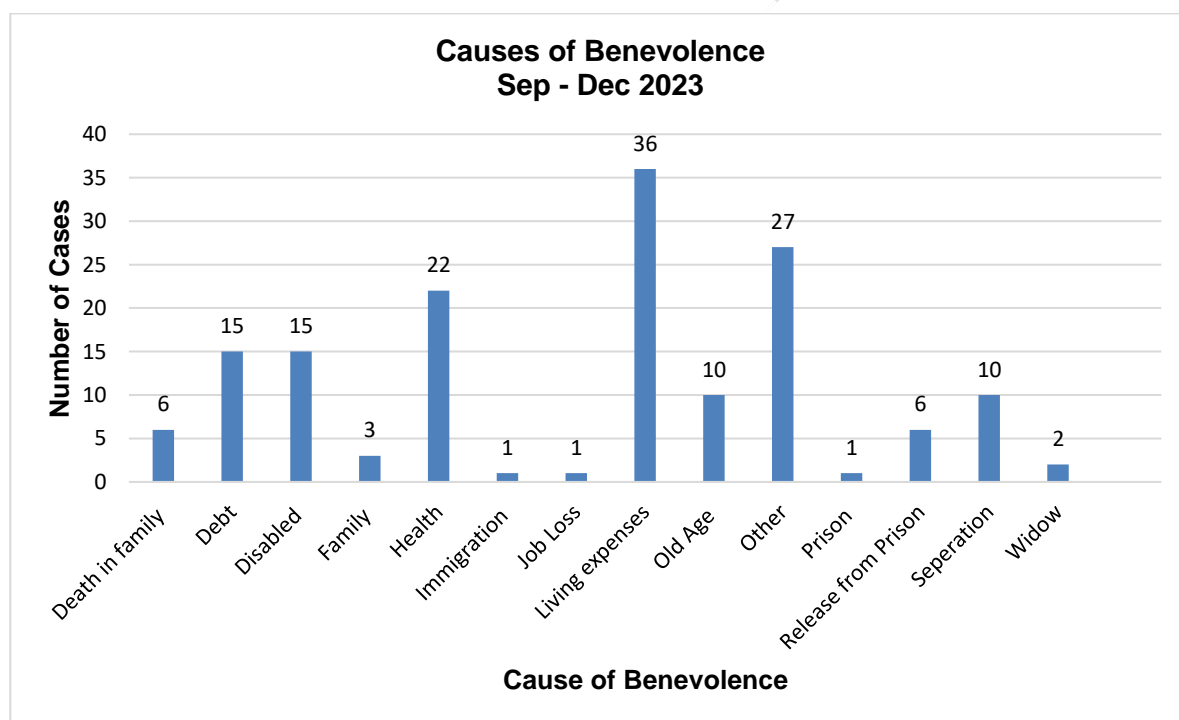
ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BENEVOLENCE REPORT JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023. Dated 9th JANUARY 2024

Serial	Data	2023	2022	2021
1	Number of cases assessed	550	527	449
2	Number of cases declined	226	169	135
3	Number of cases assisted	324	358	314
4	Number of weekly grants in care homes (£##):	£13,724 (Yearly)	11,570.60 (Yearly)	22,036.30 (Yearly)
5	Number of weekly grants at home (£##):	£95,810 (Yearly)	93,209.40 (Yearly)	96,263.70 (Yearly)
6	Special Christmas Grants	£3,005.00	£3,195.00	£3,330.00
7	Amount granted per month from cases referred by SSAFA, ABF and UWO.	£244,487.48	£211,445	£228,643.90

1. **Overall Assistance.** Compared to 2022 the number of cases assessed in 2023 increased, however the number of cases approved declined. Overall, the expenditure on benevolence (excluding the special purpose funds i.e. The Kitchener and Gabriel Funds) increased. From the 01 Feb 2024 data collected will be collected to understand why cases are refused. This will allow the REA to identify trends and, if required, adjust the parameters and criteria for the granting of benevolence.



