

The Royal Air Force Club 2020 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14th October 2020
The Royal Air Force Club – 1800hrs – Online

Officials present:

SG	Air Marshal Sue Gray	Chairman of the Board of Trustees
JF	Mr John Fisher	Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees
BC	Air Commodore Barbara Cooper	Trustee & Chairman of the Legacies & Donations Sub-Committee (by zoom)
JH	Wing Commander James Hill	Trustee & Chairman of the Membership Committee
IM	Flight Lieutenant Ian Melia	Trustee & Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee
MP	Mr Miles Pooley	Chief Executive & Club Secretary
AB	Ms Anna Bennett	Senior Audit Partner, haysmacintyre

The Chairman welcomed those present to the first online Annual General Meeting and reported that just under 300 Members had signed up to attend. Those on the panel were introduced.

During the introduction SG stated that a large number of questions had been submitted in advance of the AGM and many require research and discussion. Those not answered would be referred to the relevant Committee for follow up and response to the Member. Live questions would be answered time permitting or summarised and answered as an attachment to the minutes.

1) Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th June 2019

The Chairman reminded those attending that the minutes of the AGM are available on the website within 3 weeks of the meeting to allow Members to read and to request any changes if required.

Proposed for acceptance by: Squadron Leader John Peters

Seconded for acceptance by: Flight Lieutenant Ian Melia

Decision: The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2) The Annual Accounts ~ Ms Anna Bennett

AB presented the 2019 annual accounts which were approved and signed by the Board of Trustees on the 18th March 2020.

The audit was predominantly undertaken in February and March and Club Staff Olu Idowu (Assistant Financial Controller), Andy Watson (former Director of Finance) and Michael Harding (Director of Finance) were thanked for their help and support during the audit.

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Overall, 2019 was a good year for the Club with an increase in income of just under £650k, which includes the increased room income following the completion of the Centenary building project. There was a corresponding increase in expenditure, including depreciation resulting in a surplus of £162k. The year end balance sheet shows an increased cash position, of £1.2m, and the reduction of the bank loan to £5m.

haysmacintyre (the audit firm) worked closely with the Club in March (the start of the lockdown) to review forecasts, budgets and plans for the next 12 months. Part of this work was a review of various scenario and contingency plans that the Club had produced during March to support their view that the Club remained a 'going concern'. Page 16 of the accounts states that for this part, the report is unqualified in this respect.

Question: From Flt Lt P Broadway

- 1: Why is depreciation of fixed assets so much higher in 2019 than 2018 (£1.03m v £.66m)
- 2: Why is the RAFTC not being utilised (showing only £100 being provided)-what are the other Trading Activities note 7a.
- 3: Staff numbers note 4 page 24 - not all salary bands appear to be covered, is this the full picture re staffing numbers?

Answer: Anna Bennett

- 1: There is an increase in depreciation of £364k in the accounts when compared to 2018. The Centenary Building Project was completed and opened to members on 1 November 2018. The 2018 accounts therefore showed only 2 month's of depreciation of this £8m project and the 2019 accounts show the first full year of depreciation. This means a large increase in the total depreciation in the 2019 accounts. The Centenary project is depreciated over 3 years for electrical items, 10 years for fixtures and fittings and 50 years for the building element of the project.
- 2: The results of RAFTC are included in the accounts. RAFTC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Club and is used for all trading activity that cannot be accounted for through the Club, which is a charity. This is primarily external events income. Note 6 shows the £100 share capital in RAFTC that the Club owns. Note 7 then shows the activities of RAFTC, which include £208k income from events, and a profit of £81k, which was Gift Aided in full to the Club.
- 3: Note 4 shows the disclosure that is required of all charities, of the number of staff earning over £60k pa. The table shows only lines where there are staff numbers to report – so the missing lines would all be zero, and the disclosure is complete.

Proposed for acceptance by:	Air Commodore Dai Whittingham
Seconded for acceptance by:	Wing Commander Paula Willmot

Decision: Carried unanimously.

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3) The Trustees' Annual Report ~ The panel

SG opened the presentation by stating that traditionally we would only report on 2019, however, due to the nature of the pandemic, the panel would present a review of 2019 and 2020 so far.

Club Membership

JH presented the membership figures reporting that on the 31st December 2019, the Club had 24,491 members with 50% of the membership being made up of Serving and Former Serving Officers. A break down of Affiliate Members was also presented. Affiliate Members make up 11% of total Club Membership with Family Members being 68% of this 11%.

