20210409-IX\_Assn\_Committee\_8 Apr 21\_Minutes-U

9 Apr 21

**MINUTES OF IX(B) SQN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE – 8 APR 2021**

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| Present | AM S Evans  Gp Capt I Sharrocks  Gp Capt J Nixon  WO (Ret’d) D A Wood  Mr Mike Pritchard  Mrs Eve Pritchard  CT R Swanson  Sqn Ldr (Ret’d) R James  Flt Lt A Hargreaves | President  Chairman  Vice Chairman  Secretary  Joint Treasurer  Joint Treasurer  Dep Secretary  Historian  OIC Assn Standard |
| Apologies | Air Cdre N Hay  Wg Cdr S Batt  Wg Cdr (Ret’d) P Lenihan  CT Mark Couling | Vice President  OC IX(B) Sqn  Charities Comm Rep  Groundcrew Liaison |
| **Item 1 - Welcome**  1. The Chairman opened the Meeting and thanked everyone for joining.  **Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting**  2. The minutes of the last meeting (3 Mar 21) were distributed to all members prior to the meeting and outstanding actions were added to this meeting agenda. These outstanding actions were reviewed as follows:  **Decision:** All other Actions listed in 3 Mar 21 Minutes that are not agenda items for this meeting were deemed closed.  **Item 3 – Financial Situation**  3. The Treasurers reported the accounts are in a stable position with a current account total of £22,851.73  4. The 2021/22 Financial Plan has been compiled but the Treasurers stated this is an estimate and reiterated the need to remain flexible, in the short term, whilst plans for Assn events firm up as the Nation comes out of lockdown.  5. The Treasurers stated their concerns over dwindling membership (normal loss of membership is around 5% per annum but replaced by circa 5% of new members) and how this affects income/expenditure in the face of rising costs. The discussion centred around a recruitment strategy, particularly targeting former squadron members from the Tornado era. The Chairman volunteered to oversee a digital recruitment campaign on behalf of the Assn. The Chairman also volunteered to discuss squadron membership and how this can be improved with OC IX(B) Squadron, the suggestion being that membership is free whilst serving on the Squadron but on departure individuals become full paid up members.  **Action 1:** Chairman to introduce a digital recruitment campaign.  **Action 2:** Chairman to discuss Assn membership with OC IX(B).  6. It was highlighted by the Treasurers that 71 members still only pay £5 per year for membership despite repeated announcements that the annual subscription is £10. There are also a number of members who have not renewed for the past 3 years, who will drop from the active members list if they do not renew in June. In sum, the Treasurers stated that given the dwindling membership, increasing costs and underpayment of subscriptions, the Assn is in a long-term precarious position financially and will remain so unless action is taken. After discussion it was decided that another announcement regarding subscriptions will be placed in TABS 2021 and that the Committee would now be proactive in chasing non/low payment. The Assn Historian, as the Tornado era representative, offered to immediately chase up non-paying members if the Secretary would inform him of the names from that era.  **Action 1:** TABS Editor (Vice-Chairman) to place a statement into TABS regarding low payment numbers. **Post Meeting Note:** Statement provided to editor by Assn Historian.  **Action 2:** Secretary to inform Historian of names of non-paying members from the Tornado era. **Post Meeting Note:** Names provided.  7. There has been a recent unauthorised withdrawal from the Assn Bank Account which was picked up by the Treasurers. The Royal Bank of Scotland has refunded the £31.50 withdrawn. The Chairman thanked the Treasurers for their vigilance and this was wholeheartedly endorsed by the Committee.  8. A discussion ensued about how freely the Assn bank details are shared to encourage payment by BACS bank transfers. The Treasurers reassured the Committee that the bank account details alone are not enough to enable fraudsters access to the account.  9. The Treasurers questioned the level of subsidy the Assn provides for attendees at official functions such as the Annual Reunion. It was agreed that historically, funds raised at these events through the raffle and auction had been used to provide that subsidy and recognised the same level of subsidy may not always be available. Future levels of subsidy will be debated once the post COVID-19 era is understood and decisions have been taken on venues and costs for events.  10. The 2020 Virtual Christmas Raffle was cited as a good fund-raising event where much had been learnt about how to make improvements going forward. It was agreed that this format should be considered again, regardless of raffles at reunion events.  **Item 4 – Association Website.**  **Action: Dep** Secretary to update website to remove reference to the raffle. Reference has been removed from website.  **Item 5 – Lancaster Parts for Auction**  11. The Historian informed the Committee that he had been passed to a new contact in Sweden named Stig Olsen but also it would appear from his last contact with his POC, Christer, they had agreed returning the instruments ‘home’ to the UK was the right thing to do; the Historian will continue to pursue obtaining the Lancaster instruments from Sweden.  **Action:** Historian to continue pursuing purchase through the new POC, Stig Olsen.  **Item 6 – 2021 Reunion**  12. The Secretary reminded the Committee of recent correspondence from the ProjO, Alfie Ferguson, stating his plans to pursue securing commitment and accommodation bookings but without any financial risk to the Membership. The Committee discussed how Officers’ Mess functions are not at the top of the priority list from a Lossiemouth perspective and that any final decision about support to the October Reunion Dinner may be some time away. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is some turmoil around committing to Stn events let alone those from ‘outside’ organisations. It is also recognised that OC IX(B) can have little influence over the final decision. The Chairman committed to speak to the ProjO about making contingency plans, with one suggestion being the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) Lincoln, may be a fallback option. The Committee deferred any final decision on the 2021 Reunion until at least the next meeting and the Secretary is to ensure the ProjO is invited to the May Committee teleconference.  **Action 1:**  Chairman to speak to 2021 Reunion ProjO about contingency planning.  **Action 2:** Secretary to invite Alfie Ferguson to the next meeting.  **Item 7 – TABS 2021**  13. The Vice Chairman/Editor reported that TABS 2021 had been on first circulation around the Committee and thanked the Historian for his detailed return. The 2021 issue is nearing completion, and the Committee were informed the IBCC have been offered a free one-page advertisement to help further their cause, which has suffered considerably during the COVID-19 restrictions. The editor’s aim is to publish by the May Day Bank Holiday.  **Item 8 – Joint Tirpitz Dinner 2021**  14. The Vice Chairman informed the Committee that the dinner is still in the Yes/No space because of COVID-19 and that he is not being pushed by the Junior Sqn Assn for any commitment. It remains unclear at present when we will be required to push out to members to commit to the Dinner but that the Petwood Hotel is being understanding with accommodation requests. It is suspected any requests for Assn members to make a commitment will be in line with the Government Roadmap for release from COVID-19 restrictions; end of Jun is predicted.  **Item 9 - OC IX(B) Sqn – Sqn Update**  15. OC IX(B) Sqn was unable to attend in person and along with apologies sent a written submission; copied below:   * As an update IX(B) Sqn are entering quarantine ahead of our deployment to Romania on Op BILOXI. This is as part of the ongoing NATO Air Policing Mission. We take over the Op on 1 May, so wish us luck on our first ever operational deployment as a Typhoon unit. * The Stn is still pulling together our post OCVID social plan and I will report back with the decision re the Reunion as soon as I get it. * Regarding Mike & Eve's proposal. I understand and empathise with the request, both for the regulatory rationale and the obvious benefits for the majority of the current Association members. There are also the obvious COVID-19 limitations to deal with right now. However, in my opinion the Association will slowly wither and perish if we do not invest in growing a new cohort of members from the Typhoon era. Therefore, the more events we hold in England the less likely people will make the journey North. I know this journey is not easy for many and will be impossible for some, but we need to show serving members what the Association is about, the benefits and wider activities it undertakes. This is why I would support keeping the existing battle rhythm in place, noting COVID has paused this, with the Association event alternating yearly between England and Scotland. I hope that all makes sense. * I will keep you updated from Romania.   **Item 10 – Historian Research Tasks**  16. The Historian updated the Committee on his outstanding actions as follows. Beyond that he had nothing significant to report.  **Action 1:** Historian to prepare response to research requests and circulate to Committee. This has been provided and is now in use.  **Action 2:** Historian to provide updated text for painting displayed in CHOM to Chairman. The picture in question is of a junior squadron aircraft with a joint squadron text; this has now been updated and provided to the Chairman to liaise with CHOM.  **Item 11 – Brittlebank Recognition**  17. A suggestion had been made, ex committee, that the Assn should recognise the considerable financial contributions made by Harry and Maureen Brittlebank. Various ideas were put forward for consideration but the overriding thought was that any recognition should be appropriate to their wishes and that neither of them would want those very funds they had donated to be used to recognise them, however small the amount. The Chairman proposed that a painting be commissioned from a known Assn artist, depicting Avro Lincoln ‘WSC’ an aircraft which has particular meaning for Harry but that it should be funded through donations from the members of the Committee rather than Assn funds. He firmly stated that there was no pressure on individual committee members to donate but sufficient members indicated their willingness to contribute that it was felt worth pursuing; the Historian committed to engaging two Assn members, known for their aviation art. In addition, the Vice Chairman proposed that Harry and Maureen be invited to RAF Cranwell for a VIP day out, including lunch, hosted by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in their official capacities as OC 6 Flying Training School (FTS) and OC 3 FTS respectively. The Secretary offered to collect harry and Maureen from home and drive them for the day, should personal transport prove difficult for them.  **Action 1:** Historian to contact know Assn artists regarding commissioning the painting of Avro Lincoln ‘WSC’.  **Action 2:** Committee members consider personal donations in recognition of Harry and Maureen’s contribution to the Assn.  **Action 3:** A VIP day, including lunch, at RAF Cranwell be planned to honour harry and Maureen.  **Item 12 – AOB**  18. There were 4 items of AOB:   1. **Assn Stationery.** The Chairman stated that a quote had been received for Assn Stationery (envelopes and headed paper) and the Historian (who processed the previous order) would place an order once quantities were known.   **Action:** Committee members to inform Historian of Stationery requirements with regards to envelopes and headed paper.   1. **Annual General Meetings.** A suggestion has been made that future Annual General Meetings (AGM) should not be tied to the Reunion Weekend. Much debate took place and although it had always been part of the Reunion event it was considered that it should not be constrained by that fact. Representation was made that the Membership may be reticent to break from this ‘tradition’ but this was countered by a position that change should be embraced if it actually benefitted the Membership by making the AGM more accessible and creating another event in the year. Discussion continued around whether the reunion should actually move to the summer months to create space between the Reunion and Remembrance, being the two major events of the year for Assn members; this will be debated further at the next meeting. The President proposed that this also be put to the Membership at the next AGM and be included as an item of interest in TABS. In addition, it was proposed that the 2021 AGM be brought forward to May and be held virtually, due to the unknowns of COVID-19 restrictions. This proposal was accepted by the Committee.   **Action 1:**  Debate around Assn Battle Rhythm be included as agenda item for next meeting to enable an agreed position to be presented at AGM.  **Action 2:** Note be placed in TABs to inform Assn Membership that a revised Battle Rhythm is under consideration.  **Action 2:**  A suitable date be selected in May 2021 to hold a virtual AGM.  **Action 3:** Proposal to revise the Assn Battle Rhythm be put to the Membership via the Agenda of the next AGM.   1. **2022 Association 50th Anniversary.** It was proposed that special events be held in 2022 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Assn. Some debate took place regarding the actual date the Assn was born as the Website states initial ideas were communicated in 1972 but it was 1975 when the Assn was actually formed. The Historian committed to finding out the true date.   **Action:** Historian to research and report the date the IX(B) Sqn Assn was officially formed.   1. **Treasurers term of office.** The Treasurers informed the Committee that due to some personal health issues it may not be possible for them to continue in office for the next 4 years. This is early notification that the Committee should start reaching out to the Membership to identify a suitable volunteer to take over Treasurer duties in the near to medium term. The Chairman spoke on behalf of the Committee when passing on best wishes for a successful and speedy recovery.   **Item 13 – President’s Remarks**  19. The President thanked the Committee once again and reinforced the good wishes conveyed to the Treasurers, remarking that if they had to stand down early it isn’t a problem; continued good health is the number 1 priority.  **Item 14 – Date of Next Meeting**    20. Thur 13 May 21 at 20:00 via Teams TeleConference. | | Chairman  Chairman  Vice-Chairman  Secretary  Action Closed  Historian  Chairman  Secretary  Action Closed  Action Closed  Historian  All  Vice Chairman  All  Secretary  Vice Chairman  Treasurers  Secretary  Historian |

D A Wood

WO (R’td)

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Approved by I J Sharrocks, Chairman, 1 May 21.