

AGM 2021 SCRIPT

Attendees are directed to an opening SLIDE Agenda

Item 1. Opening by Chairman.

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Royal Air Force Apprentices' Association. My name is Frank Denton-Powell (ex 90th Entry), and I am the present Chairman of our Association.

Following tradition, we will now listen to the Apprentice Prayer recited today by Council Member Barry Hathaway, 100th entry.

The conduct of today's meeting will follow the agenda published in the last issue of the Haltonian Magazine. Voting has already taken place concerning approval of a new CIO Constitution and approval of members to fulfil Council Officer roles. These results will be announced as we progress. In accordance with our existing constitution, we asked for questions to be tabled by members ahead of the AGM. We received one request and have answered that by letter. If members wish to raise questions during the meeting, please use your zoom "Chat" boxes to initiate a question that will be answered at the end of the meeting if time permits. Our General Secretary is controlling these inputs and we will do our best to answer your query. If we fail to answer your point today, we will respond to you after the meeting.

In accordance with our existing constitution, we need to have three Council members and fifty other members present to make us quorate.

Our General Secretary has just reported to me that the numbers now present make us quorate.

You will note that there are two additional items to our agenda. I am pleased to say our President and Station Commander RAF Halton, Gp Capt Startup will say a few words at Item 10 and at Item 11, our Vice-Patron Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller will wind-up our meeting.

Item 2. Apologies for Absence.

I have received apologies for absence from the following members:

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage

Air Marshal Cliff Spink

Andrew Wilkinson 93rd

Item 3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 19th September 2020.

As you will recall, last year's meeting took place as a virtual Council meeting. We published a recording of the meeting on our website together with a transcript of the meeting, as minutes. Subsequently, your Council approved these minutes and there are no outstanding actions.

Item 4. Approval of the RAFHAA CIO Governing Document.

As you will all know by now, this document is a revision of our 2020 Constitution. I shall now hand you over to Chas Challinger (our Deputy Chairman) to declare the results of the voting. Chas.

We will now continue our Agenda in accordance with the new CIO Constitution. Just before we leave this item, I would like to thank Barry Neal (103rd entry), for all his detailed work in developing our new constitution. It was a real tour de force, an accomplishment managed with great skill. Barry, on behalf of all our members, thank you very much.

Item 5. Statement of Accounts.

I shall now ask our Treasurer, Phil Sprinks, to give his report.

Good afternoon,

I became the HAA Treasurer on the resignation of Alan Bell at the end of 2020 and combined the position with my role of 500 Club Organiser.

Today I wish to show the HAA investment situation at Slide 2 and give the income and expenditure highlights for the first half of 2021 in Slide 3.

SLIDE 2

Slide 2 shows our core investments between 2019 and Aug 2021. In 2019 some £200,000 was transferred to RAFHAT and in 2020 that £200,00 was returned together with a further £25,000 from unspent Halton Grove project money.

On takeover I reviewed our investments in Elevate GIA and Wealthtime PIP and found that communication with the respective financial advisers was not good. Further, there was a little investment in the UK Stockmarket and over exposure in the US Market and fixed interest stocks. The Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC) decided to reduce exposure and consolidate the investment through one financial advisor halving the annual fees.

The Treasury team interviewed several financial advisers and chose the best who represented Quilter (previously known as Old Mutual Wealth). Quilter carried out an independent financial risk assessment on each member of the FGPC and considered the HAA Constitution for prudent investment. Quilter recommended their Cirilium Moderate Portfolio.

The HAA invested £350,000 in the Moderate Portfolio and today the portfolio is valued at £361,824. A 4 month increase of £11,824. Our investment policy is one of capital growth over a period of 5 years with no 'drawdown' for the first two years.

SLIDE 3

Slide 3 gives a snapshot of how we are doing in the first half of the year. I am showing budget versus actual figures for both income and expenditure so that comparisons can be easily made.

I would highlight that our income is mainly from membership subscriptions supplemented in the last several months by the 500 Club lottery of which our Patron is a player. Under expenditure admin costs include postage, telephone, and audit fees. Travel costs are well down due to Covid restrictions. The Haltonian magazine is the jewel in our crown. We also fulfil our role as a modest charity with current donations to RAF Halton and RAFA.

At present we are within budget.

Item 6. Membership Secretary's Report.

Our Membership Secretary Colin Ferrier (93rd) is unfortunately unwell and so I will briefly cover the Membership stats.

SLIDE 4 shows a pie chart of the present membership numbers.

At 2143 members, there has been a small reduction of about 5% in our membership this year, due mainly to the increased numbers of Last Postings caused by Covid 19. We have also lost a few members because of the subscription increase introduced at the last AGM. Generally, we have struggled to get members to change their bank standing orders, but we are working on this, and progress is being made. Hopefully, next year's re-union will generate a spike in new or renewal membership numbers. Life Members make up 51% of our population (these are members who joined in the early days of the Association and contributed one very small fee for life). Unfortunately, over the years, their original contribution has been thoroughly disbursed and I urge this group to consider changing to Heritage Membership in the same way as 200 of their colleagues have done this year. Heritage Membership was introduced at last year's AGM, (to balance income to expenditure), and there are now 317 members in this category. This has been a marvellous response but more Life Members transferring to Heritage are needed. The number of Ordinary Members, that pay yearly and by standing order, reduced this year to 711, mainly due to Last Postings.

And finally, I can report that new membership increased by 35 in the past year, which is very encouraging.

As you know, Colin Ferrier is standing down from his role as Membership Secretary today, and I should like to thank him on behalf of all our members for his detailed and dedicated contribution to all Council matters not least of course his work in improving the quality of our Membership data base. Thank you very much Colin.

Item 7. Heritage and Development Report. SLIDE 5

Our Deputy Chairman will now report on Heritage and Development matters. Chas.

Heritage

It is a pleasure to announce that the Trenchard Museum, the James McCudden Flight Heritage centre and the Station Archives have reopened to visitors. The Archives have relocated to ground floor adjacent to the JMFHC rather than their previous location upstairs.

It is important to note, however, that applications to visit must be made to Min Larkin or Francis Hanford at least one week before the date of your intended visit. Their contact details are on the back page of the Haltonian.

Please include in your application the names of those in your party, their car registration numbers, home addresses and phone numbers. Please also note that masks and gloves must be worn throughout the visit.

St George's church has also reopened to visitors but please check times with Min before travelling.

There are vacancies in both the museum and the archives for volunteers. Please apply to Min or Francis if you are interested. Volunteers from wives, partners and relatives are also welcome to apply.

Closure plans

As you will be well aware the stated date for closure of RAF Halton is 2025 and we are now in detailed communication with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, which is the relevant section within the Ministry of Defence for military estate disposals.

The DIO have recognised our Association as a stakeholder with regard to St Georges. They have also designated St George's as a sustainable building. The church will continue to be used until such time as a closing date is specified within the overall plan for closure. By then we should expect that any bid we wish to make must have been submitted and obviously the work to prepare such a bid and raise the necessary funds to support it needs to begin now.

The Business Plan

As a first step the Council evaluated what was available in the market with respect to appropriate business plan consultants and subsequently accepted the offer from Focus Consulting to prepare a detailed business plan. Focus has a highly regarded reputation in this area and have proven to be a strong partner in guiding us as the various elements of the plan come together. Once the plan is complete, which should be within the next month, we will then begin the research phase to identify and approach likely sources of funding to support our ambitions.

Our plans go beyond just acquiring St George's since the desired future use will be as a Halton Heritage Centre which will provide what we need to protect the windows, the Tribute, the Museum, Archives and JMFHC but also create new community use to serve the houses being built. This will require permanent employed staff and many other considerations. The benefit is that it will create long term protection of what is important to us and serve the directives and parameters within which the DIO operates.

Throughout this process so far we have received excellent support from the Halton Parish Council and also the SO1 RAF Heritage, Wing Commander Erica Ferguson who, amongst other projects, has managed the whole Bentley Priory heritage centre's creation and transition from Military to civilian management.

The reunion August 20th 2022

This event will celebrate the centenary of the first arrival at Halton of Trenchard Brats when the foundation stones of all we experienced in subsequent years were laid. Your Council intends to make this an event to remember so if you have not booked yet, please do so. The earlier we have an idea of the attendance figures we can finalise the elements of the event. Our Vice Patron, Sir Dusty Miller, has initiated contact with the RAF at the highest level to attain RAF recognition for our event which, if achieved, will ensure that the event will be very special.

Finally, I would like to comment that working with the Council is stimulating and enjoyable and we have gelled into a great team. We still need more help, especially from the more junior entries, as we are all of advancing years and inevitability diminishing energy so, please do see if you can find the time to help us especially in this important next phase.

Item 8. Chairman's Report. SLIDES 6 and 7(1 of 2) and (2 of 2)

Gentlemen, I think you will all agree that a remarkable transformation in the fortunes of our Association has continued in the past 12 months. By dint of hard work from all your Council, we have achieved a long list of successes. We have restored our membership data base, introduced new membership categories, and issued a redesigned membership card; we have introduced legally required general data protection, re-established good relations with RAF Halton, the Trenchard Museum and the Archives and engaged with MOD and other key stakeholders on the future of the RAF Halton real estate.

We have developed a fund-raising lottery that is contributing over £400 per month to our Heritage Development fund. I might say, the success of this venture has been down to Phil Sprinks and his never-ending brat humour in all his communications with players. On top of this, we have completely remodelled our financial investment plan, developed a Financial Procedures and Policy document, created Terms of Reference for all members of the Council and developed the CIO Constitution that you approved today.

We have communicated with our members through regular Newsletters and an improved website that is attracting more and more attention; the quality of our main mouthpiece, the Haltonian Magazine, has continued to reach exceptional standards of content and production. We have made meaningful donations to a number of charities and as you have heard we are working with Focus Consulting to develop a Business Plan to meet our Heritage aspirations. As soon as the plan is published, we will make it available to members on our web site.

We have not forgotten Halton Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum. (SLIDE 8)Thirty-nine new pavers have been laid by families and friends, four of which are for entries not previously recognised. Your Council has also funded 4 Granite Pavers commemorating those ex-apprentices who took part in the Great Escape, The Battle of Britain, the Dambuster raids and Sir Frank Whittle. More are planned in the future. The pavers have been kept in good order by professional jet washing and the 79th and 84th entries have very kindly paid for the refurbishment of wooden benches. I must say a big thank you to the Halton Grove volunteer gardeners who through their hard work and dedication ensure the Halton Grove always looks its best.

Finally, I should like to announce that this year's Remembrance Service at St George's Church followed by an Act of Remembrance at the Tribute will take place on 10th November. We are expecting the Golden Oldies pipe band to attend, and a bugler will sound the Last Post. Afterwards, we hope to gather in the Sgts' Mess for lunch. More on this in the next Newsletter and on-line.

I now want to update you on our plan to produce a memorial to ex-Halton brats that we are calling Trenchards's Legacy.

SLIDE9 shows a sketch of the detail to be included in a large bronze plaque that will be erected adjacent to our planned Heritage Centre either at St George's Church or in an alternative location yet to be decided. Membership reacted favourably to the plan when details were posted in a recent Newsletter and we received suggestions for improvements. Currently, we are working on a design that will include the Apprentice Wheel, a Lancaster instead of a Manchester bomber, removal of Halton House in favour of a passing out parade on Henderson Grove, inclusion of sports activities and thought is being given to turning the overall silhouette into the wings of an eagle.

The cost of making this 20ft by 5ft bronze has been estimated at £110,000 including VAT; the wall and surroundings will be an additional cost once its final location is decided.

SLIDE 10 depicts the plaque mounted on a purpose-built wall.

We hope to include more information on this project in our Business Plan. Funding will be met from RAFHAA funds, and the fund-raising opportunities identified in our business plan.

Turning now to work planned for the new Council in the next year. As you have heard, there is much to be achieved regarding our Heritage aspirations. The new Constitution provides us with the opportunity to develop a new class of membership for Friends of the Association, and we are particularly keen to involve the widows and families of deceased ex-brats. Last year we identified the need to update our “old Haltonian’s” web-site. Our IT specialist, Clive Brooks, is well advanced on a new site that will be launched shortly. Now we are back on solid ground it will be easier to concentrate on new initiatives and we should be grateful for any new idea’s members may have.

That concludes my report, and we will now turn to the election of Council officers.

Item 9. Election of RAFHAA Council Officers. The results of your voting will now be declared by our Deputy Chairman. Chas.

SLIDE 11 That concludes the more formal business of our AGM, and I should now like to introduce our President, Group Captain Dan Startup, Station Commander RAF Halton.

Item 10. President’s Report. SLIDES Photograph and Pass out parade.

Item 11. Winding-up Address Vice Patron Sir Dusty Miller SLIDES Photograph and HG Parade Ground

Gentlemen, I have just checked the “chat” boxes for any questions that have been asked from the floor and I am pleased to say no questions have been asked.

Therefore, I now declare the 2021 AGM closed.

SLIDE: Apprentice Wheel