



Arborfield Old Boys Association

Minutes of the 62nd Annual General Meeting

Held at 15:30 on 13th June 2026 at Holiday Inn, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Committee Members:

Chair	Geordie Wright-Rivers (GWR)
Vice-Chair	Mike Tizard (MT)
General Secretary	Nigel Canning (NC)
Treasurer	Bob McKeegan-Brown (BMB) & Alistair Weir (AW)
Recruitment Officer	James Pittick (JP)
Membership Officer	Bob Cassidy (BC)
Data Protection Officer	Jeff Baker (JB)
Bereavement Officer	Ian Scurr (IS)
Webmaster	Bryan Zeb Mansfield (ZM)
OBAN Editor	Andy Dickson (AD)
Cenotaph Officer	Steve Thornes (ST)
Committee Advisor	Bill Cleasby
AOBA Standard Bearer	Dave Merrick

1. Apologies. Apologies received from Jeff Baker, Andy Dickson and belated apologies from Bob Cassidy.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The minutes of the 61st AGM were presented and passed as read. Proposed by Steve Thornes & seconded by Dave Merrick. **Carried.**

3. Matters arising.

Following up on the increasing postage costs, it was suggested that members may need to opt in to receiving a hard copy of the OBAN, rather than opting in for a digital copy as it is currently. This will continue to be monitored to ensure members do not lose access to OBAN.

4. Committee Members' Reports.

(a) Chair

1. GWR welcomed all members, and thanked everyone involved in the Drumhead service particularly Ian Scurr for liaising with families who attended.
2. GWR introduced the new REME Connect App. Part of the wider Military App it is a fantastic tool to communicate with the wider REME family. He encouraged members to sign up and spread the word.

3. One useful function would be to link with other Veteran's Breakfast Clubs where there is no REME Club. There are REME Breakfast Clubs in France too, use REME Connect for details.
4. The AANA had their annual reunion and AGM in May, and it was noted that some of the other Schools and College Associations have closed or are in danger of doing so. Harrogate is one of the closures which is very surprising given its status as one of the final three, along with Chepstow and Arborfield. Could the AOBA offer affiliated memberships to ex apprentices who are now without an association other than AANA? Something to discuss.
5. The Corps Memorial Day at the NMA will be on the 1st October 2026. Details to follow.
6. There have been discussions of REME Tours to visit bases in Germany, again more details to follow.
7. The Chair's £1000 charity recipient was proposed by Dave Merrick and seconded by Steve Thornes to be John Preston (77C). He has been helped in the past with his work and support to people in the Ukraine and was featured in the BBC Documentary, "Hell Jumper" about Chris Parry. Carried. It was further agreed that the remaining £1000 would be held for discretion.
8. GWR asked for input about the reunion. Are we happy with the current format or do we need to change?
9. Finally, GWR informed us that due to work and family he would be retiring as Corps Secretary and AOBA Chair after next year's reunion.

(b) General Secretary

1. NC reported issues with getting emails via the AOBA website but that has now been rectified.
2. It was recognised that the minutes from AGM 61 had not found themselves on to the website which has also been rectified.
3. After five years of service as General Secretary, NC will also be looking to stand down after next year's reunion.

(c) Treasurer

(BMB)

The current state of finances is as follows:

Current Account	£10,085.84
Business Account	£27,582.30

This is similar to our opening funds on 1 Jan 26 which were:

Current Account	£1,138.52
Business Account	£37,445.20

The largest spends in 2026 were:

Reunion	£10,743.74
OBAN	£3,152.86 with another issue to come this year
Donations	£2000.00

Our only income, now that we are no longer supported by the REME Charity, is from subscriptions and the Gift Aid which this accrues. We are in a better state than the figures indicate as this year the bill for the Reunion was paid before the AGM which as you can see was £10.7K. The increase in subscriptions to £25 has increased our income by about £6.5K with an associated increase in Gift Aid of around £1.5K and will negate any drop in funds over the next few years and leave the Association in a good place financially.

Finally, after a number of years as the Treasurer I shall be handing over to Alistair Weir at the AGM and I would like to thank him for volunteering for the post.

(AW)

Alistair then introduced himself and informed the AGM that the handover with BMB is well underway although BMB will keep a watching brief until January to ensure 2027 subscriptions go smoothly. He is also the new custodian of the AOBA “Gates” badges. Contact him through the website for details. Currently £5 plus postage.

(d) Recruitment Officer

1. James Pittick (JP) introduced himself as the new Recruitment Officer. As a 93C intake he is well placed to set up a LinkedIn account and is busy on social media recruiting younger members.

(e) Membership Officer (minutes from notes provided)

1. Below is the information that should have been included in the meeting presentations. Please contact the Members Secretary via the website if you have any comments.

