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RECORD OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS OF THE 161st CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION, HELD VIRTUALLY, ON 21 FEB 24.

Present:	Maj Gen D McDowall CBE Col N Bruce ADC Col (Retd) D Craft Col S Smith VR Lt Col (Retd) S Lockwood WO1 (Corps SM) P Steel WO1 (RSM) A Jarman Mr I Scrivin Mr R Taylor Mr T Holyoake Mr G Marsh Mr P Osment Mr R Jephcote Mrs T Muers Ms S Harler	Chair RSA Corps Col Corps Sec / Gen Sec Corps Col Res Asst Corps Sec / Asst Gen Sec Corps SM Corps SM (Des) Area 1 N Area 2 N Area 3 Area 4 Area 5 Area Rep Scotland RSA AO / Mtg Sec RSA AA
Apologies:	Mr G Phillips Mr M Nevill Mr K Bates	Area Rep Wales Area Rep 2 S / NI Area Rep 2N

Discussions / Decisions / Actions

Item 1 Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the 161st Central Committee Meeting by affirming the sensible approach to holding the meeting online due to financial restrictions and stating that this decision was positively received by the RSTL board and the Corps Executive Board. The Chair acknowledged it was the Corps SM's last Central Committee Meeting and thanked him for his work with the Association and the wider Corps. He welcomed WO1 Alicia Jarman who will be taking over as Corps SM in the coming months. The Chair offered apologies from Area Rep Wales and Area Rep NI/2S.

Item 3: Actions carried over from the 160th Central Committee Meeting on 12 Oct 23

1. The committee agreed the minutes from the meeting were an accurate record of the previous meeting. The RSA AO confirmed that all actions had been closed apart from two ongoing which are dependent on financial affordability in the future:

a. Action – Area Reps to communicate to their members the deep regret felt over the closure of the Memorial Book but to encourage their members to use the Last Post until an alternative was sourced by **RSA AO. ONGOING.**

b. Action – RSA AO to explore the provision of funeral drapes to **Area Reps. ONGOING.**

2. Col Smith confirmed that his action to research reserve military locations as possible meeting locations in the future could be closed. He offered the possible use of Woolwich, Bexleyheath, and Inns of Court (dependant on numbers attending). The Gen Sec suggested use of Stafford and Perham Down which would reduce the costs, if it was decided to move the AGM from London.

a. Action - Gen Sec/Asst Gen Sec to produce a financial recommendation of potential locations for the AGM next year.

Item 4 Chair's Update

1. The Chair stated that the Supporting Our Signallers initiative was proceeding well and thanked the Area Reps and branches for supporting the initiative. The Chair confirmed that the scheme would continue to develop to ensure protection and security of volunteers and members requesting help to be supported in the correct manner.

a. Action - Gen Sec/Asst Gen Sec to investigate RSA liability to support volunteers should issues occur and to investigate the need for DBS checks.

2. The Chair acknowledged the work currently being undertaken by the Corps HQs, such as the RSA Roadshow and confirmed he was looking forward to a number of branch visits this year.

Item 5 General Secretary's Report

Serial 2: Area Rep Nominations

1. The Gen Sec confirmed two proposed nominations for the positions of Wales and Area 2 South Area Reps. He confirmed no other nominations for these areas had been received.

a. Decision – It was agreed by the committee that David Whimpenny OBE would be proposed as Area Rep for Area 2 South in the AGM next month.

b. Decision – It was agreed by the committee that Wayne Broadhurst would be proposed as Area Rep for Wales in the AGM next month.

c. Action – Gen Sec to submit to a vote Area Rep changes at the AGM next month.

2. The Gen Sec expressed thanks to Michael Nevill for being the interim Area Rep and stated that he had done a wonderful job of communicating with the branches, even though he did not live in the area covered. He also confirmed that Michael Nevill will continue to cover the NI Area. The Gen Sec also expressed his thanks and appreciation to Gwyn Phillips for his work over the last decade in the Wales area and confirmed that the Central Committee had awarded Gwyn an Honour Award for his huge contribution to the Association in Wales.

Serial 3: PD155 Amendments

1. **Overseas Allowances:** The Gen Sec confirmed the recent interest in association members overseas opening branches, highlighting the recent addition of a Fiji Branch. He confirmed that due to this there would be a minor, but important change to be reflected in the PD in respect of prohibitive expenses for branch committee members to attend the AGM from overseas.

- a. **Action – Gen Sec** to amend PD 155 to reflect expenses for branch committee members attendance at the AGM is only available to UK based branches. However, overseas branches can attend meetings virtually.

2. **Area Rep Nominations:** The Gen Sec highlighted this section of the PD could currently be interpreted to state that any nominations for Area Reps must be a member of a branch in that area. The Gen Sec confirmed that Michael Nevill stepping in as interim Area Rep for Area 2S effectively, proved that although it would be best for an Area Rep to be nominated from a branch in the area, this should not prohibit a member from any other members from volunteering to become an Area Rep outside the area he resides.

