

Trustees' Annual Report for the period						
Period start date			To	Period end date		
Day 01	Month 01	Year 2023		Day 31	Month 12	Year 2023

Section A Reference and administration details

Branch name Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

(referred to hereinafter as either the "Branch" or the "Charity")

Other names / number Branch is known by 217

Registered charity number (if any) SC009110

Branch's principal address

64 Stenhouse Avenue
Edinburgh
Postcode EH11 3DF

Names of the Branch charity trustees who manage the charity (generally known as the Branch Committee)

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Susan Kidston	Chair/Trustee		
2	Dave Prior	Treasurer/Trustee		
3	Steve Garden	Secretary/Trustee		
4	George Prentice	Committee/Trustee		
5	Derek Read	Committee/Trustee		
6	Bobbie Prentice	Committee/Trustee		
7				

Names of any other trustees for the Branch (for example, any custodian trustees in relation to branch property)Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
None	

Ancillary Roles on the Branch

Role	Name
Honorary Welfare Officer (Area Caseworker)	George Prentice
Membership Secretary	Dave Prior
ACLO/Partnerships	Susan Kidston
Wings Appeal Organiser/ Fundraising	Sue Gillot
Webmaster	Dave Prior
Newsletter Editor & Facebook Support	Emma Kidston
Newsletter Production	Dave Prior
Facebook Admin	Ross McElhinney
Acting Standard Bearer	Dave Prior
Social Secretary	Vacant
Events Coordinator	Julie Read
Governance Lead	Bob Bertram
Honorary Branch Chaplain	William Mounsey

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Independent Examiner	Norman Steven CA	On file
Law Advisor	Shepherd & Wedderburn	On file

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the branch's trusts

Type of governing document (e.g. trust deed, constitution)	Royal Charter, Rules, Byelaws, Area and Branch Regulations of the Royal Air Forces Association.
How the Branch charity is constituted (e.g. trust, association, company)	Unincorporated association

Trustee selection methods
(e.g. appointed by, elected by)

Elected by the branch membership

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the branch's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties (including branch club);
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Charity's organisational structure

The charity is a branch of the Royal Air Forces Association, which is a Royal Charter body and registered as a charity in England and Wales under number 226686 and in Scotland under SC037673 ("the Association"). The Association has many branches, all of which share the same charitable object as the Association and are subject to the same constitution.

Trustee induction and training

Recruitment of Branch Volunteers, including Committee/Trustees is carried out by internal Membership communication, Website, Facebook, local and other media. Those RAFA Branch Members wishing to serve as Committee/Trustee are required to be nominated and seconded by Members who must be Members of RAFA and the Branch. Supported nominations are put to the Annual General Meeting of the Branch which takes place in March. It should be noted that no other external individuals or organisations are permitted to appoint/nominate a Committee Member/Trustee.

All Trustees (post AGM elections) complete an OSCR Declaration, a Branch Conflicts of Interest Declaration, in addition to signing RAFA's Form 1056 (Annual Branch Governance Return).

Guidance and Information about the role of a Charity Trustee, Charity Law in Scotland and the requirements of the Association's Governing Documents (including Financial) are readily available in the Branch's Governance Section of the website. Trustees when completing the RAFA Form 1056 complete a section confirming that this information has been brought to their attention and how to access it.

Various Training opportunities are available for Branch Trustees, either from RAFA resources or from resources identified by Branch Trustees.

Related party relationships – club (if operated)

N/A

Risk management

The Branch has almost finished a review of our Risk Policy and a refresh of our Risk register.

Branch Committee Trustees are committed to ‘Succession Planning’ on an ongoing basis. This aspiration is designed to refresh and add to the collective skills and experience of individuals for the benefit of the Branch, RAFA and its beneficiaries.

The Branch follows RAFA’s policies and guidelines with regard to Data Protection and has developed its own GDPR Policy to complement and support the Association’s Policy for Branch purposes.

Registered as an ICO Data Controller for ‘non-Member’ data protection management and permissions.

The Branch follows RAFA’s policy and guidelines with regard to Health and Safety and has developed its own Health and Safety Policy to complement and support Association Policy for Branch purposes.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the branch set out in its governing document

To promote, through the comradeship engendered by its members, the welfare by charitable means of all serving and former members of Her Majesty’s Air Forces, their spouses and dependents, together with the widows and widowers and dependents of those who died whilst serving or subsequently.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

Good Governance
 During the course of the year we have continued to ensure we conform to the standards and requirements of the Good Governance Award. However, we decided not to pursue formally the Award but instead focus our Committee’s efforts on re-energising our Membership to engage with the Branch.

OSCR Public Benefit Statement
 The Trustees are aware that ‘Public benefit in a charitable sense is only provided by activities which are undertaken to advance an organisation’s charitable purposes.

Welfare - HWO Report.

We reported previously on the impact of the loss of the Regional Office in Edinburgh, happy to report that though things have 'not returned to normal' they have at least settled down and there is a steady, if slow, list of cases being allocated.

One welcome return is the caseworker meetings whereby caseworkers from various parts of the country get together via "Teams or Zoom" and discuss trends or difficulties that have been encountered. The intention is to revert to having regional meetings whereby one gets to know the other caseworkers operating within the area; this is quite important as it often seems to be forgotten that caseworkers operate on their own and are deeply involved with clients whose needs can put a personal strain on the individual and there is no formal 'outlet' for this stress, indeed it has been stated in the past that I'm not even supposed to tell my wife where I'm going, merely leave a sealed envelope with the information for her to open if something untoward happens, presumably to tell the police where I was supposed to be if I don't return!

Formalisation has also taken place of a long-established practice of 'mentoring' a new caseworker where an experienced caseworker would accompany a new welfare officer on his/her first case and discuss with the person prior to the meeting, at the meeting and post the meeting all the aspects of the visit. It was thought that this arrangement was 'too loose' and it now requires a four-part training programme to ensure that the mentor is fully equipped to deliver proper structured support.

As a caseworker you become party to the innermost workings of a family or individual and it is very difficult to retain a totally dispassionate stance and as a result the beneficiary will often identify you as "their champion" the result is that when it is time for a renewal of an award, such as 'Regular Financial Assistance' they will often ask for you to be allocated as the caseworker. Not that this is a problem as you already have the insight into the family and in many ways it makes sense but it does result in me still having overseas clients and clients in various parts of Scotland that because of distance I would have no intention of making a home visit to, however, it seems to work well and I can enjoy speaking to 'my old friends'.

Though my cases now are much more related to Regular Financial Assistance (RFA) and Home Heating Grants than the 'big-ticket' items. An RFA is not a huge sum of money and it is paid once per quarter, but this work is so important to those who are in need. An RFA can make the difference to someone just surviving or having a quality of life. It can often be linked to such items as assistance with gardening, which again

is important as it allows someone to remain in their own home and feel some pride in a garden that they may well have spent the several decades tending.

One particularly gratifying aspect of the work is identifying candidates to receive a Christmas hamper courtesy of No. 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron. Obviously the identity of anyone who applies or receives an award from RAFA/RAFBF is totally confidential so a phone-round to seek the permission of the individuals to be a recipient is necessary. This is generally a very happy event as these 'friends' enjoy the call and the contact and the fact that they are being remembered by members of a squadron that many had close links with, let's hope that we can continue with this event that is rapidly becoming a tradition.

I can only conclude that welfare is a corner stone of RAFA and in many ways it is a privilege and an honour to be able to meet those veterans that have fallen on hard times or have other needs that they identify RAFA as being able to assist with and to be "their man" in presenting the case on their behalf. In this cynical world it might be thought that many just-try-it-on but I can assure you that I have done this for many years now and I could count on the fingers of half a hand the number of times I have come across a *chancer*, you don't get into the personal situation and finances of an individual and not see what is real.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grant making;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Expenditure

We made three significant donations in 2023:

- A ring-fenced donation of £4000 to CHQ for use for welfare cases in the Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders area only.
- £1188 to South East Scotland Wing, Royal Air Force Air cadets, to purchase video conferencing IT.
- £300 to Lothians Veteran's Centre for the purchase of office chairs.

We also spent £3100 to buy a Branch gazebo with RAFA-markings from RAFA Trad for use at fund-raising and other events.

Wings Appeal

The Branch Wings Appeal raised a total of £2,360.36 in 2023. £1,691.83 was raised from a September Wings Appeal collection in St Andrews Square, Edinburgh, assisted by cadets from several local RAFAC squadrons. Collections were also held in Tesco, at the Military Museum of Scotland, and in No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Sqn RAuxAF. Flt Lt Ross McElhinney of No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Sqn RAuxAF, raised £668.53

taking part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk. The RAFA-branded and waterproof gazebo was an invaluable addition to our fund-raising capabilities.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the branch during the year

The Branch implemented its 'Branch Business Plan' dated 9 January 2023, the main focus of which is to get our Members to re-engage with the Branch.

