



Retired Officers
Association

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE RETIRED OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE 34th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN KING ROBERT HOTEL, STIRLING
SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER 2024



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Apologies

Patron Jack Aspinall QPM, Peter Smith, Les Cracknell, Andy Burnside, Billy Campbell, Lynn Nixon, Graham Jewell, Chris McComb, Neville Carter, John Barber, Howard Newman, Marjory Greenwood.

Chair's Opening Address

Chair Geoff Heal opened the meeting at 10am by inviting everyone to stand in silent tribute as he read out the names of those 10 members who had passed on since our last reunion in 2023. He then went on to welcome everyone present including those attending for the first time along with our guests DCCMDP Kier Pritchard, Mitch Batt, DPF Secretary and Inspector Alison Harfield the Force Liaison Officer.

In his opening remarks Geoff began by saying that he would not be seeking re-election as Chair owing to a problem with his hearing which had gradually deteriorated over the past few years. Having been a member of ROA for 20 years, serving on the Committee including a period as Vice Chair for 12 years and as Chair for the last 8 years he felt the time had come to step aside. Geoff said he was a strong supporter of the association and would continue to help in any way he could.

Geoff thanked the Committee for their support and dedication during this past year and went on to relate about a visit he had made to The National Arboretum in 2022 in particular the Memorial Avenue named The Beat where fallen officers from every police force are remembered. Although MDP had a dedicated Tree he knew of several MDP Officers who had lost their lives in the line of duty and thought they should be recognised. This was pursued with the Force with a request to fund plaques in memory of those MDP Officers who had died in the line of duty. He was pleased that this had now been achieved and thanked the Chief Constable and Liaison Officer for pursuing this resulting in 7 named plaques being placed on The Beat as a fitting tribute to the sacrifices made.

Geoff reported briefly on some of the issues that the Committee had been involved with during the past year and concluded by saying 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 2023 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2023 meeting were accepted by the members as a true record.

Matters Arising

The Committee had considered the issuing of name tags to delegates however given that those present were regular attendees at the reunion and known to each other it was not necessary to provide name tags. The matter would however be kept under review.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary began by welcoming everyone to The King Robert Hotel, Stirling this being the 4th time the reunion had been held in Scotland, and first for Stirling and went on to say how pleased he was to give an update on ROA Patron Jack Aspinall. He said Jack was doing very well and still living at home. His health is good overall and still enjoys a glass of wine and the occasional scotch. 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:

I have to say that since we gathered last year in Chester very little has happened and have found it a bit difficult putting together a comprehensive report. That said I continue to deal with routine matters such as change of address, membership, pension issues and other general enquiries.

On membership, we have only had 8 new members join since our last reunion and that is a bit disappointing. And those that do join we try and encourage them to come along to the reunion which apart from the formal business of the AGM is a good social gathering.

Pleased to say your committee continue to manage the business of the association by meeting 3 times a year – usually following the reunion in November, then in April and in August. Again, thanks to our good friends Thompsons Solicitor for the free use of their offices in London.

For an organisation such as ours Communication is very important and to that end, we post items on our website such as information on News Updates, membership services, details of the reunion and sadly all too often Obituaries as well as sending out emails to those on our database – around 250 – and the Newsletter which at the moment we publish twice a year and send as hard copy to members. My thanks to Ali FLO at HQ for her help with posting/distribution. And as always to DPF for their help with keeping the website up to date.

As mentioned last year the Force Magazine 'Talk Through' was discontinued – and you will have read that Geoff touched on this in the last newsletter. Suffice to say discussions are 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.

On the matter of pension – this year's increase to the civil service pension amounted to 6.7% from the 6th April, and in relation to the basic state pension – that saw an increase of 8.5% in line with the government's commitment to the Triple Lock formula which guarantees the state pension will not lose value in real terms. Meaning that the state pension increases by the highest out of average earnings, inflation or 2.5%, but of course it is expensive for the Treasury.

It is controversial and over the years there has been much speculation about its future however at the present time Government has made great play about retaining its commitment to the Triple Lock especially after announcing removal of the winter fuel allowance.

As for next year! Well, the CPI index rose by 2.2% in the 12 months to August 2024: 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.

Before moving on David paid tribute to Geoff for his dedication and commitment to the association over many years and stewardship as Chair and wished both he and Jenny well for the future.

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 the year ending 31 March 2024 for ratification. Copies of the audited accounts are held on file.