- a. **Decision – Committee** content that Area Reps no longer must be strictly from branches in said area and can be nominated from willing volunteers outside of said area.
- b. **Action – Gen Sec** to amend PD 155 to reflect this.

Serial 4: The Etherton Review – The Gen Sec announced the publication of the Etherton Review which was conducted to address the implications on service personnel who were wrongly discharged from the forces due to their sexuality between 1967 and 2000. He detailed the measures the MOD are taking after the publication of the Etherton Review and confirmed that Corps HQs will be collaborating with the MOD addressing these measures. The Gen Sec stated that the Association should clearly address the fact that the previous handling of this was wrong and that the Association should accept anyone who was discharged under those circumstances with open arms.

- a. **Action – Area Reps** to convey the message to all their branches that the discharge of personnel in this manner was completely wrong and that they should be absolute in their acceptance of anyone who experienced this into their branches.

Serial 5: Upcoming Events

1. The Gen Sec announced Corps Weekend would be held in a similar fashion as last year and confirmed that there would be lots of accommodation for people wishing to travel to Blandford to attend.

- a. **Action – Area Reps** to encourage their branches to attend Corps Weekend and ask their members to apply for accommodation as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

2. Area Rep 4 queried the omission of Signallers Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on the forecast of events and confirmed it was scheduled for the weekend after the Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Item 6 Assistant General Secretary's Report

Serial 1: Benevolence Update – The Gen Sec gave a benevolence update and confirmed that the charity has for the first time since pre-covid times granted over £400,000 of assistance to support members in need.

Serial 2: Death in Service - The Asst Gen Sec sadly announced that there had been four deaths in service over the last year with the charity providing a grant to enable the unit to support the family of £1500 each time.

Serial 5: Area Reps T&S requirements - The Asst Gen Sec reminded all that the FOE for T&S for the upcoming six months is now due.

- a. Action – Area Reps** to submit their visit forecast, with a financial estimate to the **RSA AO** before the AGM on 16 MAR 24.

Serial 6: RSA Road Trip 2024 - The Asst Gen Sec briefed the Central Committee on the confirmed itinerary for this year's RSA Road Trip taking place 7-11th October. The Asst Gen Sec confirmed that after requests from the regular Corps the roadshow would be located within Regular locations as well as Reserve and RSA locations. The Gen Sec also noted that, by using these locations, the cost of conducting the Roadshow would be reduced substantially. The Asst Gen Sec confirmed the following locations for this year's roadshow:

- Bulford
- York
- Glasgow
- Stafford
- Chicksands / Bedford area
- Aldershot
- London
- Colerne

- a. Action – Gen Sec** asked the **Area Reps** to support and encourage members attending the roadshow at these locations, even though they may not be in the local vicinity of branch locations.
- b. Action – Area Reps** who would like to avail of accommodation at the evening locations (York, Stafford, Aldershot and Colerne) to confirm with the **Asst Reg Sec** at the earliest opportunity.

Item 7 Admin Offr's Report

Serial 4: RSA Membership Cards - The RSA AO confirmed that the RSA Admin Office has ceased supplying RSA membership cards for new members to the Association. She stated that due to the roll out of Veterans ID cards it was decided to lessen the administrative burden in supplying new cards and reissuing lost or damaged cards, noting that this decision had already been agreed by the CCM at a previous meeting.

- a. Action – RSA AA** to include the information on how to apply for a Veterans ID card in the new membership letter.

Serial 5: Supporting Our Signallers - The RSA AO stated that since the launch of the Supporting Our Signallers network in December 130 people had requested to become volunteers. She confirmed that since then, there have been five requests for help which was supported. The RSA AO encouraged people to visit the SOS page of the website and signpost anyone who requires assistance to the agencies detailed.

- a. Action – Area Reps** to continue to promote the initiative to potential volunteers and people who may need help or assistance.

Serial 6: Corps Weekend - The RSA AO echoed the words of the Gen Sec that availability of accommodation for Corps Weekend was as good as last year and encouraged people to attend Corps Weekend. She also informed the committee that a surcharge of £5 would be requested for meals during the mess functions due to people booking last year, and not attending.

- a. Action – Area Reps** to encourage their members to take up the fantastic offer of free accommodation during the weekend and support Corps Weekend and bookings can be made through the members area of the website.

