

The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Service Association



Constitution 2018

The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association, Constitution and Rules Amended from October 2010 – February 2010

1. **Name and Objectives.** The Organisation shall be called The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association, hereinafter referred to as The Association.
2. **Objectives.**
 - a. Generally to maintain contact with, and advance the comradeship and fellowship of its members.
 - b. To further the social activities of the members by arranging meetings, visits and other functions as appropriate.
 - c. Through financial support to the Museum of RAF Fire Fighting Charity (No 1172939). To preserve and generally support historic RAF fire service equipment and memorabilia.
3. **Power.** The association shall have full power to do all things necessary or expedient for the accomplishment of all objectives specified in its rules. It shall have due regard to any resolution or recommendation made at a general meeting but shall not be bound to give effect to same if, in its judgement such action would be injurious to the best interests of the Association. The Association shall regulate its own proceedings within terms of this constitution and rules.
4. **Governing Body.** The Association shall be governed by an elected management committee hereinafter referred to as The Committee. The officers are the chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership, Secretary and Editor of the Flashpoint.
 - a. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer to serve a period of 2 years unless re-elected as per para 3 part c.
 - b. The Secretary, Membership Secretary and Editor of Flashpoint, to stay in office until they wish to retire or are voted out of office by the Membership, thus to provide a stable continuum.
 - c. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer only shall be elected by ballot paper, not a show of hands. The candidates shall be proposed and seconded in writing and be in the hands of the Secretary 28 days prior to the AGM. The ballot papers to be scrutinised by 3 members taken from the floor at that meeting. The secretary to provide enough ballot papers for this purpose and handed to each member at the AGM. No postal or other means by accepted. Should no proposals be put forward for these offices and they wish to stand for a further 2 years, then the vote will be conducted by the President or Vice President at their discretion as to how it will be done.
5. **Eligibility for Membership.** Membership of the Association shall be in the following categories:
 - a. **Full membership.** Personnel who have served, are serving, or have been attached to RAF Fire Services, Air Force Department Fire Service (AFDFS) Ministry of Defence Fire Service (MOD), Army Fire Service (FS) and Naval Air Command Fire Service (NACFS), for a period of not less than 3 months, shall be eligible for membership of the Association. Every such person joining the Association shall be a full member and be entitled to vote at meetings and be elected to office.
 - b. **Associate Membership.** Personnel who have served or are serving on civilian airfields or airports licensed under the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or any other official body having the same, or similar authority, for a period of not less than 3 months, shall be eligible for

membership of the Association. Every such person joining the Association shall have no voting rights nor be eligible for office.

c. **Honorary Membership.** The Committee may, at their discretion, admit other persons who have given, or are giving, special service to the Association, or such other persons they feel may deserve such honour. Such persons shall be liable to pay a subscription and be entitled to all rights and privileges of members, excluding the right to vote and to be nominated to Committee or other office; however, such members may be co-opted to the Committee.

d. **Life Membership.** The Committee may, at their discretion, grant a Life Membership to any member who has rendered special service to the Association or to any person who, in their opinion, is deserving of the distinction. Life members shall not be liable to pay subscriptions and be entitled to all rights and privileges of members, excluding the right to be nominated for the Committee or other office.

6. **Application for Membership.** Application for membership shall be made to the Membership Secretary. Applicants must complete an application form and standing order form, providing proof of service as detailed in para. 5 if requested and pay any subscription due. On joining the Association, new members shall receive a copy of the latest Flashpoint magazine, car sticker and a copy of the Association's constitution and rules.

