

Minutes of Bucks NARF Branch AGM held Aylesbury Fire HQ Saturday 14th April 2007

Terry Ridgley welcomed members to Aylesbury Headquarters on behalf of Damian Smith the Chief Fire Officer. Terry praised the co-operation he had received from Terry Price, the Assistant Secretary during the year and invited queries from members on issues of either brigade of Benevolent Fund of which there were none forthcoming!

1/ Welcome

Our Chairman Jeff Goddard thanked Terry and asked that he pass on the grateful thanks of the Branch for the hospitality of the facilities and for his continuing support of the Bucks Branch and our Association. He then welcomed the members to the Meeting and ~~he~~ said the 18 present was better than had been anticipated by the Secretary earlier in the week. 7

Present: -

Jeff Goddard	Chairman & Honorary Branch President
Peter Robinson	Branch Secretary
Terry Price	Assistant Branch Secretary
Ernie Shankster	Branch Treasurer
Pat Reynolds	
Jack Plumridge	
Geoff Bowles	
Chris Stevens,	
David Richards	
Eddie Gutteridge	
John Biggs	
Ray Hedges	
Tony Crook	
Roland Goss	
Roy Potton	
Nick Razey	
Malcolm Ash	
Eric Frost	

2/ Apologies

Apologies were received from: Bill Atherton, Frank Knowles, Tony Cairns, Bill Edwards, David King, Bob Pepler, Arthur Letteboer, Courtney Filmore, Jim Dunbar, Dennis Deeprise, John Whitmore, Mick Goss, Jim Southcott, Brian Baker, John Hudson, Larry Pierce, Maurice Packer, Mick Haycock, Norman Razey, Jim Boylan, Ray Tamblin, Bernie Shafe, Ron Cleere, Bill Perry, Dave Bonham, John Coombs and Brian Young

3/ Minutes of Bucks Branch AGM 2006 (8th April)

The Chairman ran through the Minutes for accuracy and there were no comments.

4/ Matters Arising

Peter Robinson said that he had received an e-mail from Jim Dunbar hinting that Jim might be finding it difficult to continue with his Benevolent Fund Representative commitments. Terry

Price advised that he had been in touch with Jim since the e-mail and his understanding was that Jim would be able to continue as long as he, (Terry Price) and Terry Ridgely would also be able to assist with representation on Ben Fund issues.

5/ District Representatives Report

Jeff Goddard told members that he had been covering the District Representative function whilst Frank Knowles had been away on his overseas trips and had accordingly attended the Council Meetings in October 2006 and the Council and AGM in Newcastle last month.

As Minutes of the Council Meeting had been distributed to those present Jeff was able to deal with some of the matters recorded in more detail. He spoke of the National Memorial Arboretum and the fundamental nature of the outcome.

Terry Price had reservations about the decision by Council to ring fence £5000 from Capital Reserve towards the cost of the new memorial and felt that it should have been passed back to Branches before the decision was made. Both Peter Robinson and Jeff Goddard were able to explain the long deliberations that had gone on in Council with similar reservations having been considered, before that decision had been taken.

Moving on through the National Minutes, Jeff told members that despite the fact that there were thirteen million pensioners in the country the Government steadfastly refused to review pensions. He advised members that the Old Age Pension had fallen badly behind, and in his opinion, NARF should be concentrating on issues such as this, rather than issues such as the remarriage of widows and ex- patriots getting their annual incremental allowances paid in South Africa and elsewhere. These he stated were contrary to what had been in the contracts that had applied when they had joined their Pension Scheme. Jeff suggested the push should now be for improvements in OAP and that other issues should be dropped.

Jeff, who now has a place on the NARF Pension Committee said, that he had served for eleven years on the CACFOA and CFBAC Pensions Committee and that during that time, every improvement mooted in Committee had to be put through the Actuaries to establish the costs. He mentioned the "Death in Service" clause in the old Pension Scheme, where members might recall one literally had to submit a pad on the "deathbed" to ensure that a widow would get commutation, this being effectively the retirement of the sick fire-fighter. An improvement involving an increase in deductions of only a quarter percent to cover this anomaly was approved in Committee only to have the Actuary find the costs too high so we never got that through. This seemed to back up the stance he was making about the lost causes mentioned previously.


