

**MINUTES OF ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE STROUD CONSERVATIVE CLUB ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018 at 11.00 am**

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

Chris Price, our Branch President read the Act of Homage, Padre Brian Wollaston said a prayer and Stephen Weall welcomed Tony Holland, the AVA National Treasurer together with Judith Holland acting in this case as keeper.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Hone, Derrick Harris, Paul Stevenson, David Newton, Brinley Richards, Keith Spiret, Ken Plowman, Robert Parrant, Sheila Gibson, Hugh Gibson and Emlyn Phennah.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM.**

The minutes of the AGM held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 had been shown on the Branch website and were circulated before the meeting. These minutes were proposed as an accurate record by Dennis Flamson, and seconded by John Page.

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

There were no matters arising.

**5. REPORTS BY COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

**5.1. Chairman – Stephen Weall reported that it had been a good year for both the Branch and National Associations commemorating the 50th anniversary of the withdrawal from Aden. He thanked the Branch President, Committee and members for their support during the last year. In addition to the main event, we have had an interesting and varied programme.**

**There have been some sad losses during the last year – Ken Jones, Bob Johnson (National) and Pauline Anwyl Jones.**

**Stephen stated that he is sorry to be leaving the Branch – but he and Sue moved eleven years ago, into their present house “supposedly” for a year, en route to Cornwall. When the opportunity to actually move to Cornwall came, and fulfil the long-held dream, it was too good to miss.**

**It is Stephen’s intention to remain on the National Committee, so he will be able to keep in touch with events at the Branch and looks forward to seeing some of us at national events.**

**5.2 Secretary – Michael Compton reported:**

**It is hard to believe that a year ago all I knew of the Aden Veterans Association was the name on a wreath at the Cheltenham Memorial after a Remembrance Service,**

about 4 years ago. It was my wife, Judith who pointed this out to me. I joined the Branch less than a year ago, and since then we have had a whirlwind of events which I will report on, only in brief, since they are all reported elsewhere.

The highlight of the year was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event at Gloucester Cathedral. When I arrived on the scene, all the organisation seemed to be fait accompli; we were only at the final details such as order of precedence for the guests' seating and the wording for the service. I have to say that it is a tribute to effort and commitment of the committee and those co-opted for special tasks, that the event was such a success. On that day I, as I believe we all were, proud to be a members of this Branch. So a huge thank you to all those involved.

This will be our tenth Annual General Meeting. More important, it was our tenth birthday party in April with 37 attendees. Many thanks must go to Dorothy and Chris Blick for their kind gift of the birthday cake.

Also in April, we had the St George's Day Service at Gloucester Cathedral at which our contingent numbered 14, and the standard. It was good to see the cathedral full with HRH Princess Royal presenting the awards

In June we had the special dedication of the AVA paver at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. It was a very hot day, somewhat reminiscent of the weather in Aden. Ten members of the Branch attended, together with our standard. Just going to the Memorial is a salutary experience by itself, but the ceremony with bugle, pipes and standard, together and the chance to meet other AVA members made the day. Our thanks go to the National Committee for the organisation of this event.

During the past year we have had three committee meetings and the committee has been enlarged; so we welcome Jane Wathern and John Longhurst. Regrettably we have to say goodbye to our Chairman, who we all thank for his invaluable contribution to the Branch. We wish Stephen and Sue all good luck for their move to Cornwall.

5.3. Treasurer – David Gearing presented his report together with a statement of account, which had been audited:

Mr Branch President, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is a pleasure to present my sixth annual report as your Branch Treasurer. The principal event of the financial year was the Commemoration event at Gloucester Cathedral. Nearly four years of administrative and financial planning resulted in a highly successful day and delivered a surplus of just over £1000. Once again, the support of the members has been outstanding and our future is one of solid financial security.

Our routine of three formal Branch meetings and one informal one ensures a continuing healthy financial base as we progress.

