

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

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**National Committee Meeting held at
Court Barn Conservative Club, Court Barn Lane, Broom Way, Lee-
on-Solent PO13 9NZ on Saturday 12th October 2024
Commencing at 1100**

Minutes

Attendees: Dave Smith (DS) Peter Murray (PM)
Jim Moulson (JM) Mick Wyatt (MW)
Alan Key (AK) Mike Foote (MF)
Ben Worship (BW)

Apologies: Fred Wadley, Jeff Cook (JC)

Visitors: Geoff Owen (Kent Branch)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 11:00

The meeting then stood for a one minutes silence in remembrance of the following who had Crossed the Bar; Bernard Worman (Yorkshire)

JM said that he had received a mail from Fred Wadley with his apologies and sent all his regards.

Item 1. Minutes of the NEC Meeting January 2024 and Zoom meetings of 15 May, 26 June and 23 July

The minutes of the January 2024, May and June Zoom meetings were accepted as correct by the meeting.

MF said that he had raised the Channel Dash 2025 service and the Capelle-Ferne Battle of Britain Memorial service at the June meeting. He said that he had received an invitation to attend the Channel Dash service but there was no mention of parading the FAAA standard, he would chase

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that up. MF also said that we didn't really want to get involved with the Capel service.

Item 2. Matters Arising

The Daedalus Commemorative Stone (DCS) was on the agenda and would be discussed at that point

Item 3. Officers Reports

Treasurer:

AK informed the meeting that the Association is in a healthy state and the accounts as they currently stand, A cheque for £1317 from Max Wright had been deposited in the Welfare Fund. A further cheque for £70 had been received but there were no details as to who it was from, AK had contacted a Funeral Director but had not received any details.

Bank Accounts:

HSBC Current Account	£2300.00
Nat West Main Account	£37,000.00
Nat West Welfare Fund	£11,000.00

A request for assistance for a member of the Weymouth & Portland Branch had been received to help towards expenses to visit his son who is hospitalised in Southampton where he is recovering from a stroke.

AK outlined the case saying that it was his parents who were travelling 3 times per week to take the pressure off his daughter-in-law and family, and he was in support of a one-off grant of £250.

JM was not in favour as the son was not dependant on the father, AK likened this case to that of a Yeovil member who was visiting his wife daily in Taunton, who received the same payment.

JM pointed out that this sum was paid on completion of his visits and supported by petrol receipts.

DS considered that this request should be considered further at the end of the meeting by DS, AK, and JM

Secretary

Nothing to report apart from receiving a letter from Commodore Stu Finn, thanking me for the restoration of the benches at the FAA Memorial

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and that he intended to pay his respects at the memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

Membership Secretary/Standard Bearer

MW said that there are 173 Branch members on the books, although it could be more as he does not believe he has a full list from all the branches. He did say that Weymouth & Portland branch now had 108 members.

JM said that Solent Branch members found the copy of the Membership Form, he had received was very difficult to complete online. MW said that he would revamp the form to make it easier to complete and make it universal and control the membership database for all members.

JC had informed DS that recruiting at both Yeovilton and Culdrose with the hope of starting up new branches at both air stations would be taken forward in the coming months.

JM passed over the residue of the membership cards to MW, who also offered to take ownership of the cards and also the year stickers. JM had ordered the 2025 stickers and said that he would pass them onto to MW soon.

MF asked AK if branches passed on the names of the full members when they paid their capitation fee. AK said that some do some don't.

DS said that there needs to be a revamp of the membership data base to get an accurate picture of the membership numbers. DS asked how many new members we have had recently MW said that Daedalus Branch had 4 new members.

Chairman

DS will be attending Remembrance Sunday and JC has indicated that there are 22 names for the march in London. JC is trying to organise a meet up on the Tattersall Castle, following the laying of wreaths at the FAA memorial at Embankment.

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Item 4a. Vice Chairman/Chairman

DS advised all that he had received a letter from JC to advise that he had reluctantly decided that he was not able to continue in the role of Vice Chairman, or indeed commit himself to taking over the Chair at the next AGM. He did say that he wished to carry on in the role of Cenotaph Marshal, which DS confirmed that he was welcome to do so. DS asked that he consider becoming a Ex-Officio Committee Member, which he was delighted to do.

Item 4b. Committee Members/Officers Lists

JM advised that both lists had been updated and sent out with the agenda.

DS asked that Janet be added to the list as the Newsletter Editor, also to remove JC as W&P Secretary and add Ian Tate.

MW advised that his telephone number had changed.

PM Proposed a vote of thanks for editing the Newsletter, we now need articles from Branches for future editions.

Item 5a. 2024 Reunion – Status

AK advised the meeting that a contract had been signed with the Holiday Inn Southampton along with a £250 deposit. There would be no loss to the Association if we had to cancel the reunion before 30 January 2025. There had only been 3 bookings so far.