The Membership figures (2015 to 2019) were presented by month and JH confirmed that the Club maintains a healthy membership.

2019 financial update

IM presented a financial review of 2019 vs 2017 and 2018. Total revenue in 2019 was just over 9.5m, a 7.2% increase on 2018. Membership subscription £1.8m, an increase of 3.72% on 2018

Food, beverage and banqueting revenue was £4m, an increase of 14.2% on 2018. Room revenue was £4m, an increase of 12.3%

Overall bedroom occupancy in 2019 was 77% vs 83% in 2018, with 2019 being the first full year with additional bedroom inventory. 2019 also ended with a cash surplus of £1.2m

Member and staff satisfaction

MP reported that 2019 was another excellent year regarding overall member satisfaction at the Club with 2019 ending with a high to very high score of 95%.

The Club also received industry accolades in relation to Club Staff. The Club achieved #22 in the Sunday Times best not-for-profit organisations to work for and #21 in the Caterer awards for the Best Places To Work in Hospitality.

Club events

MP reported that 2019 was a successful year for Club events with over 50 taking place. Of those events, all had at least 75% attendance with 42% being sold out. The most popular event continues to be the Fathers and Daughters Dinner. It is hoped to return to Club events in 2021.

This concluded the 2019 Trustees Report.

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The 2020 Trustee report

SG opened the 2020 report by stating that this would include an update on what the Club has been doing since the start of lockdown, the financial headlines and fundraising.

During lockdown

SG reported that the Board of Trustees took the decision to keep the Club open to offer accommodation and limited catering to key workers during the lockdown. This included 2157 room nights to the Ministry of Defence to mainly Army personnel including non-commissioned ranks who are normally barracked in Hyde Park.

72 room nights were taken by Club Members classed as key workers and over 500 room nights were used by Club Staff who stayed in the Club to take care of those staying and reduce the demand on public transport.

2020 bedroom occupancy

IM presented the bedroom occupancy with historical information from the past 5 years and stated that the year started off well in January and February leading to a dramatic drop in March to July. August saw a slight pick up to 30% however the remainder of the year, which is normally our busy season is forecasting to remain around a 25% occupancy.

2020 bedroom revenue

IM stated that with a similar pattern to occupancy, the year started strong but declined sharply from just prior to lockdown with August and September having seen a slight increase.

Food, beverage and conference & banqueting revenue

IM reported that food, beverage and banqueting revenue has also dramatically declined from the beginning of lockdown. Further Government restrictions mean that we are currently only accommodating a small number of meetings with limited usage of the Cowdray Lounge and stronger use of the Dining Room. It is expected both the Running Horse and the Churchill Bar will remain closed until next year, although this is under regular review. The Cowdray Lounge will remain open offering a limited food menu with the informal dress code, alongside the Dining Room.

The 2020 financial recovery plan

IM presented the financial recovery plan with the key points stated included:

- Total revenue in 2020. Originally budgeted at £10m. The projection is now £4.5m with the forecast for 2021 being £5.6m
- Total direct costs in 2020. Originally budgeted to be -£8.6m. The projection is now -£4.5m with the forecast for 2021 being -£4.3m
- The 2020 net surplus / deficit. Originally budgeted to be £200k. The projection is now -£1.1m with the 2021 forecast being £100k

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The cash balance

The cash balance for 2020 was originally budgeted to be £200k. The projection is now - £200k with the 2021 forecast being £100k.

Fundraising and legacies

BC presented an update on the various fundraising initiatives and thanked those Members who have donated. As of Monday 12th October:

- £282,706 in single (one off) donations from 1539 members
- £154,884 per year in ongoing standing order pledges from 717 members
- Grand total: £437,590.94

With the exception of donations made on the *Just Giving* website, the Club has not yet claimed gift aid on the donations received and is starting this process.

Members were encouraged (if they were able and had not yet done so) to donate to the Club.

This concluded the 2020 Trustees annual report

4) The retirement of Trustees

SG reported that no Trustees have retired since the last AGM.

5) The retirement and reappointment of Trustees

SG reported that the following Members have reached the end of their first 3 year term and are seeking reappointment to the Board of Trustees.

- Air Commodore Dai Whittingham
- Wing Commander James Poynton
- Squadron Leader John Peters

Air Commodore Dai Whittingham

Proposed for acceptance by:

Flight Lieutenant Ian Melia

Seconded for acceptance by:

Wing Commander Paula Willmot

Carried unanimously.

Air Commodore Dai Whittingham is reappointed to the Board.