7. **Subscriptions.** All members other than life members, shall pay an annual subscription due on the first day of September each year, this being paid for a year in advance. The Committee shall have the power to keep the matter of subscriptions under review.

a. **Arrears.** Any members who have not paid their subs 3 months after it becomes due, shall be considered "in arrears" and will be deemed to be a lapsed member. Should the arrears not be paid within 3 months thereafter, the person shall cease to be a member.

b. **Lapsed Membership.** Lapsed members shall receive only one further issue of the Flashpoint Magazine i.e. the issue immediately following the first day of September when all subs are due. However, should the lapsed member pay one year's subs in advance, plus complete a standing order, all rights and privileges shall be reinstated immediately and any back issues of Flashpoint will be forwarded to the member without delay by the Membership Secretary.

c. **Cessation of Membership.** A member shall cease to be a member:

i. By non payment of subscriptions under Para. 7 Sect. a. Any member whose membership has ceased from this shall not again be nominated for membership unless one year's subs is paid in advance, plus completion of a standing order form.

ii. By expulsion under disciplinary rules.

iii. By resignation, any member wishing to resign should send written notice to the Membership Secretary.

iv. The death of the member.

8. **Discipline.** Any member whose conduct has or may bring the Association into disrepute or where the actions of the member are deemed to be prejudicial to the good name of the Association or who stands in breach of any of the rules of the association shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings which will take place in the following form:

a. A disciplinary panel, consisting of five members appointed by the Committee, any three members of this panel will investigate incidents or allegations.

b. The accused will have an opportunity to make written representations or appear before the Panel to make verbal representation.

c. At the conclusion of the Panel's enquiry, they may, giving their reasons in writing, discharge, admonish or recommend suspension or expulsion for a fixed or indeterminate period.

9. **The Committee.** If suspension or expulsion is felt to be the only option and the accused disagrees, the matter will be referred to the Committee for adjudication where the evidence may be heard again. No member shall be suspended or expelled without first being summoned before the committee and full opportunity afforded to advance a defence, nor unless two thirds of the Committee then present shall vote for suspension or expulsion. The reason to be given in writing, every member so summoned, unless they have elected to waive their right to receive notice, shall receive at least twenty-eight clear days' notice in writing from the secretary. Such notice shall contain a statement of the charge brought against the member. A suspended member shall not be entitled to attend meetings nor vote nor hold any office during suspension.

10. **Appeals.** A suspended or expelled member shall have the right to appeal in writing to the Secretary within twenty-eight days of being notified of the Committee's decision. A select committee comprising comprising of the President, Chairman, Secretary and one other Committee member who shall be arbitrators appointed by the Association shall hear the appeal. The arbitrators, or majority of them, shall have full power to alter or rescind such suspension or expulsion as they think fit. The arbitrator's decision is final.

11. **Management Committee.** Officers of the Association known as the Committee shall be full members and shall be elected by an annual general meeting as in paragraph 4.

a. Honorary Life President, Honorary Vice President known hereafter as the President, Vice President, titles are conferred on members on the recommendation of the Committee and voted on at the AGM.

b. The President, Vice President shall have the right to attend all meetings, act as ambassadors for the Association and shall perform such other duties and functions as may be assigned from time to time by the Association.

c. The President, Vice President are voted into these positions by the membership, not the Committee and they hold these positions until voted out by the membership who shall be informed as to the reasons why being voted out. Both the President, Vice President have the right to vote as per Para. 4.

12. **Election of Officers.** All officers shall be full members of the association and be elected to office at an annual general meeting and thereafter in accordance with Para 5 and 11 part c.

13. **Vacation of Office.** Committee members may vacate office by:

a. **Removal from office.** Any of committee shall be removed at any time providing that two thirds of the members at a special meeting called for that purpose. Under rule should vote in favour of such removal. In the event of the removal of resignation of the whole or majority of the Committee, the General secretary shall obtain nominations, and arrange to hold elections without delay.

b. **Non-attendance.** Any Committee member not attending for three meetings consecutively shall, unless they send an explanation which the Committee consider satisfactory, cease to be a committee member.

c. **Cessation of membership.** Under Paragraph 7 part b and c.

- d. **Suspension.** Under para 8 and 9.
- e. **Resignation.** Submitted to the secretary in writing and accepted by the committee.
- f. **Death of the member.**

14. **Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy arising amongst the Committee, the vacancy shall be filled by the Committee having the power to co-opt a full member to fill the vacancy until the next elections of officials at the next AGM.

