



## Arborfield Old Boys' Association

### Minutes of the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting Held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025 at the Holiday Inn, Birmingham

#### Committee Members:

<b>Chair</b>	Geordie Wright-Rivers (GWR)
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Mike Tizard (MT)
<b>General Secretary</b>	Nigel Canning (NC)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob McKeegan-Brown (BMB)
<b>Recruitment Officer</b>	Bruce Leslie (BL)
<b>Membership Officer</b>	Bob Cassidy (BC)
<b>Data Protection Officer</b>	Jeff Baker (JB)
<b>Bereavement Officer</b>	Ian Scurr (IS)
<b>Webmaster</b>	Mark Jobes (MJ)
<b>OBAN Editor</b>	Andy Dickson (AD)
<b>Cenotaph Officer</b>	Steve Thornes (ST)
<b>Committee Advisor</b>	Bill Cleasby
<b>AOBA Standard Bearer</b>	Dave Merrick

1. **Apologies.** Apologies received from Mike Tizard, Bill Cleasby, Nigel Canning, Bob Cassidy, Andy Dickson, Steve Thornes and Mark Jobes (*N.B. this high number is as a result of a late change of date and venue*).

2. **Minutes of previous meeting.**

The minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> AGM were presented and passed as read. Proposed by Bruce Leslie and seconded by Ian Scurr. **Carried.**

3. **Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Committee Members' Reports.**

(a) **Chair.** AOBA Chair, Geordie Wright-Rivers, welcomed all members and attendees before raising the following agenda items:

- **Item 1 - Proposal** – To increase annual subscription rate from £15 to £25.  
Proposed by Geordie Wright-Rivers and Seconded by Bob McKeegan-Brown.

Geordie Wright-Rivers explained that the OBAN Editor and Treasurer had made an approach to highlight that publication of the magazine, and the ever-increasing cost of postage, were making a significant dent in AOBA funds and that costs in general were on the increase. He went on to advise that subscription had not risen for more than 10 years and to allow the fund to continue to generally 'break even' it would be necessary to make this increase. Consensus from the floor was this remained excellent value for money.

**Vote Carried** (Treasurer to note and action as necessary).

- **Item 2 – Proposal** – To increase the AOBA contribution to the Army Apprentice National Association (AANA) from £100 to £200 per year.  
Proposed by Geordie Wright-Rivers and Seconded by Roger Traves.

The AOBA AANA representative, Roger Traves, explained that the AANA were low on funds and needed ongoing donations to fund their annual reunion at the NMA. The Chair suggested that AOBA being a major stakeholder in the AANA, he considered it to be appropriate to support this proposal.

**Vote Carried (Treasurer to note and action).**

- **Item 3 – Future Reunions.** Geordie Wright-Rivers informed that future reunions were planned to take place on the following dates:

Next reunion: 12 – 14 Jun 26

Subsequent reunion: 11 – 13 Jun 27

Regarding the venue, there was excellent feedback relating to the current location - the Holiday Inn, Birmingham – but it was noted that the lack of lifts created difficulty for some. Geordie Wright-Rivers would continue to seek an alternative venue going forward with cost and proximity to the NMA being key considerations whilst remaining open to the option to return to the current venue.

- **Item 4 – Committee Succession Planning.** Geordie Wright-Rivers made a plea for members to step-up and join the committee. He warned that more than half of the current committee had exceeded their tenure or were about to do so and reinforced that without a committee there could be no association. He asked that members consider the various appointments and offer their services.

- **Item 5 – Charitable Donations – Proposal** – To allocate the Chair’s charitable donation of £1000 to the charity *Brain Tumour Research*.

- **Donation 1.** Geordie Wright-Rivers proposed that 1 of 2 charitable donations for 2025 should go to Brain Tumour Research, an organisation that has helped Lt Col Marc Wilding, an ex-Apprentice (91C) make an almost miraculous recovery having been last year been notified that his brain tumour was terminal and incurable.

**Vote Carried (Treasurer to note and action).**

- **Donation 2.** On opening the floor to suggestions for the second donation, Bob McKeegan-Brown requested that it be donated to a charity that he is involved with called ‘Free Wheelers’. They are a free motorcycle courier service providing out of hours support delivering blood, human tissue and other essential medical items between NHS facilities in the area.

**Vote Carried (Treasurer to note and action).**

- **Anonymous Donation.** Geordie Wright-Rivers was delighted to inform the delegates that he had just received a very generous donation of £1000 from a member of the association in the room to assist with ongoing costs of running the association. He was heartily thanked for his generosity by all in attendance.

