

XXIV Squadron Association

Minutes of committee meeting held on 22nd November 2023.

Present	Paul Oborn	President
	Dick Gould	Chairman
	Trevor Paterson	Vice Chairman
	Roger Hale	Treasurer
	Bryan Cowin	Secretary

1. Opening remarks.

The chairman welcomed all at this, his inaugural meeting as new chairman.

2. Minutes of last meeting.

Committee unanimously approved the minutes

3. Actions outstanding.

Both outstanding actions had been completed.

4. Treasurers report.

4.1 Current financial status presented and agreed by all present, balance being £4039. Annual donation to CALM (the Association's nominated charity) was discussed and agreed that this year's donation of £135 would be forward to them. Action - RH.

4.2 It was agreed that the date of the annual financial statement would be moved from the 31st August to 31st December. Falling in a period of little financial activity, this will allow members a better perspective on the year on year state of the fund. The annual statement would be published in January, following ratification by the president. Action - RH

5. Secretaries report.

5.1 Current membership status as follows (last years numbers in parenthesis) :-

Total membership 453 (452)

Deceased 239 (235)

Active members 131 (136)

Lost contact 79 (78)

Miscellaneous 4 This number reflects 3 duplicate entries and one missing entry

5.2 2023 dinner request for feedback. The secretary reported that his request for confidential feedback, either positive or negative was well supported and copies of the de-identified and abbreviated replies were distributed to the committee for discussion, the outcome of which were key factors in discussions for the 2024 dinner.

5.3 Secretary was passed details of 4 prospective new members to contact. Action - BC

6. Constitution

New slimmed down and revised Constitution was discussed and some minor changes were proposed. The Constitution to be amended accordingly and distributed to all members via blog and e-mail for comments. Action - BC

7. 2024 events

There was much discussion as to the number, format and venues for the 2024 social calendar which included the feedback received from the attendees of the 2023 dinner.

The outcome and decisions are as follows :-

- 7.1 Spring event. It was decided that the spring event would be either a visit to the National heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon, a visit to the National Arboretum or a lunch at the RAF Club in London. This of course is dependant on costings and the committee will price all options before making any final decisions. What ever the final decision is, it will be held mid week, on or about the second week in May. Action - RHG
- 7.2 Squadron visit. As we are the XXIV Squadron Association, it is important that we maintain close contact with our serving comrades on the Squadron but at the same time, are acutely aware that we have to fit in with their busy commitments. Consequently, we, the committee will keep in close contact with the CO, Gav Anderson and should there become a window of opportunity for a Squadron visit, we will of course keep the membership advised.
- 7.3 Formal dinner. After much discussion, mainly around costings, it was decided to hold the formal Ladies dinner once again at the Marsh Farm Hotel, Royal Wootton Bassett. There was an overwhelming vote of confidence in the venue from the respondees of the request for feedback. Also, the majority of the adverse comments received following the 2023 dinner had already been noted and discussed in post dinner e-mails between committee members who had already agreed solutions. The proposed date being either Friday 5th or Saturday 6th October, the former being the Committee's preference, subject to costings and availability.
- 7.4 It was agreed that BC and RH would work on arrangements for the autumn dinner with TP available for face-to-face meetings with the venue when necessary.
Action - BC, RH &TP
- 8. Folgare Tree.**
The Folgare tree was planted at Lyneham as a memorial to those Squadron personnel and Italian colleagues who lost their lives in the tragic C130 accident at Pisa. It was suggested that it would be more fitting if the tree could be replanted at the National Arboretum. It was agreed to look into the logistics and costs in taking such action with a standby solution of either planting a replacement tree or trying to take a cutting of the original one.
Action - RHG
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 9.1 One of our members had commented that neither XXIV Squadron or the Association were represented at the Cenotaph service, especially as the Squadron is still active over 100 years since its inception. Agreed to carry out a straw poll amongst the membership as to interest in exploring further.
Action - BC
- 9.2 Association Blog. It was unanimously agreed by the committee that the work of our blog master and ex committee secretary Dave Burgin be formally recognised. His work is most appreciated by all, well done Dave and keep up the good work.
- 9.3 AGM's Now that we do not formally hold an AGM, it was felt that it was still very important to keep the membership full advised of all association activity and work carried out by the committee on their behalf and therefore a copy of the approved minutes would now be circulated via the blog and by e-mail (including 3 snail mail copies) to all members.

9.4 Ligny-Thillois. RH reported on the very successful visit by 10 Association members to the Armistice Day celebrations at Ligny-Thillois, where he laid a wreath at the newly refurbished Hawker memorial on behalf of the Association. The Mayor indicated that 2024 would provide a special opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Major Hawker. RH also reported that additional work was required to restore the readability of the memorial inscription and that the Squadron had accepted responsibility for funding that work. However there was a small balance in the Association fund from the previous call for donations towards the renovation which could be contributed to this task. RH agreed to liaise with OC24 Squadron regarding funding, seeking a recommendation from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) at Arras for a stonemason to do the work, and using gold-leaf to improve the readability and durability of the inscription.

Action - RH

There being no further business, the Chairman formally closed the meeting.

The above minutes have been checked by the Committee members and approved for distribution by the Chairman.

Bryan Cowin
Secretary
11 December 2023