Jeff went on to suggest that since most employees do not even know what Pensions Scheme they are on, and have little or no idea of what their entitlement will be, NARF should be doing much more to get information to existing members of the old Scheme. New employees are on a new Scheme and it isn't a patch on the Scheme we had all been in. He then dealt with some of the anomalies that seem to be inherent in the new Pensions arrangements.

Concluding, Jeff suggested that we need in future to educate people on what Scheme they are on and what entitlement they can expect.

This created a good deal of discussion on pension issues.

6/ Benevolent Fund Report

Since Jim Dunbar had offered apologies and had not sent in a written report there was no input to meeting on the fund. However Peter Robinson was able to reassure members who had been in receipt of "hard sell" telephone calls from the Ben Fund, that a recent meeting between a senior member of the Fund and John Littleton NARF General Secretary, had resulted in the fund raising company recruited by the Benevolent Fund having their contract terminated. Peter reassured members that no telephone numbers had been passed to the Ben Fund and NARF had received

information that all such numbers had been in possession of the Fund because of members previous connections with the Fund such as, being members of the Ben Fund Lottery Draw etc. 

7/ Branch Treasurers Report

Ernie Shankster spoke to his submitted Statement of Accounts, which is attached to these Minutes for those who didn't make the meeting!

Ernie did make a sincere plea that those Bucks members who hadn't yet decided to sign up for their annual subscription to be deducted using the Bank Standing Order system, should seriously consider it. Ernie advised that the number of written reminders he had been obliged to send out to remind those still paying by cheque to please "cough up", had boosted expenditure on post costs considerably. Members were reassured to learn that if anything ever happened to them, the Bank officials would immediately review such as Standing Orders and other monthly debits on behalf of the widow or surviving relatives to determine which would need discontinuing.

Acceptance of Ernie's Statement was proposed by David Richards and seconded by Pat Reynolds with approval from all.

The Chairman thanked Ernie for his efforts and said he had done an excellent job during the year and acknowledged that Ernie still had a few more members to catch. He suggested that this be recorded as a Vote of Thanks in the Minutes.

8/ Election of Officers


• Chairman

Terry Price took the Chair whilst the Chairman post was debated. Jack Plumridge proposed that Jeff Goddard continued in post and this was seconded by Chris Stevens and accepted unanimously.

Jeff having accepted resumed the Chair.

• Branch Secretary

Peter Robinson stated that he had sought to get someone else to take on the Secretary role in 2005 and 2006 without success and had just written to nearly sixty of the members to seek a volunteer to attend this meeting. This he said was seemingly without success, unless a volunteer was to be forthcoming from those attending today. Peter reiterated what he had included in the letter, this being that he wished to relinquish just some of his involvement with NARF in view of his heavier commitments now at national level. He also suggested that if a volunteer did come forward he or she, would be able to approach him to take the job back again after the national council and AGM in 2009 when he would be replaced by a new National President.

In the absence of any volunteers from the floor, the Chairman asked Peter if he would accept a compromise. He suggested that no appointment be made at this time and asked Peter if he would continue to carry out the role temporarily in an informal adviser role whilst he personally, would seek to find someone from the membership to take the job on. He suggested the if Terry Price was also willing to carry on with the Assistant Secretary role the work in the interim period would be then shared by Peter, Terry and himself. 

• Assistant Branch Secretary

It was proposed by Peter Robinson and seconded by Ray Hedges that Terry Price be elected again as Assistant Secretary. Terry had already given satisfactory reasons why he personally wouldn't take on another full secretarial role although perfectly willing to assist to best of his abilities as he had done for several years now.

This was approved by membership.

- **Branch Treasurer**

It was proposed by Roy Potton and seconded by David Richards that Ernie Shankster is elected to the Treasurer role. Again this was approved.

