

# **Royal Naval Association**

## **Minutes of 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting**

**Held at  
The Wardroom, HMS Nelson  
Portsmouth**

**Saturday 18 June 2022**

Charity Number 266982

**Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN**

Incorporated by Royal Charter

Full recognition by the Royal Navy



*Standards paraded in Broad Street, Portsmouth, during the Falklands 40<sup>th</sup> commemoration/*

*RNA National Conference weekend*

## Delegates

Branch	Representative	Branch	Representative
Ashford	Alan Oliver	Limavady	Chris Batten
Aylesbury	Glen Michael Beck	Liskeard	Jerry Fleming
Belfast	Alex Ferguson	Llanelli	Eirwyn Evans
Bracknell	Anthony Boddrell	Londonderry	Robert Buchanan
Bromley	Frances Halifax	Maidstone	Stephen Champion
Bury	Terrence White	Mansfield & District	Andrew Hamilton
Cardiff	Paul Pritchard	Monmouth	John Clarke
Carmarthen	Donald Griffiths	Morecambe	Mark Lister MBE
Chatham	Dennis Potter	Newton Aycliffe	Elizabeth Lewarne
Chepstow	Brian James	Nottingham	Tom Rotherham
Chester	Fred Pilgrim	Paddock Wood	Susan Rickard
Chichester	Paul Stone	Peterborough & District	Paul Godfrey
City of Edinburgh	Stephen Elliot	Plymouth	Carl Beeson
City of Glasgow	Brian Mackenzie	Portland	Alexander Miller
City of Inverness	June Coburn	Portsea	Ted Hawkins
Colchester	Maggie Whittaker	Portsmouth	Robert Jones
Crewe	Bruce Lamb	Rayleigh	Michael Burnham
Crosby	John Arnold	Rhondda	Graham Warner
Dagenham	William Rock	Royston	Geoff Apperley BEM
Dorchester	Jim Armstrong	Rushden & District	Paul McKay
Dublin	Nigel Brislane	Salisbury	Jon Everett
East Antrim	Bobby Loughran	Scarborough	Shaun Brosnan
Folkestone	Timothy Geere	Selby	Ron Shilton
Forth Valley	James Mann	South Bristol	Adrian Andrews
Gosport	Valerie Gleave	Southend-on-Sea	Gary Daisley
Greenford	Ann Foley	Spalding	Yvonne Crawford
Harwich	Paulette Rose	Spennymoor & Ferryhill	Christopher Lewarne
Hazel Grove	Peter Gundry	St Neots & District	Pete Horner
Horsham	Ken Chandler	Stroud	John Milloy
Huntingdon	Bill Small	Sunderland	David Staines
Isle of Wight	Shaun Greenwood	Warwick	David Butler
Lee on the Solent	Douglas Carrington	Woking	Helen Maguire
Leighton & Linslade	Ken Brown	Worthing	Tony Avery
1st Garden City Letchworth	Penelope Jarvis	York and District	Marie Taylor BEM

## **Present**

S/M VAdm D Potts CB – National President/Conference Chair  
S/M Cdre M Slawson OBE RN – Deputy National President  
S/M K Ridley – National Chairman, NCM 6  
S/M P Stephenson – National Vice Chairman, NCM 12  
S/M N Purkis – Chairman, Standing Orders/Governance Committee  
S/M I Irvine – National Honorary Treasurer  
S/M B Coburn – National Ceremonial Advisor  
S/M G Williams - Governance Committee and Advisor  
S/M S Caulfield – National Events Co-ordinator  
S/M G Apperley – National Welfare Adviser  
S/M S Davies – Deputy National Welfare Adviser  
S/M L Yeoman – AMC Adviser  
S/M T Day – Governance Committee  
S/M T Reed – Governance Committee  
NCMs representing Areas 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12, Scottish

## **In attendance**

Capt W Oliphant RN – General Secretary  
S/M K Cornelius – Accountant  
S/M J Gilmore – Accountant  
S/M A Christie – Deputy General Secretary  
S/M M Gray – Communications/Minutes  
S/M M Little – Fundraising and Major Events  
S/M K Brindley – Finance / Membership  
S/M L Pearson – Welfare Programme Manager  
S/M G Swanson – Welfare Assistant  
WO1 C Robson – Trustee  
WO1 C Steedman – Warrant Officer to the Royal Navy  
S/M J Scivier – Comms  
S/M D MacAskill - Comms  
S/M S Field – Membership Support  
S/M N Huxtable - Photography  
S/M L Ford – Sound Engineer

Note: A full sound recording is available of Conference, held in Central Office for historical archive purposes. Copies may be obtained by Areas and Branches if required.

## **Agenda Item 1 – March on the National Standard**

National Standard marched on by S/M Steve Champion, National Standard Bearer.

## **Item 2 – Opening Prayers – the General Secretary**

The RNA Honorary Chaplain, Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Andrew Hillier, was unable to attend Conference, so General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant led prayers to start the meeting.

## **Item 3 – Silent tribute in memory of Shipmates who have crossed the Bar**

## **Item 4 – Welcome and Opening Remarks: National President**

NP welcomed shipmates to Conference in Portsmouth, the home of the Royal Navy, and thanked Mess President Cdr Julian Gazzard of hosts HMS Nelson for “allowing us to pitch our tent in his back garden.”

NP spoke of how much he and the shipmates he had met enjoyed the Falklands 40-themed events the previous evening.

## **Item 5 – Patronal message: General Secretary**

GS read out a message from our Patron, Her Majesty, The Queen.

## **Annual General Meeting for Financial Year 2022**

## **Item 6 – Conference Standing Orders**

SOC Chairman S/M Nick Purkis said the Standing Orders had been circulated before Conference, and noted a minor correction to Standing Order S9 (amended to read ‘Rule 22’ and not ‘Rule 20’ as printed).

## **Adoption of the Standing Orders:**

**Proposed – S/M Anthony Boddrell (Bracknell)**

**Seconded – S/M Brian Mackenzie (City of Glasgow)**

**Motion was carried unanimously on a show of hands.**

## **Item 7 – The National President’s address: Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB**

NP said it was a great pleasure to be there for his first full Conference as National President.

Vice Admiral Potts said this year’s Conference diverged slightly from the norm as the whole weekend was dedicated to marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands Conflict, but that necessary business had to be conducted for the sake of good governance, even though the AGM itself had been trimmed to allow more time for other events.

NP paid tribute to his predecessor, S/M John McAnally, who handed over to Vice Admiral Potts at last year’s Conference in Nottingham after 20 years in the role.

NP said it had been a really interesting first year for him, and thanked everyone for the invitations which saw him visit branches, attend events and dinners and meet shipmates.

Having been losing 1,000 members a year, since doing away with subscriptions at the end of 2020 membership of the Association has risen from below 10,000 to more than 14,000 – growth of more than 40 per cent, which was good news.

He spoke of a new initiative to group New Entrants at HMS Raleigh together on the Association database, developing that sense of comradeship that starts at initial training and later spreads to ships.

And while the training and early years in the Royal Navy requires something of a survival mode for newcomers, who are busy training and going off to sea, these new members will be encourage to visit their local branches when they have time, where they will no doubt be given a warm welcome.

NP reminded members that not only are these fledgling sailors the future of the Royal Navy, but also the future of the nation, and of the Royal Naval Association.

He added that it is hoped that the RNA will also be successful in recruiting members from families at HMS Raleigh as well, further increasing membership.

Vice Admiral Potts thanked the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for supporting the RNA financially as they transition away from subscriptions – and suggested that encouraging members to establish a small regular monthly payment (“£1 will do, £2 will be even better”) would make the RNA more resilient.

On staff changes, NP noted that S/M Nigel Huxtable had retired, and was awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours List, but is still on the scene as the Association’s official photographer, while Sara Field had taken over Nigel’s membership responsibilities.

Charlie Darlington had moved on from the communications team, while Julie Royston had also handed over her responsibilities, in this case running the successful Project Semaphore iPad programme.

NP also welcomed Gemma Swanson to the staff, while Kathryn Brindley has moved from finance to support Sara with membership.

Vice Admiral Potts thanked Andy Christie, who would be stepping down after a long career at Central Office, but again noted that Andy will remain active within the Association as National Council Member for Area.

There were also thanks for Malcolm Little’s efforts as the driving force behind the Reunite, Relive and Remember-themed Falklands 40 weekend, liaising with groups and organisations including Portsmouth City Council, the RMA and SAMA to ensure the success of the weekend.

