

**MINUTES OF ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE STROUD CONSERVATIVE CLUB ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023 at 11.00 am**

**1. ACT OF HOMAGE, AND WELCOME.**

Chris Price, our Branch President read the Act of Homage..

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Colin Lambert, Tony Holland, Jane Gandy, Peter House, Stewart Harrison, Jonathan Friedberger, Alan Biggs, Keith Spiret, Trish and Stan Shearer, Chris and Karen Mead.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM.**

The minutes of the AGM held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 had been shown on the Branch website and were circulated before the meeting. These minutes were proposed as an accurate record by Jean Stublely, and seconded by Dennis Flamson.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM.**

At the Secretary's request, Brian Serrell gave the latest update on his application for medal recognition for those serving in Aden prior to 1964. The application had been made last year to his MP, Alex Chalk, now Lord Chancellor and Minister for Justice. Brian stated that he had received an e-mail from a Mr Mclean requesting further evidence of the conditions at that time, so that it could be passed on.

*(Afternote: Brian has sent another book from the "Denis Sparrow library" as further evidence; the application with supporting evidence will be passed on to Baroness Goldie who is Minister of State at the MOD.)*

**5. REPORTS BY COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

5.1. Chairman – Rick Rutter presented his report:

Branch President, Committee, National Membership Secretary and members welcome to our fifteenth AGM. Your Branch has been involved in a wide range of events over the past twelve months, many of which have been covered in the June newsletter. I would just like to mention some recent ones and to thank those of you, who attended and represented the Branch. June was an exceptionally busy month with the Branch being present at the following events:

VE Day and D-Day Remembrance Services in Cheltenham

Remembrance service at Earthcott Green, which was well attended and enjoyed by all of us who went. Thanks to Stan Shearer for laying the Branch wreath and to Robert Parrant for carrying the Branch Standard.

Approximately eighteen members went to Weymouth over the three day event organised by the West Dorset Branch. It was, as always, superbly well organised and we all enjoyed the Friday get together, the Gala dinner and the parade on Sunday morning. Robert paraded our standard, and Dennis Flamson carried the Kernow Standard.

Denis Sparrow took our display to the Jet Age Museum to celebrate Armed Forces Day. Emlyn Phennah was also in attendance.

A group attended a Not Forgotten Fun Day at Gatcombe Park last Friday. My apologies to anyone whom I did not contact about this event. Chris Blick received the invitation and contacted me with the details. We had 72 hours to respond with individual details of those wishing to attend. There were only seventy places available for veterans from all local organisations. We had approximately ten places. It was a little cold with intermittent drizzle but all enjoyed the games and the food. We really appreciate these invitations from The Not Forgotten.

There is some very encouraging information from the National Association regarding the future of the Aden Veterans Association. Michael will give you the details of their recent committee meeting aspirations. I am sure that Graham will answer any questions that you may have. I am extremely encouraged, and delighted, if the proposal that they have suggested are adopted.

Finally a few thanks from me for your commitment to your Branch:

As you know Chris Blick is standing down as vice-chair. The first time since the formation of the Branch that Chris will not be one of the key officials. I am hoping that he will continue on the committee as his wealth of knowledge and contacts is so important for the Branch.

Michael and David continue to work hard for the Branch and their work is greatly appreciated, and Chris Price for his thoughtful and incisive advice.

Jean continues to organise our excellent first Wednesday lunches, and along with Sally is in the process of planning our Christmas Lunch, which will be held at the Robinswood Hotel who looked after us so well for our 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary attended by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. Denis for taking the Branch display to a number of events and, of course, Robert for parading our Standard.

Sheila Gibson has very kindly offered to take over the raffle duties so well run by Rose and her team. Thank you Rose, Carol, Dorothy and Jane. I hope that you will continue to help Sheila with raffle ticket sales and collecting the money that is invaluable to funding our Branch.

My final thanks are to you all who have been so supportive and active during the last year. Without you your Branch would not exist. I hope to see many of you at the future events that Michael will announce later in the meeting.