Wing Commander James Poynton

Proposed for acceptance by:

Air Commodore Dai Whittingham

Seconded for acceptance by:

Wing Commander James Hill

Carried unanimously.

Wing Commander James Poynton is reappointed to the Board.

Squadron Leader John Peters

Proposed for acceptance by:

Wing Commander Paula Willmot

Seconded for acceptance by:

Flight Lieutenant Ian Melia

Carried unanimously.

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Squadron Leader John Peters is reappointed to the Board.

6) The appointment of new Trustees

SG reported that no new Trustees are standing for election.

7) The appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

JF proposed that Air Marshal Sue Gray be reappointed as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Seconded by: Squadron Leader John Peters

Carried unanimously.

Air Marshal Sue Gray is reappointed as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

8) The appointment and remuneration of the Auditors

Messrs haysmacintyre have been proposed as the Auditors for the ensuing year and subject to their reappointment it is further proposed that they shall be remunerated in accordance with their usual terms and conditions.

Proposed for acceptance by: Flight Lieutenant Ian Melia

Seconded for acceptance by: Air Commodore Dai Whittingham

Carried unanimously.

haysmacintyre are reappointed as the Club Auditors.

9) Propositions submitted to the meeting in accordance with article 2.8G

SG stated that No items have been submitted in relation to proposition 2.8G

"...discuss and determine any issues of policy or resolutions of which 14 days notice in writing have been given to the Secretary"

10) Any other business

Questions answered in the meeting:

a) Question from: Flt Lt P Broadway

A question in relation to Membership numbers. Full Memberships seem to be reducing 13763 in 2018 vs. 13608 in 2019 is this trend expected to continue?

Answer from: Wg Cdr James Hill

There has been a modest reduction in full membership, with fewer Former Serving Officers. This is not unexpected as the number of members who jointed at the instigation of the ½ days pay scheme in the 1960's and 1970's sadly decreases. The Club continues to actively promote members to convert their Membership from Serving to Former Serving on leaving regular or reserve service and the Club also encourages Serving Officers to join at every opportunity and the number of Serving Officers has increased.

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b) Question from: Fg Off N Horner-Boyd

A recommendation to the Club to increase contact (in addition to attending the IOT Fresher's Fayre at RAF Cranwell) with newly Commissioned Officers / those coming to the end of the training.

Answer from: Wg Cdr James Hill

The Club is reviewing its approach with how it engages with Officer Cadets at RAF Cranwell and our preference remains to engage directly with potential Members prior to graduation from the College, however since the introduction of the new modular training course, it has become increasingly difficult for the Club to get access at the right time to promote membership. Discussions continue with the training staff at Cranwell to identify the best opportunities to speak to the Cadets to promote membership.

c) Question from: Flt Lt Philip Fazal

A recommendation that the Club reduce the promotional rate of £125, to ensure this is competitive and encourage more Members to stay,

Answer from: Mr Miles Pooley

We benchmark our bed rates to remain very competitive and very much hope that our Members would always wish to stay at their Club as opposed to a nearby hotel. The special rate currently of £125 per night would usually be £155.00. We have also very recently introduced other promotional rates over half term, together with an advanced purchase saver and frequent stayer

With the additional hygiene and safety measures that we have had to implement, our cleaning costs are greater than ever and also the labour costs to allow for the additional time that housekeeping staff need to spend to clean the rooms to be Covid secure.

If we were to benchmark against our neighbours at the Calvary and Guards together with many other London Clubs they would not totally be comparable as our bedrooms and the amenities within these are more superior. Having researched the Calvary and Guards Club and also another Club in Mayfair, The Lansdowne they have not reduced their bedroom rates at all since reopening in July.

With regard to hotels we researched 12 hotels in Mayfair and the most economical room rate this week was £184 at the Sheraton Park Lane. They have 303 bedrooms although they are currently struggling to achieve double digit occupancy.

On Monday the Hilton Park Lane and near neighbours at the Athenaeum are selling basic double rooms at £196 per night. Currently to obtain at rate lower than £125 per night one will need to travel to the Premier Inn Leicester Square or the Holiday Inn north of Oxford Street.

I would go as far to say that the RAF Club offers the best priced accommodation in Mayfair and also one of the best breakfasts in town. The Club is 'your home away from home'

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d) Question from: Mrs D Burns

If running the meeting in a similar format, is it possible to have a one page agenda added to the website as when I print the screen, it goes on 10 pages.