(b) **General Secretary’s Report.** The General Secretary was unfortunately unable to attend but provided the following written report:

- *The Constitution has recently been updated and is available in the members area on the AOBA Website.*
- *For any issues of Benevolence, AOBA Procedures, or any other issues regarding the running or administration of the AOBA, please contact the Secretary in the first instance. You may then be directed to the appropriate committee member.*
- *For any other enquiries, all Committee Members can be contacted through the AOBA Website ‘Contacts Page’ here <https://arborfieldoldboys.co.uk/contacts>.*

(c) **Treasurer's Report.** The Treasurer presented the annual report highlighting the following specific areas of interest:

- The fund began the year with £10,377 and now has £5161 in the account. The major expenditure was OBAN which costs £3150 per issue. Other costs were:
  - Software Costs £909
  - Moorepay £630
  - Archive and AANA £640
  - Committee Costs £550
- The Savings account remains healthy with a current balance of £49,200.
- The costs associated with the annual reunion costs will as usual, empty the current account, and monies will have to be transferred from savings account to enable the Association to function for the remainder of the year. To continue to draw down the savings account in this fashion will give us approximately eight years until we are unable to function.
- This situation is linked to the fact that the REME Charity withdrew our aliquot interest payments which amounted to an annual total of around £7000.
- The Treasurer closed by expressing his gratitude for the members' support in earlier raising annual subscriptions to £25 and that a replacement be sought as he had now completed 6 years in the appointment.
- Proposed by Ian Scurr and Seconded by Roger Traves.

(d) **Recruitment Officer's Report.** The Recruitment Officer announced that he was standing down from his position after 7 years and thanked the membership for their assistance over that period. The Chair thanked him on behalf of the association for his sterling efforts in steadily adding new members each year.

(e) **Membership Officer's Report.** The Membership Officer was unfortunately unable to attend but provided the following report:

#### ***Introduction GOOD NEWS INCREASED NUMBERS***

- *Membership numbers much improved this year.*
- *New membership UP in 2024 compared to 2023.*
- *New members for 2025 (so far) slightly UP on this time last year.*
- *Total Active membership is 728 UP from 704 reported at 2024 AGM.*
- *Large contingent from 75'ers boosted membership. Well done guys.*
- *Members welcome to contact me about any aspect of AOBA.*

#### ***4 Year membership Stats***

- *New members for 2021 – 59 of which 26 cancelled or failed to re-join.*
- *New members for 2022 – 53 of which 2 cancelled or failed to re-join.*
- *New members for 2023 – 35 of which 13 cancelled or failed to re-join.*
- *New members for 2024 – 41 of which 1 cancelled or failed to re-join.*
- *New members for 2025 – 16 so far.*

(f) **OBAN Editor's Report.** The OBAN Editor was unfortunately unable to attend but provided the following written report:

- **Cost of OBAN.** Could membership please consider to reverting to electronic copy to save costs. Use the AOBA website contacts page to let me know if you want to change.
- **OBAN 91.** Well underway but more articles required for OBAN 92.
- **Articles.** It has been a while since I asked but I am starting to run out of articles for OBAN. Anyone who has photos or stories from this year's reunion please send them to me via the 'Contacts Page' on the AOBA website.
- **Reunion.** 2025 photos and stories please.
- **New Features.** Any ideas on new features would be welcome. I am thinking about a new series of stories on 'Coincidences'. If you would like to see changes or additions to OBAN let me know – all (most!) things will be considered.

(g) **Data Protection Officer's Report.** Jeff Baker presented his report highlighting the following specific areas of interest:

#### **Data Protection**

- No attempted security breaches have been detected.
- Our current security measures appear to be effective.
- We have had no incidents that require investigation or reporting to the ICC.
- We have had no requests for information allowed by DPA 2018.

#### **Databases**

- There are currently 9 active spreadsheets in the database, all are for different purposes.
- Each requires changes depending on purpose though all are currently up to date and accurate
- All are held securely in AOBA's cloud site and website, but access is limited to committee members.

Jeff Baker closed with a brief summary of the impending Data Use and Access Bill emphasising that he was monitoring its progress and envisaged only minor, if any, changes to AOBA procedures.

(h) **Bereavement Officer's Report.** Ian Scurr provided a brief report announcing that there had been 52 members' deaths since the last reunion and that he was grateful for assistance received from members throughout the year. He suggested that reporting of deaths could be better and asked that more information relating to the deceased and the person reporting, be gathered prior to passing information to him.

(i) **Webmaster's Report.** The Webmaster was unfortunately unable to attend but provided the following written report:

- *Firstly, my apologies for my absence – the reunion this year has conflicted with a long booked 'Chaps' holiday in Europe.*
- *There are no current issues with the website.*
- *There are now 710 users registered with the site.*
- *With the Reunion under way as you read this, I would be grateful if any photos and videos taken at the event could be sent to me to use on the website.*
- *I am currently working with Celia at the REME Museum to collate and hopefully publish numerous videos of life as an Apprentice at Arborfield that have been gathering dust for many years (there are a lot!!)*
- *As always – Company ties are available to order via the website order form!*
- *As this will be my last AGM report as the AOBA Webmaster, I would just like to thank the members of the Committee (past and present) and the members of the Arborfield Old Boys Association for their support and guidance over the years I have been in this role.*

- *I will remain as a member of this wonderful association and be available to help and guide the new Webmaster and to assist the association wherever I can.*
- *It has been an absolute pleasure gents!*

The Chair offered his sincere thanks and gratitude on behalf of the association for Mark's exceptional work in developing and maintain the website over his long tenure.

(i) **Cenotaph Officer's Report.** The Webmaster was unfortunately unable to attend but provided the following written report:

- *AOBA has again received 35 tickets for the Cenotaph parade on Sunday 09th November 2025, the same number of tickets as last year. The RBL have confirmed the 35 tickets and Steve Thornes [Cenotaph Officer] has sent out initial emails to previous attendees in his Cenotaph distribution list who have expressed an interest to attend this year's parade.*
- *If anyone attending the AGM would like to apply for a ticket for this year's parade they should contact Steve Thornes ASAP after the AGM. Please can you supply my contact details to anyone who is interested. These are: [stevethornes@hotmail.com](mailto:stevethornes@hotmail.com) Mob: 07766 906350*
- *Can a proposal be put forward for the AOBA to again grant a £25.00 per head subsidy to offset the cost of a remembrance dinner on the Saturday evening 08th November 2025 at the VSC.*  
**Vote Carried (Treasurer to note and action).**

5. **Member's Voice/AOB.** Following officers' reports, the meeting was opened to the floor with the following points being raised and discussed:

- **E-OBAN Option.** Nigel Deacon requested that the OBAN editor be requested to send out a renewed request to identify those members willing to forego hardcopy of the OBAN magazine and take the E-OBAN from the website.  
**Agreed (OBAN Editor to note).**
- **Recognition of TeeCee's Poem at the Memorial.** A request was made on behalf of the family of the late Tony Church, TeeCee, to recognise his contribution of the poem that is inscribed on the centre stone of the memorial. There was a suggestion of having his initials added to the stone but advice from member's associated with the AANA, particularly the project officer Gordon Bonner, suggested that this would be highly unlikely as it would breach contracted agreements made when the memorial was constructed. Roger Traves agreed to take the matter to the next meeting of the AANA executive committee to discuss. In the interim, it was agreed that a special article be produced to recognise his wider contribution in the OBAN.  
**Agreed (Roger Traves and OBAN Editor to note).**
- **Memorial Bricks.** There was a request to ask whether member's might be able to buy memorial bricks to add to those currently adorning the memorial. Gordon Bonner explained that rather than being memorial bricks, those bricks that are currently in place are in recognition of individuals' donations made during fund raising for the memorial and that the agreed number was reached at the start. He advised that further changes or additions to the memorial would not be permitted.
- **Webmaster.** Following a discussion led by the Chair regarding volunteering to join the committee, Zeb Mansfield agreed to fill the role of Webmaster in succession to Mark Jobes. He also that he be known from hereon in as 'Zeb the Web'.  
**Agreed.**

6. **New Committee for 2025/26.** Neville Catchpole wished to formally thank the committee for their efforts throughout the year on behalf of the membership. The following members agreed to form the committee for 2025/26 which was agreed by the membership:

Chair	Geordie Wright-Rivers
Vice-Chair	Mike Tizard
General Secretary	Nigel Canning
Treasurer	Bob McKeegan-Brown
Recruitment Officer	VACANT
Membership Officer	Bob Cassidy
Data Protection Officer	Jeff Baker
Bereavement Officer	Ian Scurr
Webmaster	Zeb Mansfield
OBAN Editor	Andy Dickson
Cenotaph Officer	Steve Thornes
AOBA Standard Bearer	Dave Merrick
Committee Advisor	Bill Cleasby

7. **Date of Next Meeting.** Then next Annual General Meeting will take place during the AOBA Reunion on Sat 13 June 2026.

Signed:

Date: