

Royal Naval Association

Minutes of 84th Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting

**Held at the
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham**

Saturday 4 September 2021

Charity Number 266982

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Incorporated by Royal Charter

Full recognition by the Royal Navy



Vice Admiral Duncan Potts is acclaimed as the new National President

Delegates (in person)

Branch	Representative	Branch	Representative
Aldershot	Ray Pullen	March	Carol Gowing
Ashford	Alan Oliver	Margate	Michael Cox
Aylesbury	Glen Michael Beck	Market Harborough	Michael Petch
Birchington	Carol Dorey	Monmouth	John Clarke
Birmingham Central	George Barbrook	Newark	Kevin Winter
Bognor Regis	Ron Hargest	Nottingham	Tom Rotherham
Bracknell	Anthony Boddrell	Oswestry	Mike Evans
Bromley	Frances Halifax	Pendleton	John Coxon
Camberley	Roy Roberts	Peterborough	Paul Godfrey
Carmarthen	Donald Griffiths	Plymouth	Des Mc Carthy MBE
Chatham	Christine Stout	Purley	Ron Dorey
Christchurch	Christine Payne	Ramsgate	Steve Susans
Crewe	Bruce Lamb	Reigate	Gerry Brown
Dorchester	Dennis Matthews	Rhondda	Graham Warner
Edinburgh	Stephen Elliot	Riders	David Ives
Ferndown	Ralph Dodds	Royston	Geoff Apperley
Forth Valley	Karen Elliot	Salisbury	Jon Everett
Letchworth	Penelope Jarvis	Scarborough	Shaun Brosnan
Glasgow	Brian MacKenzie	Shrewsbury	Graham Meredith
Gosport	Val Gleave	South Bristol	Adrian Andrews
Greenford	Anne Foley	Spalding	Shirley Day
Harwich	Paulette Rose	St Austell	William Lambert
Horsham	Ken Chandler	Stroud	Tim Benn
Huddersfield	Graham Horner.	Sunderland	David Staines
Huntingdon	Bill Small	Tewkesbury	Monica Malpass
Inverness	Trevor Carnall	Warwick	David Butler
Lee and Stubbington	Julia Hamlin	Wittering	David Colman
Leighton & Linslade	Ken Brown	Wrexham	Kevin Hackett
Londonderry	Robert Buchanan	Wythenshawe	Arthur Ney
Mansfield	Tony Kemp	York	Pat Farrington
Maidstone	Steve Champion		

Delegates (on line)

Branch	Representative	Branch	Representative
Aylesbury	Glen Buck (fall back)	Market Harborough	Michael Petch
Basildon	John Kingsley	Portland	Pete Shoemith
Corby	David Jess	Southend on Sea	John Hawes
Delabole	Chris Hore	Stourbridge	David Rushforth
Dublin	Nigel Brislane	Torrevieja	Tony Jenkins
Grantham	Charlie Chaplin	Worthing	Bob Scott

Present

S/M Vice Admiral J McAnally CB LVO – National President/Conference Chair
S/M Vice Admiral D Potts CB – National President Desig
S/M Commodore 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 S Caulfield – National Events Co-ordinator
S/M G Apperley – National Welfare Adviser
NCMs representing Areas 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11

In attendance

The Ven A Hillier QHC - Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the RN
Capt W Oliphant RN – General Secretary
S/M K Cornelius – Accountant
S/M A Christie – Deputy General Secretary
S/M N Huxtable – Assistance General Secretary
S/M M Gray – Communications
S/M M Little – Fundraising and Major Events
S/M L Pearson – Welfare Programme Manager
WO1 M Turnbull – Fleet Commander's Warrant Officer
S/M S Field – Membership Support
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: 1000

National Standard marched on by S/M David Corrigan.

Item 2 – Opening Prayers

RNA Honorary Chaplain, Chaplain of the Fleet Andrew Hillier QHC, led prayers for shipmates of the RNA, and for those who have passed on; followed by the Last Post.

