



From the Secretary – Maj (Retd) PA Raison

Ad Unum Omnes

THE PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III KG, KT, PC, GCB, AK, QSO, PC, ADC

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THE 101st MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION FRIDAY 11 APRIL 2025

RECORD OF DECISIONS

Present	Lt. Colonel L Cradden MBE Mr JJ Wilson Maj (Retd) P Raison Mr R Bareham Mr P Bryant Mr D Smart Mr D Singletary Mr M Farrington MBE Mr C Jackson Mr B Black Mr A Ellis Mr V Thorn Mr Mark Powell Mr Gary Haughton	Chairman (Online) Vice Chairman and Northeast Region National Secretary Finance Director Anglia Region Southeast Region Wales Region Northwest Region Yorkshire Region Scotland & N I Region Southwest Region South Region JM Finn (Online) Grampian PRA (Online)
Apologies	Mr Jean-Marc Bazzoni Mr C Brooksbank Mr T Wood Emma Smith	PRA Admin Assistant Midlands Region London Region Assistant Finance Manager

Please note that due to the availability of some participants online and connectivity issues the sequence of this meeting was not as detailed in this document. The details however are an accurate record of the meeting.

Item 1 - Chairman's update & Regimental news.

1. The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.
 - a. The Chairman delivered the Regimental Update. The key points were:
 - a. Challenges in defence with present USA situation.
 - b. Ongoing unit operational deployments.
 - c. Manning in RHQ Para. Reduction in staff and Civil Service recruiting ban.
 - d. Change of Infantry recruit process. 1 ITB initially and then move to PARA Coy. The first iteration of this process and the regiment will make it work for us.
 - e. The Application (App) - The development of an App for smartphones or tablets is ongoing and making good progress. This would cover all aspects of recruiting through to leaving and supporting the veteran community, events and welfare. A trial may be required to iron out any early issues.
 - f. PRA finance situation and increase in financial commitments due to Civil Service recruiting restrictions. The charity has had to pick up the bill. Others within RHQ will be gapped and will have an impact.
 - g. The PRA branches request for financial support to PRA HQ. A request to The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC) to cover national and regional regimental and PRA events, which has been partly agreed by them.
 - h. The Secretary highlighted that there had been some significant donations to the PRAFC by individual PRA members and branches in recent months that were not included in the figures.
 - i. Dave Singletary and the Vice Chairman stated that we do not wish to get into a competition with the PRAFC. We work very well together under the RHQ Para umbrella and wish to make this work for everyone.

Item 2 – Record of last meeting and Matters Arising

2. The Vice Chairman summarised the previous record of decisions. Points arising:
 - a. Merger with the PRAFC – The Secretary discussed the situation with the potential merger with the PRAFC in the future. This has been looked at previously and is on hold now. It may be something that is looked at in the near future as it could be beneficial for both charities to sit under one umbrella.
 - b. Paul Bryant highlighted that we had been asked about the situation regarding 'Walter Mittys'. The Secretary apologised as he has received a response from the OC of the RMP in Colchester and thought this had been sent out. The message was that it is not illegal and unless they are making financial gain from it there is very little they can do. The Secretary will distribute the response from the RMP.
3. The proposal that the previous minutes are passed as read:

Proposed by: Paul Bryant
Seconded by: Dave Singletary

CARRIED

Item 3 – Financial Report Update – Emma Smith

4. Mark Powell from JM Finn joined the meeting online and gave an update on the association's portfolio. This provided a valuable insight into the financial world with the ongoing issues with the USA and taxes. There is a large amount of uncertainty in the market now, which is having a significant impact on investments. It has produced a large amount of movement in the financial market, leading the sale of USA assets that could lead to less profit.