Answer from: Air Marshal Sue Gray

This is a good suggestion and will be added to the website next year.

e) Question from: Hon. Gp Capt J Salter

How long will the offer to pre-pay for 10 rooms be open?

Answer from: Air Marshal Sue Gray

The promotion does not have an end date as the Club is monitoring take up and future occupancy levels, however, it is not a permanent promotion so I would encourage you to book this offer now.

f) Question from: Mr G Lorimer

In context of the President's letter encouraging direct debit support what proportion of those funds will contribute to clearing the loan as soon as possible?

Answer from: Air Marshal Sue Gray

We cannot answer this question immediately, so with the other questions relating to financial matters, it will be referred to the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee to respond.

g) A statement from Mr B Edwards

Thanks so much for getting together to help us all today and also for the amazing work you have all done to keep the club open. Having worked with the RAF and other teams in the military for many years, I am not surprised – brilliant job. Thanks so much.

h) Question from Air Cdre R Peacock-Edwards

In September the Battle of Britain Dinner was cancelled. Those who had opted in were then invited to opt in to dinner in the dining room. This I willingly did, and so did many others. There was a full house in the dining room and we all had a really great evening. In reality, what had happened was that the B o B Dinner took place in the dining room in all but name. Can someone please explain to me why the dinner could not have gone ahead as planned in rooms where numbers were limited and social distancing was being practiced, on tables of 6. If one can dine in the dining room then why is it not possible to dine in private banqueting rooms under similar rules as those applied to the dining room, i.e. no more than 6 to a table and social distanced etc.

Answer from: Air Marshal Sue Gray

This was a difficult decision and we have to listen to Government guidance which is often law. The Club remains very careful about making sure we comply with the

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law. Where an event was pre-programmed, publicised and had a speaker, we were absolutely not allowed to run that event. We are looking at ways to maximise the use of the Club within the law.

Closing remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes the 2020 RAF Club AGM.

Thank you so much for attending, voting and submitting questions. I hope you found the meeting useful. Without a doubt, the Club is going through one of its most difficult challenges ever. If you haven't yet had a chance to support with a donation and you are able to do so, please don't put it off. This will help us remain available to future Serving Officers and their families. Live streaming the AGM is also new to us and we would very much appreciate your feedback on the meeting today. Over the next 48 hours you will be sent a link to complete a short survey that will help us make the 2021 AGM more effective. As a reminder, if you submitted a question that we did not have time to answer today, it will be summarised and added to the minutes. Lastly, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your continued membership. I very much look forward to meeting you in the Club soon.

The meeting ended at 18.47

Questions referred to be answered later:

Question from Flt Lt Dr S Arnold

Given the current financial situation, in which the RAF Club is appealing for assistance; would the Board consider charging a double membership fee for this year – on an opt out basis? I am not able to calculate the exact figure that this would yield, because I do not know how many members are in each category of membership. However a 'big hands, small map' calculation of 24,000 members @ my own rate of £155.00 would result in £3,720,000. A useful sum.

Thank you for your question. As you are aware, the Club is currently running a campaign, suggested by Flt Lt Colin Bell and proposed to the membership by the Club President Air Marshal Sir David Walker to encourage members to set up a monthly 'gift' via standing order. This request follows two campaigns for one-off donations to help support the Club during this difficult time.

If every member opted in and paid a double membership fee, the Club would raise an additional £1.8m (based on 2019 rates). However, it has the potential to be divisive as affiliate and family members would pay considerably more than former serving and serving officers (the only group we know for certain are in full employment). Moreover the imposition of a levy (even with an opt out) may cause some members to reconsider their membership.

With the Club aiming to participate in the new job retention scheme and mindful of donor fatigue, following discussions with the Membership Committee, we do not feel we need to propose a double membership fee (with an opt-out) at this time, however, the suggestion has been noted and will be discussed again if required.

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Question from Flt Lt K Warner

Despite the tremendous hard work and ideas that have been proposed by the Board of Trustees & Club Management Team to limit the financial impact that the current COVID crisis is having on the Club, I have strong reservations that simply increased usage, donations and legacies will have the desired outcome in the timescales that are required to avoid a large deficit in this financial year. For a cash-flow focused business, which relies on fixed income (through membership subscriptions) and variable income (through bedrooms, events & catering facilities) I was very surprised to read of the Board's decision to freeze subscriptions at the 2020 level for next year. In my view this is almost the opposite of what we need to be doing: in tough times we need to rely more on our fixed income, and less on our variable income.

