

# 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment Royal Artillery Past and Present Association

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held at Copthorne Hotel Merry Hill Dudley  
Saturday 28 March 2015

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AGENDA POINTS</u>	<u>ACTION ON</u>
	<p>Committee Members in attendance:</p> <p>Chairman: Mr Steve Wallis Vice Chairman: Major Steve Ward Secretary: Mr Tony Kirkpatrick Welfare Officer: Mr Brian Henderson Treasure: Mr Peter Thomas Member : Mr Jack Pye Observer: Mr Mick Topping</p> <p>The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 13.40 Hrs</p>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Commemoration</b>	
1.1	The Chairman read the Royal Artillery Commemoration and the meeting responded.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Welcome and Chairman's Opening Address</b>	
2.1	The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and immediately thanked all attendees for taking the time and effort at personal expense to attend.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
3.1	The Chairman stated that he had received one apology from Charles (Shuggie) McTaggart who regretted that due to personal reasons he was unable to attend the meeting	
3.2	As a point of order, the Chairman stated there remains a lot of work to be completed between the incoming and outgoing Secretary. This was evident by the amount of administrative tasks the Chairman has had to pick up during the last 12 months since the change of the Secretary appointment.	
3.3	The Chairman moved on to apologise personally for overlooking to contact and inform the Webmaster Mr Steffan Jordan, that this meeting was taking place.	

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>6</p> <p>6.1.</p>	<p><b>Minutes from the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Chairman referred to the previous minutes of the meeting that was held in the Royal Court Coventry on the 11 May 2013. The Chairman asked the committee to read through the minutes after which the Chairman stated that he thought that all the “actions on” had happened within the minutes and there were no outstanding issues to bring forward.</p> <p>A clear demonstration was that the 2014 Reunion has taken place. The Chairman did comment that although the 2014 Reunion was not the best attended, it was successful.</p> <p>The Chairman asked the Secretary to take note of the Secretary’s duties which the Secretary acknowledged.</p> <p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>The Chairman informed the meeting that he had received a letter from the Royal Artillery Association thanking the 26 Regt RA Association for their kind contribution. The Figure contributed was £312.50. The Chairman passed on the relevant documentation to the Treasurer.</p> <p>The only other letter received by the Chairman was a letter from the outgoing Secretary which will remain private twixt the Chairman and the outgoing Secretary.</p> <p><b>Financial Statement</b></p> <p>The Chairman handed over to the Treasurer who furnished the Committee with the following statement:</p> <p><u>Cash</u>  Cash in Hand    £ Nil  Barclays Bank   £3122.31  Nat West Bank   £634.07  Total Cash        £3756.38</p> <p><u>Current Assets</u>  Regt Ties £104.88 (Stock on hand 8 x £13.11)  Property   £145.63 (Association Laptop)  Sundry Debtors £350.00 (Secretary and Welfare)  Total Current Assets £600.51</p> <p><u>No Current Liabilities</u></p> <p><u>Total Assets as at 28 March 2015</u></p>	<p>Secretary</p>
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	<p>Total Cash £3756.38  Add Currency Assets £600.51  Less Current Liabilities £Nil</p> <p><u>Total Cash Available £4356.89 CR (Fig agrees with GPF)</u></p>	
6.2	The Treasurer then discussed the clearing of any outstanding vouchers which the Welfare Officer declared he had spent £50.	Welfare Officer and Treasurer
6.3	The Treasurer then raised the matter of “going online” with Barclays Bank and he intended to liaise with the Bank and speak separately with the Secretary afterwards.	Treasurer and Secretary
6.4	The Treasurer inquired into the name change of the Association which would require a notification of name change at the Bank. The Chairman confirmed we had agreed on the previous meeting to accept a name change. The Treasurer suggested that he may need documentary evidence of this change and the Chairman stated that he would write a quick note. The Welfare Officer suggested the minutes would suffice.	Chairman and Treasurer
6.5	The Chairman raised the point that on the previous meeting that the Welfare Officer proposed that the cost for new membership (£5) be waived. Consequently we could have new members but we would receive no income.	
<b>7</b>	<b><u>Chairman’s Report</u></b>	
7.1	Major General Stuart Skeates CBE is to assume the appointment of Honorary Colonel 26 Regiment RA wef 01 April 2015 and will therefore de facto, assume the post of President of the Association. The General had been a previous CO of the Regiment. The Chairman will write a letter of introduction to the General and a farewell letter to General Nick Eeles.	Chairman
7.2	<p>The current CO has nominated the following to assist in Association matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Stuart Hay BC 132 Bty for the (Regimental) ORBAT and Website</li> <li>• WO2 (BSM (Sandhams)) John Bulmer POC the next Reunion and Dinner</li> </ul>	
7.3	The Chairman stated that he has been in contact with the Association President and CO. The Chairman after further discussion stated that both websites Regimental and Association should “link in “but clearly do not.	Chairman Secretary Webmaster
7.4	The Chairman also stated the Major Stuart Hay has been tasked to link in with our Webmaster. BSM Bulmer has made contact with the Chairman so	Chairman

	<p>it is clear that the Regiment has been encouraged to develop the links with the Association. The Chairman's observation was that this will become more difficult when he retires from his civil service employment.</p>	
7.5	<p>The committee discussed the challenge of keeping the website up to date; and in general, having a second eleven for the Committee appointments. It was raised that if the current Webmaster had an understudy/2IC that would perhaps help with the workload and with continuity across the Committee.</p> <p>Kiwi Davies was thought to be a natural to step into this position and it was agreed that he be approached for his views as to taking on the appointment of assistant webmaster. The Chairman also stated that he had spoken to Kiwi at the last reunion reference this.</p>	Mick Topping to make contact
7.6	<p>The Treasurer asked if the Webmaster required any financial assistance in completing his duties and secondly,</p> <p>"Is the webmaster aware that the Website requires updating?"</p> <p>It was generally agreed that we are all guilty of failing to maintain communications with each other and typically that is the case with the Webmaster. The Chairman asked for an action point to be recorded that the Chairman is to contact the Webmaster reference these general issues concerning the website.</p>	Chairman
7.7	<p>The Chairman requested that Mick Topping speak with Kiwi Davies reference the assistant Webmaster post. It was stated that it would be better if they (Davies and Jordan) were to meet however, they do live some distance apart.</p>	Mick Topping
7.8	<p>The Welfare Officer did state that he thinks that Facebook is killing the website, in that news travels much faster on Facebook and the site simply cannot keep up. This observation was unanimously agreed.</p>	
7.9	<p>The Chairman raised the point that Welfare announcements, in fact any announcements, are the responsibility of the Secretary. All announcements should go to the Secretary who in turn through the Webmaster, places them on the website. (Less the death of a member which falls to the Welfare Officer to notify the webmaster) Jack Pye commented that it is all our responsibility to keep "our ear to the ground" and we all keep people up dated.</p>	Secretary / All
7.10	<p>The Website was the next point on the Chairman's report</p>	
7.11	<p>Jack Pye asked the question is there a need for both a Facebook and Website? The discussion was that perhaps that the two (Facebook and the site) could be linked. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the Website has been neglected by all and it would work better if it were to be linked into Facebook.</p>	Webmaster

7.12	The Secretary raised the question about the Secretary's email address on the Website. He inquired how he receives any emails written to that address. It was explained that, the address should linked into the Secretary's home email address. It is a requirement of the Webmaster to erase the old Secretary's email address and replace it with the new Secretary's email address which is: <a href="mailto:secretary@26threg-ra-asc.com">secretary@26threg-ra-asc.com</a>	Secretary Webmaster
7.13	It was also agreed that the website must remain as an information platform; the Chairman will re-establish contact with the Webmaster and Mick Topping will speak with Kiwi Davies.	Chairman Webmaster Mick Topping
8.	<b>Handover of Secretary</b> – is this complete? No not yet.	
8.1	The Treasurer made the point that he and the new Secretary had completed the financial business that was required and that communications are open between him and the Secretary.	
8.2	The Chairman and the Committee members agreed that apart from the Post Script on the bottom of the previous minutes, nobody knew that the handover of secretary had taken place.	
8.3	As an observation, the Chairman commented that there had been a breakdown of communication which elongated the production of the minutes and their subsequent publication. Jack Pye immediately commented that there ought to be a contingency plan to back up the organisation. The committee agreed that an Assistant Secretary was required should the Secretary become for whatever reason, incapacitated.	
8.4	<p>Mick Topping without hesitation agreed that he would be willing to become the Assistant Secretary. The offer was unanimously welcomed and agreed. The Treasurer in order to get Mick set up onto the financial side of life requested Micks details such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address</li> <li>• Phone number</li> <li>• Bank details</li> </ul> <p>Mick Topping agreed to furnish the Treasurer with those details.</p>	Treasurer and Mick Topping
8.5	The Welfare Officer raised the question of the correct Association title. The Chairman replied that he had prepared a new header for correspondence which he would email to the secretary and others on the Committee.	Chairman
9.	<b>Regimental verses Battery Reunions-</b> should we change the frequency of the Regimental Reunion.	
9.1	The Chairman stated that he has been talking to various people and the	

<p>10</p> <p>10.1</p>	<p>underlying issue with reunions is the cost. People don't have an amount of disposable cash to use on attending a list of reunions. Clearly cost is an issue.</p> <p>The Chairman asked the question "Do we extend the gap between reunions or do we give it one last go next year and look at the attendance as a yardstick? At the AGM last year there were 54 members present.</p> <p>Jack Pye informed the committee that he had carried out some research on this issue. He found that 159 Battery has 4 separate reunions. It was agreed that historically the Gunners fundamentally operated at sub unit level. Sandhams, Colenso, Corunna and other Batteries have their Battle Honour day; however, there is no "26 Regiment RA" day!</p> <p>Battery gatherings it was agreed are here to stay.</p> <p>Jack Pye went on to say that this issue we are facing now is the sign of the times and we must accept that and get on with whatever we can. He then asked "are we perhaps too formal at the reunion" The Treasurer widened the view by asking is the reunion too long and too expensive. Although The Chairman stated that the 2016 reunion is a separate agenda point and it can be settled later in the meeting a lengthy but very helpful discussion then took place.</p> <p><b>The Charter</b></p> <p>The Chairman reminded the Committee of the changes that had already been made to the Charter to vote in various appointments. The Chairman stated that this year the only thing he needed to change was the name of the Association in accordance with vote last year.</p> <p>In paragraph "9g Organisation" The Regimental Secretary, we now have a Warrant Officer nominated by the CO to act as a focal point for the reunion.</p> <p>The committee discussed and articulated the <u>Association Secretary's</u> responsibilities which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership Applications</li> <li>• Organization of Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Association Reunions</li> <li>• Association Newsletter</li> <li>• Correspondence</li> <li>• Collection of donations of Funds to the Treasurer</li> <li>• Updating the Association Website</li> </ul> <p>The Chairman removed the need to attend the Royal Artillery Assembly and stated that he would propose these changes to the Charter at the next AGM.</p>	<p>Chairman</p>
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10.2	<p>Once amended the Chairman will circulate the Charter to the Committee. Further to this, the Committee discussed that the final draft of the Charter completed with the Regimental responsibilities to the Association, should be sent to the CO of the Regiment in order for the CO to sign and agree the Charter acknowledging his Regiments responsibilities.</p> <p>The Chairman stated that once he puts those requirements into legal terms he would do that. It was then discussed that the final draft should also be sent to the General for him to sign as the President of the Association as an "Agreement to the Charter"</p>	Chairman
		Chairman
11.	<b>Secretary's Report</b>	
11.1	In essence the Secretary had nothing to report. He had read through all the documentation handed to him and liaised with the Treasurer to set up the banking facilities.	
11.2	The Chairman asked the Secretary to please make contact with Shuggie McTaggart the outgoing Secretary to complete the handover. Secretary acknowledged that this is a priority and will make every effort to complete this action on him.	Secretary
12	<b>Welfare Report</b>	
12.1	The Welfare Officer stated that his report is no different to the previous years in that nobody is prepared to ask for help. He talked about the British Legion and the help that is available through them.	
12.2	The Welfare Officer requested that a Royal British Legion link be incorporated into the Association Website.	Webmaster
13	<b>Election of Officers</b>	
13.1	The Chairman led a discussion on the re-election of appointments on the committee. It was initially observed that the Treasurers appointment is due re-election. The Treasurer stated in accordance with the Charter he wishes to be nominated for re-election.	
13.2	The Welfare Officer stated that the post of Treasurer needs to be put onto the Website in order to allow individuals to be nominated for the post.	
13.3	The post of "Association Assistant Secretary" can be co-opted onto the committee until the AGM. Mick Topping must be voted onto the Executive Committee at the AGM and the Charter changed to incorporate the post.	Chairman and Secretary at AGM
13.4	On further scrutiny of the Charter, the Chairman stated that appointments of :	

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Welfare
- Treasurer

**may** be after six years be placed up for re-election **rather than must**.

The Charter does not state that an appointment can only serve six years. Therefore, the post of Treasurer will not be put up for re-election.

13.5 The Committee unanimously agreed that there is a need for younger members on the Committee.

#### 14 Reunion

14.1 The Committee spent a great deal of time thrashing out the detail of the 2016 reunion.

As a general point, it was unanimously agreed that the formal function, dressed in suits and ties; attending a formal dinner with VIP guests that require formal hosting, is perhaps not what the Association is really about. It was agreed that Association need to get back to basics and dispense with its overly formal approach.

14.2 Rather than record the entire discussion this item in the minutes will record the final decisions taken.

Date of Function :10 -11 June 2016

Venue: The Copthorne Hotel

Dress: Smart Casual

Programme of Events:

##### Friday 10 June 16

Meet and greet! Residents bar open, Friday evening meal under own arrangements

##### Saturday 11 June 2016

10.00 Hrs AGM

1930 Hrs Assemble for Evening Function in private suite, the function bar



	<p>opens until 0100Hrs</p> <p>2000-2130 Hrs Buffet /Carvery in your own time, in a suite set aside for the Association. The buffet is booked when booking into the hotel on a package.</p> <p>(In earlier discussions it was raised that Non-residents could purchase a voucher at £12 per head and £8.95 for Breakfast in Faradays, at reception. This would give the attendee the choice to eat or not. This voucher system was not discussed in final format of having a private function room )</p> <p>0100 Hrs The function bar closes all to move to the residence bar. Residence may have guests at bar.</p> <p>Entertainment: Background /Piped music</p> <p>Donations: It was agreed that donations can be made to the Secretary at the weekend</p>	
14.3	<p>The booking procedures are through the Hotel which is to be advertised by the Secretary. It was agreed that the Secretary needs to pre book the Buffet meal with the hotel. There is a requirement to have a booking reference, and to have three packages on offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One night with Breakfast</li> <li>• Two nights with Breakfast</li> <li>• One or Two nights with Breakfast including the Buffet/Carvery</li> </ul>	Secretary  Secretary
14.4	<p>The Chairman and Secretary will negotiate these packages at a later date (TBD) Chairman and Secretary need to decide a date for the meeting.</p> <p>If attendees choose to stay at the Copthorne Hotel the Hotel will offer a 20% discount card on alcoholic beverages whilst attending the weekend.</p> <p>It was agreed that this method of booking direct through the Hotel removes the need for the Secretary to personally administer every individual's requirements. More importantly this process offers the freedom of choice to the individual to build an independent package outside of the set package as offered by the Copthorne Hotel.</p> <p>Should individuals wish to book alternative accommodation and feeding near the venue then they are of course quite at liberty to do so under their own arrangements.</p>	Chairman and Secretary

<b>15</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>	
15.1	Produced by November of each year. Announcements for the 2016 reunion to be included.	Secretary
15.2	The Secretary to invite individuals (via the website) for articles to be included into the 2015 edition.	Secretary
15.3	There was no Newsletter in 2014 so the births marriages and deaths for 14 and 15 to be included. The Secretary will circulate the Newsletter around the committee; it was agreed that the Welfare Officer will update births, marriages and deaths.  The Waterloo celebrations will also be included.	Welfare Officer
15.4	The Secretary is to place a calling notice for the 2016 reunion into the Gunner Magazine Nov 15 to May 16 inclusive.	Secretary
15.5	It was agreed the Newsletter should include a paragraph, and an announcement made at the AGM, that in order to maintain the balance of charitable funds all donations would be most gratefully received.	Chairman Secretary
<b>16</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
16.1	Jack Pye voiced his concerns over the longevity of the Association Committee. Other than Steve Ward, Tony Kirkpatrick, and now Mick Topping all other members are well into their 60s. It was agreed that this issue should be addressed by posting invitations to join the committee through the Website, Newsletter and AGM.	Secretary Chairman at the AGM
16.2	The Secretary wanted to confirm that the Association intended to purchase a small stock of ties for the use at funerals and other formal occasions. It was agreed that a call to the manufacture was required to establish the "batch cost" and how many ties constitute a "minimum batch". Once this is established the Chairman will give authority to purchase. Treasurer and Secretary to establish communications with Wrexham Ties	Treasurer Secretary
16.3	The Secretary requested that the Association Laptop be written off. The machine is malfunctioning and cannot be used. The Treasurer requested permission to "write off" the item. The Treasurer was given authority to do so and he will with Mr Chick Adams, strike it from account and produce the certificate to satisfy the auditors. The Secretary will use his own laptop for Association business.	Treasurer Secretary
16.4	The Secretary again stated that he would visit the previous Secretary and complete the handover as best they could.  <i>Afternote: The Secretary has made contact with Shuggie McTaggart and agreed a meeting at his home address at 1400 on Wed 08 Apr 15.</i>	Secretary

16.5	The Chairman stated that he would circulate by email the new headed paper to all Committee members	Chairman
16.6	The Committee discussed the member's data base. It was agreed that as much as possible a data base was required to be maintained. The Secretary was briefed that he should announce in the Newsletter and at the AGM that any change of address, physical, or electronic, or new membership please be passed to him for recording within the existing list.	Secretary
16.7	It was agreed that due to data protection, to ask the Webmaster to remove the members list from the open Website and the Secretary maintain the list privately on behalf of the Association.	Webmaster Secretary
<p>There being no further business, the Chairman set the date of the next meeting on 11 June 2016 at the Copthorne Hotel. That will be a full Council Meeting. The Chairman stated that he will as normal, phone the CO and RSM of the Regiment and invite them to that meeting.</p> <p>The meeting was declared closed at 1710 Hrs.</p>		Chairman
<p>Minutes recorded by</p> <p><i>Tony Kirkpatrick</i></p>		
<p>Association Secretary</p>		
<p>Minutes authenticated by</p> <p><i>Steve Wallis</i></p>		
<p>Association Chairman</p>		