Item 8 Corps Update

1. **Corps Col** confirmed he had been in post for approximately a year now and that the pressures of the Corps remained the same as last year. He stated that the overarching challenges remain with recruitment and retention, with recruitment Corps wide being low which correlated with the growth in industries such as cyber and haulage. The Corps Col countered that by saying that Officer recruitment in the Corps was growing, however retention of Officers was a challenge, again due to the pull of outside industry recruiting DE and LE captains into civilian jobs. The Corps Col stated that it had come to the personal attention of the Chief of the General Staff which was a positive step.
2. T&S reductions had impacted on Adventurous Training and Battlefield tours etc but the reductions should be stopped this year. However exercises were ongoing such as EX STEADFAST DEFENDER, a NATO exercise across Europe and DEFENSIVE CYBER MARVEL, a Corps led international cyber competition.
3. **Corps Col Reserves** confirmed that Reserve numbers were steady with the back end of year busy and productive for the main regiments and specialist units.
4. In year saving measures have hit RSDs which will impact on future activities for Reserves, with the outlook for next year being further cuts. The Corps Col Res stated the need to conduct a review to see where the cuts can be made but it may affect future attendance supporting the retired community.
5. Corps Col Res announced to the committee that this would be his last meeting and that Col Emma Bruce would take over later in the year.
6. The Chair thanked Corps Col Res for his support to the Association and for assisting in delivering the 3R message which the Chair stated Corps Col Res had done very successfully with the participation of the reserves in association events.
7. **Corps SM** reflected that Mercury Knowledge had worked in bringing the 3Rs community together with the attendance of the Area Reps. This has led to more branches being created and other branches being reinvigorated. In addition to this, the roadshow had worked well and the inclusion of the regular locations would be fantastic for bringing the regulars onboard.

8. The Corps SM encouraged the attendance of the Area Reps and the Home Team at future Senior Soldier Conferences to continue networking with the Regular and Reserve Corps.

9. The Corps SM would encourage all Standard Bearers to attend Corps Weekend but suggested if they were not available soldiers would be willing to carry branch standards.

10. The Chair acknowledged the fantastic work the Corps SM has done bringing the 3Rs together and including the Association in Corps activities. The Chair requested a Corps Update should be delivered to those serving outside of regular units such as Defence Digital and Northwood to inform them on Corps and Association matters.

a. Action – Corps SM to explore the possibility of delivering such brief.

11. The Chair then presented an RSA Honour Award to the Corps SM in recognition of the outstanding contribution that he had made to the Association during his tenure. The CCM had unanimously supported this.

Item 9 Area Rep Updates

Area Scotland – Branch memberships list contacted but only three replies.

a. Action – RSA AO/AA to remove the other members from the Edinburgh branch list.

Area 1N – Spennymoor Branch have decided to remain open in the meantime but require new members.

a. Action – RSA AO/AA to provide a list of potential members in the Spennymoor area to the branch secretary.

Area 3 – 31 Sig Regt would like to move from affiliation to branch.

a. Action – RSA AO to link in with Area Rep 3 to provide assistance.

Area 4 – West London Branch has decided not to close, but to switch to affiliation status to retain their standard.

Area 5 – Colerne branch being launched by WO1(RSM) Dave Bates. Swindon branch are exploring the potential to recruit more members from the Nepalese and Polish community. Salisbury branch are in contact with 3 Div and Signallers in Perham Down and the Salisbury branch are planning a hockey match with a combined team from Perham Down.

Item 10 Awards

Serial 1. Awards for Consideration:

a. Decision – The following awards were approved by the Central Committee:

40 Year Awards

*Allan Beever - Rotherham
Maj Paul Buckley – Darlington*

*Linda Cooper – East London
Roderick Gladwin - Shropshire
Bernard Hewitt - Edinburgh
Ann McKenzie-Hughes – Edinburgh
James Johnson – Southport and District
Derek Lambert – Edinburgh
Kevin Shelmerdine – Edinburgh
Alan Wright - Darlington*

50 Year Awards

*Jackie Allan – East London
Kevin Barnard – Norfolk
Keith Bates – Rotherham and Sheffield
Robert Burnett - York
Helen Coultish – Catterick
Stephen Freeman-Pannett - Norfolk
James Johnson – Southport & District
Christopher Lane – Dorset
James Mill – Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment
Iain Scrivin – Catterick
Peter Sellars - Poole
John Wharton – Catterick*

60 Year Awards

*Fred Alexander - Darlington
Roy Bilby – East London
John Dollen – Glasgow
Maj (Retd) James Barry Greenwood – East London
Keith Hall - Aldershot
William McNamara - Glasgow
Maj (Retd) Brian Murray MBE TD – Edinburgh
John Robson – 56 Div (Signals) OCA
James Rodger – Catterick
Maj (Retd) Robert Gordon Simpson - 41 Signal Regt PLKR Association
Allan Whillock - Dorset*

Honour Awards

*Ray Jeffery – Darlington
WO1 (Corps SM) Paul Steel - RHQ
Peter Mark Watson – Catterick*

Serial 2. Award delivery:

- a. Decision** – Other cap badges who are attached to the R SIGNALS cannot add this service towards an RSA longevity award. As per PD 155.
- b. Decision** – Awards can be awarded to members at Corps Weekend, only if they cannot attend their local branch to receive the award.

Item 13 Date of Next Meeting

- a. **Decision** – *The date of the next Central Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday 17 October 2024. Location to be confirmed.*

T C Muers
RSA AO / Mtg Sec
(Original Signed)

Action
Corps Sec
Asst Corps Sec
Corps SM
Corps SM (Des)
Area Reps
RSA AO
RSA AA

Info
Chair RSA
Corps Col
Corps Col Res
COS
Corps Adjt
Corps Col PA