Therefore, would the Board consider the idea of a one-off 'COVID surcharge' on top of the 2021 subscriptions for Senior & Retired Officers only, with effect from 1st January 2021, when the Direct Debit mandates are renewed? I fear that if this proposal is not embedded into next year's subscriptions from the start of the year (in just 11 weeks' time) or is delivered part-way through the year, then it may be too difficult to implement effectively later on, with the danger of causing significant resentment amongst the membership. In any 'normal' financial crisis (!) I think that we might have had the luxury of time, but this is not the case in the current situation. I genuinely believe that all members will understand the Club's predicament and would probably want to help in any small but meaningful way possible (e.g. a £30 surcharge applied across 24,000 members would equate to £720,000). Appreciably, in implementing such a one-off levy we may stand the risk of losing some members, but if we don't act quickly and decisively now then we may not have a Club at all, and a golden opportunity may be missed.

May I thank the Chairman, Board of Trustees & Management Team for all their hard-work and would you give serious consideration to the above suggestion? Thank you.

Thank you for your question. The answer has been prepared in consultation with the Membership Committee.

From an administrative point of view, this would be difficult to implement, particularly regarding the definition of a Senior Officer. A manual process would need to take place identifying those with a starred rank of OF3, OF4 or OF5, or indeed the classification of a Senior Officer. The Membership Committee is also mindful that Former Serving Officers is the membership category where numbers, albeit slowly continue to fall. If anything, the group least affected in employment terms by the pandemic are serving officers.

If this would be implemented on the entire membership, the Membership Committee believes that this would cause some Members to reconsider their membership, (including Associate Members) which would have a larger detrimental impact on the Club.

As you are aware, the Club is currently running a campaign to encourage members to make a regular donation via standing order and we are hopeful that the support this has generated continues, however your suggestion has been logged and if required, will be discussed again.

Question from Wg Cdr Clive Upton

I greatly appreciate the work of the Trustees, the Chief Executive and the staff are doing at this very difficult moment in the Club's history, and their combined capability to steer us through the situation. I am both sorry and disappointed that only some 7% of members have positively responded to the appeal (based on our President's most recent letter).

I wonder if our current financial model is appropriate for these stringent times. With very low inflation being applied to service pay but much higher inflation attributed to Council rates

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and other overheads, increases service pay cannot match the increases of our necessary outgoings. To me, we have to level up our income to outgoings very quickly. Whilst the Trustees have the flexibility, within the Club's rules, to adjust membership fees for all but serving officers as appropriate, it might be helpful, in these extraordinary times, if the rules were amended to have serving officers pay say a full day's pay plus 10% for a term of 3 years. Obviously, this would need to be tested by research to ensure it is not detrimental to membership numbers. Finally, I appreciate, that there will not be an increase in membership fees in 2021 and can understand the reasoning behind the decision, but for myself, I would have been content for a 10-15% increase in these stringent circumstances.

Thank you for your question. The answer has been prepared in consultation with the Membership Committee.

For many years, in order to encourage membership from Serving Officers, we have maintained the policy of Club Membership rates being set at ½ days' pay. From a member's point of view, it is exceptionally easy to both explain and understand. The Club is also mindful that the Victory Services Club charges no membership fee to Serving Officers.

The Armed Forces received a 2% pay rise in 2020 which is above the rate of inflation. The percentage of serving officers who are members of the Club has fallen significantly over time. It is currently 42.5%. Increasing serving officers' subscriptions will not help in addressing this problem.

The goal for capping membership rates for Serving Officers, is that the membership is then maintained following retirement from the service when it is hoped that more regular visits to the Club will take place to take advantage of all the facilities the Club has.

The Membership Committee believes that any move to change the model for Serving Officers' would need to be market tested before a proposal to change the Club rule was put to the membership, and therefore at this time, we are not proposing to change this policy. However your suggestion has been logged and if required, will be discussed again.

Question from Flt Lt V Antia

I would like to make a suggestion for consideration. The club needs to maintain and grow its membership as mitigation against the current drop in operational revenue. All members have families so why not promote referrals for family membership more heavily. To encourage uptake why not waive the entrance fee of £200 which is a significant barrier to joining particularly in the current economy. If the entrance fee were waived I could gift both my daughter's a membership for 2021. I am immensely proud to be a member and would like to encourage my children to share my experience and help ensure the club's future.

I, like many members have contributed on the just giving page, but I am sure many would also like to share the membership with their families. If each of the 24,000 members introduced one family member that would bring in £4.8 M in annual fees, which would clear your debts. It's not unrealistic, I have already introduced my mother so with my daughter's that makes 3. I have two brothers and 4 more children who are currently ineligible as they are under 18, but are potentially future members. I hope you will consider my suggestion and waive the entrance fee for family members either permanently or for a trial period to the end of 2021.