5. The Secretary highlighted that the impact of losing two Civil Service posts within the association (finance and admin) is significant and the annual wage bill has increased by 24k. We are fortunate and very grateful that the PRAFC has covered part of the wage bill for the new assistant. The PRA investment portfolio will not be able to cover this along with the other normal running costs of the association.
6. On behalf of JM Finn, Mark Powell offered to sponsor a regimental event in 2025. It was suggested that a UK based event such as Hardwick Hall could benefit from this. It was later confirmed that JM Finn would provide £500 to sponsor this event.
7. Richard Bareham, Finance Director, gave a brief Quarter 1 for the period January to March 2025. The following should be read in conjunction with the Budget v Actuals spreadsheet used at the meeting:

Total income for Quarter One (Q1) 2025 was a very healthy £40940. This unusually high income has been generated by legacies totalling £24,032. The legacies were from Arthur Doughty, Eileen Hughes and Edward Cassidy. We are expecting a further legacy from Arthur Doughty as the £20,000 received so far is only an interim payment.

Q1 donations also performed better than anticipated with total donations reaching £7,391. Donations were received from the following branches (in no particular order); N Ireland, London, Worcester & Hereford, Portsmouth, Hertford, Aldershot, Manchester, Ilford and Maidstone. Thank you to all these branches for their generosity. Later donations will be covered in later quarters and meetings.

32 branches have paid their full affiliation fees in Q1, we also received £45 from West Somerset and £50 from the following: Central Birmingham, Chelmsford (now closed), N Ireland, Rochdale and Swindon. If we can remind branches that the affiliation fee is £60 for the year please.

Q1 dividends currently reflect what was received in Q4, £5881, as we do not have the figures for Q1 yet from J M Finn.

Total expenditure for Q1 2025 was £8,287 which is slightly above budget. The main reason for the expenditure exceeding the budget is due to the £1,100 grant for Philip Aucot to attend Op Varsity. The majority of this grant (£1000) was recuperated following a grant from the Darell Brown Memorial fund and the other £100 covered by profit from selling Parachute Regiment glass tumblers. The Secretary thanked the EC for their vote to support this grant.

The budget is on target and Emma Smith has done some great work in this. The donations and legacies so far have been excellent and will go some way in keeping our finances level.

The valuation of the PRA portfolio is £760k but is fairly fluid due to the ongoing situation with tariffs applied by the USA.

The surplus for Q1 is £32,654. A fantastic start for the year for the PRA

The Vice Chairman asked for a vote of thanks to be recorded for Emma Smith the new Financial Assistant for the work she had put into the accounts and her report.

Item 4 – Regional Secretaries Verbal Reports.

7. The Regional Secretary's provided a summary of their areas of responsibility:
 - a. Northwest. Mike Farrington attempted to get a meeting together. The first attempt in October was cancelled due to lack of support. Unfortunately, only 4 of 13 were represented at the second attempt. Some sent their apologies but others simply ignored the request. There are a number of branches in the region that are on the verge of collapse. Mike has tried to contact all of them to get the ground truth. Some are very limited by numbers and would benefit from closing or merging. Formal letters are required to establish the situation and to suggest options for their future. Changes to the constitution are required to outline the levels that branches should be at to remain viable. Mike stated that the Manchester branch had voted to support PRA HQ in the future from their collections. They will continue to donate to the PRAFC from money raised at the Commando Speed March.
 - b. Anglia. Paul Bryant stated that the Chelmsford branch had recently closed after the loss of a number of members. The Cambridge branch is in the process of closing with the majority of the money coming to the central fund of the PRA. The Secretary held a meeting with Tom Brown and Ken Price at IWM Duxford recently to discuss this. It was agreed that a donation of £500 would be made to the

Cambridge Veterans Club as Ken Price was now a member and was being well looked after by them. Tom Brown would then close the accounts.

Spalding branch does not communicate with the regional secretary and contact needs to be made and there needs to be a decision on their future. The Colchester branch are doing well and are heavily promoting the Airborne Statue that will be unveiled in 2026. Their membership is fairly strong and they have a number of events in the diary. The Ilford branch are doing well and are running a number of activities throughout the year. There was a question on paying in slips for cash collections from them, which will be looked into. This should be a straight forward process of paying into their own branch account and then paying it into the PRA HQ account. This provides an audit trail and also an opportunity for members to vote where the money goes, unless it has been agreed and voted on previously. The Norfolk and Waveney branch are very active and is well run. The South East Essex has gone through some management changes but is doing well. It was suggested by the Norfolk and Waveney branch that there could be an opportunity to advertise Airborne Tradesmen/businesses. The App may be the perfect platform for this. They also requested a clarification of the differences between the PRA and SOP as they are often asked this when directing donations to one or the other. This will be sent out to all branches for clarity.