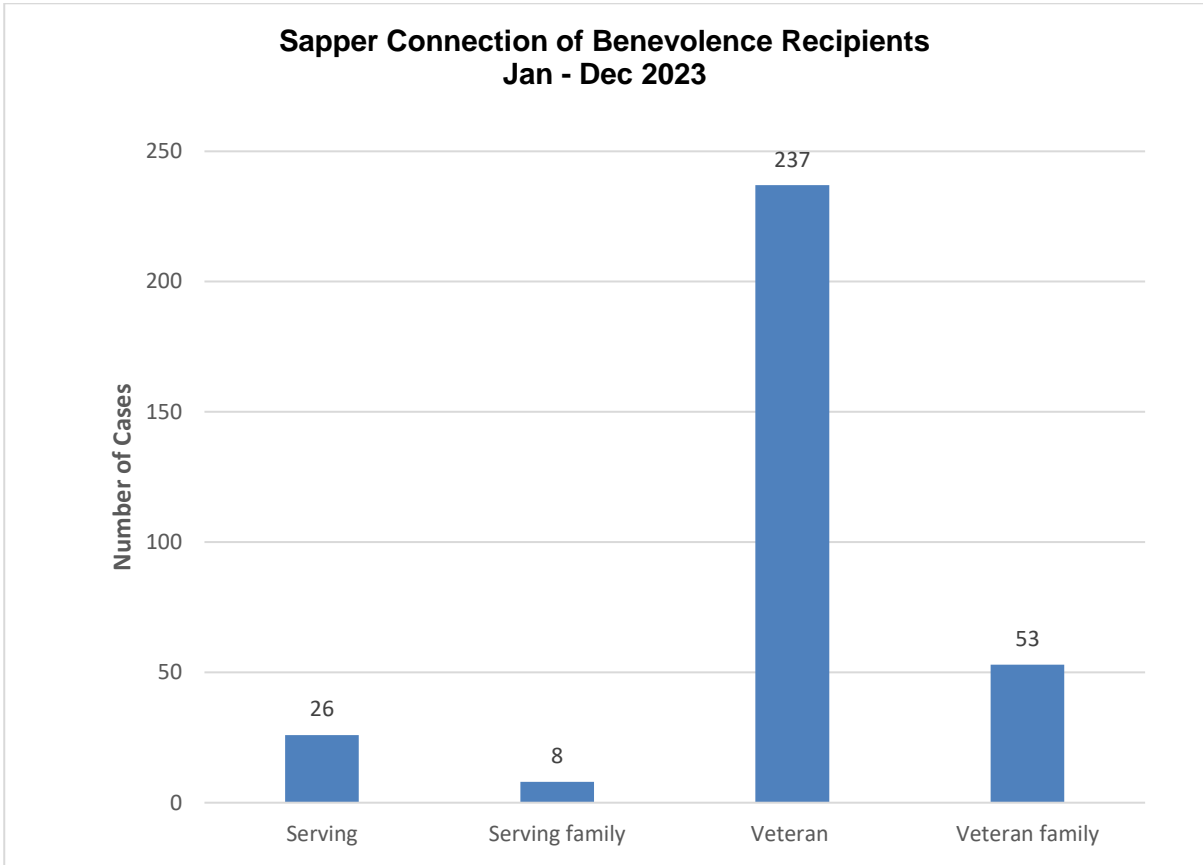
2. **Age.** Throughout 2023, the age bracket of 40-49 years old accounted for the greatest portion of benevolence grants, closely followed by the 30-39 age bracket. This reflects national trends of a similar age bracket who have been affected most of all by an increase in cost of living.²