As part of our efforts to re-engage Members, we conducted two surveys of our Members in February and June 2023, respectively resulting in 26 and 57 responses. Those who took part in the second survey were eligible for a draw to win seats at the Edinburgh Tattoo. The winner had a hugely enjoyable experience.

The Committee also produced an action plan in June 2024. Progress against the plan will be reported fully in June 2024. Nonetheless, it was pleasing to note that slightly more Members are attending planned events, we have had more Members engage with the Committee's work, and in 2023 we spent 10% of our welfare budget, as we had planned.

We have continued to hold our Monthly meetings via Zoom, predominantly for the convenience of Committee members (not needing to travel), with an occasional face-to-face meeting. Our 2023 AGM was a hybrid meeting.

The Branch trialled monthly zoom chats from January to June 2023 but cancelled them due to lack of participation by Members.

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.

We sent over 75 Christmas cards to Branch friends and Members, and cards and gift vouchers to twelve RAF veterans who are residents of Whitefoord House.

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.

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.

Our Branch Chair, Susan Kidston, was awarded a National Presidential Certificate.

At the 2023 Area Conference, ELB was announced as the winner of the Area Branch Efficiency Trophy for 2022.

To mark Remembrance, wreaths and crosses were laid at 15 separate events/locations, including Edinburgh Garden of Remembrance, the Scottish National War Memorial and St Giles' Cathedral.

Committee Members attended RAF Air Cadets, South East Scotland Wing, Competitions Day, to view the IEC and audiovisual equipments with which we had presented the Wing. A Branch representative also attended the annual Coastal Command Commemoration held in North Berwick on 6th May 2023.

The Branch held an afternoon tea in conjunction with No 603 Sqn as part of Op UNITE, an initiative to support Op Herrick and Op Telic veterans. Some 20 Branch members attended. We also visited the Scottish Museum of Flight. A suggested visit to the National Arboretum was cancelled due to zero interest from Members.

Branch representatives attended the funerals of nine Branch members or ex-RAF personnel in 2023. Personnel from No 603 Sqn frequently attend these funerals. The following quote is typical of the thanks we receive from family members of the deceased: "Thank you so much for everything today. It was very special and poignant, and a huge mark of respect from RAFA and the RAF. God bless you and the entire Edinburgh team".

One of the funerals was that of Marion Meal, who, as mentioned above, had been a RAFA member for 60-years and the Honorary Branch Welfare Officer for 30 of those years. The Branch Standard was paraded at Marion's funeral.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the branch's policy on reserves

We actively aim to retain enough funds for three-year sustainability.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

NONE

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the branch’s principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the branch;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The Branch’s current principal sources of funds are from Membership subscriptions. These are credited to the Branch on an annual basis.

The Officers of the Branch and other Trustees fulfil their responsibilities by continuous monitoring of branch funds and ensuring that all necessary expenditure is to the benefit of the branch, its members/beneficiaries, the RAF Association, its aims and objectives; and the wider RAF Family.

All reasonable efforts are made by the Branch to support the RAF Association Wings Appeal, fundraise for general branch activities and this include supplementing the branch welfare fund as and when required; the latter on the advice of the Branch Honorary Welfare Officer.

On an annual basis (and in preparation for the Branch Annual General Meeting); the branch trustees consider the current “health” of branch funds; in particular the level of “non-committed” surplus funds “agreed by the Trustees” that “may” be available to be donated towards a relevant and deserving cause that relates to, and supports the aims of the RAF Association.

The Branch continues to achieve charity objectives by providing friendship, help and support to current and former members of the RAF and their dependants across the Royal Air Force family.

The guidelines for the operation of the Branch finances are laid out within the Governance Handbook and these are also supplemented by Government Legislation and Charity Law, The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as to the requirements of the contents of the Annual Accounts of a charity.

The Branch invests any surplus ‘running cost’ funds on the recommendation by the RAF Associations Central Headquarters. This investment strategy is currently with Rothschild Investment Trust.

Section F

Other optional information

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the branch's trustees

Signature(s)	Susan Kidston	
Full name(s)	Susan Kidston	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair/ Trustee	

Date