NP also mentioned the new combined RNRMC/RNA South West Engagement Officer who will have an important role to play in recruitment at HMS Raleigh, and welcomed Kate Hughes to the team.

Two more new faces at Central Office were John Scivier and Dave MacAskill, who were working on a mentoring project for Service leavers.

Vice Admiral Potts thanked all Central Office staff for their efforts, led by General Secretary Bill Oliphant, in keeping the Association in the public eye and relevant to the next generation.

NP said he believed the Association was making real progress, keeping it a vibrant organisation, but he also wanted to ensure it was, for the younger generation, “a safe space, where members, irrespective of their background, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or anything, ... can come along, because the thing that binds us together is our service in the Royal Navy, and we are all shipmates, whoever we are.”

Vice Admiral Potts thanked those who arranged a showcase of Special Interest Groups on the Friday of Conference weekend, and also thanked sponsors, most notably the RNRMC, and Greenwich Hospital, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and Brooms Professional Services, who look after RNA finances.

There were further thanks for BAE Systems for supporting the reception on HMS Warrior, and Gunwharf Quays for sponsoring lunch on Saturday. Concluding, NP said: “I really believe the Association is in good shape. We are a small charity but with a big brand and an even bigger heart, and if we can be known by all those things then it will be a great credit to all of us.

“We look after our oppos, and that’s really shone through Covid... it feels to me like Covid has been a real transformation point for us. I was talking to some shipmates last night, how they felt much more a part of the whole RNA – tot nights, Monday evening Fireside Chats, the whole thing, and we’ve come together very well.

“So please go out and tell your local communities about us, and all Naval folks in your area to come and join us.”

## **Item 8 – President’s Awards for Recruiting and Gift Aid Returns**

**Briggs Rose Bowl** for the branch with 30 or fewer full members: **Pendleton**

**Briggs Dirk** for the branch with 31 or more full members: **Sunderland**

**Sword of Honour** for the Area with the greatest increase in members: **Area 11**

**Tasker Bowl** for the Area returning the most Gift Aid forms: **Area 6**

**Overseas Certificate** for the branch with 31 or more members: **Torrevieja**

**Overseas Certificate** for the branch with 30 or fewer members: **Rockingham and District**

## **Item 9 – Standing Orders Committee (SOC)**

Chairman SOC (S/M Nick Purkis) reported that over the past two years or so the SOC had been reformed into a governance committee, overseeing and reporting to the National Council and the AMC on all areas of governance throughout the Association.

That includes compliance with Charity Commission rules, and making sure branches and clubs are on top of their paperwork.

Chairman SOC said a number of branches registered with the Charity Commission do not submit their returns on time, which is a reputational issue for both the RNA and Royal Navy.

He encouraged branches to meet their deadlines for returns, and if revenue is less than £5,000 a year they should consider deregistering from the Charity Commission.

Chairman SOC said the SOC currently consists of himself, S/Ms Terry Day and Tracy Reid, and the recently co-opted trio of S/M Gordon Williams, and S/Ms Ian McQueen and Dave Wright to look after clubs.

He reported that there were 67 delegates at the Portsmouth AGM, that there were no motions of urgency, and one National Council motion to be considered at the Conference later on the agenda, and explained the procedure for debating the motion.

Elections – the following nominations were received for National Council Members (NCMs) and Deputy National Council Members (DNCMs):

- Area 1 – S/M Maurice Foley (NCM), no nomination for DNCM
- Area 2 – no nominations for NCM or DNCM
- Area 3 – S/M Andy Christie (NCM), no nomination for DNCM
- Area 4 – S/M Warwick Belfitt (NCM), no nomination for DNCM
- Area 5 – S/M Peter Chivers (NCM), no nomination for DNCM
- Area 10 – S/M Stirling Simmons (NCM), no nomination for DNCM
- Area 12 – S/M Paul Stephenson (NCM) and S/M Robert Buchanan (DNCM)

As only one nomination had been received for each of those roles, the aforementioned shipmates were appointed NCM and DNCM effective from the end of the Conference.

Chairman SOC urged members to consider if they knew anyone who could step into the role of NCM or DNCM so that the vacancies could be filled, reminding them that NCMs can only be elected at Conference.

## **Item 10 – Minutes of the 2021 AGM**

There were no suggested amendments to the minutes of the 2021 AGM.

**Motion: To accept the minutes.**

**Proposed – S/M John Clarke (Monmouth)**

**Seconded – S/M Jerry Fleming (Liskeard)**

**Carried on a unanimous show of hands.**

Matters arising – none raised.

## **Item 11 – Annual Accounts for Financial Year 2021: Honorary Treasurer**

Honorary Treasurer S/M Ian Irvin said he had completed reasonable due diligence over the past year regarding the manner in which the RNA's accounts have been prepared, and – more importantly – the detail behind the underlying figures themselves, and he was more than satisfied that the accounts, as presented, properly reflect the financial position of the charity as at the end of the last year.

S/M Irvin said he had also been party to budgeting and financial planning process, and as a result he was more than content with the manner in which the finances of the Association are being managed on a day-to-day basis.

He reminded delegates that as he operates at a senior level in the business world, his reputation is valuable to him, and as such he does not take his role as Honorary Treasurer of the RNA lightly.

**S/M Irvin invited questions, but there were no issues raised so the accounts were approved on a show of hands.**

Honorary Treasurer went on to thank accountant Kevin Cornelius and his colleague Jaz Gilmore, as well as Central Office members Kathryn Brindley and Sara Field for their support. A final thanks went to Francine Thompson at the RNRMC.

He concluded: "It has certainly been a very interesting year for us all, and from a financial perspective I'm more than satisfied the Royal Naval Association is well-placed to deliver on all the initiatives that are currently being progressed and that will be progressed over the coming year or so."

## **Item 12 – The National Council’s Annual Report to Conference: National Chairman (NCh): S/M Keith Ridley**

NCh S/M Keith Ridley opened by saying it was the sixth time he had the privilege of addressing National Conference as National Chairman, adding that S/M Rita Lock, National Welfare Officer until last year, was unable to attend but that he was sure delegates went warm wishes to her.

He congratulated S/M Steve Champion for winning the role of National Standard Bearer, and extended those congratulations to his predecessor S/M Dave Corrigan, saying the shipmates carried the National Standard with pride at all the national events involving RNA participation.

S/M Ridley said his report was based on the activities of the National Council, and the administration of the RNA for 2021 and 2022, and he began with “good news, hot off the press” that the Association had been awarded the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Employee Recognition Scheme Silver Award, “and we now look forward to being awarded the Gold in next year.”

He thanked S/M Malcolm Little of Central Office for his hard work in ensuring the RNA achieved this award.

NCh said the NC’s Association Management Committee (AMC) had “gone out on the road” and held meetings at Cleethorpes and Grimsby and at Gosport branches, allowing members of the Association to observe how the Association functions.

He said that a review of the RNA’s governance is in progress, alongside a strategy review; recommendations will be presented initially to the National Council, and subsequently to Conference for approval.

S/M Ridley reported that S/M Jim Hammond (NCM 5 Area) crossed the bar during last year’s Conference and expressed his gratitude for Jim’s contribution to the Association.

He thanked S/Ms Stewart Maclean (former NCM 3 Area), David Wright (former NCM 10 Area), and S/M Ian McQueen (former NCM 11 Area) for their valuable contributions, and welcomed S/Ms Andy Christie (NCM 3 Area), Pete Chivers (NCM 5 Area), Stirling Simmons (NCM 10 Area) and Rosalyn Hastie-Murray (DNCM 11 Area) for stepping up.

NCh mentioned WO Clare Robson, one of two WOs who represent the Royal Navy on the National Council, alongside WO Carl Steedman, both being appointed Vice Presidents of the Association.

S/M Ridley acknowledged the external funding given to the RNA by organisations including the RNRMC, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Greenwich Hospital and the Gosling Foundation; the RNRMC has taken on most of the RNA’s financial tasks, at no cost to the Association.

NCh reported that Phase 2 of Project Semaphore was up and running, with fresh funding, under the guidance of the RNA’s Welfare team Lynda Pearson and Gemma Swanson, and

he also paid tribute to the efforts of Julie Royston, who left the RNA after five years supporting then leading the project.

The National Chairman congratulated General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant on the success of the switch to zero subscriptions, saying that in nine months the RNA had recruited 1,700 new members and the move, which carried risk, had proved a winner.