A query was raised by a Solent member regards refunds as, he has just suffered a relapse of his cancer and didn't want to pay a deposit if there to be refund due to illness.

AK confirmed that any cancellation through illness, would be refunded.

Individual cancellations can be made up to 15 March without penalty.

PM asked if a package cost has been decided on yet, AK said that it had but he would check the details and publish an updated version next week.

The cost of car parking was queried, as last year it was free for those staying overnight. AK said that it was the policy of all hotels in

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Southampton to charge £12.50 for each overnight stay and would be an additional cost.

JM asked that the end time for the parking charge is made clear by the hotel. He did not envisage any changes to those shown on the website booking form. There would also be a 10% discount on drinks throughout the weekend.

All branches and the website are to advertise the function between now and January.

Item 6a. Website status

DS reported that the numbers visiting the website is increasing and there have been a steady viewing of both the reunion 2025 and joining pages. Hopefully the visits to the joining page is producing new members. DS stated that he is still looking at how we can get both an online joining form and members area up and running with the latter possibly requiring the uploading of the upto date membership database to the site.

Item 6b. Welcome pack

The welcome pack for any new members joining the Association will be as currently stated on the website, i.e. Pin badge, Membership Card, the current Newsletter and BACs details.

Item 6c. FAAA presence on RNA Website

DS introduced this by saying that W & P have been in discussion with the RNA, who are keen to encourage associations to have access to the website, which is hoped will be of benefit to both organisations, with the potential to increase membership for both the RNA and other RN associations.

Currently a link to the FAAA has been set up, and clicking on the menu button will take you to CONA and underneath that the FAAA, which also provides a link to W&P site.

All committee members are encouraged to visit the RNA site and pass comments to DS, both positive and negative or other suggestions.

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Item 7. Remembrance Sunday

There are 22 names down for Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph parade in London and JC will be leading the Association.

JM has been in contact with the parade staff at HMS Sultan and have confirmed that the XTM is in the process of being drafted and have also confirmed that the road closures will be in place.

MW would be attending the FAA memorial at Lee-on-Solent with the Standard. JM advised that he would be marching there also, his days of marching at the Cenotaph are over. As the Solent Standard Bearer would be away on holiday, JM may well parade the Standard, for the first time. Ben Worship would be laying the wreath for the FAAA.

If the War Graves Commission are unable to tidy the hedges and flower beds at the memorial, JM has organised a working party to tidy up the area.

PM said that the bookings for the Fleet Air Arm Memorial weekend had been made and would take place on 18 May 2025. It would take the same format as in previous years, with the evening meal at Lee Golf Club on the Saturday, followed by the Service at St Faiths church on the Sunday afternoon.

MW asked if the National Standard was required? It was confirmed that it was, and the Solent Standard would be an added bonus.

It had also been suggested that all attending the service should go to the FAA memorial for the laying of the wreaths by the HMS Sultan volunteers.

Item 8. Welfare donation

As noted at Item 3 this would be discussed post meeting by DS, AK and JM.

POST MEETING NOTE;

JM Although not against the requested grant, expressed concern that the £250 was to be paid without any proof of expenditure.

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Both AK & DS were happy that W & P had followed the Welfare Fund Procedure for Claiming, however JM was not happy that the process as laid out in paras 3 & 4 had been followed.

DS & AK were adamant that the procedure had been followed and agreed that the sum of £250 be paid by a vote of 2 to 1.

Item 9a. Daedalus Commemorative Stone (DCS) - Update

JM gave an update on the progress of the project so far. To date the formal procedures for planning had been submitted to Gosport Borough Council and the legal documentation for the work to install the stone on the airside and the information boards, have been submitted to Fareham Borough Council.

On site visits had been made by the team with Council members and the local councillors who have provided assistance and support of the project throughout. A diagram of the stone was passed around for all to see.

A memorandum of Understanding (MOU) laying out the details of the project, had been produced which was presented to FBC for scrutiny and approval. However, FBC did not have the necessary legal expertise to go over the detail and it then passed to the legal team at Southampton City Council.

The cost for this was estimated at just under £3K, however after much discussion this was reduced to under £1K and considered to be in order.

The RNA have also agreed to take responsibility for the continued maintenance of the Stone for the next 20 years. As part of the process we have had to provide risk assessments for the work to be undertaken for the installation, and assessments to ensure that the any underground services close to the control tower are not compromised, and that the area is free from explosives (the airfield was checked and cleared of suspected pipe bombs in the 1980s).

The next step is to agree on the material composition and colour of the stone. A local stonemason has been commissioned to source and engrave the stone. There is a lead time of 5 months from ordering to delivering the stone to the stonemason. The timing will depend on when sufficient funds have been raised to cover the cost of this phase.

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Item 9b. DCS – Funding

JM gave an update on the cost and donations pledged and received to date.

The projected project cost stands at £11.5K. The cost of the DCS and engraving is £4.5K. which was considered to be adequate to cover both the purchase, planning and legal costs. Installation and fencing costs are additional. £3K is also being raised for potential information boards at the site.

Funding/Grants to date are RNA centre pledged up to £5K, with the caveat that other service associations are requested to raise funds.

The local RNA Branch has pledged £1k as has the Solent Branch of the FAAA.

FNF have been requested to canvass the 18 Associations to donate towards the project.

JM asked the NEC to match the RNA pledge with the caveat that the maximum would be £5K dependant on what the FNF could raise.

At the time of the NEC meeting no offers of support had been made, although interest had been shown. A request had also been made to the RNRMC.

The Daedalus Aircraft and Heritage Group (DA&HG) have also been approached to assist with the research and provision of the information boards. They are keen to assist and have received correspondence from Richard Hobbs advising that estimated cost for this phase would be between £3 - £4K.

JM asked if there were any questions regarding funding. AK said that he was involved with the DA&HG and said that all Director and members of the committee were in favour of supporting the project, but they would have to go to all of their members for approval of any funding.

PM asked if the cost was still in the region of £15k, JM said that cost is now approximately £11.5K, could be more depending on the cost of the fencing and surrounding base.

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PM said that if we pledged £2.5K that would equate to approximately £10 per member. AK said that possibly we should go to the membership and ask if they supported this project, if we said that we would give £5K that would equate to about 12% of our funds, are we entitled to do that?

DS said that if we were to pledge that sum of money it couldn't be done until the AGM. The members may not agree to that, we should wait and see what other Associations are offering and then make the decision.

JM did not think that was the way ahead as we have experience of other associations not supporting the FAA memorial weekend, so there would be little chance of receiving anything from the majority of the FNF.

JM also said that we should be taking the lead as, we have always considered Daedalus to be the home of the association and of course Daedalus Branch is our HQ Branch. The FAAA should not be sitting on the fence.

JM reminded the meeting that in 2020 that a motion was passed to reduce the funds to £20K in 10 years. A discussion on the topic ensued.

DS said that the max we could give at this meeting in accordance with the Constitution was £250 and would have to refer it to the AGM for anything more. He also suggested that we should be looking at BAE and other companies to donate towards the stone.

JM said that we should donate £2K now, with a pledge to increase up to the Max of £5K. AK said that as the Treasurer he would not allow the funds to be pledged until there has been full consultation with the members at the AGM.

DS said that he feels that all the committee agree that they support the principal we should donate towards the stone. However, we would be willing to donate £250 at this meeting and then look at what is still required to make up any shortfall or suggest a £2K max to take forward to the AGM in May.

JM asked what is stopping us going to all the Branches now to vote on a proposal. Also if we don't reach the target needed to secure the project and to take it forward, it will be a lame duck and will be an embarrassment to the FNF.

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The other option, as DS suggested is to go and ask other outside organisations to assist, which JM doesn't want. The team see this as a project which should be met by the RN.

AK said that the RNA membership is probably 25000 compared to our 250 members and the request to donate the same as them is out of order. JM reminded AK that membership to the RNA is free and is supported by the RNRMC.

JM said that we shouldn't be thinking along those lines, the RNA suggested a Commemorative stone and are leading it. They could have done it without consultation with us, but they wanted to involve us.

AK said that in the past there had been oversight with donations and we cannot continue with this. Reiterating that the maximum we can pledge at this time is £250, in accordance with the Constitution. We are going to support the DCS but at this moment we cannot pledge £5K, it is too much. JM said once again that it was the Maximum if other Associations would not contribute, it would more than likely be half that amount.

DS said that the Max we could pledge today is £250 and he suggested that in supporting the project we could offer £2K meaning that a proposal to the AGM would be £1750. A note could be sent out to all Branches explaining what was needed and discussed at the January meeting and then taken forward to the AGM.

JM proposed that an Extraordinary meeting be held in advance of the AGM, by Zoom if necessary, this was discounted as the Constitution did not allow for such a meeting for matters such as this.

It was proposed by DS and Seconded by PM that the way forward would be to award the £250 now with the further £1750 discussed as basis for submission as a motion for the AGM, all were in favour. DS said that this may be seen in bad light by others but there was no other way out due to the rules of the Constitution.

AK said that DA&HG had received a letter from the Project Manager that we only needed to raise between £3K & £4K, which was for Information Boards and not the Stone. JM pointed out that the sum quoted was for the next phase and not the Stone.

JM said that he was very disappointed with the outcome of the discussion.

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Item 10. Slops/FAA Crest (King's Crown)

JM asked if the King's Crest would be added when the next order is placed.

Item 11. AOB

DS said that all stationary should be the same with regards to the content of the Headers/Footers. The Association address should reflect the FAAA.org.uk address.

Item 10. Date of next meeting: Saturday 18 January 2025

The Chairman closed the meeting at 14:55

Jim Moulson MBE
Secretary
Fleet Air Arm Association