

Wx Sec 2130

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9 Sep 21

**WESSEX RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021
HELD AT RNAS YEOVILTON AND HOSTED ON ZOOM
ON TUESDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2021**

MINUTES

Present

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| Mrs P Golding OBE | President |
| Mrs S Troughton | Incoming President |
| Colonel L C A Ranson TD | Chair |
| Brigadier G Fraser MBE RM | NRCWWE |
| Mr A Campbell | Vice-President |
| Colonel E T Bolitho OBE | Vice-President |
| Mr E Gillespie OBE | Vice-President |
| Mrs A Maw | Vice-President |
| Colonel J Thompson TD DL | Chair City & County of Bristol |
| Air Commodore J C Bessel | Chair Cornwall & Vice-Chair Air |
| Commander PJ Burne RD RNR | Chair Devon |
| Brigadier D R Wilson CBE | Chair Dorset |
| Maj R Wharton TD** | Chair Gloucestershire |
| Colonel H A R Hancock | Chair Wiltshire |
| Brigadier N C Beacom QVRM TD | Chair Somerset |
| Mr Alec Mann | Chair Estates Committee |
| Mr Peter Wright | Chair Finance Committee |
| Col R Guest TD | Chair Cadets Committee |
| Wing Commander Mike Sherburn | Chair REEG |
| Captain S Jameson RD RNR | Vice Chair Naval |
| Colonel P A Jobbins OBE GM RD* | Vice Chair Marines |
| Colonel N R Holmes MBE | Commander, HQSW |

In Attendance

Brigadier S P Hodder and 18 members of the Association Executive And 83 members of the Association online.

Keynote Speakers

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| Colonel D L Skelton | Commandant Devon ACF |
| Lee Davis | Quartermaster Devon ACF |

| ITEM | DETAIL |
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| (a) | (b) |
| 1 | <p>PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The President, Mrs Peaches Golding, thanked everyone for attending and stated how good it was to be able to meet together and share a coffee, even if it was without hugging. She also welcomed all those who had joined online and highlighted the success of the Wx RFCA delivering online events and meetings over the year and for enabling the Lord Lieutenants' Cadets to be able to take part in what was unfortunately a number of limited opportunities. She went on to highlight that the Reservists have been extremely active with Op RESCRIPT making sure that the NHS has not been overwhelmed in our area, as they provided a huge number of resources both logistics, medical or whatever has been required. This has brought the face of the Armed Forces to the community in a way that has not been seen for some time. This is perhaps reflective of the number of employers who have signed up for the Armed Forces Covenant, as this has been a bumper year for signatories. She offered a huge well done to all in Wx RFCA who have pulled out all the stops regardless of the pandemic challenges to ensure we can undertake our business, stating it has been wonderful to see so many at the online coffee mornings, in fact seeing more at coffee mornings than we have been able to see face-to-face. This is one of the things we have missed by not getting out and about, however it has been a tremendous year despite the challenges.</p> |
| 2 | <p>APOLOGIES AND MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</p> <p>Apologies were received from 88 members who were unable to attend.</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7th September 2020 virtually over Zoom, have been published on the Website for the past few weeks.</p> <p>In the voting we sought approval that these represent a true record of proceedings.</p> <p>Proposer: Major (Retd) Robert Wharton TD – Chair Gloucestershire</p> <p>Seconder: Commander PJ Burne RD RNR – Chair Devon</p> <p>Voting results were: 63 For; 0 Against. Quorum: 32. Motion carried.</p> <p>The Chair invited the President to sign the Minutes.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There are no matters arising from last year's AGM minutes.</p> |
| 3 | <p>APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS</p> <p>A list of new Members, and the various changes that have occurred, are contained in the AGM Booklet.</p> <p>In accordance with Clause 5 of the Scheme for the Association, it is necessary for these appointments to be approved en bloc before the election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs/County Chairs to allow the new members the right to vote.</p> <p>Proposer: Mr John Phillips – Selected Military Member Devon</p> <p>Seconder: Colonel Rex Stephenson - Selected Military Member Wiltshire</p> |