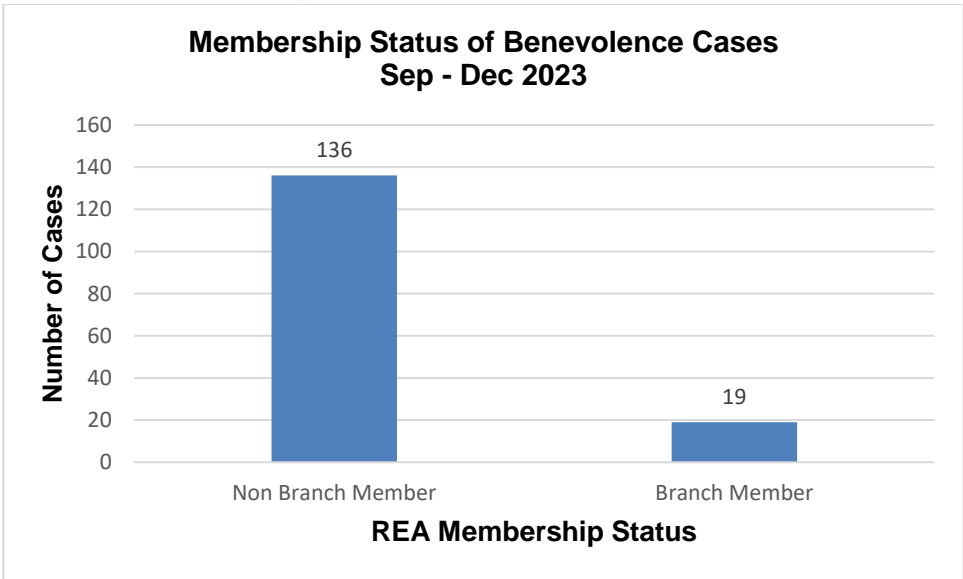
3. **Causes of Benevolence.** Whilst subjective, the main cause of Benevolence is living expenses. This covers a broad range of factors but is often instigated by an unforeseen incident/circumstances i.e. job loss, divorce, relationship breakdown etc. Debt continues to be a cause of Benevolence requests. However, the REA only assists with primary debt

²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/articles/impactofincreasedcostoflivingonadultsacrossgreatbritain/september2022tojanuary2023>



5. Veteran Sappers make up the greatest number of benevolence recipients, followed by veteran family members. Veteran family members include widows, widowers, separated and divorced partners.⁴ Compassionate support for Commonwealth soldiers forms a large part of the serving soldier statistics. This is because under current MOD policy Commonwealth soldiers are not entitled to MOD funded flights home in the event of a compassionate case.



6. **Branch Membership.** In Sep 2023 the range of data collected increased to include branch membership status (Y/N) of those requesting benevolence. Although only a small

⁴ Eligible until remarriage.

sample the overwhelming majority of those requesting benevolence are not REA Branch members. Whilst it would be unwise to draw a direct correlation between Branch membership and benevolence need(s) it is a factor that will continue to be monitored.

7. **Kitchener Fund.** The Kitchener Fund currently has 11 dependants who have been assisted throughout the year to a total of £73,356.

8. **Gabriel Fund.** The Gabriel Fund assisted with the retraining of one individual at a cost of £25,000.

9. **Case Studies.** Every individual who receives benevolence is requested to share their benevolence story on REA communications channels.⁵ This will be used to reinforce the Sapper Charity Brand.

10. **Impact of Armed Forces Pensions Scheme 1975.** The earliest recipients of the 1975 Armed Forces pension scheme will start to claim an index linked pension in 2024. All regular service personnel who served for the qualifying time from 1975 – 2005 will be in receipt of an index linked pension. The amount will vary however; this may reduce low-level benevolence cases.

11. **Summary.** Whilst the number of cases assessed has increased, the number of applications that have been declined also increased, resulting in an overall reduction in the number of grants distributed. The amount of funds granted increased, this is likely due to cost of living inflation. Overall, data will continue to be collected, analysed and publicised. The publication of data will be used in collaboration with the Sapper Charity brand, to demonstrate the charitable function of the Royal Engineers Association.

N Gunnell
Operations Director

⁵ Via the RE RHQ Comms Hub