15. **Duties of Officers**

- a. **Chairman.** The Chairman shall take the chair at all meetings of the Association and have a casting vote only.
- b. **Vice Chairman.** The Vice Chairman shall, in the absence of the Chairman, undertake the duties of the Chairman at such meetings and have a casting vote only.
- c. **The Secretary.**
 - i. The secretary shall be responsible under the direction of the Association and Committee, for conducting general correspondence and keeping accurate records to ensure efficient administration.
 - ii. The Secretary shall act within the agreed policies or queries which may arise, are to be referred to the next meeting of the Committee before any action is taken or, if urgent, must be referred to the chairman for consideration and ruling.
 - iii. The Secretary shall ensure that all members of the Association, through Flashpoint, are kept informed of all relevant matters, shall attend all meetings as directed by the Committee, take minutes of the proceedings in the accepted format. All minutes must be presented at the next applicable meeting for acceptance and counter signing by the Chairman.
- d. **The Treasurer.**
 - i. The Treasurer shall pay all monies received by the Association, from any source whatever, to the credit of an account, or accounts, opened in the name of the Association, at such bank, or banks, in such a manner as the Committee may direct, and shall, when required to do so, render to the Committee or general meeting, an account of all monies received and expended, and prepare balance sheets and submit them for scrutiny.
 - ii. The treasurer shall attend all general meetings as directed by the Committee.
 - iii. The Committee may authorise bank accounts to be held by other groups within the Association, such groups must supply the Treasurer with an annual audited balance sheet in time to be included with the main balance sheet to show a true state of the finances of the Association.
 - iv. The Treasurer shall liaise with the Secretary with regard to the annual return referred to above.
 - v. The Treasurer will pay, if possible, all expenses claimed by cheque on the appropriate form together with proper receipts.

vi. All past records, bills, receipts, invoices and bank statements to be retained for a period of five years.

16. **Membership Secretary.** The membership Secretary shall keep a register of members to include names, addresses and membership numbers, the dates they joined the association and on which they ceased to become a member and records of subscription payments. Information of the Committee will include the offices held by members and the dates elected. The membership secretary shall liaise with the Secretary and Treasurer to avoid duplication.

17. **Flashpoint Editor.**

a. The Editor shall normally publish three issues of Flashpoint per financial year i.e between the first day of September and the 31st August, and, usually covering autumn, winter, spring and summer periods. Should the Editor be unable to meet a deadline, then the Editor shall have the power to carry on an issue into the following period.

b. Any article or photograph etc submitted to the Editor for possible inclusion in an issue shall be published at the discretion of the Editor, who shall have the right to edit, amend or reject an item as the Editor sees fit. The editor shall not reject any submission on the grounds of simply disagreeing with the originator's opinion and will therefore edit for content only, but having due regard to copyright and duplication.

c. The Editor's decision is final.

d. A copy of Flashpoint shall be sent free to all members and shall be issued to all eligible persons by the Membership Secretary, on joining the Association.

e. Spare copies of Flashpoint may be donated free to organisations or persons who, in the opinion of the Committee, may help to further the objectives of the Association. The membership Secretary to normally assume these duties.

18. **Area Co-ordinators.** Co-ordinators shall be recruited from the full membership and will cover the following areas – North, Midlands, South, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Devon and Cornwall, South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, East Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire. The designation of areas to be reviewed by the Committee from time to time. Co-ordinators will be responsible, under the direction and guidance of the Committee, for endeavouring to advertise the Association and its activities and by doing so further its objectives within their areas with a view to recruiting new members. A co-ordinator shall be eligible to sit on the Committee in accordance with rule 3.

19. **Sub-Committees.** The committee may appoint such sub-committees as they deem necessary, with specific terms of reference and authority, but which shall be directly accountable to the Committee.

20. **Co-option.** The Committee shall have the power to co-op, when they deem necessary and for a particular activity or specific purpose, a person, or persons who may not be members of the association. Any such co-options shall cease at the meeting of the Committee held prior to the next AGM. The person/s will be legible for a further period of co-option if required, but shall have no voting powers.