The only comments made by the auditors this year has again been regarding the £5 annual donated subscriptions; it has been suggested that we re-word the application form to indicate that this is an annual subscription, but they understand that the joining fee is a life membership, and the annual subscription entitles the member to newsletters etc which will not now be sent without this payment.

The interest on the 32-day account continues to accrue although interest rates have started to lessen again now as the Bank of England rates are starting to reduce once more.

Regarding the accounts you will see that our total income was up by £417 thanks mainly due to the bank interest rate, but our expenses appear to be vastly increased for the year. This is because, as you can see £1247 was for return travel expenses from Scotland for two committee members costing on average £100+ each meeting and two return trips to Portsmouth costing more than £200, to deliver and then collect accounts from the Auditors. Both these expenses have been significantly reduced in this current year. There was also £1970 for the last and this reunion, payments of guest fees, which are now covered from the general fund where in the past this was not the case. The debtors and creditors mentioned are the figures, at the time of the audit, on the books for the Reunion.

I quote from the audit statement: "In auditing the financial statements we have concluded that the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

We have not identified any material uncertainties that may cast doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern."

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 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 Glyn Wilson, seconded by Kevin Craddock and carried unanimously.

Address by DCCMDP

Mr Kier Pritchard said he had been in policing for 30 years and prior to joining MDP had been Chief Constable of Wiltshire. He went to acknowledge that policing is going through some difficult times at the moment and the policing family in general is trying hard to gain the public's trust, confidence and respect. Mr Pritchard went on to give an overview of the difficulties facing the Force as regards recruitment and retention. He also said that a number of sites currently policed by MDP would be transferred to the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and a few other to MPGS resulting in a change to the current ways of policing and patrolling making the Force more dynamic, intelligence led and more efficient. Mr Pritchard acknowledged that the Force was going through a significant period of change, but policing was about family and by starting this new chapter and being passionate about the brand of policing done by MDP he was extremely confident about its future.

DPF Report

Mitch Batt DPF General Secretary then addressed the meeting saying that membership of DPF stood at 93% which was very good. He then gave an update on recent changes to terms and conditions of service including payment of an unsocial hours allowance from February 2025. Mitch also reported on progress involving the McCloud Remedy as regards pension discrimination and continuing work on The Police Covenant.

Force Liaison Officer

Insp Alison Harfield spoke of her role as Liaison Officer and gave an overview of some of the issues currently being dealt with including how to find a way of keeping retired officers better informed about force activities given that Talk Through had been discontinued.

Election of Officers

The election of the following officers for 2024/25 then took place.

- Chairman:** Mel Goudie proposed by Richard Waters, seconded by Bob Bailey
- Vice Chair:** Glyn Wilson proposed by Mel Goudie seconded by Keith Heather
- Secretary:** David King proposed by Tom Sloman, seconded by Michael Bone
- Treasurer:** Ken Hicks proposed by Glyn Wilson, seconded by Richard Waters
- Asst. Sec:** Catriona McBeath proposed by Deidre Finn, seconded by Geoff Heal
- Member:** John Barber*
- Member:** Chris McComb*
- Member:** Neville Carter*
- Member:** Sandy Stewart*

* Elected unopposed 'en bloc', proposed by Roger Philips, seconded Bob Prescott

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

Venue for 2025 AGM/Reunion

Chair Mel Goudie explained about the difficulty in finding a suitable venue for 2025 which was mainly due to the high cost of hotel accommodation and invited Glyn Wilson to give an overview of what had been done to date. Glyn said that research carried out with the help of one company well experienced in finding conference venues, a number of venues included in their portfolio had been identified however the rates being quoted were unrealistic – between £600 & £700 per couple – especially compared to the cost of this year's event. Bob Bailey thanked Glyn for his work, and this was acknowledged by everyone present. A number of options were then discussed including the possibility of returning to the King Robert Hotel. Mel concluded discussion saying that further consideration would be given by the Committee to the points made and an announcement made at the earliest opportunity.

Closing Remarks

In drawing business to a close the Chairman Mel thanked members for their support and said he was delighted and honoured to have been elected as the chair of the ROA and thanked the outgoing chair for his stewardship over the last six years. Mel also thanked DCCMDP Kier Pritchard the DPF Secretary Mitch Batt for the continuing excellent relations and assistance given to the ROA committee and closed the meeting at 12.30pm.