Thank you for your question. The answer has been prepared in consultation with the Membership Committee.

The Club promotes family membership and the Board has agreed a further extension to eligibility to include the close relatives of former members now deceased. Further work is being undertaken to widen eligibility

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The joining fee is approximately the same as the annual subscription so if dropped it would require double the current number of family members to join to break even. I suspect in the current climate when access to London and the Club is depressed, we are unlikely to see a significant uptake in membership. Conversely, a significant uptake in family membership would put pressure on Club resources and change its character – a concern to some members.

Therefore at this time, we are not proposing to change the Club rule, however your suggestion has been logged and if required, will be discussed again.

Question from Lt Col B Lines

As the recovery of the Club may be a slow process, I would like to propose a way of engaging new pilots in their support of the Club with the introduction of a DayPass. Through communication with the international airlines, I believe this would be a great opportunity to highlight the facilities of the Club with the long term aim to increase our membership. I would suggest that the DayPass be managed online, including payment with a limited number per day. If the Club was busy, they could be restricted to a specific area (e.g. the Cowdray Lounge). Guests could be brought in for an additional fee.

I would be happy to provide additional recommendations in relation to the scheme as I genuinely believe it would be very popular.

Thank you for your question. Given the parlous state of the aviation and travel industry, we are not sure there would be significant demand for a DayPass. Offering one day temporary membership would fundamentally change the character of the Club for very limited gain, however your suggestion has been noted and if required will be discussed again.

Question from Flt Lt K Warner

Would you consider the AGM to be in a similar format next year to give maximum opportunity for all members to attend?

Thank you for your question. Whilst no final decision has been made, following the success of this year, it is planned that Members will be able to participate and attend the AGM online. More details will follow when the final decision has been made.

Question from Sqn Ldr B Moxey

What can be done to extend the mortgage/reduce the repayments?

At the start of the pandemic, the Club met with Coutts & Co and have been kept regularly updated in terms of monthly Management Information supplied throughout 2020. Coutts have been extremely supportive of the Club, including offering several short term relief opportunities. Discussions are ongoing with the Bank, The Club, The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.

Question from Sqn Ldr B Moxey

What has been done to retain the contact details of the best staff made redundant so that they could be re-employed when the situation improves?

Thank you for your question. The Club is retaining all contact details from those staff made redundant including those who took voluntary redundancy. As part of the redundancy process we advised those affected that should a relevant position become available, they would be contacted.

Question from Flt Lt M Brooksbank

Although posed immediately after the AGM has concluded, I hope the committee will consider my suggestion (2 below) as an additional, hopefully not too controversial method of raising additional funds from the membership:

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- 1) The idea already proposed to scrap the joining fee is sound and will encourage members to propose others, hence raising more long-term revenue.
- 2) My additional point is for consideration of an extension to the family-membership category; expanding beyond children, etc. of a member to include siblings, nieces and nephews. All of these could be vetted for suitability and would not essentially step (far) outside the "RAF Family".

Thank you for your question submitted following the AGM. We hope you found the event useful. In regards to your question, we will answer the questions in the same order:

- 1) The Club's primary aim is to provide accommodation, events and event space for Serving Officers, Former Serving Officers and their families. To support this, the Club does not have any joining fee for Serving Officers, Former Serving Officers and their partners. We have also removed the re-joining fee for Former Serving Officers who resigned and then re-joined the Club. There is a joining fee for other Family Members and Affiliate Members with the income raised through this going towards the general operating costs of the Club. We regularly review the joining fee to ensure it is affordable.
- 2) The Membership Committee regularly review the eligibility and criteria for family membership. Currently, any full member propose their parents/legal guardians, siblings, children and grandchildren aged 18 years and over for family membership. The Membership Committee recently discussed extending the criteria to include nephews and nieces of full members and will be recommending this change to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

Question from Dr J Craggs

The Club is run by Full Members who, I believe, comprise 56% of the membership. Is there any way the other 44% can contribute their skills and experience to the Club?

Thank you for your question and for your interest in supporting the Club. Affiliate, Family and other members (who are not Full Members) sit on and bring their expertise to the Club 5 Committees (House, Arts, Finance, Membership and Membership). There are also volunteering opportunities in the Club Library. Details of these volunteer roles are posted in the Club e-news when vacancies arise.