



Officers' Association
HMS COLLINGWOOD
Newgate Lane
Fareham
Hants
PO14 1AS

11 October 2020

**MINUTES OF THE 'VIRTUAL' COMMITTEE MEETING OF HMS COLLINGWOOD
OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR 9 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Committee:

Capt J.N. McGrath	Chairman
Lt Cdr D.L. Howe	Vice Chairman
Lt Cdr D.J. Rook	Treasurer
Cdr D. Coombes	OA Secretary
Lt Cdr M.P. Carr	Membership and Social Secretary
Capt J.E. Palmer	Webmaster
Lt Cdr T.C. James	W.R.M.C Representative
Lt Cdr C.F. Brooks	Committee Member
Lt Cdr J.R.D. Rouse	A/Sec

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 11 Mar 20

The minutes were accepted, proposed by Lt Cdr Brooks and seconded by Lt Cdr Howe.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Lt Cdr Carr to discuss with WRMM arrangements for members and partners to have drinks and lunch in the Wardroom after the HMS Collingwood Remembrance Ceremony.

Proposal cancelled because of the current restrictions of entry to the Establishment. **NFA**

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With the impact of the Coronavirus epidemic on the social programme and access to the Wardroom, Capt McGrath said that it would not be a great surprise that his report would be very brief. The Annual General Meeting was replaced by a meeting by correspondence with members receiving papers either by email or post and replying, if they wished, by these means. It seemed to work very smoothly with all the proposals being accepted. The great loss was the OA/SD Lunch that usually follows.

The Establishment was working to produce a book to commemorate the eighty years since it was first opened and the OA had been asked to seek contributions from their members. To that end Capt McGrath had asked that the relevant CTM and some contact details be circulated.

The OA Sword for 2020 would normally have been presented at Ceremonial Divisions but this year it was the final component of a number of similar, timed presentations made in the Wardroom Garden. The donor, Mrs Gill Leighton-Goodall was unable to make the presentation because she was shielding and Capt McGrath said he acted on her behalf. The Chairman commented that it had concerned him that the winner's name had not been etched on the blade, just the fact that the sword was presented by the OA. To rectify this, he'd had discussions with Robert Pooley, the owner of Pooley Sword, and had put the winner in touch with him so that they could discuss both the position and form of this inscription which would then be done by Pooley Sword. If it worked well, he would recommend that the procedure was adopted in future years.

Post meeting note: Action complete. The winner was delighted with the name on the blade and Pooley Sword made no additional charge. It is therefore recommended that this procedure be followed in the future.

Looking to the future, the Chairman reported that Mrs Pamela Nason was donating the sword of her late father, Commander Frederick Jack Shirley, DSM, Royal Navy. Capt McGrath said he had been working with her to prepare a one page summary of her father's career suitable for framing and giving to the recipient. As a courtesy, Capt McGrath would give her a framed copy as well. When a more mobile mood arrived, he would organise the handover of the sword and he would take it to Pooley Sword for refurbishment. He suggested that this would be the sword presented in 2021 with Mrs Nason invited to make the presentation. The Association would then have the new sword purchased in 2020 ready for 2022.

Capt McGrath stated that the one matter that needed to be resolved was the collective stance on the contribution to the Wardroom. If necessary, all other business must be postponed until this was agreed so that Lt Cdr James, the WRMC rep could go armed with the OA's agreed position to the September Wardroom Committee Meeting. It would depend on the options offered by Lt Cdr Rook in his paper. (See **Agenda Item 6**.)

Capt McGrath said that the course to resuming a social life needed to be set out. The key event being the Lunch celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the WE Branch. He suggested the event should be heavily subsidised to encourage members to return to the social programme. If the OA was going to invite the senior serving WE Officer to be the GoH, then it was necessary to get a bid in soon. However, this was dependent on the Mess reopening for such gatherings. It had been agreed that it would be appropriate for Capt Palmer, the incoming Chairman, to preside at that event. Originally a date in March had been looked at but with the current Covid measures set to last at least 6 months that looked increasingly unrealistic. The obvious timing might be following the AGM but that would change the nature of the event from the much enjoyed family lunch format. As the OA shares the event with the SDs, it might not be a good move. Other options would be July or September if the Summer leave period and Trafalgar Night were to be avoided. As said above, a decision should be made because if the OA wished to invite a Senior Serving WE officer as GoH, adequate notice needed to be given to him or her.

4. SOCIAL AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Social

Fort Purbrook.

Lt Cdr Carr reported that he'd had a fruitful meeting with the folks at Fort Purbrook and they were most keen for the OA to utilise the spaces; there were some promising possibilities. However, the biggest limiting factor was the current Government guidelines on social gatherings (limited to 30) but that may change if they open music venues etc.

If the numbers allowed relaxes there may be scope for:

Wine Tasting with Fort Purbrook Tour

Trafalgar Night or a semi-formal dinner pre-Xmas

Xmas Lunch (committee or otherwise)

Social dance early Feb 2021 (Valentines?)

Early summer 2021 BBQ

Lt Cdr Carr suggested that it would be good to perhaps gather there for a committee meeting and have a peruse of the facilities at some stage. Fort Purbrook could provide all the necessary (at a cost of course) so he would investigate with the WRMM what (if anything) the OA could borrow from the Wardroom and also if the Wardroom Staff would be willing to attend.

Costs wise it would be £30 per hour per function room + small charge for cloakroom etc. So, for a Trafalgar Night/Formal Dinner/Dance the OA would be looking at £60 per hour for say 6 hours so around £400 for the venue space.

Also, there was a possibility of a wooden floor Marquee on the parade ground (grass) with a cost of £800 just for the parade ground.

Titchfield Community Centre

Lt Cdr Carr reported that he'd had the following response from Titchfield Community Centre:

“Dear Martin

Thank you so much for getting in touch. Unfortunately, with the current guidance from both the government and working closely with the Environmental Health team at Fareham Borough Council we have been advised to refrain from social functions for now. We have moved all functions from 2020 to 2021. We need to maintain 2m social distancing, face coverings and discourage all centre users from having refreshments which I don't think would fit with what you are looking to do. It would be great to show you the facilities here though so that you can keep them in mind for future events.”

Other Possibilities

Capt McGrath had forwarded the following information.

He did not expect Cams Golf Club to be offering the sort of event the OA needs anytime soon and the same applied to the RNC & RAYC in Old Portsmouth and Wallington Village Hall, all of which he should expect to hear about as soon as they are back to normal operation. He reported that he and his wife had been to Lysses Hotel recently and found it operating smoothly but, with the current table spacing, a small event could be held but it would just consist of isolated tables for two which would hardly be very sociable.

Membership

Lt Cdr Carr reported that, since the last report, the OA had not lost any members so far either to COVID or resignations. The breakdown of the membership being:-

ACTIVE 267

Country 107

Full 17

Honorary 10

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

Lt Cdr Rook, Treasurer, said that his report for the period commenced from the last reported position for the AGM in June 2020, where the fund stood at £6,799.43. From the OA account activity through the period up to the end of August, he confirmed that the current financial position remained at; £6,799.43.

Lt Cdr Rook reported that he had recently submitted a discussion paper to the OA Committee regarding the amount of annual levy that the OA pays to the Mess, where the OA is looking for a reduced contribution for the Covid shutdown period, as members have not been allowed access to the Wardroom facilities for many months. **See Agenda Item 6.**

Lt Cdr Rook said that the OA Committee needs to consider that with zero expenditure over the latest period there was now a surplus of funds, against the Wardroom Mess guidance of running the account to a level of around £5,000. The OA's two largest outgoings are for social event subsidies and the purchase or refurbishment of an annual sword to present. It is understood that the OA has swords sufficient to cover for 2021 and 2022. The financial report was accepted, proposed by Lt Cdr Howe and seconded by Lt Cdr Rouse.

6. PAPER: COVID-19 OA REBATE OF WARDROOM MESS FUNDS PAID

The paper had been circulated to all members of the Committee. Following discussion via email a proposed way ahead was agreed and a letter outlining the proposal was sent by the Chairman to the XO in time for the next WRMC meeting on 15 Sep.

7. OA SEC's CORNER

Cdr Coombes gave the following report:-

At lockdown, when access to HMS COLLINGWOOD was denied, 3 AF's were stuck in the system and had been joined by a further 25 to date. The latter group of AF's, as advised, were sent to his home address and were complete but undated. He said that it was possible that AF's had been sent to the Wardroom (he would contact the WR). Not all members had responded to Lt Cdr Carr's prompt re where to send the AFs.

The Autumn Newsletter was in outline form. The Chairman had kindly provided an input. Other topics would include:

- Financial and membership using AGM or later updates
- Update on the subscription rebate over the COVID period
- Latest on CWD access in particular.
- CWD 80 – CTM complete.

Cdr Coombes said he would welcome any other thoughts.

8. REPORT FROM WARDROOM MESS COMMITTEE

Lt Cdr James gave the following report.

Mess Committee Meetings had continued to be carried out “virtually” which was not ideal especially as there had been a number of changes to the Committee, so putting faces to voices very difficult!

The XO recently issued an update confirming that from the outset of the CV19 pandemic and in line with MOD and DIO guidance, the Mess had postponed or in extremis cancelled all events that were not critical to the delivery of essential training up until December 2020. Currently amenity pass holders are not allowed entry into the establishment; however the policy was constantly under review.

It was understood by the Mess, that the issue of the OA Contribution was being worked on by the OA and that it would be available for consideration at the next OA Committee meeting in September. The next WR Mess Committee meeting was planned for 15 September

A CWD 80 book was being worked on and if anyone wanted to be part of the project CTM 23/20 refers.

Update from the WRMC meeting 15 Sep 20

Lt Cdr James reported the following:-

The Mess President advised the committee that he had received a letter from the OA Chairman reference the OA Contribution to the Wardroom fund. However, he had not had a chance to read the letter fully but that he would endeavour to provide a response by the next WRMC meeting on 13 October. Lt Cdr James offered to apprise the committee of the OA's stance but the President preferred that he wait until the next meeting.

Lt Cdr James briefed the committee that the OA was preparing an article for the 80th Anniversary Book.

The President advised that implications of the recent changes to the Covid 19 restrictions and in particular the ruling that only 6 people could gather together in a group were under consideration.

The WRMM advised that the WM galley is due for a refurbishment in 2022 and it could have an impact on social events for a period of time, yet to be specified.

9. AOB

Capt McGrath reported that 2021 marked not only the 75th Anniversary of the WE Branch, but the 25th Anniversary of the OA. He suggested that the OA should aim to develop the material it had got into a document with a working title: HMS Collingwood Officers' Association; the First 25 Years. It could be made available for free download and also placed on the website. The anniversary might also provide a useful hook on which to hang a social event when life returned to normality.

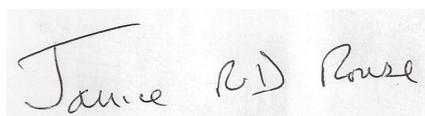
10. DONM

The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as:-

Wed 2 Dec 20 at 1230

Wed 3/10 Mar 21 tbc

Sun 13 Jun 21 at 1030 followed by the AGM at 1130

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J R D Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

J R D ROUSE

Lt Cdr

A/Sec

Distribution:

Committee Members

Wardroom Mess Treasurer

WRNB