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| | <p>Voting results were: 64 For; 0 Against. Quorum: 32. Motion carried.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the new Members and thanked them warmly for volunteering their services or agreeing to be representatives of their respective authorities. He stressed how much their support is valued including when required, their help and advice.</p> <p>All members were elected en-bloc.</p> |
| 4 | <p>ELECTION OF THE CHAIR</p> <p>The President explained, that in accordance with Clause 10 of the Scheme for the Association, the Chair had to be elected or re-elected each year. Colonel Lance Ranson has agreed to be Chair for a fourth year. No other nominations for the appointment have been received.</p> <p>Proposer: Mr John Phillips – Selected Military Member Devon</p> <p>Seconder: Air Marshall Sir Dusty Miller – Co-opted Member Gloucestershire</p> <p>Voting results were: 49 For; 1 Against. Quorum: 29. Motion carried</p> |
| 5 | <p>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRS AND COUNTY CHAIRS</p> <p>The Chair reminded Members that Vice-Chairs and County Chairs had to be elected or re-elected every year. All Vice-Chairs and County Chairs have expressed a wish to be re-elected. There have been no other nominations.</p> <p>A complete list of Vice-Chairs and County Chairs has been published on the Website and distributed in the AGM booklet.</p> <p>Propose that all Vice-Chairs/County Chairs are re-elected together, en bloc.</p> <p>Proposer: Lt Col (Retd) Guy Benson – Selected Military Member Wiltshire</p> <p>Seconder: Commander Chris Parry – Selected Naval Member Devon</p> <p>Voting results were: 50 For; 0 Against. Quorum: 29. Motion carried.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all the Vice-Chairs and County Chairs for their continued service and sound advice throughout the year.</p> |
| 6 | <p>EMPOWERMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION BOARD</p> <p>The Scheme of Association for Wessex RFCA requires that the Association Board must be given express authority to exercise the Association’s statutory powers and duties without prior reference to the membership. A copy of the motion has been published on the Website during the voting process.</p> <p>Propose the Motion that the Board be authorised to:</p> <p>Exercise the powers conferred, and the duties imposed on the Association by the Reserve Forces Act 1996, as amended, and the Regulations made thereunder, and to deliver the requirements set by Service Level Agreements entered into by the Council of RFCAs, in support of the Services, without prior reference to the Association, save that this delegation does not extend to any decision relating to the future existence, independence or autonomy of the Association.</p> |

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| | <p>Proposer: Colonel Stephen Bartlett – Co-Opted Member Somerset</p> <p>Seconder: Air Marshall Sir Dusty Miller – Co-Opted Member Gloucestershire</p> <p>Voting results were: 50 For; 0 Against. Quorum: 29. Motion carried.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the membership for their vote of confidence in the Board and assured them that the Board will continue to govern the Association with due diligence under his chairmanship.</p> |
| 7. | <p>CHAIR’S REPORT</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone who had attended and those taking part online. He highlighted that his written report was in the AGM main report to which members had access. He opened by conferring with the President and thanking the staff at Wessex RFCA for continuing to maintain the key outputs over recent months with estates, cadets and engagement all being managed exceptionally well. He further stated that the use of Zoom has proven to be the way ahead and praised its use to deliver the hybrid AGM. The Chair went on to highlight the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Bigger Picture. Over recent weeks the vital nature of Defence has featured widely in the media, on sea, land and in the air. There have been some extraordinary examples of the capabilities and reach of our Defence Forces, including the quality of our people. b. Reserves. The key figure in the report is the 2400 reservists who volunteered to support Op RESCRIPT. Not all were required in the end, however it is a remarkable number. Units have continued to recruit and conduct training, whilst 7 and then 6 RIFLES undertook tours of Op TOSCA, the UN Operation in Cyprus. The RWxY have deployed reservist tank crews on Op CABRIT (NATO forward presence in Estonia), and are preparing for more next year. c. Cadets. A highlight of the summer was a visit to a cadet camp and witnessing how happy the cadets were to be back training face-to-face. The Chair commended the leadership of all the cadet units at all levels for keeping the flame alive. There have been some fantastic initiatives to keep them engaged including the continued delivery of Duke of Edinburgh Awards, leadership training and CVQO. Underpinning all this is the work undertaken by the Wx RFCA Estate and County Staff to enable safe place and conduct essential maintenance, all of which ensured that cadets could get back to training quickly. d. Engagement. Another area that has done well throughout the year has been engagement. The new methods of communication have been hugely successful and kept us all informed. There has been growth in social media campaigns supporting Armed Forces Covenant signings, Employer Recognition Scheme Awards (especially Gold and Silver), Armed Forces Day and Reserves Day. e. The RFCA Review. The review has been ongoing for some time and is progressing. Whilst there is not much new to report, the role for volunteers has continued to be acknowledged as being vital for the future. f. Continuity. In terms of continuity, the members will continue to be a key part of our engagement capability and the Lord Lieutenants and their Lieutenancies will be a central part of our ability to influence and have authority in our counties. The members experience, contacts, and enthusiasm will continue to be a valuable part of our strength and engagement strategy. |

g. **Defence Community.** Please champion the Defence Community, in particular the reserve and cadet community, and it is important we are familiar with who they are and what they are doing.

h. **Communication.** Every event is a PR opportunity therefore please look out for them and communicate with county chairs. I thank you all and we will undertake to keep all informed.