2.

Report

- Active membership numbers are back down to the 2024 count
- Sadly we lost a high number of our more senior members during 2026
- New membership down in 2025 compared to 2024
- New members for 2026 8 (so far) slightly down on this time last year
- Total Active membership is 704 down from 728 reported at 2024 AGM
- 76 Uptake for their reunion was low. Reunion message may need reviewing?

3. 4 Year membership Stats

- 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 – 28 of which 1 cancelled or failed to re-join
- New members for 2026 – 8 so far

4. Overall active membership is still quite stable. Looking back to 2021 our membership was in the mid 600's. Therefore, currently the overall trend is upwards.
- 5.

(f) Data Protection Officer (From report provided)

1. We have had no issues with the security of AOBA held data.
2. Recently a member had his personal address book compromised which resulted in some members and others receiving scam emails relating to Amazon purchases. These were attempts to obtain money using false information.
3. Treat any unusual or unexpected contacts as suspicious and if unsure, contact me via the website and I'll run a check and respond.
4. please let me know of any concerns you may have and keep your address book as safe as possible.
5. All AOBA databases are up to date and as accurate as possible.
6. Please let DPO know of any personal data changes asap.
7. The Arborfield Apprentice Nominal Roll is progressing and now stands at 20,350 which is about 70% of the total intake. Further additions will be made over the next 12 months.

A vote of thanks is recorded for Jeff's amazing work at the REME Museum in creating this historical Roll.

(g) Bereavement Officer

1. There were 50 deaths of ex- apprentices and permanent staff remembered. Sadly there were 30 deaths recorded with no family contacts. 12 families of ex apprentices attended the service and very grateful for the opportunity.
2. It is requested again that if reports of death are put on social media or elsewhere that contact details for families are added if possible. This makes it much easier to contact them. It also enables us to assist if required.
3. GWR noted that as we a part of the REME Family we can apply for help to attend funerals, access Standard Bearers and buglers etc.

(h) Webmaster

1. I am Zeb Mansfield and I was 77C. I took over administrating the AOBA website in September 2025 from Mark Jobes. The only qualification I have for running a web site is I have used a mouse and keyboard before.

Firstly, I would like to say a massive thank you to Mark for all his help with both transferring the web site over but also in his help in showing me how to do the

day-to-day administration of the site and his very quick responses to all my questions as I learned the ropes.

There are no known issues with the AOBA website, I have not (yet) managed to break it!

There has been a major clean-up of data, cross checking the web site user details with membership data. Many email addresses were found to be out of date, and we are working to update the data.

If you update your email address, please remember to update the details on the website or let the Web Site administrator know so I can update for you.

Copies of OBAN are available to read or download from the website.

Company ties are available to order via the website order form.

Website stats.

In the last 12 months we have had:

- just under 5500 visitors to the site, an average of 15 per day,
- over 18300 page views.
- there are 663 users registered on the site.

(i) OBAN Editor (minutes from notes provided)

1. Apologies for not attending the reunion and AGM, again.

OBAN 94 is well under way. I am just waiting for the reports and photos from the reunion and the committee members reports.

Stories and articles for OBAN are always welcome. Thanks to the regular contributors.

Please don't be shy. Other members are genuinely interested in what takes up your time.

There is a comment in my report in OBAN 94 about the issues we are having sending e-mail to Yahoo addresses. Not a huge issue for us but annoying for some committee members.

Microsoft and Yahoo don't seem very interested in solving it.

Please contact me via the AOBA website contacts page with any suggestions, complaints, ideas etc for OBAN. I won't be offended.

I hope you have a great reunion and congratulations to the 66ers on their 60th anniversary and the 76ers on their 50th.

(j) Cenotaph Officer

1. AOBA have been allocated 35 tickets for the Cenotaph parade for 8th November 2026.
2. Please contact ST to be added to the list.
3. It is proposed again that a £25.00 per head subsidy be donated to offset the cost of a remembrance dinner on the Saturday evening 07th November 2024 at the VSC.
Seconded Jim Gardner. Carried.

5. Members' Voice

1. Mike Tizard proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for the high level of teamwork and enthusiasm that is put into keeping the AOBA in such a high position.
2. It was proposed by Nigel Canning and seconded by Derek Wheatland that the annual £200.00 donation requested by the National Army Apprentices Association be granted. Carried.
3. The annual Sancto Award for outstanding service to the Association for 2026 is awarded to Bill Cleasby for all his efforts and involvement with the AOBA. His knowledge and wisdom in his role as Advisor to the committee has been an absolute godsend at times.

7. New committee

The following members have offered to stand on the committee. Carried.

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

8. Next Meeting:

The next AGM will be on Saturday 12th June 2027.

The meeting closed at 16.50

Signed:

Date: