



THE SAPPER CHARITY

Royal Engineers Association

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

**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

8th Apr 2026

THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION THE SAPPER CHARITY 58th Annual General Meeting

Time: 1600hrs UK

Date: 25th April 2026

Location: The Bury Theatre, Leeds Royal Armouries.

1. **Welcome and opening remarks** - Major General A S Dickinson CBE (President). The Annual General Meeting was opened at 1600hrs by the President of the Association, Maj Gen (Retd) A Dickinson CBE who welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending.

2. **Confirmation of minutes** – President

a. To confirm the [minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 7th June 2025](#).

- 1) Proposed – Tim Harnett (Deputy Group Director SW Gp)
- 2) Seconded – Kevin Street (Deputy Group Director Mids Gp)

b. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting.

3. **Badge of Merit Recipients** – President. The Badge of Merit recipients from 2025 were announced

- a. Allen Artis - Blackpool

- b. Dave Hadfield - Derby & District
- c. John Huck - Leeds
- d. Stewart Kitching - Junior Leaders
- e. Lawrence McLeman - Newcastle & District
- f. Alan Scholey – Sheffield Branch

4. Board of Trustees Report – Mr Ken Kirk (CEO) on behalf of Mr Mark Ruddy (Honorary Treasurer)

- a. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period 01 January 2025 - 31 December 2025.

5. Appointment of Auditors – CEO

- a. To note the appointment of Kreston Reeves LLP (formerly Reeves LLP) as the auditors of the Association.

6. Appointment of Honorary Treasurer – President

- a. Mark Ruddy has agreed to continue. Discussion and approval of the appointment of Honorary Treasurer

7. Strategy 2030 – CEO

- a. Objectives:
 - 1) Connectivity and participation
 - 2) Effective support (serving, veterans, families and dependants)
 - 3) Sustainability (governance, financial resilience, capability)

8. Delivery – Nick Gunnell (Operations Director)

a. Engagement indicators 2025 -

LinkedIn	15,735
Facebook	5,796
Newsletter open rates	Typically 54–80%
Fundraising	£98,151.90

b. **Benevolence Cases for 2025** - Nick Gunnell (Ops Director). The Benevolence Report for 2025 can be found [here](#). There was a reduction in cases in 2025; this was not unique to the Sapper Charity with the Army Benevolent Fund reporting the same. However, as a comparison there has been a 100%+ increase in cases requested in 2026 compared to 2025.

	2026*	2025	2024	2023
Casses Assessed	157	458	489	471
Casses Assisted	131	380	386	346
Casses Declined	26	78	103	125
Total granted	£106,506.11	£258,068.94	£293,775.68	£236,339

*Cases from 1 Jan – 1 Apr 2026.

c. **Sapper Charity Children's Funds**. The management and formalisation of the Sapper Charity Children's Fund under the new Benevolence Case Worker has resulted in an increase in recipients.

- 1) 2025 8 families and 14 children (as at the annual report).
- 2) 2026 16 families (6 of which are serving) with 28 children.

d. **Gabriel Fund**. The fund supported the retraining of an individual to the cost of £25,000.

9. **McCabe Grants – CEO**. In 2025 £131,105.67 was granted from the McCabe grants proving its popularity and success. However, Head Office needs to improve how it evidences the impact.

12. **Events & Activities – Ops D**. In 2025 there was a broad offering of events and activities for members to get involved with such as vehicle painting, visits to Chelsea Hospital and the Houses of Parliament. Similar events along with long standing events are scheduled for 2026.

13. **Outreach Conducted – Ops D**. The following outreach was conducted in 2025.

	2025	2026*
Unit	26	23
Branch	5	15
Total	31	38

*As of 1 Apr 2026

14. **Unified Banking – CEO.** The Board of Trustees directed that Branch Funds are to be unified. The process commenced in September 2025 with consultations and feedback from members. Two Townhall's have taken place and training is to be provided by the provider SOLDO. The target is 75% of branches by Sep and 100% by Nov 2026.

15. **Sapper App – CEO.** SapperCom will be replaced by a smartphone app. The app will have utility for the serving Corps and the other RE Charities (Museum, Institution and CPD).

Question / Statement	From	Response
Will the app replace Eventbrite?	Rick Tootle	Yes (Chris Toulmin – MarCom).
Facebook is not effective at engaging working aged veterans	Tony Cheales	Statement
How do branches overcome a lack of engagement from Units that are aligned to them?	Mike Facchini	Be cognoscente that the units have no requirement to interact. Offer / add value to the Regiment/trust the Head Office to leverage support through other means. (Ops Director)
How do we get older people using the app?	John Nixon	As branches do now, they help each other out (Ops Director).
Why aren't younger members joining?	Maurice Pearson	Corps Sec offered to place questions on the next Corps Pulse Survey

16. **Priorities for 2026 – President.**

- a. Deliver Strategy 2030 priorities with clear impact reporting
- b. Continue and strengthen benevolence and outreach
- c. Embed unified banking to reduce risk and admin burden
- d. Roll out the REA app to improve connectivity and participation
- e. Grow fundraising and volunteering so we can reach more Sappers in need

Question / Statement	From	Response
What is meant by grow volunteering?	Kevin Street	Allow vehicle painting to be run by volunteers across the country (CEO)

17. **Questions** – Questions were submitted 10 days prior to the AGM:

Branch	Name	Question	Answer
Derby	Dave Hadfield	Why have the names of those being awarded the Badge of Merit this year not yet been published in the committee meeting minutes.	Para 3.
Chesterfield	Norman Elkington	Purely an update of the progress and introduction of the new finance system.	Para. 14
AEA National Branch of REA	Philip Taylor	Would like an update on new banking procedures which I'm sure will be on agenda	Para. 14
Birmingham	Lee Greensall	Is the REA going to provide more direct support in assisting with benevolence referrals with RBL now that you cannot make a third party referral to the RBL?	This is linked to a specific individual with multiple cap badges in the reserves with no record of DPS. Third party referrals with the exception of incapacitation are unlikely to be accepted by the Sapper Charity as experience has shown that individuals either do not want help or are not eligible. Ops Director.
Stratford Upon Avon	Kevin Street	How does the REA get recognised for grants it gives?	Para. 9.
Glasgow	Rick Tootle	How soon will the North/ South events managers engage with groups and branches. Sooner will help engagement with the serving family.	They are already however the priority is with Groups with no interaction with the Serving Corps i.e. NE Gp. Ops Director.
Sheffield	John Nixon	In line with Nick Gunnell's plans to expand the branch memberships by opening to all the tri-services, what are the REA doing to support the transition? (Given that some	If the circumstance is such that Committee members cannot be voted out, then it's cultural change. Ops Director will visit Sheffield Branch. Ops Director.

		branches are run by people resistant to change).	
Sheffield	Sean Flanagan	Is there any practical and material support available from REAHQ for the branches to assist them in public engagement and fund-raising events for the Sapper Charity?	Material to be produced and distributed on request from the Group Directors in time for Armed Forces Day. Op Director.

18. Date and location of next Annual General Meeting - To be announced once the feedback from the 2026 Sapper Gathering has been received.

19. Closing Remarks - Major General A S Dickinson CBE. Thanked all of our members, volunteers and standard bearers, those serving, their partners, donors and fundraisers.

N R Gunnell
Operations Director
Sapper Charity

Annex A – Attendance in addition to the President, CEO and Ops Director

**Annex A to
REA AGM Minutes
Attendance**

Serial	Name	Branch Represented
1.	Lee Greensall	Birmingham & District
2.	Sean Nugent	Peterborough
3.	Philip Taylor	AEA National Branch of REA
4.	Jimmy Hall	Newcastle & District Branch
5.	Gordon Crosthwaite	Newcastle and District
6.	Norman Elkington	Chesterfield
7.	Kevin Street	Midlands Group
8.	Rick Tootle	Glasgow
9.	Dave Hadfield	Derby
10.	James Hall	Newcastle & District
11.	Michael Harness	Dundee
12.	Sean Flanagan	Sheffield
13.	Dave Hadfield	Derby
14.	Steve Louch	Maidstone
15.	Michael Allison	Bristol
16.	Jacqueline Lowe	Hereford & Worcester Sappers
17.	Roy Lowe	South Wales Group (Deputy Group Director)
18.	Peter Canning	Wakefield
19.	Pam Furness	Wakefield
20.	Michael Allison	Bristol
21.	Allen John Artis	Blackpool
22.	Brian Simm	Cycling and Triathlon Branch
23.	Kevin Clark	Hartlepool
24.	Tim Harnett	South West Group
25.	Sean Nugent	Peterborough
26.	Michael New	Wakefield
27.	Michael Allison	Bristol
28.	John Collins	Chesterfield
29.	Christine Collins	Chesterfield
30.	Brian Cowie	Hartlepool
31.	Richard Gate	Hartlepool
32.	John Thurston	Leeds
33.	Ian Slack	Cycling
34.	Maurice Pearson	Bournemouth
35.	Nick Edwards	Medway
36.	Sue Simms	Cambridge
37.	Mike Facchini	Hartlepool
38.	John Huck	Leeds
39.	Simon Scott	DGD Yorkshire
40.	Pam Furness	Wakefield
41.	Jim Speckman	Peterborough
42.	Tony Dyett	Thanet
43.	David Waters	Lancashire Sappers
44.	John Nixon	Sheffield
45.	Tony Cheales	Peterborough/Sappers in the City
46.	Ian Woodward	Stafford
47.	Harrison Johansen	Leeds