



The charity that supports the RAF family

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL BRANCH
1370 HELD ON 13th March 2021 via 'Zoom 'online**

1. The meeting was opened by the reading of the RAFA Dedication by Mr Richard Wiltshire

2. Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from over 115 members including Mr Pat McGarry, Mrs Marilyn Roman & Mr Conrad Steele-Benny.

3. Chairman's Opening Address

Can I first, request that you all stand & take a minute to remember all those branch members who have passed away since our last AGM, including Alan Meggs, Nick Hugo, Dean Zimmer, David Ashurst, Neil Collinge, Ray Stokes & Will Hughes. Please also remember all those friends & family members who have also passed away during the past exceedingly difficult 12 months.

May they all Rest in Peace.

First of all, I must thank Ian Thomas for the loan of this Zoom link which has allowed us to unlimited time & attendees. It must be the first time I have got something from an Armourer free of charge!!!

Well Ladies & Gentlemen, 2020 is a year we will never ever forget for far too many reasons and may we hope that things from here can only improve.

Obviously Covid-19 has had a major effect not just individually on our lives but generally across the Association of which we are just a small but integral part.

Many of the normal things we, as branch, would have done throughout the year were unable to happen. No social visits, very few Wings collections were able to be conducted due to the cancellation of the airshows, town parades etc, etc, etc. However, we still, as a branch managed to raise a good sum for the Wings Appeal which included just over £1,000 from the Home Collection Boxes. There was also an amazing amount of more than £4,400 raised by our intrepid Wing Walkers. This included more than £1,000 each by Damian Harriss & non-

branch members Fred Yarwood & Joyce Clucas. Well done to everyone who took part. There will not be many branches that can boast an increase on their Wings Appeal total in 2020. With the onset of the Covid pandemic, which came thankfully just after we had held our 2020 AGM, RAFA set up a Covid-19 appeal to which the branch made a contribution of £1,000 from branch funds. We also, following Head Office's guidance set up a Covid response team for our members which was led by branch member, Ray Bailey. Fortunately, the services of this team were hardly called upon but at least we were able to say that we were ready, should our membership require assistance.

In these difficult times, the Association has had to make various difficult decisions to hopefully help safeguard the future of the Association itself. Some of these decisions have been slightly controversial to say the least, for example the closing of all the care and respite homes that the Association ran. Many members have different views on these decisions, but whether we agree or not, this is why, the position of trustee of any charity is not an easy one but every trustee in the end has to be able to justify outcome of their actions not only to their own membership but also to the Charities Commission.

As a branch, we seem to have weathered the pandemic as well as could be hoped for. By being a virtual branch, our actual running costs generally are on the low side. However, this might have to change slightly, as holding a virtual AGM produces possible costs that, we as a branch, will have to look at in the future to ensure that we can continue to tick all the boxes within the RAFA Governance Handbook. But you can be assured that your new Committee will, hopefully, be on top of this from the very start.

Our membership continues to go from strength to strength. Indeed, in the past year we have increased our overall membership by some 30%. This increase does not seem to have slowed down either as we have moved into 2021, so I would be a very contented Chairman if I could stand here next year reporting on a membership strength of over 500, or quicker than that if resolution 9.2 is passed later in this meeting!!!

Your Committee has had to make a couple of shuffles over the year with Bryn Holland leaving the post of Newsletter Editor. Damian Harriss then made a sideways move to take over that position with Andrew Thomson slipping into the then vacant Secretary slot. Also knowing that our long serving Treasurer, Mazza Holland, was standing down from that position at this AGM, we managed to find a, hopefully, suitable victim, sorry candidate, in Richard Wiltshire to take over that position.

My good lady, Julie Mullis, is stepping down from her position as Social Events Organiser due to ill health, with Mazza taking on this role.

All these positions should be confirmed, by your Secretary, as having been ratified by our membership in the vote prior to this AGM.

All in all, I believe we can look forward to 2021 in a position of strength poised & ready to respond to any new challenges that this unpredictable world might decide to throw at us.

I trust that you will have an enjoyable, albeit different AGM.

Ladies & Gentlemen, as your Chairman, that concludes my annual report to you, the Global Branch membership.

4. Acceptance of the Report from the Committee for the past year (Presented by the incoming Secretary)

This is the 6th Annual General Meeting of Global Branch 1370

I joined the branch at the beginning of last year after finding out my local branch in Skipton had actually closed. I was given the charming and beatific Mr Mullis as contact, joined and was quietly being a member for a few months. Around August, he was looking for someone to fill the Secretaries slot, I volunteered. Some may say madness was my problem but honestly we have an excellent and dedicated committee of whom it has been a pleasure to work with, and yes, that especially includes you Maz!! I am glad you are staying as I need someone to help me keep the Chairman in line!!

Over the past 12 months the Branch has continued to grow from strength to strength with now in excess of 400 members and continuing to increase. Ours is a unique branch being 'virtual' therefore making us accessible all over the world and which has stood us in good stead throughout the pandemic, and, although, there is light at the end of the tunnel for the pandemic the committee continues to meet online every month. The minutes of which are recorded and posted on Facebook. Any questions/queries etc. can be directed to me and I will endeavour to quickly answer or pass to the relevant person.

We would actively encourage and welcome ordinary branch members to, if you should wish, table items/suggestions for consideration by the Committee also pointing out this facility is advertised through Facebook. I do understand that some are not keen on computers and Facebook so please direct, as previously mentioned your requests etc. to me and I promise I will deal with it.

From a regulatory perspective we are governed by RAFA branch regulations contained in the Governance handbook. The regulatory framework is always under review by the association and the Branch will continue to Strive to meet these our obligations.

Our registration with the Charities commission is now in the final stages after many attempts and hard work, especially by our Chairman, will hopefully be concluded in the next month.

To sum up the branch has still been active, assisting members as well as in contributions with some members having completed a sponsored wing walk. Very brave guys, however, try the cockpit next time it is a lot more comfortable and warmer!! Nevertheless, very well done for that.

I look forward to continuing for next year

Andrew R. Thomson

Incoming Secretary

5. Matters Arising from the Committees' report.

None

6. Report by the Treasurer including consideration of the Statement of Accounts for the preceding financial year.

Good Evening Everyone

It's great to see so many of you here in these strange but exciting times.

For those of you that have already know, this will be my final AGM report, I would like to thank you all for your support over the last 5 years and I'm sure you will not be disappointed with the incoming treasurer Mr Richard Wiltshire (subject to your approval tonight).

Income for this year, for obvious reasons, has been slow but sure, we were able to pay £1826.13 to the WINGS appeal which I think is a great achievement considering the challenges we have faced. Steve Mullis will give you the total of the funds raised from the WING WALK, which I was lucky enough to take part in, and was made direct to the Wings fund.

Our account balances are much easier to understand this year as we only have 2 accounts.

RAFA Global 1370 general account, which, as of 31:12:2020 stood at £2834-14

RAFA Global 1370 welfare fund account which, as of 31:12:2020 stood at £485-91

I would like to remind everyone that a useful and easy way to raise funds is by using the Easy Raising App, it literally takes no effort at all and has raised a total of £154.07 this year. Steve can give you details on how to register for this. Other fundraising has come via donations and the Chairman's challenges.

All in all another successful year for the branch and I am sure will come up with yet another crazy way to raise valuable funds for The Wings Appeal and keep the branch heading into the future in his usual positive way.

I hereby present the accounts up to the 31st December 2020

Marion B Holland

Outgoing Treasurer

7. Report by the Welfare Officer.

RAFA Global Branch Welfare Support 2020/21

RAFA provides friendship and welfare support to anyone who is serving or has served in the Air Forces, their spouses, widows/widowers and their dependents. Friendship and welfare support is provided to all eligible personnel irrespective of their membership of the Association.