21. **Conduct of Elections.** The election of officers and Committee members shall be by majority vote at the AGM held in October of every 2nd year, with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer being elected as described in Para 4 part c.

a. Nominations for any position as Officer, Committee members or co-ordinators shall be forwarded to the Secretary at least 28 days prior to the date of the AGM.

- b. No member shall be eligible for nomination unless they have been a full member for at least six calendar months prior to nominations closing and has been proposed and seconded by two full paid up members who themselves must sign the nomination.
- c. No member in arrears of subscription of more than 12 months or under suspension at the date of closing of nominations shall be eligible for nomination.
- d. No candidate shall be nominated for more than one position.
- e. No member of the Committee, whose term of office is not about to expire, may become a candidate unless they first resign the position they hold.
- f. The election shall be held under the direction of the committee.
- g. Each full member shall have one vote for each vacancy, but no member shall give more than one vote to any one candidate.
- i. Should an election vote result in two or more candidates receiving an equal number of votes, the Secretary shall write the names of such candidates on slips of paper, which shall be so placed that the names are concealed, and the President, or, in his absence some other person appointed by the Committee who may not be a member, shall draw as many slips as there are vacancies to be filled, the eligible member/s drawn shall be declared and duly elected, the result to be recorded.

22. Meetings

- a. **Annual General Meeting.** This shall usually be held in October at a place determined by the Committee with a minimum of 3 months' notice being given to the members. The agenda for the meeting shall be in accordance with the programme determined by the Committee.
- b. **Notice of Motion Proposed.** Notice of a relevant motion submitted by a full member must be received in writing by the Secretary not less than 28 days before the date of the meeting, it also must be signed by a proposer and seconder. Any such notices of motion not reaching the secretary in time to comply with this rule may, at the discretion of the secretary, be included as an agenda item.
- c. **Extraordinary General Meetings.** The Secretary shall call an extraordinary meeting in the following circumstances:
 - i. Upon the direction of the Committee and in accordance with such direction.
 - ii. On a requisition, signed by one tenth of the total number of full members entitled to vote at a general meeting, or thirty six members, whichever is the lesser, and stating the special object thereof. The requisition should include both the printed name and signature of the member. The Secretary, of the requisition, shall hold such a meeting not less than twenty eight days and not more than fifty six days from the date of receipt.
 - iii. Notice of any extraordinary general meeting and the object which is called for, shall be notified to all full paid up members at least twenty one days prior to the date of the meeting. Should the secretary not convene this meeting in the manner prescribed hereby within twenty eight days after a duly signed requisition has been delivered to the Secretary, any of the requisitionists may call such a meeting, giving notice as is provided by rule.

23. **Quorum.** Meetings may proceed to business if, for a general meeting, a minimum of one fifth of full committee members or fifty such members, whichever is the lesser, are present. For a

Committee meeting, a minimum of two officers and one co-ordinator is present, within one hour after the time fixed for the meeting, otherwise the meeting, if convened by the committee, shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the committee, at the same time, and the meeting, so adjourned may proceed to business whatever the number of members present. If the meeting is an extraordinary general meeting, it may proceed if a minimum of one tenth of a total numbers of full members entitled to vote, or thirty such members are present, whichever is the lesser, within one hour after the time fixed for the meeting, otherwise, if convened by the Committee, the meeting will stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Committee, at the same time, and the meeting so adjourned may proceed to business whatever the number of members present or, if convened on requisition of members, the meeting will be dissolved. No meeting shall become incompetent to transact business from the want of a quorum arising after the chair has been taken.

24. **Voting.** All full members shall be entitled to one vote on each motion. Voting shall be by a show of hands of those present or as decided by the Committee. Voting for the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer shall be carried out as per para 4 part c or as directed by the occupier of the chair at the time of voting. The Chairperson has the casting vote.

25. **Adjournments.** Any general or committee meeting duly constituted, may adjourn to such a date, at the same time, the Committee direct, and may continue any such adjournment from time to time. No business shall be brought on at an adjourned meeting which could not have been brought on at the original meeting.

26. **Disputes.** All disputes between a member and an officer of the association shall be settled by the Committee. The decision of the Committee will be final.

27. **Finances and Subscriptions.** The financial year shall be from the first day of September to the thirty first day of August each year.

a. **Subscriptions.** Shall be payable to the Treasurer by the first of September each at a rate determined by the Committee.

b. **Non-Payment of Subscriptions.** Members not renewing their subscriptions within eight months of the due date shall be deemed to be a lapsed member under para 7 part b.

c. **Cheques.** All cheques drawn on the account of the Association shall be signed by any of the two of the following three officers, namely, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

d. **Application of Profits.** The profits of the Association shall be applied as follows:

i. For promoting and further the objectives of the Association and in accordance with its Constitution and rules.

ii. Any other lawful purpose authorised at an AGM provided that no profits or funds should be distributed amongst the members.

iii. No individual member shall benefit personally from any monetary gain, or profit in kind, whilst undertaking any merchandising or other venture whatsoever on behalf of the association.

iv. Any member found in breach of rule 16C may be dealt with under para 8.

28. **Accounts.** The Treasurer shall be responsible, under the general direction of the Association, for the administration of the Association's financial affairs. This will include the records and financial procedures in relation to income received, expenditure, assets and liabilities and the Association's banking arrangements. The treasurer shall submit a statement of the Association's financial position to all meetings as necessary including at the AGM. The latter statement should be independently audited by a competent auditor duly elected at a previous AGM and should be

sent to committee members along with the notice of the AGM. The Treasurer shall compile and maintain a register of assets and their relative value and include such details in the financial report to the AGM.

29. **Expenses.** Reasonable travelling expenses and out of pocket expenses may be allowed to members of the Association attending meetings, or when otherwise engaged on Association business with prior authority of the Committee, and in accordance with the Constitution and rules of the Association. Proof of such expenses to be provided by the member at the request of the committee.

30. **Merchandising.**

a. For the purpose of the Association, the merchandising unit (the shop) will be named RAFDFSAs shop hereinafter referred to as the shop. The shop shall be solely operated under the control of the co-opted shop supervisor. Other members may be called upon to assist as required and approved by the Committee.

b. No member shall undertake any merchandising on behalf of the Association, or use the Association's name, with a view to obtaining goods and services etc whether or not the member intends, or intended, to sell for, on behalf of the Association, with, or without, the intention of producing an income or profit from such a venture for the benefit of the Association and its members, without prior approval of the Committee.

c. It is accepted that it may be prudent or necessary for a member to make an initial approach to a company, wholesaler, retailer or supplier, in order to ascertain whether or not the obtaining of goods and services would be of benefit to the Association. In this case the Committee shall be informed as soon as possible and approval sought before the venture continues.

d. The shop supervisor shall be solely responsible for controlling all goods and services etc being offered or sold on behalf of the Association, and shall be required to render such accounts and statements of stock held as they may from time to time determine, or at least once per financial year, whichever is the lesser.

31. **Dissolution of the Association.** The Association shall not be dissolved except by an extraordinary general meeting of the Association convened for that specific purpose in accordance with the procedure set out in para 22 part c of this constitution. At least two thirds of the full members present must vote in favour of dissolution and confirm their consent testified by their signatures to an instrument of dissolution. If the decision is taken to dissolve the association, then it shall be competent for the members present at this extraordinary general meeting to arrange for the disposal of the assets of the Association as follows – when the assets of the Association have been realised and all liabilities and debts paid in full, the whole balance remaining shall be donated to the Memorial Fund and, after the memorial Fund does not require further funding, the remaining funds shall be donated to the Museum of Royal Air Force Firefighting and a receipt/s obtained from the secretaries of those funds.

Amended October 2017

M Clapton 704 General Secretary