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SERVICE AND CADETS REPORTS

The Chair highlighted that the Service and Cadet Reports were included in the annual report. Members were invited to ask any questions. The following questions were raised:

a. **Cadets.** Asked over zoom; There are 2 views about cadets, firstly they are keen to get back, having been stuck at home for 18 months, the second is that they have found other things to do and don't want to return. What is the experience of cadets around the region?

Answered by Gp Capt Jason Chalk - It appears to be a mixed bag with much to do with how engaged they have been. The success appears to be based around going out and looking for those opportunities depending on the catchment areas.

Follow up Answer by Sea Cadets – We are seeing a mixture of juniors who had 6 months to be in the junior cadets followed by the pandemic experience and we are trying to keep them on board. We are seeing data that there is interest and things are beginning to pick up. A small indicator but the door remains open.

Follow up by Col Leigh Skelton, Devon ACF – Having returned from camp I have never seen cadets so keen. On the whole it is very positive.

Follow up from Col Rupert Elliott, Somerset ACF - Numbers have been good, having taken cadets on camp and over 300 cadets have attended over the period.

Follow up Rex Stephenson Ulysses Trust – The trust has been constrained in the past 18 months, however it is happy to support cadets on any expedition be it overseas or around the country. He encouraged those who are interested to take a look at their website and that now is just the time to set up expeditions.

b. **Cadet Review** – Asked by Rex Stephenson, where are we with the Cadet Estate Review.

Answered by CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – He explained that the Cadet Estate Review is now known as the RFCA Estate Optimisation Program. He went on to explain that it covers the whole volunteer estate and that it is a national program driven by the SoS. The Tri-Service Team was set up and given a short timescale of 6 months to report back. Wx has been fully engaged and was the first region ready to undertake the Military Judgement Panel. The aim is to optimise the estate, recognising that in some towns there are 2 cadet huts that may not be that far apart and this may not be efficient. There is also a move to try to optimise onto the Reserve Estate and, where there is room, cadets might share facilities on these sites. Wx is reasonably efficient already and our reserves centres have been found to be efficiently filled with limited spare capacity. Additionally, all but one of our Reserve Centres has cadets sharing facilities already. On the cadet front it has been identified that over the period of the next 10 years there are a potential 15 areas where cadet units could be reduced with two combining and moving into one site, following the

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| | <p>principle that the priority for disposing of sites was expensive hirings that no longer meet our needs, leases that are soon to come to a close and are expensive and finally to concentrate on any freehold properties we already own. The program is broken down into 3 phases with the first phase being 2 years. This will include quick wins and projects that can be achieved with relatively limited input. We have identified 15 to 20 which we have been discussing and fully consulting all the cadet organisations involved. We now await a program mandate to move forward. The 3 to 5 year timescale will involve projects that require more investment, maybe extensions of sites to get two units into one. The 5 to 10 year program will be major rebuilds of new joint cadet centres. It was emphasised that Tranche one has not yet been signed off. He went on to explain that in order to have clear communication with the 3 regional cadet chains of command a Regional Cadet Steering Group has been established to consider things from a regional perspective, with the cadet chains of command making the decisions with advice and guidance from Wx RFCA. The communication piece down to volunteers is owned by the chain of command and this is the piece that we are working on with the chains of command now.</p> <p>c. Study of Cadets – There was another study regarding the value of cadets to the nation. Where are we with the outcome of that study, how far have we got.</p> <p>Answered by CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – It is a 4 year program of study by Northampton University led by Professor Simon Denny. The study was commissioned by the MoD to look at the social impact of the cadet movement across the 5 elements of sponsored MoD Cadets. The final report was published this year and is available on the Association’s website. It is intended that we invite Professor Denny to our members forum on the 9th of November to speak about his study. The outcome of the report was very positive and it has been seen that the MoD investment in cadets benefits other departments.</p> |
| 9 | <p>MEMBERS’ BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chair introduced the Members’ Business Forum, and outlined that 3 questions have been pre-submitted.</p> <p>a. Mr John Phillips – Could members have a list of all properties that are under consideration for disposal. How many of these are former TA Drill Halls.</p> <p>Answered by CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – Having given an explanation of the Estate Optimisation Program the CE explained that until the mandate has been officially signed off, no lists could be published, however as soon as it has it will be released. The impact on former TA centres will be minimal. He went on to state that putting cadets into old drill halls is frequently counterproductive due to them being too large for the cadet units and expensive to maintain.</p> <p>b. 2Lt Sarah Tresise - Contingent Commander Pool Academy CCF Cornwall – Her question was about further training? Sarah was not available to expand on her question.</p> <p>c. Col Rex Stephenson - The Role of the Voluntary Membership and Voluntary Committees in the NDPB Era.</p> <p>Answered by the Chair and CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – The Chair stated that every indication that he has had is that the role of the volunteers in this and all other regions is appreciated and the work is being taken forward by two senior Civil Servants who are engaging with a small committee of the Council. The feedback is that they are listening and they are open to the role of volunteers in the future.</p> |

