



30 March 2024

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF HMS COLLINGWOOD OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION HELD AT HMS COLLINGWOOD 20 MARCH 2024

Committee:

Capt J.E. Palmer	Chairman and webmaster
Cdr D. Coombes	OA Sec
Lt Cdr D.L. Howe	Vice Chairman
Lt Cdr D.J Rook	Treasurer
Lt Cdr M.P. Carr	Membership and Social Secretary, pro tem OA Liaison member on WRMC
Lt Cdr T.C. James	Member
Lt Cdr C.F. Brooks	Member
Lt Cdr J.R.D. Rouse	A/Sec

1. **APOLOGIES**

Nil, all Committee members were present.

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted, with the correction that Agenda item DONM should be labelled 11 and not 10, proposed by Lt Cdr Howe and seconded by Lt Cdr Brooks.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no Formal Actions outstanding from the Committee meeting on 13 Dec 23 and no other items were raised.

4. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Lt Cdr Rook, Treasurer reported that at the December meeting the OA fund stood at £4898.34, it currently stood at £2963.17. The account activity of note for the period, was the £687 relating to the sword. The final figures for the Trafalgar Night had now been charged to the OA account, with a subsidy requirement of £1247.

Lt Cdr Rook said that sometimes VAT was included in the quotation, and sometimes it wasn't, which made it difficult to calculate the figures for an event. Approximately £2000 was input from annual fees, but the Mess Treasurer had given early notice that the contribution to the WR Mess would be going up in 2025. There was a discussion on whether to raise the annual subscriptions. Cdr Coombes pointed out that if the subs were increased, members may question why it was necessary to also increase the cost of events.

Lt Cdr Brooks suggested that the membership should be told exactly how much the OA received from the subscriptions. Lt Cdr Rook stated that about £2900 was the actual income from the

subscriptions. After further discussion, it was proposed by Capt Palmer, seconded by Lt Cdr Brooks, that the subscriptions should be increased. The Committee were all in favour of the proposal for an increase of £2pa.

Lt Cdr Rook reported that a new board for the OA Sword recipients was needed. Capt Palmer said he would look into who was responsible for updating the board.

Action Capt Palmer

5. SOCIAL AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership

ACTIVE	232
COUNTRY	91
FULL	10
HONORARY	7
TOTAL	340
Cancelled since last meeting	4
Deceased since last meeting	4

Social Report

Taking into account Committee comments, Lt Cdr Carr reported that the OA would be hosting their own Trafalgar Ladies' Guest Night. The date options had been Fri 18 Oct or Fri 1 Nov, and it was decided that the event would be on Fri 1 Nov.

Lt Cdr Carr said he had asked for a cost base by mid-late Aug with the intention of uploading the booking form by end Aug at the latest, this should give an early indication of take up. Based on last year the headline price should be around £70 for Members and 1 guest and £75 for all other guests. Based on the attendance last year (120), the above costs would raise just over £9000. If these prices were increased to £75 and £80, £9775 would be generated.

Lt Cdr Carr listed the options to save money: No Fort Cumberland Guard saving £240; Limited Printing saving £50-£70; No Pre-Dinner drinks saving £125; No fish course; Own wine from the bar. However, he and the rest of the Committee were not in favour of any of the options. Capt Palmer pointed out that cancelling pre-dinner drinks would result in a long queue at the bar. It was agreed to go forward with the current plans and see the resulting take up. Should take up not be forthcoming, members will be advised to join the actual Wardroom Trafalgar Night on the 24 Oct 24.

Despite the long-standing naval tradition of not taking drinks into the dining room, it had been decided that at the 2024 OA Trafalgar Ladies' Guest Night, there would be no restriction on taking unfinished drinks into the dining room.

Capt Palmer said he would like the OA to try to hold a lunch or evening event somewhere. Lt Cdr Brooks offered to investigate various locations for lunch or dinner.

Action Lt Cdr Brooks

PMN – Lt Cdr Brooks reported by email that he was investigating the following venues: -

The Great Cabin, HMS Victory
The Lower Gun Deck, HMS Victory

Officers' Half Deck, HMS Warrior
Nelson Gallery Storehouse 11
Royal Maritime Hotel, various areas including Nelson's Lounge
Peter Ashley Activities Centres, Fort Purbrook

Capt Palmer suggested that a lunch could be organised around the time of the AGM.

Action Lt Cdr Carr

6. OA SEC'S CORNER

Cdr Coombes, OA Sec, reported that despite having told members that if they were entering Collingwood for organised OA functions only, it wasn't necessary to hold ID and car passes as there would be a detailed list of attendees at the gate, since the last meeting, requests from members choosing to retain ID cars and car passes were 17 over a 10-week period. The number was small but resulted in an uncontrolled dribble of requests. Hence, provision of passes was bound to be less than optimal.

Cdr Coombes said that he had encouraged members to send AFs to his home address, and that he was considering the purchase of a second "OA authorisation stamp" to be used by a nominated member in his absence.

The MoD security passes team in Atlantic block remained extremely supportive.

7. REPORT FROM WARDROOM MESS COMMITTEE

Lt Cdr Carr reported that he was, pro tem, OA WRMC Representative and had attended the WR Mess AGM on 14 Mar 24. He had produced a synopsis of the proceedings, which is reproduced below.

"Mess should be cognisant that we are still a standalone Mess, on a recent visit to RNAS CULDROSE it was found that the 'Wardroom' was now just a floor of the WO&SR Mess. Lots going on in Defence that will affect both COLLINGWOOD in general and also the Mess. The Committee has no say over the policies but where they can they will try and implement sympathetically.

The updated Mess Rules were published 2 months ago but there has been no feedback (see later re Rig).

The Mess Pres has been keen to re-establish the building as a Wardroom rather than a general conference facility which he feared was becoming the case. Please bear that in mind when looking at mess rules etc.

Finance

As of 29th Feb (end of FY 31 March) net worth of Mess was £353.7K:

<i>Fixed Assets</i>	<i>£55.6K</i>
<i>Current Assets</i>	<i>£128.6K</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£184.2K</i>
<i>Liabilities</i>	<i>£43.5K</i>
<i>Net Assets</i>	<i>£140.7K (£46.5 readily available)</i>

Mess has agreed to increase Full Serving Member fees from £15 to £16

Civilian non-serving Member £19.20

Associate Member £10

Officers' Association Contribution will remain unchanged for 2024 but will increase in 2025.

Where do Mess Fees Go

%	Item
28	TV & Audio (Sky)
25	Running Costs
24	Coffee (will reduce in future as new machines come on line)
14	Newspapers & Magazines (from 1 April on line platform will drastically reduce this, see below)
4	CAF
3	Mess Hospitality
2	Future Projects and Investments

Social

Tuesday Quiz well attended now with Free Chips and Dips

More joint ventures with WO&SR Mess

WO&SR organising a joint D Day 80th Anniversary Dinner – 6th June but WR mess members only

WO&SR Mess organising a joint Battle of Britain Dinner – guests TBC

COLLINGWOOD Open Day 6th July

Summer Ball 20th July Wild, Wild West theme

Trafalgar Night 24 Oct

Xmas Raffle Tickets can be purchased by Standing Order.

Possible requirement for International Rep on Committee

Mess Improvements

New Online Media site (combined with WO&SR Mess) now available

Can be used off site, password changed monthly. Logon via QR code or URL.

Funding being sort for new improvements from RNRMC, last funding was for Woody's Bar in 2014.

Discussion took place on dress standards within the Mess with the feeling from several members that standards are slipping. Mess Pres will look again at mess rules to see if they are explicit enough, in the meantime, it is everyone's responsibility to challenge those who do not come up to standard".

Several points were raised wrt the above synopsis of the AGM. Lt Cdr Carr will investigate whether the QR code for the 'On Line Media Site' will be available to the OA. Capt Palmer said he would make a formal note/request if necessary. It was agreed that the OA would not contribute to the new improvements (upgrading of the Leading Hands Mess). On the subject of dress standards within the Mess, Lt Cdr Carr believed that young/junior officers were reluctant to challenge people on dress standards.

8. THE REVIEW OF THE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Capt Palmer stated that he didn't feel it was worthwhile producing a written report on the outcome of the Review and much would stay as it is. It was agreed that the conclusions would be summarised and published in the next Newsletter. The conclusions are listed below.

- The Committee's view is that the OA should largely continue as is (ie. a membership organisation based at and part of HMS COLLINGWOOD, running its own events) and wishes to retain its own Trafalgar Night. This is broadly supported by the responses to the December 2023 survey.
- The Committee believes that the recent Burns Night, held jointly with the Wardroom and WO/SR mess, was a success. However, the experience shows that there were restrictions,

especially around the numbers of guests permitted, which have highlighted the downside of shared events. Such joint events will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- The committee accepts that there is no current prospect of W/R guest accommodation being available.
- The Wardroom's ability to offer consistent quality and value-for-money services for Mon-Friday formal or informal events/lunches, with or without entertainment, is still questionable and needs to be understood. This uncertainty is likely to be ongoing and will need constant experimentation and challenge. A better understanding of event cost drivers is needed and earlier quotes, well before holding the event, is needed. How do we build our relationship with the Mess Manager to achieve a better outcome?
- More support is needed in organising social events - do we need to recruit an assistant social sec onto the Committee.

Capt Palmer stated that slightly updated Rules and Constitution were already uploaded to the OA website but they would be taken to the AGM for formal agreement.

9. AOB

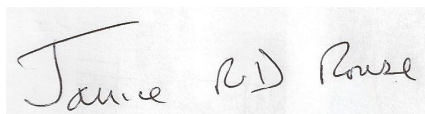
Capt Palmer explained the capabilities of the new website and Lt Cdr Carr explained some of the changes he had suggested.

10. DONM

The date of the next meeting: -

Fri 7 Jun 24 at 1100 followed by the AGM at 1130.

Lt Cdr Rouse, A/Sec, proposed the dates for Committee meetings from Sep 24 through to the 2025 AGM. The dates agreed were Wed 11 Sep 24, Wed 4 Dec 24, Wed 12 Mar 25 and Fri 6 Jun 25 followed by the AGM. She would check the availability of the proposed dates with the WRMM.



J R D ROUSE

Lt Cdr

A/Sec

Distribution: -

Committee Members

Wardroom Mess Treasurer

OA Website