



Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society

Hon. Secretary Joe Kirk G3ZDF 111 Stockbridge Road
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MINUTES

Committee Meeting Thursday 2nd November 2017

HMS Collingwood

Present:	David Firth	2E0GLL	Chairman
	Joe Kirk	G3ZDF	Secretary
	Adrian Mori	2E0JVM	Treasurer
	Mick Puttick	G3LIK	Hon. Vice President
	Doug Bowen	G0MIU	Commodities Manager
	Steve Legg	M6WVW	Shack Manager
	Martin Longbottom	M0EHL	Co-opted serving member
Apologies:	Marc Litchman	G0TOC	Membership Manager

The Meeting started at 19.07

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to this extraordinary Committee Meeting.
2. Secretary reported that Marc G0TOC had verbally authorised the Chairman to use his vote as he saw fit and confirmed it by email from hospital saying *“Please accept this e-mail as authority for the Chairman to vote on my behalf, as he deems fit in my absence during the forthcoming ECM.”*
3. The Chairman said the reason for the meeting was the complaint by Colin GM6HGW supported by Dave G4JBE that Phil G1LKJ’s posting on the Yahoo Group and his refusal to name the individuals he meant when he referred to ‘2 mini Hitlers’ was grounds for invoking Section (3) Membership of the Constitution in order to consider whether Phil should be expelled from the RNARS.
4. Colin’s proposal was discussed at the Committee Meeting on 7th September 2017 and a majority agreement was that a sub-committee should be formed to investigate the matter.
5. The Chairman said there had been some question about the validity of the decision to set up a sub-committee. He had researched the rules and guidance for committees and had taken advice and said that the use of sub-committees by committees was standard practice and well recognised.
6. He also summarised what he had said in his *‘Report on a Conflict of Interest’* dated 25th October 2017, a copy of which was attached the Agenda for this meeting and is also attached to these Minutes.
7. The Chairman then went through each of the conclusions of the Sub-Committee contained in their report to the extraordinary Committee Meeting – copy attached.
8. All of the conclusions of the Sub-Committee were accepted and agreed unanimously.
9. The Committee also recommended that:
 - a. The RNARS adopt the RN Social Media Policy to guide its approach to all social media, channels and communication media

- b. Any social medium, channel or communication medium that represented the RNARS or has RNARS in its name and any persons that posted thereto should be subject to the rules and policies of the RNARS
 - c. Any channel or medium that had postings from members should have a caveat *'that the views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the RNARS'*.
- 10.** The Secretary then reported that on the evening of 16th October he had a telephone call from Jackie Manning, Phil Manning's wife. She was in a distressed state. They had received a poison pen letter and package. She read out part of the letter which was addressed to both of them. The parts that she read out were crude and obscene and also made reference to Phil causing damage to the RNARS by what he had said and the likelihood that it would lead to a loss of members of the Society. She said the letter also included a disgusting photo-shopped image of Phil. She told me she could not continue reading the letter and put the phone down. Later that evening he received an email from her that said: *Sorry I couldn't continue the phone call, I think it is very sick of who ever sent the letter and the package. The postmark on the letter is Edinburgh. My son is a Metropolitan Police Officer and we have spoken to him about it. He has told us to report it to our local police in Guildford, which we are going to do tomorrow. Thought I would let you know about the letter, package and that we are notifying the police.*
- 11.** The Chairman said that if it turned out that the package had been sent by a member of the RNARS then Section (3) Membership of the Constitution would be invoked.
- 12.** The Committee passed a Vote of Thanks to the Sub-Committee for their work.
- 13.** The Meeting closed at 19.55.

Sub-Committee Report

1. The Sub Committee met on 10 October 2017 in order to investigate the claim by Colin GM6HGW that the Yahoo Group posting by Phil G1LKJ on 16-08-17 in which he said "*Glenn, commiserations your not the only one to suffer at the hands of the mini Hitler's in the Society. Nuff said before I get into trouble fortunately it's only two of them.*" was "*totally unacceptable and goes beyond the behaviour expected from a member*" and his proposal that Phil's comments be considered under section 3 (Membership) of the RNARS constitution inasmuch that:

The Committee shall have power to expel any member whose conduct, in the opinion of at least three-quarters of the full Committee, renders that person unfit to be a member of the Society. No Member shall be expelled without first having been given an opportunity to appear before the Committee.

2. The Sub-Committee consisted of:

Doug Hotchkiss G4BEQ

Doug Bowen G0MIU

Joe Kirk G3ZDF.

Steve Legg M6WVV was unable to attend because of work commitments and Nev G0FOD declined to attend because as he said "*I have given this some thought, I have not read or heard of any conflict between members and Phil, G1LKJ and as Phil has apologized, why cant the apology be accepted? so I will not be joining the Sub Committee*"

3. The Sub-Committee had before them a folder of all the communications including Yahoo Group postings and emails relating to the issues under discussion.
4. Doug G0MIU outlined his qualifications for sitting on the sub-committee:
 - Manager of an engineering company for some 30 years where he was responsible for all HR & industrial relation issues
 - Long membership of the RNARS
5. Doug G4BEQ outlined his qualifications:
 - Long service in the RN as a Lieutenant-Commander(SD) including managing staff with high security clearance

- Sat on the board of 3 courts martial
 - Service as Editor of a number of Newsletters
 - Long membership of the RNARS including serving as Chairman on 2 separate occasions
6. The Sub-Committee concluded that:
- a. This was a matter for the Yahoo Group and not for the RNARS.
 - b. Dave G4JBE had reminded the Chairman that he was the owner of the Yahoo Group and that as he stated on 25 September 2017 *“The Committee HAS NO jurisdiction over the Yahoo Group, and certainly has NO RIGHT to close the Group, ONLY the owner of the Group can do this”*
 - c. The Concise Collin’s Dictionary defines ‘Hitler’ as *“A person who displays dictatorial characteristics.”* In Southern England the term *‘mini Hitler’* is used to denote a person who is a bit of a bully; there are no anti-Semitic overtones.
 - d. On 18 August 2017 Phil G1LKJ apologised for his original posting saying *“I used an unfortunate turn of phrase to air a personal opinion. I know I have caused offence for which I sincerely apologise to all on here.”*
 - e. The matter was resolved by the Yahoo Group Moderator/Owner banning Phil from the Yahoo Group.
 - f. The affair may lead to one of the most active RNARS volunteers no longer being willing to represent the RNARS at rallies.
 - g. The Sub-Committee considered that the matter was now closed.
 - h. There is a need for a 3-stage disciplinary procedure within the RNARS which should be investigated by the full Committee.

JJ Kirk, G3ZDF, Hon. Sec.

15 October 2017

REPORT ON A CONFLICT OF INTEREST 25th October 2017

Colin Topping, David Lacey, Wally Walker -V- Phil Manning

In that it is alleged Phil Manning brought the Society into disrepute (Article 3) by writing offensive material on the Yahoo Group's webpage that directly targeted Colin Topping with David Lacey.

1. The Conflict of Interest

a. A committee member had lodged a written complaint at a recent committee meeting with a view towards dismissing another ordinary member from the Society. A conflict of interest was evident because of the forceful nature of the complainant and his two supporters, also committee members, during the meeting in which they appeared to be coercing the committee into making an immediate decision for dismissal.

b. A conflict of interest arises in the immediate future regarding an extraordinary committee meeting to hear the report from the sub-committee formed to investigate the complaint, in as much as, the three committee members involved in the complaint would most likely insist on being present during the forthcoming meeting where the committee is expected to deliberate on the sub-committee's findings and vote on the outcome. Their presence during a meeting such as this would also be an interference with the decision-making of the committee. (Similar to placing members of the prosecution on to a jury)

2. Colin Topping wrote the letter of complaint, David Lacey supported him with a verbal complaint of his own while Wally Walker expressed his interest in support of the complaint.

3. No conflicts of interest had been declared in advance, but are now emerging.

4. The complaint lodged by Colin Topping against Phil Manning, is that Phil wrote offensive remarks about him by referring to '*...two mini Hitlers...*' in the midst of what appeared to be a rancorous exchange between several members of the Yahoo Group at the time. David Lacey drew a similar conclusion that he was a target and has since removed Phil Manning's access to the group. The committee's discussion concluded that while they had heard and understood the complaints there should be a further hearing to investigate the matter. It was also noted that Phil had written an anonymous reference to two mini Hitlers and that it would be impossible to know to whom he had been referring. Phil latterly gave an unreserved apology to the Yahoo Group before he was apparently struck off, and after receiving censure from a member of the committee. The Yahoo Group is a closed group with its forums not open to the public domain.

5. No one withdrew from the discussion particularly when it was noted by the committee that punishment had already been handed down by banishing Phil Manning from the Yahoo Group. There was opposition from Colin Topping to the appointing of a sub-committee to investigate the matter further, on the grounds that it was not in the constitution, but the point is that it does not say in the constitution that a sub-committee cannot be formed. In BR 2006 the original constitution does include the provision for sub-committees.

6. The decision was taken to hold a sub-committee enquiry into the matter, and the sub-committee will then report to an extraordinary committee meeting without the three complainants being present for the reasons explained above. The three committee members may be informed of the pending extraordinary committee meeting in advance and latterly, of its decision. In this way a conflict of interest can best be avoided.