This friendship and welfare is usually delivered via static Branches and their Honorary Welfare Officers but where a Virtual Branch has been established (as in our case with the Global Branch), the welfare assistance is provided by the existing and well-established worldwide RAFA Welfare team through the Regional Welfare teams.

My role as your Welfare Officer is to refer any eligible clients from either our Branch or people that we know into the Association's Regional Welfare system. From then onwards I am unable to keep a check on the progression of 'our' cases due to Data Protection but can chase up or hasten the Association's response if I am notified of any issues by our clients.

Over the past year, I have referred a number of cases into the Welfare System but have also been able to provide advice and signposting to individuals who wished to progress their own cases. Although we have offered on every occasion, the Branch has not yet been asked to contribute any of our Welfare Funds to 'our' cases that resulted in financial assistance. However, the Branch has continued to use our Welfare Fund to gift another year's RAFA Membership to a WAAF.

Should you need my help or assistance, or you know of an individual in your community who might benefit from friendship or welfare support from the Association or other Service charities (I am also a Caseworker for The Royal British Legion and SSAFA so am very used to dealing with clients from all 3 Services), please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. Remember, people do **NOT** need to be members of the Association or any Service charity to access welfare support – they simply need to be serving or have served or be the spouse, widow/widower or a dependent of someone who served.

Nicky Loveday

Global Branch Welfare Officer

8. Election of the Branch officials and Branch Committee members

As there were no objections from the floor nor other persons coming forward for election, the following persons will form the committee for the next 3 years (see resolution para 9.1)

Chairperson:	Mr Steve Mullis
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr David Routledge
Treasurer:	Mr Richard. Wiltshire
Secretary:	Mr Andrew. Thomson
Membership-secretary:	Mr Gerwyn Thomas
Welfare officer:	Ms Nicky. Loveday (Group Captain rtd)
Wings Appeal:	Mr Graham Croft
Social Events:	Mrs Marion Holland
Newsletter Editor:	Mr Damian Harris
Webmaster:	Mr Chris Mercer
Conference Delegate:	Mr Steve Mullis

9. Acceptance of any resolutions forwarded by Ordinary and Associate Members of the Club to the Secretary at least seven days before the date of the meeting.

9.1 How long should Branch Trustees Serve on the Committee for, before requiring re-election? As ref Branch Regulations 4.2.2. Options are 1 year, 2 years or 3 years

As per the voting slip distributed to all members it was voted that 3 years will be acceptable

9.2 We have been asked by Headquarters if the Global Branch would be willing to accept, in principle, a number of members from two specific branches that have closed recently – Woking and Camberley Branches. The numbers are not huge, estimated at up to approx. 150 members in total and we would only receive those members who have email addresses recorded. This is not a formal amalgamation of branches, more a matter of providing a genuinely supportive new home for members who would benefit from being part of a growing, proactive, and forward-thinking branch or would otherwise be transferred to the HQ roll.

After some discussion and no objections from the floor this was agreed

9.3 Further to resolution **9.2** - in order to prevent the necessity of whether waiting until the next AGM or call a Special General Meeting will the members here present give the Branch committee permission to review any future requests from Headquarters in accepting members from any other branches that are closing, to prevent those members from languishing on area rolls without a voice.

After some discussion and no objections from the floor this was agreed

10. General matters arising.

One of our members, Mr Conrad Steele-Benny had written in and asked that his thanks be conveyed to the Chairman and the Committee for their dedication and hard work throughout the past year.

This was received by the Chairman & Committee with thanks

The Chairman then opened the meeting up to the members present to allow discussion and debate of any matters. There was no response from the floor.

11. Meeting dismissed.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

.....

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A Thomson'.

Andrew Thomson
Secretary.
RAFA Global Branch 1370