5.2 Secretary – Michael Compton reported:

Not wishing to duplicate the detail of our Chairman's comprehensive report, I am confining mine to a more personal review of the last year.

Since the last AGM, the Gloucestershire Branch has remained in the spotlight. During last autumn we were in a state of flux, with the possibility of HRH the Princess Royal's attendance at our 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. Then, we knew, but couldn't tell anyone except those directly involved. Finally with only 4 weeks to go we could tell all members. Looking back at the whole event from my initial proposal in March, I learnt two things, firstly, how convoluted an invitation for the attendance of a royal personage can be with all the hoops we had to jump through (that was a challenge!); secondly, what a pleasure it was to work in a team who, despite advanced age, all pull together with all their respective skills and experience to produce a day to remember, and this despite the British weather intervening at the last moment so that HRH's visit had to be curtailed by 25 minutes.

Since the end of November, we have had a few new members and we have lost a few as well; therefore our membership has been fairly steady at 45 with an average of about 24 attending all meetings and lunches. We continue to look forward to an active second half of 2023 as shown in the agenda.

Finally the question which Clive Candlin raised with us at last year's AGM – "The Future of the AVA" has been a matter of discussion by many of you, and I have had many ideas passed on to me as a result. Also, Rick Rutter and I have had various conversations with members of the National Committee, during which we passed on the general consensus from the Branch, that we wish the AVA to continue beyond 2025, in some form with or without the National "Umbrella". A few days ago, the National Committee agreed some proposals; we are due announce these at the AGM.

6.3. Treasurer – David Gearing presented his report. Statements of account, 2022-23 are attached to these minutes:

I think this is the 12th occasion when I have reported to members that "it's been a good year". Our Chairman and Secretary have spoken of the success of our 55th Anniversary of withdrawal lunch. Yet again our planning and organisation produced an outstanding event. In the beginning, it looked like being a financial challenge. Even more so, when Royal patronage was confirmed. The National Association invited bids to help Branches with funding for local events, as there was to be no National event, so we jumped in with a bid we thought reflected the likely costs. I was keen that we should price the event at the same level as the 45th Anniversary event. I felt this was what our Members deserved for their continuing support. As

you know, we received a grant of £1,000 which ultimately guaranteed financial success. Thanks to that grant, and donations from Members for the event, we incurred just a small loss of £86. I wish to thank the National Association because without their support, and the local donations, we could have ended the year with about £15 in the bank.

Of course, we had other Meetings and expenses, but the 55th lunch accounted for 80% of our financial throughput. In the last Newsletter, I reported that we had incurred the loss of £86 on the anniversary lunch, and £39 on other business, giving a total excess of expenditure of £125, which is shown in our annual accounts.

Our bank balance at the end of the financial year was £1,191. This will keep us in good shape for several years, as costs will rise faster than our income. As always at the AGM, I invite members to make an annual donation of £10 towards running costs. Copies of the accounts have been circulated, and I would ask that they be approved, so that I may enter a signed copy into the books. I would like to conclude by thanking everyone for their unstinting support to the Branch.

*Sally Welzel proposed acceptance of the accounts and this was seconded by Brian Serrell.*

5.4. Social Secretary – Jean Stubley reported that so far this year, our “first Wednesday of the Month” lunches have been well supported with an attendance of about 20. I hoped those who attended the recent lunches at the Bell in Frampton, and the Corner Cupboard in Tewkesbury enjoyed the meals. Finding the venues at the right price is not always easy. Future arrangements are as follows: The Belfry Hotel at Littledean on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, and The New Dawn Norton on 6<sup>th</sup> September.

The Christmas lunch is to be held at the Best Western Hotel, Robinswood on 6<sup>th</sup> December; Sally Welzel has negotiated a price of £18.50. Since the dining hall there is large, it was agreed that other veteran groups, in particular the Grenadiers, be invited to attend. Menu choices need to be completed by the end of September.

## **6. SPEECH BY NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER.**

Graham Mottley the National Committee Membership Secretary, started his address by saying he is delighted to see the meeting so well attended.

