



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE RETIRED OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE 33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE QUEEN HOTEL, CHESTER SATURDAY 7th OCTOBER 2023

Apologies: Patron Jack Aspinall QPM, Peter Smith, Les Cracknell, Andy Burnside, Jim McMurray, Billy Campbell, Lynn Nixon, Graham Jewell, Catriona McBeath MBE.

Chairman's Opening Address

The Chairman opened the meeting at 10am by inviting everyone to stand in silent tribute as he read out the names of those 15 members who had passed on since our last reunion in 2021. He then went on to welcome everyone present including those attending for the first time along with our guests CCMDP Melanie Dales, Eamon Keating, DPF Chairman and Superintendent Sandy Stewart the Force Liaison Officer.

In his opening remarks the Chairman commented on the circumstances that had led to the cancellation of the 2022 reunion and the difficulties in finding a suitable hotel within an acceptable price range. Fortunately matters had been successfully resolved and he was pleased to welcome everyone to Chester and The Queen Hotel for our 33rd agm/reunion.

Despite the gap the Committee had done its best to keep the association on track and that regular meetings continued usually held in London courtesy of Thompson Solicitors with the exception of one meeting that was held in April this year at the new state of the art Force HQ at RAF Wyton, Cambridgeshire.

In thanking the committee for their dedication and support the Chairman reported that Force Liaison Officer, Supt Sandy Stewart was retiring in February 2024 and that Insp Alison Harfield had been appointed to the role. The Chairman wished Sandy a long and happy retirement and looked forward to him joining the association.

Concluding his remarks, the Chairman said that he and Jenny had represented the association at the Graduation Ceremonies held at Southwick Park and at the DPF Annual Awards event at Southampton.

Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2021 meeting were accepted by the members as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary began by welcoming everyone to The Queen Hotel, Chester and went on to say how pleased he was to give an update on ROA Patron Jack Aspinall. He said Jack was well and living at home. He enjoyed reading the last newsletter and delighted to read the message from our new Chief Constable. He appreciates being kept in touch with news from the association and sends his very best wishes to all and hopes for a successful and enjoyable weekend.

The Secretary continued to report as follows:

Since we last met in 2021 some **27** new members have joined which is good (this includes **13** this year) and although disappointing that we don't get many newbies attending the reunion it is really good to welcome a few new members who are here for the first time. Apart from the formal business of the AGM, the weekend is a good social gathering which is what it's all about

As Secretary I continue to deal with routine enquires - some by telephone but mainly by email - covering a variety of subjects such as change of address, membership, and pensions. We also occasionally receive requests for financial assistance but, as you know, that is **not** something which is in our remit. In such cases we do however recommend other avenues that may be able to assist including more recently the civil service charity.

Your committee continues to meet on a regular basis in between AGM's usually in London courtesy of Thompson Solicitors who provide us with excellent facilities at no cost.

For an organisation such as ours - communication with members **is** important and we do that by posting items on our website - for example, information on membership services, details of the reunion, and sadly all too often Obituaries. One of the main items that retired members enjoyed receiving was the Force Magazine – Talk Through but sadly that was discontinued during 2022. Since then, discussions have been ongoing with our Liaison Officer and staff at HQ to see if there is another way can be found to disseminate news about Force activities.

We also publish a Newsletter – at the moment twice a year – keeping members up to date as best we can but it's not easy at times. Email is another means of communicating information but of course not everyone is on email, at the moment we have around 250 on the database – whereas there are around 500 addresses when we circulate hard copy. So, the main source of communication remains via the website and my thanks go to staff at DPF HQ for their help in updating the site.

A few things on Membership Services – **Staysure Travel** Insurance offers 10% discount to ROA members – **The Tax Relief Company** will offer to check your Tax Code so see if you are paying too much tax and due a refund – **The Charity for civil servants** supports current, former, and retired civil servants and can offer practical, financial and emotional support – **Blue Light Card** gives a range of discounts and costs £4.99 for 2years access You need to provide a copy of your pension statement showing your role within the Police during registration to be accepted. **PMAS** (Police Mutual Assurance Society) has been around for many years, dedicated to helping the police family and provide help and advice on a wide range of matters including insurance, finance and health & well-being issues. They also have presence at HQMDP Graduation Ceremonies.

We recently announced a partnership with **HMCA** – Hospital & Medical Care Association that provides Private Medical Cover as well as other plans such as dental, hospital cash plans, travel, and vehicle breakdown recovery. They are a well-established company, and their plans are only available to members of trade, professional and groups such as ourselves.

Another organisation closely involved with the police family is **Police Care UK**. It is an independent charity, previously known as the Police Dependents Trust and they have recently been in touch to make us aware that they offer assistance to serving and retired officers across all UK police forces, who have been harmed as a result of policing. The organisation provides free practical, emotional, and financial assistance to individuals within the police family who are in need. They have already provided around £13000 of assistance to 14 MDP officers and staff and keen to make the service available to ROA.

Another subject that has recently come to light is '**The Police Covenant**' which is a government commitment to ensure the health and wellbeing of members and former members of the police service, their physical protection and the support required by members of their families. The Covenant became law in 2022 and extends to non-home office forces – MDP, BTP and CNC. Now, how it will apply to MDP or indeed ourselves as retired officers I have no idea. I have been in touch with DPF who confirm that the three non-home office forces had signed an agreement to work together on issues but at this stage there was little information on how the MDP propose to deal with this. DPF Gen Sec has agreed to provide an update in due course.

Finally – something (as retirees) we all have an interest in PENSIONS.

There has been much speculation about the future of the 'Triple Lock' formula on the basic state pension which guarantees an increase of average earnings, the consumer price index, or 2.5% whichever is the higher. And although inflation is coming down, the rate of average earnings growth is heading upwards and is likely to be a key factor in determining next year's state pension rise. This means a higher-than-expected bill for the Treasury and raises the prospect that government would break the triple lock. Difficult to know at this stage but thought unlikely

especially in the run up to a general election in 2024! What happens afterwards is a different matter.

As for the Civil Service Pension any increase is based on the September CPI figure which is then applied from April the following year. **This year** the increase was 10.1%.

What can we expect for next year! Well, the CPI index rose by 6.7% in the 12 months to August 2023, down from 6.8% in July: The September figure on which next year's increase is based will be released on 18th October.

On that note Chairman that concludes my report.

Treasurer's Report and Annual Audit

Treasurer Ken Hicks reported as follows:

Firstly, I am pleased to say that the annual audit has been completed and all the items have now been returned to myself as treasurer. There were no causes for concern raised even though the audit was carried out under very strict business account guidelines. I am pleased to say that we remain financially sound, and I am happy to present these to the membership at this AGM for both year ending 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023 for ratification. Copies of the audited accounts are held on file.

The reason that there are 2 lots of accounts is because, as you will all recall, through no fault of our own, there was no AGM and Reunion last year as we were let down by various factors. As the accounts were not therefore able to be presented to the membership last year, I offered them for inspection by the full committee on your behalf at our meeting in November 2022 and these were accepted and agreed as such.

The only comments made by the auditors this year has been regarding the £5 annual donated subscriptions; the auditors have suggested that we re-word the application form to indicate that this is an annual subscription per household and not optional as it can appear.

The interest on the 32-day account is starting to accrue more now that interest rates have improved and at the present time, we are earning approximately £40 per month which should cover some of the expenses for the reunion in 2024.

Regarding the 2022 accounts there is not very much to report, our income was almost the same as previous (2021) but expenditure was increased as we had to pay for printing, travelling expenses due to the resumption of committee meetings, which had not held in 2021 of course, and a contribution to the reunion held at Harrogate covering the cost of our guests, plus the Towergate insurance which we have now ceased, this now being covered by an alternative source; the overall important fact is that we still ended up with a surplus of income over expenditure, albeit only £74.

As to this past year, ending March 2023, you will see that our total income was down by £5, but our expenses were for the year, down by over £1000 meaning that we had another surplus of income over expenditure, up to over £700. The debtors and creditors mentioned are the figures, at the time of the audit, on the books for this Reunion, all I am pleased to say paid promptly by you our members to enable me to then pass on to the organisers, this year Airedale Travel, so that there are now no outstanding accounts to settle for this weekend, apart of course from any individual room accounts which we manage to run up!

I therefore commend these accounts to the membership for your acceptance and before I close, I should, on behalf of the committee and membership once again record my thanks to the DPF for their continued financial support in paying for our annual audit, without which we would be nowhere near as financially viable.

Acceptance was proposed by Kevin Craddock, seconded by Richard Waters and carried unanimously.

Address by CCMDP

Mrs Dales started by thanking the ROA for the opportunity to address members. She then gave a brief resume of her police career leading up to joining MDP and went on to give an insight into some of the issues happening in the force at this time and of the many challenges that lay ahead.

Force Liaison Officer, Supt Sandy Stewart then spoke informing us that this will be his last meeting in post as he is retiring in the new year and informed us of his replacement.

DPF Report

Eamon Keating, DPF National Chairman then addressed the meeting informing us of the ongoing problems with force recruitment and went on to mention about some of the changes happening with regard to officer's duties. He referred to a few outstanding issues saying that the pensionable age has not yet been resolved and that the fitness levels have recently been changed to more suit the tasks that officers are undertaking.

Election of Officers

The election of the following officers for 2023/24 then took place.

Chairman: Geoff Heal proposed by Richard Waters, seconded by Michael Bone
Vice Chair: Mel Goudie proposed by Neville Carter seconded by Glyn Wilson
Secretary: David King proposed by Richard Waters, seconded by Sue Parkes
Treasurer: Ken Hicks proposed by Glyn Wilson, seconded by Neville Carter
Asst. Sec: Catriona McBeath proposed by Jenny Heal, seconded by John Barber
Member: John Barber*
Member: Chris McComb*
Member: Neville Carter*
Member: Glyn Wilson* - replaced Jenny Heal who did not wish to seek re-election
* Elected unopposed 'en bloc', proposed by Sue Parkes, seconded Kevin Craddock

All above members were elected and will form the committee for the next twelve months.

Any Other Business

Gwen King thanked all the members for their continuing support with respect to her fundraising for her local hospital.

Bob Bailey proposed the use of name tags at future events as we are all finding it harder to remember names these days.

Sylvia Hicks suggested the use of amplification in future as many of the attendees are increasingly hard of hearing with advancing age.

Vice Chair Mel Goudie outlined details about the venue for the 2024 agm/reunion confirming that it would be held in The King Robert Hotel, Stirling over weekend 11th to 14th October 2024. A good package had been negotiated with keen rates and he hoped that would attract a great deal of interest from members.

Closing Remarks

In drawing business to a close the Chairman thanked CCM DP Melanie Dales the DPF Chairman Eamon Keating for the continuing excellent relations and assistance given to the ROA committee and closed the meeting at 12.05pm.



