

**ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2021 AT STROUD CONSERVATIVE CLUB AT
11.00 HOURS**

1. Our Branch Chairman Rick Rutter welcomed everyone to this meeting and asked everyone to stand for the Exhortation and Kohema.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Chris Price, Keith Spiret, Dennis Flamson, Jean Stubley, Peter House, David Brown, Stewart Harrison and Tony Holland. There were 28 attendees.

3. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd October 2019 had been circulated. Chris Blick proposed their acceptance and Rose Longhurst seconded.

4. a. Rick Rutter advised all members of a new initiative taken by the University of the First Age. There is due to be a presentation/discussion on military history, on 28th October (10.00am until 12.00 midday) at the Church Hall, Montpellier St, GL50 1SP. It is intended that this will be the first of regular meetings.
Rick also stated that about 8 members of the Branch attended the Battle of Britain Service and Parade on 19th September. He thanked Ray Bunnage for the recent upgrading of the website. Finally, he informed the meeting he has been made aware by Chris Blick of the Gloucester Carers Hub, which provides support who carers. Mr Stephen Moore who is the coordinator of the organisation has asked for a few minutes at our next meeting in January to explain the function of the Hub. This has been agreed.
b. Michael Compton stated that further to his notification in the most recent newsletter, both the Lord Lieutenant for Gloucestershire, Edward Gillespie, and the Cheltenham MP Alex Chalk had been invited to attend the 54th Anniversary of Withdrawal and that both had declined with thanks. However, Democratic Services at GCC had advised that one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants would be nominated in place of the Lord Lieutenant. Mr Chalk declined because with his recent promotion to the position of Solicitor General has meant more work as a minister, and the 29th November falls on a Monday. There has been one resignation from the AVA – Josie Scott.
c. David Gearing stated that we are at the half-way point in the financial year, and he thanked all who made donations at the AGM, and after. We received £355 which is remarkable as we emerge from the disruptions of the pandemic. Our total income to date is £490.50, and expenditure is £486.18, of which £250 is a deposit for our Christmas lunch. Our bank balance is £1,424.89.
Our social secretary Jean, is unable to be here today, and she has asked me to collect Christmas lunch pro-formas and monies. Finally, David thanked Ray Bunnage, our webmaster, who stepped in to pay our annual internet fees of £86.49. This amount was not included in the expenditure report above, as we are repaying Ray today.

5. The following future events were confirmed:
 - a. 3rd November – First Wednesday lunch at the George Inn, Frocester GL10 3TQ.

- b. 4th November – Dedication of the Garden of Remembrance – Cheltenham (12.00hrs)
- c. 11th November – Armistice Day Service – Stroud Subscription Rooms. (Details to be confirmed subject to acceptance on Health and Safety grounds by Stroud Council)
- d. 14th November - Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service - Cheltenham.
- e. 29th November - 54th Anniversary of Withdrawal from Aden – Cheltenham. (Branch Secretary will send out final details when confirmed by the Mayor’s Office and Cheltenham Borough Council)
- g. 8th December – Christmas lunch at Tortworth Hall – to meet the hotel requirement for minimum numbers, Jean Stubley proposed and it has been agreed, that we invite members of the Grenadier Guards Association to join us.
- h. 5th January 2022 – Informal meeting at the Carlton (Conservative Club) – Jim Major has kindly volunteered to be the quizmaster.

6. Any Other Business

- a. Ray Bunnage gave a brief explanation of the amendments to the branch website so that it is more user-friendly; he asked for comments on the changes.
- b. Chris Blick proposed that we consider an another excursion in May 2022, to the National Arboretum, at Alrewas, this time travelling on a vintage double-decker bus. Chris gave a number of further details for consideration at the next meeting.
- c. Carol Parrant suggested that we consider supporting Gloucester Day next summer.
- d. Sally Welzel asked that the Committee consider making a special effort for the 55th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden, and consider having a special church service possibly in the church at Matson.

7. Paul Burnett, our guest speaker, gave a most interesting lecture on “Hook VC”, one of the soldiers who survived the Battle of Rorke’s Drift. Paul separated fact from the fiction as depicted in the film “Zulu”. The most surprising was that the 24th Regiment of Foot were the 2nd Warwickshires and only became the South Wales Borderers in later years. Hook was a Gloucestershire man, with family in the Forest of Dean. Paul gave a very clear account of the protagonists at both this battle and of the one preceding it – Isandwala - when the British forces were wiped out. The lecture was so interesting that we were late for lunch!!

8. The meeting closed at 13.00 for raffle and ploughman’s lunch.