He began by giving a statement about the situation regarding the membership of the AVA nationally; since taking over as Membership Secretary he had together with Clive Candlin, had spent a lot of time trying to verify the full list of membership. He is still chasing about 100 members for annual fees as well as asking for the revised rate of £15 to be paid.

Since Clive Candlin's statement to the last Branch AGM, the National Committee has modified its intentions, primarily extending the future of AVA to at least 2027. (See below where Rick Rutter's synopsis shows the latest intentions of the National Committee). In view of this, Graham had already suggested that we invite a member of the Royal family to attend an event which could possibly be held in London at the Union Jack Club, where he hoped special rates could be discussed.

Following on from Graham Mottley's address, the list of proposals as published before the meeting was then put to a vote:

- The National Association to continue to 2027 the 60th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden.
- Planning has started for an event to commemorate the founding of the Association on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2000
- The National Standard will be laid up in November 2027 at the Reunion and AGM.
- Branches may keep their Standards for local events, but must lay their Standard up when they cease to be an organised club
- Currently there are approximately 1000 members, life, full and associate.
- Due to the absence of applicants for advertised vacancies on the National Committee the members of the National Committee are willing to serve beyond their term of office, subject to their and/or partner's health.

All the proposals were accepted unanimously with the additional comments that certain members of our Branch would be prepared to assist members of the National Committee, in particular where the final year's events are concerned. Graham Mottley expressed his appreciation at the suggestion. David Gearing added that if the Branch should wish have its own event we should consider some financial planning in preparation.

## **7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

In accordance with branch procedure, the positions of Branch Treasurer is due for re-election. A notice had been sent out with the agenda asking for any proposals. However, no proposal has been submitted; David Gearing stated that he is prepared to stay in post for another 3 years. There being no other proposal for the position David was confirmed nem.con.

## **8. APPROVAL OF BRANCH MEETINGS FOR 2024**

Branch meetings scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 3<sup>rd</sup> July (AGM) and 2<sup>nd</sup> October were approved.

## **9. FUTURE OF THE AVA**

See para 6 above

## **10. ADDITIONAL PLANNED EVENTS FOR 2023**

Details are shown on the Branch website.

Jim Major was asked to lay the wreath on Battle of Britain Sunday.

Rick Rutter stated that Helen Simms has been asked to give a talk on “My Life in the Wrens” at the October meeting.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dennis Sparrow informed the meeting of the current status of Brian Serrell’s request for his local MP Alex Chalke’s support in having another MOD review for “A GSM for the lost years”. A formal response is awaited.

## **12. CLOSURE**

The meeting closed for the raffle and lunch, which included the celebration cake, with everyone expressing thanks to Hugh and Sheila.

Michael Compton

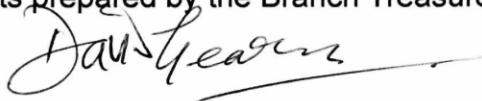
ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH  
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST MARCH 2023

	Bank Balance brought forward	1317.67
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<u>Donations</u>		
Received from Branch members	350.00	
Donation made to ex-RAF Britannia fund	100.00	+250.00
Receipts from Branch raffles		+208.00
<u>Branch Administrative Expenses</u>		
Office Equipment & Consumables	209.64	
Postage	35.56	
Room Hire 4 Jan 23	25.00	
Carlton Club Affiliation Fee	10.50	-280.70
<u>Lunches at Branch Meetings</u>		
Costs from Carlton Club	298.50	
Receipts from Branch Members	190.00	-108.50
Internet Fees		-108.00
<u>55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Withdrawal Lunch</u>		
Cost of lunches, Table decorations & flowers, Church costs, Minibuses, Piper, and refunds made.	3061.69	
Receipts from Branch Members and others attending, donations received towards costs, and the grant of £1,000 from the AVA National Association	2975.00	-86.69
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	Bank Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	1191.78

Total Income : £3723.00  
Total Expenditure : £3848.89

Excess of Expenditure over Income £125.89

Statement of Accounts prepared by the Branch Treasurer



Accounts Auditor

