

**MINUTES OF THE RAFA EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN & BORDERS' BRANCH 75<sup>TH</sup>**  
**AGM HELD IN PERSON AT NO 287 (STENHOUSE) SQUADRON RAF AIR**  
**CADETS AND BY ZOOM ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023**

<b>Present</b>		<b>In attendance</b>	
Susan Kidston (SK)	Branch Chair/Trustee		
Bob Bertram (BB)	Branch Life Vice President		
Steve Garden (SGa)	Secretary/Trustee.		
Sue Gillot (SG) (By Zoom)	Wings' Organiser and Social Secretary		
George Prentice BEM (GP)	Honorary Welfare Officer		
Dave Prior (DP)	Treasurer/Trustee		
Derek Read (DR)	Trustee		
Julie Read (JR)	Events Coordinator	<b>Minute Taker</b>	Steve Garden (SGa)
<b>Members attending:</b>		<b>In attendance</b>	
Jim Leggat (By Zoom) Jim Riddick		Morag Goulden (Military Museum of Scotland)	

The meeting began at 1400hrs.

<b>Agenda Item No.</b>		<b>Action (Initials)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Opening Remarks &amp; Apologies.</b>	
	1.1 Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1.1 Alex Dawson.</li> <li>1.1.2 Ross McElhinney</li> <li>1.1.3 Frank McShane.</li> <li>1.1.4 George Megahey.</li> <li>1.1.5 A Mitchell.</li> <li>1.1.6 William Mounsey.</li> <li>1.1.7 Bobbie Prentice (Committee/Trustee).</li> <li>1.1.8 Girvan Stewart.</li> <li>1.1.9 Andy Wight-Boycott.</li> </ul> 1.2 Chair's Opening remarks. The Chair extended a warm welcome to all attendees. She thanked Kerrie Noble, OC 287 Squadron RAF Air Cadets, for allowing us to hold our AGM in the Sqn's premises.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of 74th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 27 March 2022.</b>	

	3.1 The minutes of the 27 March 2022 AGM were accepted as being an accurate and fair representation of the meeting. Minutes approved by DP; seconded by SGa.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest.</b>	
	3.1. DR has an ongoing conflict of interest with No 603 Sqn BB has 869Sqn RAFAC.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Annual Report – Chairman.</b>	
	<p>4.1 Rather than read a Chairman's Report, which may or may not repeat what my fellow Trustees' Reports will include today, I will read out some of our key highlights (not all) which I have summarised as bullet points.</p> <p>4.2 We have continued to hold our Monthly meetings via Zoom, predominantly for the convenience of members not needing to travel.</p> <p>4.3 We had one social occasion last year, a Branch Lunch the Navaar House Hotel in Penicuik on 9 April 22. Regrettably, no one from the general membership took up our invitation to attend, but members of the Committee took the opportunity to treat Mr &amp; Mrs George Megahy, and thank George for many years' work on the Committee, and Mr Norman Stevens, to thank him for being our Independent Inspector of Accounts for many years.</p> <p>4.4 We held our annual church service in the Church of the Good Shepherd on 26 June 2022.</p> <p>4.5 Branch Members, together with the assistance of other Service Organisations, marked 2022 Remembrance by: laying a Wreath at Edinburgh's Garden of Remembrance to mark the start of the commemoration events; laying wreath at key events/locations in each of the five local authority areas in the Branch's 'patch'; and by laying 11 single poppies on the RAF War Graves in Dalkeith Cemetery</p> <p>4.6 In addition, over the year various Committee Members attended: a parade to commemorate Coastal Command; five funerals for ex-RAF servicemen (for one of which we involved No 7 Sqn RAF and its Squadron Association); No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Sqn RAuxAF's annual awards' ceremony; and a Tri-Service Christmas Fund-raising service in Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh.</p> <p>4.7 Our Branch Life Vice President, Bob Bertram, donated a silver quaich 'Branch Presidential Award' to No 603 (City of Edinburgh) RAuxAF to be awarded to recognise 'over and above</p>	