Item 3 – Silent tribute to shipmates who have crossed the bar

Item 4 – Welcome and Opening Remarks:

NP welcomed shipmates to Conference in “this great city of Nottingham, the Queen of the Midlands.” With last year's conference conducted on Zoom, NP said it was good that everyone was now present meeting up in person.

NP thanked hotel staff for working very closely with the Central Office team to put together a “superb package”, observing that it was one of the nicest halls in which the Association has held a Conference. NP also thanked 9 Area and the organising committee – “our hosts, as far as the RNA is concerned” – for bringing the event about and making it a success.

NP welcomed the Venerable Andrew Hiller [Chaplain of the Fleet] for his first RNA Conference as Honorary Chaplain, adding that the association valued his ministry and that it meant a great deal to them all.

Item 5 – Patronal message.

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

Item 6 – Guest speakers

NP introduced the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Cllr David Trimble, who welcomed shipmates to the city, talking of the city’s rebellious past and rich history.

Next to speak was Cdre Rob Bellfield CBE ADC, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England, who spoke of the comradeship of the family of the Royal Navy and explained his role. Cdre Bellfield went on to talk about global maritime trade, shipbuilding, development of technology and the growth and changing role of the Royal Navy. The Commodore spoke specifically of training officers and ratings alongside each other, forward-basing of ships, maintaining rights of navigation and operations in the Black Sea and by the Carrier Strike Group.

The final guest speaker was Cdr Larry Grayson, Commanding Officer of HMS Sherwood in Nottingham, who spoke of his 33-year RN career, training as a chef, and of the Royal Naval Reserves, including the challenges of lockdown during the pandemic.

Royal Naval Presentation Team

Lt Ollie Johnson, AB Loren Jackson and L/Cpl Kai Baker RM delivered the new RNPT presentation, speaking of the importance of protecting maritime trade and underwater cables, particularly data links, which carry 97 per cent of global data. Team members then took questions from delegates, and AB Jackson also thanked members for their support to her home of St Vincent and the Grenadines, which was devastated by a volcanic eruption earlier this year.

Annual General Meeting for Financial Year 2021

Item 7 – Conference Standing Orders

SOC Chairman, S/M Nick Purkis said that Conference Standing Orders had been amended last year because Conference was held online during the Covid lockdown, but that this year's Conference Standing Orders would revert to those used before the pandemic but that technology would allow the participation of Branches to join by Zoom. This was especially helpful for more remote/foreign Branches who might not have been able to participate otherwise. It was felt that greater inclusion improves democracy.

Adoption of the Standing Orders:

Proposed – S/M John Clarke (Monmouth)

Seconded – S/M Jack Voller (Warwick)

Motion was carried.

Item 8 – National President's address

NP said this was his 21st and final Annual Conference as NP, but assured delegates that he would not go through all 21 years – he would save that for the gala dinner! NP commented how great it was to be together again in a hall, enjoying each other's company, and not confined to Zoom, though he acknowledged some delegates were still rightly reluctant to attend or travel because of the risks of the pandemic and welcomed their attendance on Zoom.

Vice Admiral McAnally spoke of the enormous amount that had been achieved in the past year, including the removal of annual subscriptions, supported by the RNRMC who bankrolled the switch to a donation-based income model, which is working "beyond our wildest dreams" with 2,286 new members by August 31.

NP noted that the Association renegotiated the Memorandum of Understanding between the RN and RNA over the summer, and thanked Branch Secretaries for their efforts in populating the new central membership database.

Shipmates were thanked for their response to the St Vincent appeal, following the volcanic eruption in April, which may result in the formation of a new branch. Also thanked were Wrexham branch and their Saturday evening virtual tots, and GS Capt Bill Oliphant for his great line-up of speakers for the Monday evening Fireside Chats.

NP spoke of the staff changes at Central Office, thanking Chrissie Hughes and Michelle Bainbridge for their service and welcoming new Welfare Programmes Manager Lynda Pearson, National Welfare Advisor Geoff Apperley (who was awarded a BEM in the Birthday Honours List) and Malcolm Little. Another new member of the team was Sara Field, who took over as Membership Support Manager in succession to S/M Nigel Huxtable, who retires after 13 years' service to the RNA.

NP said that next year's Conference weekend in Portsmouth will be centred on the 40th anniversary of the end of the Falklands Conflict with the themes of Reunite (Friday), Relive (Saturday) and Remember (Sunday).

NP also spoke of the award-winning Project Semaphore, directed by Julie Royston, and thanked other members of the Central Office team, led by GS Bill Oliphant. Vice Admiral McAnally said the Association has started to achieve the Holy Grail of changing the shape of the membership numbers graph. He spoke of the slow process of emerging from the Covid pandemic, with branches reopening.

NP also spoke of the success of the RNA Special Interest Groups, and concluded that the shoots of recovery were to be seen everywhere, and there was plenty to look forward to. He said that the Naval Associations Parade, to be held the following weekend in London, was an occasion for reflection, and a chance to remember shipmates who did not make it through the pandemic, many of whom did not receive the traditional marks of respect at their funerals that they might have expected because of restrictions.

He said he thought that the Association has a great story to tell, describing it as "a small charity – financially – with a big brand and an even bigger heart. We look after our oppos, and this has shone through during Covid. Our projects are relevant, we lead the Naval veteran community in engagement with the serving Navy."

NP concluded that he felt he must say how much he really has enjoyed the very great honour of serving as National President for the last 21 years, adding that the real privilege has been "the warmth of your friendship and comradeship over these years."

George Barbrook (Birmingham Central branch) asked if there were any powers to turn Special Interest Groups into branches, which could help recruiting, and NP and GS said it was a question of "suck it and see" – some could develop to the stage they wanted their own branch and standard, which could make such a move relevant, while others might wish to remain as groups.

Item 9 – President's Awards for Recruiting and Gift Aid Returns

Briggs Dirk: City of Glasgow

Briggs Rose Bowl: Salisbury

Overseas Certificate for the branch with 30 or fewer members: **Japan**

Overseas Certificate for the branch with 31 or more members: **Port Philip Bay, Australia**

Tasker Bowl: Area 9

Sword of Honour: Area 10

Item 10 – Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

Chairman SOC (S/M Nick Purkis) reported that there were 75 delegates (63 present in the room and 12 online). The SOC has continued to meet this year and it has evolved into the new Governance Committee, undertaking a lot more additional tasks other than just standing orders. This year the Committee has lost two members, S/M Lance Higgon Young

and S/M Selwyn Davies, leaving vacancies for two full members of the SOC which will hopefully be filled in the next few months.

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

- Area 2 – no nomination for NCM or DNCM
- Area 6 – S/M Keith Ridley (NCM) and S/M Anthony Boddrell (DNCM)
- Area 7 – S/M Lance Higgon Young (NCM) and S/M Graham Warner (DNCM)
- Area 8 – S/M Peter Godwin (NCM) and S/M George Barbrook (DNCM)
- Area 9 – S/M Keith Crawford (NCM) and S/M Kevin Winter (DNCM)
- Area 11 – S/M Ian McQueen (NCM) and S/M Roslyn Hastie-Murray (DNCM)
- Scottish Area – S/M Stephen Elliot (NCM) and S/M Ian Irvin (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 said there was one National Council motion to be considered at the Conference later on the agenda, and explained the procedure for debating the motion.

Item 11 – Minutes of 2020 AGM and Special Conference

There were no suggested amendments to the minutes of the 2020 AGM and Special Conference.

Motion: To accept the minutes.

Proposed – S/M Brian Mackenzie (City of Glasgow)

Seconded – S/M Tim Benn (Stroud).

Carried on a unanimous show of hands.

Matters arising – none raised.

Item 12 – Annual Accounts for Financial Year 2020

Honorary Treasurer S/M Ian Irvin said that in looking at accounts there are only three things that one should consider – “reputation, reputation, and reputation”, which is all that matters in S/M Irvin’s opinion. The first reputation is that of the auditor, or in the RNA’s case the independent examiner who reviews and signs off the accounts – a highly-qualified individual and S/M Irvin is satisfied that they are satisfied the accounts are all tickety-boo.

The second reputation is the Trustees, who are fundamentally responsible for the accounts in law, and are elected by shipmates. The third reputation is that of the people who sign off the accounts – the Hon Treasurer and the NP.

S/M Irvin said he served in the Navy for a dog-watch in the 70s and went on to become an accountant. Amongst his interests are his role as chairman of a small bank, for which he is approved by the FCA as a ‘suitable person’. His ability to do as he does would be put at risk if there was anything wrong with these accounts, so he doesn’t sign them lightly. So

shipmates can rely on these accounts based on the reputations of the people who put them together.

Hon Treasurer said the only figure he wanted to highlight on the balance sheet was the cash figure, bearing in mind the accounts is a snapshot of a particular day, 31 December last year. The previous year we had a lot of money with the banks in liquid form – cash – because it was the height of the pandemic, and we didn't know what to expect, so GS had quite rightly liberated some funds into cash so that we could move quickly.

The story was told of an elderly shipmate, in his 90s, who was the principal carer for his wife, and, despite the requirement for shielding of the elderly in the first lockdown, he went out food shopping on a daily basis. When this was discovered by Central Office when they were doing a ring round of HQ Roll members, a search of the new database found a younger shipmate who only lived a few streets away and they were able to establish a support system for the elderly couple. These things, said S/M Irvin, don't just happen, they happen because of all the things the RNA put together and fundamentally it happens because the Association makes sure it has the ability in terms of the cash to move on that sort of thing – and that is just one example of which there were many others.

S/M Irvin added that in terms of the accounts the RNA would be lost without the input of Kevin Cornelius, the RNA's accountant.

Motion – to approve the annual accounts for FY 2020.

Proposed – Kevin Winter (Newark)

Seconded – Jerry Brown (Reigate)

Motion carried on a show of hands.

Item 13 – National Council's Annual Report to Conference: National Chairman (NCh)

NCh S/M Keith Ridley paid tribute to the great presentation by the RNPT earlier, and to Wrexham branch for their virtual tot nights, bringing so many shipmates together. S/M Ridley also acknowledged one omission, telling shipmates that Scottish Area Secretary S/M Karen Elliot had been awarded the BEM in the New Year's Honours. Also S/M Dodds, for Fireside Chats and for reviving the fortunes of his branch.

This is the fifth occasion NCh has delivered this report, and he reported that sadly three members of the NC were unable to attend – S/Ms Rita Lock, Keith Crawford and Jim Hammond – wishing them all a speedy recovery. (Post Meeting Note: Very much regrettably, S/m Jim Hammond, NCM No5 Area, has now crossed the bar.)

Also WO to the RN, WO Carl Steedman, sent apologies, as he is on operational duty. NCh said with the arrival of Covid, the past 17 months had been extremely testing for all, with RNA members losing family members, shipmates and friends. He said his report was based on the activities of the NC and the administration of the for 2020 but would also touch upon 2021, and much of the content could be found in the Association's Annual Trustees' Report.

Apart from physical committee meetings February and March 2020, NC has continued to meet via Zoom, ensuring the continued governance of the Association while adhering to government Covid regulations and policies. NCh reported by February 2020 Central Office was in the throes of a move from Semaphore Tower to Scott Road in the Naval Base. Despite a stormy start to 2020 because of Covid the Association's finances have continued to hold a steady course throughout 2020 and into 2021, and NCh stated his appreciation for the funding provided by outside organisations, namely the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the Greenwich Hospital Trust.

Thanks also to Kevin Cornelius, the RNA accountant, to whom the National Council awarded a Certificate of Appreciation the previous day. Kevin joined Brooms 39 years ago as a trainee, and for as long as he can remember he has been responsible for the RNA accounts, producing detailed financial reports to the Finance Committee every three months. NCh also acknowledged S/M Irvin, adding how lucky the RNA was to acquire him as a NCM and as Hon Treasurer.

S/M Ridley said that there were 2,286 new members, and he expressed his thanks to S/Ms Nigel Huxtable and Sara Field for their hard work in bringing the new members on board, as well as to branch and area secretaries who have helped to populate the new database, making the membership process more efficient. NCh also reminded shipmates that recruitment was not a task for Central Office alone, it is a job for branches and members.

During Covid, said S/M Ridley, the RNA fleet of minibuses have been put to good use, including distributing food parcels to isolated vulnerable veterans. NCh said that the Association's Governance Committee has been established, which used to be generally known as the Standing Orders Committee, and he paid tribute to the amount of work undertaken by chairman S/M Nick Purkis. He added that the body would monitor those clubs holding an RNA permit, allowing them to use the RNA name.

In terms of initiatives since last year, NCh listed the following:

- Initiatives to improve efficiency and attract new and younger members – achieved.
- Engage with Naval recruits to bring them on board – not able to undertake until access to HMS Raleigh is available.
- Engage with families of those joining the Navy at HMS Raleigh, as they become part of the Naval family – again, when parades resume at Raleigh.
- Create a new database – achieved, with the hard work of S/Ms Nigel Huxtable and Sara Field.
- Encourage informal groups where branches decommission but members wish to continue meeting – several such groups have formed.
- With 1SL's approval, host the World Uckers Championships in Portsmouth Naval Base – postponed till 2021.
- Encourage the creation of Special Interest Groups – achieved, including those covering golf, fishing, cycling, modelmaking, rugby union, motorhoming and caravanning, and classic cars.
- New branches commissioning in 2020 – Salisbury and Portsea commissioned online because of Covid, which was successful, though Thetford could not follow suit as leading members crossed the bar. Also coming are Abbey Wood, Northampton, and a request from King's Lynn, close to RAF Marham, home of the RN's F-35 aircraft.

NCh said farewell to two NCMs: S/Ms Victor (Darby) Allen (2 Area), who is retiring, and S/M Gordon Williams (7 Area), who has a new role as 7 Area Chairman.

Also thanks to S/M Ian Irvin, who has stepped down from being Scottish Area NCM to concentrate on his role as RNA Hon Treasurer.

In conclusion, NCh thanked members for their efforts and good deeds in representing the RNA, and Central Office staff for “working their backsides off”.

Break for lunch until 1430

NC thanked corporate sponsors AWT Ship Management and Pussers Rum whose donations paid for lunch, and also Brooms Professional Services.

S/M Nick Purkis reported that there are now 57 delegates in the room.

Item 14 – Motions of Urgency

None.

Item 15 – National Council Motion

1. That Conference amends Rule 7 (e) to read as follows (amendments to existing rule in bold): A Chairman and a Vice Chairman of the Association shall be elected **for a period of two years** by the Council from the elected members of the Council at the first meeting of the Council after the Annual Conference, **so long as the term of office of the National Council Member does not expire in the meantime, under Bye Law 6 (v) (a), in which case the election as Chairman or Vice Chairman shall be elected for a period of one year only.**

And that this amendment shall be subject to such change as may be required by the Privy Council and is agreed by the President of the Royal Naval Association.

Proposed by S/M Peter Godwin (NCM 8 Area).

He said the motion was intended to tidy up transitions of authority within the National Council – a NCM stands for two years, in that time taking on a lot of responsibilities, through sub-committees and working groups, allowing everybody to learn about how the RNA works.

The tip of the NCM spear is the Chairman and Vice Chairman, said S/M Godwin, who need to know everything that is going on in the RNA, so they will attend more meetings and cross over in committees, to gain a full understanding of how it works.

That can take a new NC or NVC six to nine months to get fully up to speed, but as it stands they are only in office for one year, and could be three to six months effective when, technically, they could get voted out.

This motion seeks to get ‘value for money’ out of NC or NVC by having a two-year appointment.

The second part of the motion, said S/M Godwin, tidies up if somebody becomes NC or NVC halfway through their term as an NCM, so they only have one year left, they would stand for election 12 months after that as both NCM or NC/NVC and then get into the two-year cycle.

Motion seconded by S/M Ian McQueen (NCM 11 Area).

Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Item – Presentation on Sparko TV

The GS said the lockdowns had highlighted the necessity for improved welfare support to beneficiaries (members) around the Association, and to shift outputs around Central Office as our normal activities and events had to be cancelled due to Covid. It was encouraging that Branches understood that the Welfare component of Comradeship was important as well as the social aspects.

The RNA has brought in Linda Pearson as Welfare Programme Manager (WPM) to look at ways the RNA could do better to reach veterans in our community who may be experiencing loneliness. WPM spoke of Sparko TV, a project fully-funded by the RNRMC, as part of their Reaching Out, By Your Side programme, and urged shipmates to support the scheme by finding veterans who would benefit from it.

Sparko CEO, Orit Eyal-Fibeesh, described the creation of the Sparko TV project and how it operates, providing an interactive channel on a TV which is specially tailored to veterans.

Orit outlined four key features:

- It allows you to connect through the TV with families and friends – they use an app to connect; the system can make and receive calls and messages to anyone connected anywhere in the world;
- Sparko has specially-curated content designed for members;
- Community – whether geographic, or people on the same ship, or the entire RNA community, all people who share something in common;
- Wellbeing – generic activities for members, including bingo, creative writing, and specific activities for RNA members, such as stand-easy, up spirits etc.

Shipmates were given a demonstration of how Sparko TV works and further details of the benefits of the system, and heard from S/M Mike Mill, who is curating material for the RNA service. GS urged shipmates to find veterans to join the scheme, and reminded them that the service is free to qualifying veterans.

Item 16 – Fireside Chat by S/M Ralph Dodds

S/M Dodds said that a highlight of the pandemic has been the Monday night RNA Fireside Chats, starting with NP on the Battle of Jutland, and meeting almost every week since, with subjects including Op Paraquet, Portsmouth Naval Base preparations for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth, the RNBT, mutiny and piracy, the restoration of L7074.

Many have been delivered by shipmates, and there are at least 40 or 50 joiners every night, sometimes up to 60 or 70.

S/M Dodds then reprised his Fireside Chat entitled 'Winston's Back', on the Royal Navy's preparations for World War 2 and the opening months of hostilities, when the Royal Navy was the largest navy in the world.

Item 17 – RNA Central Charities Fund Conference Raffle Draw

1st prize (£500): David Steggalls (Stevenage)

2nd prize (£300): Dave Ives (RNA Riders)

3rd prize (£200): A Bird (West Wittering)

4th prize (£100): Geoff Patterson (St Neots)

Item 18 – Supersession of National President

NP said he is not leaving because someone asked him to go, nor is he leaving at all, because he is a Life Member – he is just handing over the office, and he welcomes the chance to do so because the Association will benefit from somebody who is younger, fitter, and closer to today's serving Navy than he is or can be. He continued that he has an "absolutely splendid" relief, who will serve the Association well, and who will enjoy doing so just as much as NP has. NP then handed over to Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, who assumed the role of NP. The transfer of Command was sealed with a hearty tot and there was rousing applause as Vice Admiral John McAnally left the Conference.

Item 19 – Closure of Conference

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

Conference closed at 1642