- **Branch Representative to District 6 Committee**

Peter Robinson explained that Frank Knowles was the current Branch Representative to District and that position was voted for by the Branch membership. However, Frank was also the Representative to National Council for No 6 District which position was a decision of the District Committee. If for any reason, Bucks decided to send someone else to the No 6 District Committee this would automatically invalidate Frank's position on the National Council since the national representative had to be an active member also of the District Committee. In these circumstances, even though Frank wasn't present at this meeting by reason of his absence in America, he recommended that the Branch voted Frank in again. Peter said they could consider the situation again in 2008 when he would likely be at the Bucks AGM to make his own representations on continuance or otherwise in the role.

It was proposed by Eric Frost and seconded by Malcolm Ash that Frank be voted in as District Representative. This met with approval of members.

- **Fire Services National Benevolent Fund Representative**

Since Jim had indicated to Terry Price that he was happy to continue as the titular head of the Ben Fund Representative post for another year it was proposed by Nick Razey and seconded by Roy Potton that he be elected again and this was acceptable to members.

It was suggested by Terry Price, that if Terry Ridgeley who was to retire soon were to join NARF (Bucks), he would be a marvellous successor for Jim in 2008. Peter Robinson told members that he had already sent off an Application Form to Terry R since he was entitled to be a member already in his last year of fire service without membership fee.

9/ Any Other Business

- Terry Price acknowledged that there had been a couple of typographical errors in the list of Branch Members he had distributed by post at the end of 2006 and at least one of these was in telephone numbers. He had produced a corrected list, which he and Ernie had vetted the day previously and this should be absolutely correct. Terry suggested that he would send out the new lists very shortly although Peter Robinson needed a couple for members who had asked for replacements having already mislaid the last new one and took a couple from Terry there and then.
- Eric Frost told members he had been asked on 4th March to carry the standard of another organisation that he belonged to and had enjoyed it so much that he wished to volunteer as reserve Standard Bearer for NARF. Peter told Eric that Council had needed to recruit a person only last year to substitute for Alan Beecroft (National Standard Bearer) but that Eric's name would be held in abeyance in case both the current S/B and his nominated deputy were committed in future and a second reserve needed at short notice.
- Eddie Gutteridge asked if any final progress had been made on the initiative to set up a **notification chain** to quickly spread the word if a Branch member or other non NARF ex colleague died, to publicise funeral details throughout the Branch Membership. Peter Robinson told members he had had received a few names who had been prepared to receive e-mails to notify the initial death information and to subsequently telephone other

members not on the internet system of funeral details. He hadn't progressed this to a stage where each of these volunteers had a list of specific persons to telephone. From Peter's recollection those who had responded to his initial appeal had only been Bill Atherton, Frank Knowles and Geoff Bowles. He suggested that he would include this again in the Minutes since at least five, six or seven persons were necessary to make this arrangement viable in view of the number of our Branch Members who didn't have e-mail facilities.

Secretary Note: -

So if there are any more of you out there who wouldn't mind telephoning say four or five Branch Members from a provided list when an ex fire colleague dies, please let me know on pejo2@supanet.com

This does of course mean that I am only looking for computer owners with Internet connection to get the telephone chain going in event of need. Terry Price already has a superb network of e-mail addresses for those on the net so it is only the ones still without Internet facilities for whom the new arrangement is applicable.

- Arthur Ellis asked if Fred Clarke's demise had been publicised and it seemed he had been away when the very short notice of Fred's death from a Stroke had been notified. Peter Robinson said there had been quite a good turn out of Bucks NARF members at the Crematorium for Fred's send off despite the suddenness of his going and rapidly following funeral arrangements.
- Eric Frost asked if he could use his daughter's e-mail for when matters needed to be circulated at short notice and this was considered acceptable as long as the e-mail was identified clearly as one where messages for him could be sent so there wouldn't be confusion.
- Terry Price advised that with Talk Talk as Internet Server there were no costs for telephone calls anywhere in the country
- I cannot recall whom, but somebody reminded me that second class mail is now 34 p. Note that cannot as yet be in force since only that day I bought twelve second class stamps for £2-76 "P.R."

The Meeting ended at 1215 and was followed by a splendid buffet prepared by Elsie the Aylesbury Fire Station Cook at a very reasonable cost of £2-50 per head.