He welcomed Kate Hughes as the new RNA/RNRMC South West Engagement Officer, and said there was a recommendation that the HMS Collingwood Part 2 Culture and Values sessions, under the guidance of S/M Andy Christie, would also cover HMS Sultan Part 2 recruits.

Sights had also been set on Logistics recruits passing through Worthy Down.

NCh said the new RNA database was working well, improving communications between members and Central Office, and the Association has been able to take on board admin for several ships' associations.

New branches are set to commission in the next year, said S/M Ridley, included one in the UK representing members of the island of St Vincent, with a second branch possibly following which is actually based in the Caribbean, and other branches at RAF Marham, Wantage and Abbey Wood.

He added that a few branches had sadly decommissioned, mainly because they were unable to form a committee. Such branches were being encouraged to become informal groups, with members transferring to HQ Roll in an initiative by General Secretary S/M Bill Oliphant, supported by the National Council.

NCh said the Association continues to encourage the formation of Special Interest Groups, and S/M Ridley congratulated S/M Oliphant on his success at building a positive network of contacts within the Naval Service and the Naval charities sector.

He observed that the (fairly) new National President, Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, had settled in and had his hand firmly on the tiller.

S/M Ridley said Monday night Fireside Chats and Wrexham branch's Saturday night Virtual Tot Nights continued to be great successes.

On behalf of the National Council, he thanked members for the endless hours of support given to fellow shipmates and the Naval veterans community, and S/M Ridley personally thanked members of the National Council, and National Advisers for their support through the year. Furthermore, he acknowledged the hard work of Central Office staff.

NCh looked ahead to the 2023 Conference, to be held in Liverpool, and the 2024 which would – subject to a subsequent vote by delegates – be held in Cardiff.

He said he looked forward to joining shipmates at the gala dinner that evening, and more importantly, on parade the following day to commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Falklands, and those who returned with mental and physical scars.

S/M Ridley congratulated WO Carl Steedman on his forthcoming promotion to lieutenant.

He finished by awarding an RNA Certificate of Appreciation to Central Office staff in recognition of the hard work that has been put in to provide moral support, welfare and guidance to the membership, beyond their normal duties, during the Covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

The longest-serving member of the team, S/M Andy Christie, accepted the Certificate on behalf of his colleagues.

NP added that he had been struck by just how much the tireless NCh S/M Keith Ridley, and his wife S/M Maureen, does for the Association – “He’s a huge servant to all of you, and also he couldn’t do it without the unfailing support of Maureen as well, who does a huge amount for the Association, so it’s really made my first year special – thank you.”

### **Item 13 – Motions of Urgency**

None.

### **Item 14 – National Council Motions**

**1. That Number 7 Area hold the 2024 National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Association in Cardiff.**

#### **Proposed by S/M Graham Warner (7 Area)**

S/M Warner said the reasoning behind the proposal was that the last time 7 Area hosted Conference was in 2006 in Aberystwyth, and members of 7 Area felt that shipmates would enjoy a weekend in the Welsh capital, and the opportunity to explore the surrounding area from Tiger Bay to The Mumbles and beyond.

#### **Motion seconded by S/M John Carr**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

NP then invited S/M John Arnold to outline plans for the 2023 Conference in Liverpool, hosted by 10 Area.

S/M Arnold said the date was chosen to coincide with the Battle of the Atlantic 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations, when the city of Liverpool would be very busy welcoming visitors and ships from far and wide.

S/M Fred Pilgrim then gave delegates an overview of the accommodation options – the three-star Adelphi and the four-star Novotel.

## **Item 15 – Branch Motions**

None.

## **Item 16 – RNA Central Charities Fund Conference Raffle Draw**

1<sup>st</sup> prize (£500): RNA Cromer Branch

2<sup>nd</sup> prize (£300): RNA City of Glasgow Branch

3<sup>rd</sup> prize (£200): S/M Gordon (Flash) Vincent – RNA Torbay Branch

4<sup>th</sup> prize (£100): Gerald Howells RNA Llanelli Branch

## **Item 17 – Closure of AGM and Conference**

Playing of the National Anthem, and National Standard marched off accompanied by Area and Branch Standards.

*Bill Oliphant*

W Oliphant  
Capt, RN  
General Secretary