	<p>efforts in relation to Community Relations and Charity Work' by members of the Squadron. On 10 December 2022, Bob presented the award for the first time to AS1 Kris Mackenzie RAF Regiment.</p> <p>4.8 We have continued to enhance our Branch communications via our website, our Facebook page and the email and distribution of approximately 2000 quarterly Branch Newsletters annually.</p> <p>4.9 We sent over 75 Christmas cards to Branch friends and Members, and cards and gift vouchers to 12 RAF veterans who are residents of Whitefoord House.</p> <p>4.10 Several Branch Members helped celebrate the 100th birthday of Marion Meal, who has been a Branch Member for over 50-years and for 30 of those was the Honorary Branch Welfare Officer. Marion was awarded an Area Presidential Certificate. The Branch also awarded her Honorary Life Membership.</p> <p>4.11 Similarly, Jim Scott, a past Branch Chairman and now Branch Life Vice President, and ex-ATC Squadron Commander/CivCom Chair, was awarded Branch Honorary Life Membership.</p> <p>4.12 The following new, draft Branch policies are currently under consideration by the Branch Committee: Risk Management; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); and Complaints.</p> <p>4.13 We recognised that additional efforts were needed to re-engage with our Members we have been making repeated attempts to encourage our membership to participate in Branch activities but with only limited success. These efforts will continue on multiple fronts. The main document capturing these efforts is the 'Branch Business Plan' dated 9 January 2023, and which is being reviewed quarterly.</p> <p>4.14 Last, but not least, I too, was awarded a National Presidential Certificate from Air Marshall Sir Baz North in Leicester in recognition of exceptional and dedicated service.</p> <p>4.15 In closing, I would like to extend my grateful thanks to all the Trustees, Lead Members and Members for their support.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Account – Branch Treasurer.</b>	
	5.1 A pdf copy of the Treasurer's report accompanies these	

	<p>minutes.</p> <p>5.2 The Treasurer made himself available for questions but none were received.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Welfare Report – Honorary Welfare Officer (and Area Caseworker).</b>	
	<p>6.1 This has been a difficult year. It is probably worth noting that, although in an emergency situation assistance can come almost overnight, normally it will take a matter of some six to eight weeks, depending on the level of work within RAFBF and the willingness of the person making the application to cooperate and provide the necessary information. There is a sort of a feeling amongst some beneficiaries of, “I’ve told you I need help, so just give me the money”, but given that we are dealing with monies from charitable funds then there is a process that must be followed to ensure that the monies are justified and correctly allocated. The applications are “means tested” and information such as the persons income and expenditure, including their last three months bank statements, are examined in detail. All this takes time. Having undertaken the detailed work and reached the point of submitting the information for consideration, the HWO maintains contact with the beneficiaries, ultimately advising them of the outcome of the decision: good, if an award has been made; or not-so-good if the result is that the application has not been approved.</p> <p>6.2 2022 commenced and from January to July the case work flowed in its normal fashion but with the closure of the Scottish Regional Office, things went a bit haywire, and the case load fell off dramatically until by the end of the year it had dropped from a normal HWO caseload of around ten to essentially a couple of long-term cases that were particularly difficult to close. Nonetheless, over the course of the year, the beneficiaries were awarded a total of over £50,000, so valuable assistance was still being provided.</p> <p>6.3 CHQ in Leicester now seems to have got to grips with the situation and has formed a new ‘Scottish’ team to assist the HWOs and caseworkers so it is hoped that things will return to normal very soon.</p> <p>6.4 As a HWO working so closely with individuals it is almost inevitable that a bond forms and it is not unusual for the HWO to receive calls from “my friends” even after an award has been given. The call might not relate to their previous application, but is someone reaching out due to loneliness or just needing someone to talk to? For example, one individual called after their dog had died but they felt that they couldn’t speak to</p>	

	<p>anyone else about their feelings yet desperately needed to express their grief. Another occasion was where one of our members needed to borrow a wheelchair for a specific event and the branch hired the chair from the Red Cross for the day. Then member was so delighted with the experience that he made a successful application for the provision of an electric scooter. Some calls are seeking assistance with a problem that is under the statutory duty of a government or local authority and in this case the only assistance we can offer is to 'signpost' them towards the correct authority. At other times we are not the best people to approach and again it is a matter of signposting them to other charitable organisations, such as Scottish Veterans' Housing. Lately the HWO has been receiving calls for assistance with dealing with an excellent organisation called Fare4Free that provides free transport for veterans and these applications have been readily submitted the request on their behalf; as 'all part of the service'.</p> <p>6.5 Loneliness continues to be a major problem among our veteran community and the RAFA "Operation Connect" continues to try and address this issue by making telephone contact. There is a need for additional caseworkers within the Scottish area. Any ELB members who would be willing to help with either Operation Connect or welfare casework work should make contact with the HWO and he can make arrangements for the necessary training to be given.</p> <p>6.6 In subsequent questions:</p> <p>6.6.1 GP explained that RAFA/RAFBF can only provide assistance <u>after</u> state options have been explored and discounted.</p> <p>6.6.2 Morag Goulding highlighted the role of SSAFA in providing financial assistance. GP noted that SSAFA's casework system could sometimes be a hindrance.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Wings' Report – Honorary Wings' Appeal Organiser.</b>	
	<p>7.1 Most importantly, SG stated she was grateful to all the people who helped with Wings' Appeal.</p> <p>7.2 Our Wings Appeal season started at the end of November 2021 with a store collection at Tesco, Broughton Road, Edinburgh. The collection took place over 2 days, Friday and Saturday, at the start of Storm Arwen. I collected £16 on the Friday but with the help of the Air Cadets of No 1143 Sqn (Portobello) and No 870 Sqn (Dreghorn) on Saturday, the total shot up to £181! We know the presence of Air Cadets is invaluable to collections, on this occasion they collected 10</p>	

	<p>times more than I did on my own. Thank you, RAF Air Cadets.</p> <p>7.3 We held three other significant collections, with thanks to everyone who helped staff the stalls and carry collection tins:</p> <p>7.3.1 At the Borders Union Show 29/30 July 2022, ELB shared a stand with SE Scotland Wing RAF Air Cadets and the RAF Reserves of No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron. This was a weekend of recruiting for the Cadet Staff and the Reserves but they helped us raise £187.06 for Wings and gave us the opportunity to show presence as well.</p> <p>7.3.2 We had a stall at the Military Museum of Scotland annual Military Fair in August, again over 2 days and raised £91.04.</p> <p>7.3.3. And thirdly, we returned to St Andrew's Square on 17 September for our Battle of Britain Week collection where 4 of the committee and I set a stall and raised £164.39.</p> <p>7.4 In addition to these three fundraisers, our presence, with collecting tins, at the RAF Air Cadets SE Scotland Wing Training and Presentation Day and the Military Museum of Scotland Associations Day collected £30.30 and £17 respectively.</p> <p>7.5 There was also a major effort made by Kris Mackenzie, a gunner on No 603 Sqn RAuxAF – to whom special thanks - who ran the London Marathon in aid of RAFA and represented ELB Branch. By combining sponsorship with some fundraising events, Kris raised a fantastic £2887.37.</p> <p>7.6 Grand total for 2022 £3597.26</p> <p>7.7 We started using a card reader to take donations this year. It has proved very useful and we collected a significant amount at both the Borders Union Show and in Edinburgh using it. These days, many people are willing to donate, but don't necessarily carry cash.</p> <p>7.8 SG welcomed suggestions for other fundraising venues/events.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Secretary's Report.</b>	
	<p>8.1. In addition to arranging and recording meetings, and taking share of the representational duties the Committee does at funerals and national remembrance events, the Secretary attended both Area &amp; National Conferences as Branch</p>	

	<p>representative, taking and distributing notes from both meetings.</p> <p>8.2 The Committee is overall concerned by the twin problems of members appearing uninterested in Branch activities throughout 2022 and the Branch holding significant reserve funds, primarily due to the very generous Holland Bequest. The Secretary and Treasurer developed a draft Branch Business Plan to tackle both problems. (The plan was endorsed in January 2023.)</p> <p>8.3 The Plan outlines how in parallel we will both:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">8.3.1 Survey our members to ascertain what they want the Branch to do.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">8.3.2 Organise trips and activities for Members. Of note, the proposed Arboretum trip has already been put on hold for now due to lack of interest.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Resolutions received.</b>	
	<p>9.1 None received in advance.</p> <p>9.2 BB mentioned the two papers raised at National Conference, for which the Branch would need to consider its response. SK noted that the Committee had previously agreed to discuss these papers in a meeting to be held in April before the papers and the Committee's views were circulated among the Branch membership.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Donations.</b>	
	<p>10.1 None proposed in advance.</p> <p>10.2 MM noted that the Military Museum of Scotland is always looking for donations. BB noted that RAFA ELB is a charity and thus any donation we made would need to comply with our charitable aims.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Election of Office Bearers and Trustees.</b>	
	<p>11.1 Chair person: Susan Kidston. Proposed George Prentice; seconder Barbara Prentice. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>11.2 Treasurer: Dave Prior. Proposed Sue Gillot; seconder Susan Kidston. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>11.3 Secretary: Steve Garden. Proposed George Prentice; seconder Barbara Prentice. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>11.4 Trustee: George Prentice. Proposed Sue Gillot; seconder Dave Prior. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>11.5 Trustee: Barbara ('Bobby') Prentice. Proposed Dave Prior; seconder Susan Kidston. Agreed unanimously.</p>	



	11.6 Trustee: Derek Read. Proposed Sue Gillot; Seconder Susan Kidston. Agreed unanimously.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Re-election of independent examiner – Mr Norman Stevens.</b>	
	12.1 Agreed unanimously.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Appointment of Law Adviser – Shepherd &amp; Wedderburn</b>	
	13.1 Agreed unanimously.	
<b>14</b>	<b>Delegate (1) Scottish &amp; NI Area Conference, Newcastle – 13/14 May 2023.</b>	
	14.1 SG had volunteered to do so. Agreed unanimously.	
<b>15</b>	<b>Delegate (1) National Conference, Hilton Birmingham Metropole, 13-15 October 2023.</b>	
	15.1 SG had volunteered to do so. Agreed unanimously.	
<b>16</b>	<b>Notification of Long Membership Badges.</b>	
	<p>16.1 Mr 'Robert' Bertram was presented with his 50-years' membership award.</p> <p>16.2 There were no other recipients present at the Meeting. A full list of the recipients is attached at Annex B.</p>	
<b>17</b>	<b>Any other business.</b>	
	<p>17.1 JR gave an update of the 29 survey responses received to date. The deadline for responses was end-February but some people might still reply. The responses received to date are copied at Annex B. Based on the responses, JR suggested that we organise an afternoon tea (being the most popular suggestion) in the very near future. All present agreed that afternoon tea was a great idea. DR offered No 603 Sqn's premises as a suitable location. The offer was gratefully accepted.</p> <p>17.2 Jim Leggat (JL) asked for clarification re SSAFA's performance: was it specific to case or local branch. GP explained that a SSAFA employee had noted that SSAFA was struggling with case-worker paperwork/forms. JL was grateful. (JL noted that he joined the ATC 50-years ago and BB had been an ATC staff member.)</p> <p>17.3 JL also noted that many organisations were struggling with the same problems of RAFA ELB: namely, returning to pre-Covid 'normal business'.</p>	
<b>18</b>	<b>Closing remarks</b>	



	18.1. The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking everyone for attending.	
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The meeting closed at 1600 hours.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Name: Susan Kidston

Dated: March 2023

**ANNEX A TO**  
**AGM MINUTES OF 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**  
**RAFA ACTIVITIES SURVEY**

**Q1: Have you ever attended a RAFA event?**

Yes	25.00%	7
No	71.43%	20
Unsure	3.57%	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>28</u>	

**Q2: Which, if any, of these events would you be interested in attending?**

None of the above	18.52%	5
Lunch / Afternoon Tea	55.56%	15
Dinner	22.22%	6
Day Trip to places of interest	40.74%	11
Quiz Night	11.11%	3
Cheese and Wine event	14.81%	4
Guest Speaker	40.74%	11
Overnight trips with transport provided	25.93%	7

Total Respondents: 27

**Q3: Age group?**

under 45	3.45%	1
45-55	3.45%	1
56-65	37.93%	11
over 65	51.72%	15
Prefer not to answer	3.45%	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>29</u>	

**Q4: Any barriers to participation?**

None of the above	41.38%	12
Cost	10.34%	3
Accessibility	13.79%	4
Transport	20.69%	6
Distance to travel	27.59%	8
Time of day or year	20.69%	6
<u>Total Respondents: 29</u>		

**ANNEX B TO**  
**AGM MINUTES OF 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**  
**LONG MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

			LONG MEMBERSHIP		
AGM	Service				Apologies
2023	50 Years - 24236	Mr.	Robert	Bertram	<b>PRESENTED AT AGM</b>
2023	50 Years - 108824	Mr.	Robert	Gallacher	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 187874	Mr.	D T	Carey	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 190464	Mr.	C	Crook	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 183230	Mr.	A	Dawson	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 187856	Mr.	N J D	Innes	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 193729	Mr.	Russell	Kirk	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 182771	Mr.	S R	Lamont	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 192470	Mr.	Frank	McShane	<b>Apologies given</b>
2023	25 Years - 189546	Mr.	A	Mitchell	<b>Apologies given</b>
2023	25 Years - 181301	Mr.	Ian	Morgan	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 182299	Mr.	J J	Price	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 182364	Mr.	Mark	Riches	TO BE POSTED
2023	25 Years - 183231	Mr.	G	Stewart	<b>Apologies given</b>
2023	25 Years - 194056	Mr.	Andrew	Wight-Boycott	<b>Apologies given</b>
			<b>Apologies</b>		
		Mr	Phil	Cox	<b>Apologies given</b>
		Mr	George	Megahy	<b>Apologies given</b>
		Mr		Shreeve	<b>Apologies given</b>
		Mrs	Bobbie	Prentice	<b>Apologies given</b>
			<b>LONG Service</b>		<b>TO BE ORDERED AND POSTED</b>
2023	<b>75 Years - 109623</b>	Mr.	Dennis	Carmichael	RAF Association Lapel Brooch Pin (New Crest)
2023	<b>76 Years - 109831</b>	Miss	H R J	O'Hara	RAF Association Lapel Brooch Pin (New Crest)
2023	<b>75 Years - 108008</b>	Mrs.	J C	Williams	RAF Association Lapel Brooch Pin (New Crest)
2023	<b>75 Years - 21682</b>	Miss	Catherine	Wilson	RAF Association Lapel Brooch Pin (New Crest)