Copies of the audited accounts have been placed on the tables. Our income/expenditure now follows a regular pattern, with events like the Commemoration being clearly identified. The balance of £2907.64 will be reduced by £631.79 when we present equal sums to SSAFA and the Eye Clinic in Aden. We

will be using the good offices of Rev Peter Crooks to find a way of our funds reaching the clinic in light of the continuing civil war embracing Yemen. I would like to thank the Committee led by Stephen for ensuring there is a prudent way of managing our funds.

If members wish to make annual voluntary donations, they may do so today; these funds are used to support the ongoing administrative costs.

**5.4. Social Secretary – Jean Stubley** reported that so far this year, our “first Wednesday of the Month” lunches have been well supported. The next lunch dates are on 5th September and 7<sup>th</sup> November with the Christmas lunch on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

**5.5. Webmaster – Ian Cooper** reported that the Committee had considered the recent data protection legislation and concluded that it did not apply to this website since no personal information was retained. Names, addresses and telephone numbers are kept on paper by the Secretary only. Ian suggested that information more than two years old should be deleted from the branch website. This was agreed.

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

Mr Tony Holland the AVA National Treasurer, began by saying how he and Judith enjoyed coming to the Gloucestershire Branch; he was glad to see so many attendees, and that the Branch is flourishing. Having had a very eventful year – with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Dedication of the Paver, as well as the events at Blackpool and Weymouth, we have to look forward to our next major event which will be 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AVA.

Tony expressed the concern felt at national level, that the overall membership has started to reduce, the reason being simply one of advancing age of those who actually served in Aden. Both the Teeside and Mid-Scotland Branches have had to close for lack of numbers, and/or for lack of personnel who could take on the roles of the various committee. It therefore is very important for all of us to consider recruiting and maintaining contact with the “Children of Aden”. He asked for our assistance in this.

Finally, Tony wished to make us aware of a particular act of generosity by Shaun Gilmartin; some years ago, Shaun had paid for a commemorative bench to be placed at the National Arboretum, Alrewas. Unfortunately, during the last few years, the bench had become very much the worse for wear. When this information was passed on to Shaun, he provided £1000 for a replacement to be put in a better place. This is not only to cover the cost of the original purchase, but it will cover maintenance for some time. Our thanks for this kind act.

## **7. RESIGNATION OF OUR CHAIRMAN AND ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN.**

Stephen Weall had announced his intention to resign as Chairman at the last committee meeting and this had been published in the latest quarterly newsletter.

Michael Compton had requested nominations to him by 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018. He reported that at that date only one nomination, that of Rick Rutter, had been received by that date. Rick's nomination was proposed by Jean Stubley and seconded by Chris Blick. Therefore, Rick Rutter was duly elected unopposed. On relinquishing the Chairmanship, Stephen Weall was presented with an AVA shield in recognition of his service to the Branch. Sue Weall was then presented with flowers as thanks for her support as well.

Rick Rutter was then congratulated on his appointment; he took the chair and gave the members a short synopsis of his career both in the RAF and afterwards, as a schoolteacher.

#### **8. FUTURE BRANCH MEETINGS**

Approval was given for the following dates for branch meetings – 2nd January, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 3<sup>rd</sup> July (AGM) and 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

#### **9. ADDITIONAL PLANNED EVENTS**

Additional Planned Events include Family Day Visit to REME Museum and Training School, Lyneham, 1<sup>st</sup> August, "First Wednesday Lunches", Remembrance Service 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018, and Christmas Lunch 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018. With regard to the visit to Lyneham all members wishing to go will have to provide identity, for access to the Training School. Also car number details will be required.

#### **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10.1 Chris Blick wished to make formal acknowledgement of the contribution made to this Branch by Pauline Anwyl Jones who died recently. Chris attended the funeral and had been duly thanked for passing on our respects to her family.

10.2 All members were reminded of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations due to take place in the next few days, in particular those in Gloucester the next weekend.

11. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 12.30pm