- c. Yorkshire. Chris Jackson reported that there was nothing significant to report. Grimsby and Cleethorpes do not wish to be involved regional activity. Driffeld /East Riding branch does not want to be involved either and all correspondence is through one man. Bradford and Wakefield merged to form the West Yorkshire branch and are doing well. Chris mentioned that Gil Boyd had recently joined the branch after moving to York. Hardwick Hall planning is in progress and there is a small group that is organising the event. Funding for this will be discussed later in the meeting. Chris stated that former member Brian Dingley had acorns from Arnhem that he wished to plant them at Woodhall Spa now that they are established. It is called the 'Arnhem Oaks Project'. It is in development and could involve the wider regiment. The Secretary highlighted that there are bigger issues in planting trees as we had been offered a similar thing for Colchester Garrison. More details are required and a conversation with Col Andy Wareing is required.
- d. Scotland and Northern Ireland. Brian Black reported that Glasgow is doing well. Lothian are doing well and seem to be recruiting a few new members. Fiona Flynn has been holding the fort and has done a great job. Tayside are well established now but going through a difficult legal battle about access. The Tayside committee has recently confirmed that they will run their ABF Day in 2026. Grampian is doing well under Gary Houghton but still has an ongoing issue with a rival organisation. This matter will be discussed later in this meeting. The Secretary reported that the Glasgow branch and Terry McCourt has been very helpful in supporting RHQ with funerals and grave cleaning.
- e. Southeast. Dave Smart gave a rundown on his branches, who are doing well. Dover is strong and hold regular events and meetings. He has not been able to visit Eastbourne for some time. Hastings are struggling and have very few members. The difficulty is trying to recruit new committee members. The Maidstone branch is doing well.
- f. Southwest. Tony Ellis gave an update on the regions branches. Gloucester has a new management in place and are organising a few events for this year. Swindon is ticking over but does not benefit from the local units (Brize Norton). One of their members Danny Gibbon, carried out a parachute jump for the blind veterans charity that has been supporting him. North East Somerset is well supported with a number of events planned. There are plans to link in with the Swindon branch. The South Somerset branch is closed. This was due to lack of numbers. There is very little heard from the Royal Cornwall branch but they appear active and recently donated £5,000 to the PRAFC. The West Somerset branch was recently visited by the Secretary to collect some pictures and discuss the closure. The Secretary will liaise with Les Riggs about this.
- g. Wales. Dave Singletary provided a rundown on his branches. Newport has a new younger generation on the committee. Cardiff attracts a few younger members and benefits from being near to St Athan. Bridgend is doing well under Al Peet, with walks and events. Swansea has a younger generation of members. There are advertising opportunities here that we will look into that could provide additional members and assist with recruiting. They are running an Arnhem trip in 2025 and have a number of places available. It will leave on Thursday and return on the Monday. The cost is £550 for 4 days and is great value. There may be places available for other branch members at a later date.
- h. South. Vic Thorn reported that the Airborne Forces Riders will be holding their AGM at Cleethorpes shortly. Members of the ABR are members of the PRA and are encouraging many of their social members to join, which is greatly appreciated. There are smaller groups that conduct rides for specific events all over the country. They also have the Ride of Respect and Warrenpoint Ride out. Chichester is small but meet regularly under Lee Strange. The Isle of Wight branch are well established now, meet

regularly and hold events. The Portsmouth branch have made good use of the leaflets provided by PRA HQ and include a sticker for their branch to attract new members. They have a strong Belgian connection and they visit each year. Aldershot are doing very well and are very active. Vic was there recently to help present a number of awards to their members for services to the branch. They are running a number of activities which their members get involved in. West Berks and Oxford have merged and there was an issue with the new management of the branch that resulted in a meeting chaired by Vic Thorn. The outcome of the meeting was that the branches will merge and form the Thames Valley branch. The advantage will be a larger catchment area for members.

- i. Northeast. John Wilson stated that the Tyneside branch is doing well and attendance is improving. Durham always meet on a Saturday evening and are still reeling from the loss of Bob Wheatley. Sunderland is still running and has a regular attendance. Teesside is doing well and has a healthy membership. They are attracting new members and trying to encourage local Airborne veterans to attend. The move to the Don Bar was a good move and has proved to be very successful. Pass out parades are regularly attended by these branches and they have managed to establish direct communications with the ITC clerk so that the correct timings can be disseminated.
- j. Midlands. Chris Brooksbank was unfortunately unable to attend.
- k. London. Terry Wood was unfortunately unable to attend.

Item 5 – PRA Secretaries Report.

8. Discussion Points/Decisions.

- a. Fundraising: The fundraising request has gone quite well so far with several branches have donated directly to the PRA. We have also been very fortunate to have received an individual legacy of £20k. This is an interim payment and we can possibly expect more from this estate after the sale of a house. As we know, legacies are not forecast or budgeted for as they are not expected or guaranteed. The concern is for future years.
- b. Admin Assistant: The new admin assistant is settling in well and is a great relief to me. Jean-Marc is fully invested in the PRA and his previous knowledge and experience will add great benefit to the association. He has taken on all that has been asked of him so far and has the capacity and eagerness that we need. The cost to the PRA is approx. £18k and the remainder will be covered by the PRAFC.
- c. Welfare Training for Branches: There has been a suggestion and discussions on recognised training for branch Welfare Officers. This would consist of recognised training packages being run in Colchester for those who regularly deal with welfare cases. The cost of the course would be free but the branch would have to pay any travel and subsistence costs.
- d. National Standard Bearer: The National Standard Bearer Tom Brown is still in post and is keen to continue. A meeting with him took place in Duxford recently where he was informed that we would only be supporting him financially for Arnhem each year. This decision has been made due to the logistical issues with Normandy and the large number of events that he was expected to attend. Arnhem is a far better event that revolves around the 3 main commemorative events of the weekend. John Frost Bridge, Ginkel Heath and Oosterbeek CWGC. UK events would continue to be supported.
- e. Formal Complaint – There has been an ongoing issue between the Grampian branch of the PRA and two members of the Aberdeen branch of the Airborne Alliance (ABA). Outside of the official disagreements that the two groups have had, there has been a serious breakdown in relationships. This has become abusive and resulted in a disciplinary hearing that the respondent failed to attend. Following the suspension of the member, I have now received a complaint from him. This will be discussed later in the meeting when we have the Chairman, online. There will be no final outcome of this at this meeting and today's decision is whether we agree to form an independent panel.
- f. Airborne Riders (ABR) Representative: There was a request from David Lang to send Paul Moore as a representative for the Airborne Riders. There are changes to the website being discussed that will be made to provide them with the ability to advertise their events separately. EC members Paul Bryant and Vic Thorn are members of the ABR and are able to submit on their behalf.

Item 6 - Funding for Regional/Branch Events.

9. Discussion Points/Decisions.

- a. NMA. The NMA was one of the cut backs that we as the PRA chose not to support. This was agreed by the PRAFC and they will fund the majority of the event. The cost of attending the NMA has risen over the years and now stands at £12.50 per person. This is heavily subsidised by the charities and the intent is to charge as many people as possible for the lunch, with only the NOK eating for free. A small element of the cost is the tea and coffee for the event and it was suggested that the PRA pay for this:

Proposed by: Vic Thorn
Seconded by: Dave Smart

- b. Hardwick Hall. Chris Jackson provided a detailed breakdown and planner for the 2025 event. Request for funding from HCC will be submitted to support this event due to the historical significance. 2025 is the 80th anniversary of it closing. The total cost of the event is £1700. The costs are for the band, First Aid, buffet and entertainment. A question was asked about a card reader to take payments and since then RHQ have done some work on this. There are various options available, which will be sent to all branches. Insurance is covered by the RHQ PRA Policy. Promotion of the event is required and we will produce a flyer that can be shared on all Social Media platforms.

