



The Chair's Annual Report 2020

Finances

Our finances at the end of 2020 amounted to £????? comprising a bank balance of £????? and reserves of £?????. Of this total £????? is restricted for expenditure on the Coull Memorial award and RFA Memorial and a further £??????? ring fenced for the RFA Summer Ball/BBQ, RFA Golf and Welfare.

In 2020 income, at £????? was £?? lower than the previous year largely due to a reduction in Golf Event income whilst subscriptions and branch fundraising was slightly increased. Expenditure increased by £4805 due to £2842 of bills carried over from 2018 (MoD office rent and staff costs), an additional £1538 of welfare related payments and increased Trustees meeting expenses.

Accounts information and this report will shortly be available on the Charity Commission website (England and Wales) <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk> and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) <http://www.oscr.org.uk/>.

Governance

The charity is a charitable unincorporated association and is registered with both the England and Wales Charity commission (Reg No 1093950) and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator (reg No SCO39054). It has a three-tier structure consisting of the Members, 6 Regional Branches and the Board of Trustees.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the constitution and are voted into office annually at a members' AGM. They can serve for a maximum of 9 years continuously.

The duties of Treasurer and bookkeeper are separated and 2 signatures required for all payments. A reserves policy has been implemented and the balance of unrestricted funds will be enough to carry on the current level of activities for a minimum of 6 years.

The Constitution

The Constitution was updated in 2020 and has now been brought into line with current Charity Act requirements.

The Membership

Membership is currently running at 657 in total, of which 160 are Life Members and 9 are

Honorary Members. Membership numbers has again remained virtually static over the last year.

The Trustees

Trustees stand for a period of 6 years, but may serve for a maximum of 9 years. They must be re-elected on a year-to-year basis.

Ray Bennett, Chair, Solent. (Completes 9 years at AGM 2022)

Peter Fry, Deputy Chair/Treasurer, Solent. (Completes 9 years at AGM 2021)

Robert Settle, Welfare, Northwest. (Completes 9 years at AGM 2023) (Welfare moves to Martin Troman in 2021 and Robert Settle stands down)

Ian Thompson, Northwest. (Completes 6 years at AGM 2021)

Keith Escott, Plymouth & SW. (Completes 6 years at AGM 2023)

Martin Troman, London & SE. (Completes 6 years at AGM 2025)

COMRFA has not appointed an Ex Officio Trustee.

Please note, as we lose two trustees in 2021, we will be down to five and I stand-down in 2022. WE MUST HAVE NEW TRUSTEES come forward. Without the trustees there won't be a charity nor as Association as it is now, just a group of social clubs....it's in your hands!

The Branches

All branches have been unable to meet for virtually all year.

The Midland branch remains in name only. Should it become viable, it will be most welcome and will be supported by the Board.

I recognise here that the branch almoners, and those others that have help keep in contact with members during the pandemic are truly appreciate and have the thanks of us all.

Although the Annual Reunion Dinner was cancelled, the October date was during the period when groups of six could congregate indoors. Since many members already had hotel bookings, the Plymouth branch organised a socially distanced meal to which about 35 members attended. Those members who had previously booked, but they felt unable to attend were given refunds or generously donated their fee to the Association.

Associated Organisations

The Association has links to the RFA Association of Malta and John Caruana of the London Branch provides liaison.

There is a very unofficial “branch” (The Far Flung) in Thailand with John Littlechild and David Palin providing the necessary liaison.

We also have members in: Falkland Islands, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Croatia, Singapore, Oman, Spain, South Africa, Japan, Bahamas and Jersey.

The Management

The Association now rents a room in Stony Lane, Portsmouth Naval Base. It houses the entire collection of RFA artefacts, pictures, some battle honours belonging to ships no longer in service and a substantial collection of literature.

The Association has trustees from across the UK and our management has become more diverse and widespread. The trustees continue to meet approximately 4 times a year, but all the day-to-day work continues to be done at home. The Chairman is assisted by Dawn Reay who is our part-time Membership Secretary and Bookkeeper. Pat Thompson runs the website and manages ceremonial duties. Peter Fry is our Treasurer/Deputy Chairman. Robin Lock handles Corporate Fundraising. Without his work we would be around £10k a year poorer. Bob Settle dealt with Welfare in coordination with the Chair and Deputy Chair.

The Website (www.rfa-association.org.uk)

The website continues to provide news to the membership on an ad hoc basis. All information posted on whatever media platform is there because someone has taken to the time to supply it. We do not have the resources to hunt for or create content. If anyone has something of interest, please pass it to the Webmaster or Chair. Most branches have their own area on the websites to publish, providing local flavour and information to members. Similarly, each branch has its own area in the RFAA photo gallery.

In addition to the website, we operate a Facebook and Twitter page, members should just search the Facebook and Twitter sites to find our entries.

The Members Handbook

The 2020/2021 Member’s Handbook and Yearbook was distributed in February 2020. The Year Book continues to be printed at no cost to the Association by kind courtesy of Method Publishing, who make their profit through the advertising contained in the book. However, the related distribution costs are ever increasing and everything is done to be as cost effective as possible e.g. stamps purchased from discounted website at less than face value.

The RFAA Welfare Fund.

In the last year there were 9 applications for assistance. Not all cases have resulted in a successful conclusion but we paid out £1,410 in personal grants. Any help we give is always gratefully accepted. We involve other agencies SSAFA, Royal British Legion, etc. where

appropriate as they have greater resources and full time qualified case-workers who can accurately assess an individual's need.

The RFA National Memorial / Graves.

Keeping the memorial at the National Arboretum in the Midlands alive and relevant is not easy. We are still waiting to place the outline agreed contract for repair, maintenance and cleaning and money is ring fenced for this purpose.

Annual Meeting with the Commodore.

The Annual meeting with the Commodore took place in January 2020 (unable to match dates in December). A broad range of issues were discussed, including welfare and the MOU. The MOU was finally signed off just before Cdre Lamb retired in October.

The Coull Memorial Award

In 2020 the award was made to two people. 1/O(E) Mike Hontoir and 1/O(LS) Mike Tyndell. Their citations can be found on our website.

Looking Ahead

The Association did not meet all its primary aims. For the obvious reason, social contact has been severely curtailed, but this coming year is going to be better than last year. As ever, the future holds challenges to be met. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our next AGM and Dinner!



Ray Bennett
National Chair
RFA Association.

21st February 2021