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| | <p>Col Rex Stephenson Followed up – Have we put forward proposals and been proactive in what the regions and council would want to see in this new NDPB.</p> <p>Answered by the CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – Last year, whilst nothing much was happening from the MoD side, the RFCA put together a working group chaired by David Rhodes who is the Chairman of Yorkshire and Humber RFCA. This working group have undertaken a huge amount of work putting together a proposal, looking at every aspect from top level governance down to members and regional structures. At the beginning of this year, 2 new team members arrived who have been fully engaged and supportive.</p> <p>d. Question from The Chair – How do we see the RFCA working over next 2 years?</p> <p>Answered by the CE Brigadier Steve Hodder – This is something we have been giving a great deal of thought to, especially during COVID and what happens afterwards. During COVID we looked at how we operated internally which resulted in many improvements and initiatives to help us in moving forward. The main improvement has been internal communication both to the staff and out to the members. Secondly, organisationally we now have a Senior Leadership Team with the 4 pillar heads of Estates (Nicola Johns), Youth and Cadets and Chief of Staff (Hannah Owen), Finance (Tracey) and Engagement (Rachael), which means more work can be undertaken by working together as a collegiate and integrated team. There is also recognition that work has been delivered throughout COVID and shown that some work can be undertaken effectively from home. This has been discussed with Council and Wx RFCA will undertake a 40/60 mix of hybrid working, 2 days in the office and 3 days at home. Additionally, core hours have been considered and therefore a minor change to core hours of 9am to 4pm, providing slight flexibility at the beginning and end of the day, however all hours have to be worked. It is intended that more hybrid meetings can be delivered providing options for attendance. It was emphasised that committee chairs would be consulted on how they wish to run their committees in the future. Members Coffee has proven to be very useful and has involved small updates from members of staff followed by discussions with the members. The members forum with key speakers has proven to be popular and is a useful way to deliver key issues to members, with the next forum planned for the 9th November with Professor Denny as a speaker.</p> |
| 10 | <p>HANDOVER OF PRESIDENT</p> <p>The Chair thanked the President for her support and leadership during her tenure and explained that the Presidency now moves to the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton, who unfortunately has been unable to attend today.</p> |
| 11 | <p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>It was outlined that it had been agreed that the future AGM would take place on Tuesday 6th September 2022.</p> |

BRIGADIER S P HODDER

Chief Executive
Wessex Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association

Dated:

Annexes:

A. List of Vice-Chairs and County Chairs.

Distribution:

Chair
Association Board
All Association members

P GOLDING

President
Wessex Reserve Forces' and Cadets'
Association

Dated:

LIST OF VICE-CHAIR AND COUNTY CHAIRS

CHAIR FOR RE-ELECTION

Colonel Lance Ranson TD Chair

VICE-CHAIR FOR ELECTION

Air Commodore John Bessell RAF (Retd) Vice-Chair Air

VICE-CHAIR FOR RE-ELECTION

Captain Sue Jameson RD RNR Vice-Chair Naval

Colonel P A Jobbins OBE GM RD* MSc Vice-Chair Marine

COUNTY CHAIR FOR ELECTION

Air Commodore John Bessell RAF (Retd) Chair Cornwall

COUNTY CHAIR FOR RE-ELECTION

Colonel Jane Thompson TD DL Chair City & County of Bristol

Commander P J Burne RD RNR Chair Devon

Brigadier D R Wilson CBE Chair Dorset

Major Robert Wharton TD* Chair Gloucestershire

Brigadier N C Beacom QVRM TD Chair Somerset

Colonel H A R Hancock Chair Wiltshire