There are a number of fundraising events in place to cover the cost of the event such as raffle, collection buckets, donations and an auction.

- c. Eden Camp. The costs for Eden Camp are the band and the donation to Eden Camp for the use of the facilities. All other aspects of the day are covered by those that attend.

Mike Farrington highlighted that these requests should be requested by submitting a Business Case (BC). These must be produced for the 2026 events at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

The proposal that Hardwick Hall and Eden Camp events are underwritten by the PRA to the total cost of £2300:

Proposed by: Dave Singletary
Seconded by: Tony Ellis

CARRIED

- d. The requests for funding for 2024/2025 are as follows:
- e. 1 Para/SFSG Veterans Day. This will take place in October 2025. The projected cost is £750, depending on MAB7 Catering costings and contribution by those attending.

The proposal that the veterans day in St Athan is underwritten to the total cost of £750:

Proposed by: Vic Thorn
Seconded by: Mike Farrington

CARRIED

- f. Colchester Veterans Day. This is dependent on one of the Colchester based battalion sponsoring it. This was very popular and successful in 2024 and allows a wider veteran audience to see how the modern-day soldier trains. No date is known and unfortunately it may not happen if a unit sponsor cannot be found. This may require an out of EC meeting vote for funding.
- g. Mick Willets Memorial. There are no details known yet about the 2025 event and this will have to be investigated and an out of EC meeting vote for funding.
- h. Swansea Airshow. Dave Singletary spoke on this event and asked if this could be turned into an ABF Wales. 1 Para/SFSG participation would be unlikely but should be explored.

Item 7 – Any Other Business

10. Discussion Points/Decisions.

- a. Formal Complaint. The EC welcomed Gary Houghton online to assist in informing the committee on the situation between the Grampian branch and one of their branch members. Gary provided a detailed

outline of the situation between the PRA and the Airborne Alliance (ABA). The Secretary read out the passage quoted by the complainant:

'An investigation panel may be formed at the direction of the Executive Committee under guidance of the Regional Secretary to investigate'

Following this discussion, the decision by the EC is that an independent panel will be formed to decide on this matter. It is hoped that we can identify a serving or retired senior officer to support this in a timely and impartial manner.

- b. Swansea Advertising. Dave Singletary has submitted details of potential advertising at Swansea Football Club. This could be a great avenue for funding, recruitment and membership.

The proposal that we spend £500 at Swansea Football Club:

Proposed by: David Singletary
Seconded by: Vic Thorn

CARRIED

- c. Christmas Hampers. The process is changing this year and must be completed in full. The information required about the recipient of these hampers must be provided. It was suggested that vouchers should be used instead of a cheque.
- d. Review of official documents. The Constitution, Branch Guide and Discipline process documents will be updated. Some of these are complicated documents that require a lot of time due to the various links within them and the detailed processes within them. This includes out of date submissions and returns that are no longer in use.

Item 8 - Diary of Forthcoming Events

12. Discussion Points/Decisions.

- a. All dates are published on the events page of the website. Any changes should be sent to the Secretary.
- a. Key Events for 2025 are below. The events that are known have been uploaded onto the website with as much information as is known. Please advise of any additional events and dates ASAP:

Events:			
Month	Date	Event	Location
May	10	Hardwick Hall	Chesterfield
June	5-8	Normandy 81	France
June	14	Regtl Commemoration	NMA
July	6	60 th Anniversary of Toot Baldon Crash	Oxfordshire
July	19	Eden Camp	North Yorkshire
July/August	TBC	Regimental Day	Colchester
September	19-21	Arnhem 81	Netherlands
October	23	Veterans Day	St Athan

October	25	Past & Present Dinner	St Athan
November	9	Remembrance Day	Cenotaph

Item 9 - Dates of next meetings.

- a. 77th Annual General Meeting, National Memorial Arboretum, Saturday 14th June 2025
- b. 102nd Executive Committee Meeting in October 2025, Location: TBC. The Friday is the preferred day.
- c. The Vice Chairman asked to record a vote of thanks to the Secretary for the work he does on behalf of the association.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15:35hrs.