

**Warwickshire & Birmingham Wing
Mess Committee
Annual General Meeting
23 November 2005**

Present: PMC – Sqn Ldr M Harrison, Sqn Ldr J Phillips, Flt Lt R Foster, Flt Lt S Collins, Fg Off C Quinney, Fg Off B Pinner, WO A Hobbins

Apologies: Wg Cdr P Ladwa, Flt Lt L Vile

Previous Minutes:

All attending reviewed minutes and agreed that they were a concise record of the previous meeting and were duly signed.

Matters Arising:

Allesley Hotel - At the previous meeting the issue with the invoice had not been settled, the PMC informed the committee that this was now resolved and all dealing with the hotel would now cease.

Money Tin – The matter of the collection tin was raised by BP and that it was now no longer a deterrent and more of a ‘magnet’ for those wishing to excuse themselves during the meal.

Village Hotel – It was agreed that there were too many people crammed into the room and that less people would have made the night more bearable. The PMC agreed that he would restrict the dinner to 140 guests next year.

The meal at the October dinner took far too long to be served and may have been a contributing factor to the ‘excusers’ on the night. A tighter meal timetable will be discussed with the Village Hotel staff for the next time.

Speeches – It was universally agreed that the speeches at the dinners were becoming far too long and were now approaching forty five minutes.

A new format for the speeches was discussed and with approval from the Wing Commander will be trialled at the dinner in March 2006.

The committee also discussed the removal of presentations such as Millennium Volunteers awards etc and ensure that they remain as part of Wing Training Day.

Discipline – The dinners have undeniably become more of a success story over the years attracting record turnout in attendance, although this is to be celebrated, the discipline at the event has unfortunately started to slip across the ranks.

RF indicated that all were now perhaps a little to blame in this and that it should be put to all squadron commanders that they are responsible for the conduct of staff.

Sqn Ldr Phillips agreed with the PMC that a booklet on Mess Etiquette be sent to all squadrons with the invitation to the next dinner reminding all staff of behaviour requirements at a formal dinner especially with VIP guests attending.

The PMC also stated that in his role as Personnel Officer he would remind staff of this on his visits to squadrons and would also discuss with the Wing Warrant Officer.

BP also mentioned that the standard of discipline from SNCOs at the dinners has been slipping at recent dinners.

It was suggested and agreed that an announcement ten minutes before the dinner was to be served to give guests ample time to purchase drinks and visit the facilities and arrive at their seats in time for the dinner.

It was also suggested that the role of Mr Vice be extended further from the toast to the queen in that they would control remaining guests whilst the top table left the room at the end of proceedings.

With this, a 'semi-permanent' Mr Vice format was discussed and agreed, this would allow the PMC to have assurance that the role was fulfilled and controlled whilst also allowing for jnr rank officers to still take on the role if they so wished and also assist the semi-permanent Mr Vice.

Fg Off's Quinney & Pinner both offered to take on this role for the dinners during 2006 in March & October respectively.

Entertainment – It was agreed that the roulette table, whilst not making profit at the dinner in March was well received and it was decided to continue with it.

The entertainment at the October dinner was not so well received and due to a combination of errors at the hotel did not start until late.

It was decided that a disco would be the option for next years dinner as the 'live' entertainment format didn't suit all and a disco would have more varied appeal.

PMCs report:

The Drayton Manor dinner was its usual success and the decision to move the roulette table into the bar area did seem to keep the function 'together' after the meal.

Although this dinner is already well attended it was felt that the room in which it is held 'drowns' the people in it and more numbers would be well received.

It is understood that a small hotel/travel inn is being built at Drayton Manor and the PMC will investigate prices etc and discounts for any guests wishing to stay over.

The PMC has stated that his preferred choice of guest for the March dinner would be the AOC or Regional Commandant and invitations would be sent to them both shortly.

The Village Hotel, despite a few teething problems did prove a good venue, as stated earlier in discussions there would have to be a limit on the amount of guests allowed to attend the function.

It was agreed that despite the teething troubles, next year's dinner in October would again be held at the Village Hotel.

With this in mind it was agreed that the committee as a whole should hold a meeting at the venue to assess preparations and confirm proceedings thus assisting the PMC with running orders on the night.

OC Wing's report:

Unfortunately due to the Wing Commander's absence, no report was given.

Mess Accounts:

With the Allesley Hotel issue now resolved the accounts for the 2004 dinners have now been closed and as predicted the March dinner in that year provided enough profit for the October dinner 2005 to be subsidised as it was a new venue.

The accounts for both functions during 2005 were presented to the committee by the PMC and as predicted the March dinner made a small profit whilst the October dinner a deficit in light of the agreed subsidies.

Whilst the account itself is healthy it was agreed that an increase to the dinner prices would be required.

Functions 2005:

It was agreed that despite the concerns (see matters arising) that the dinners during 2005 had been a resounding success.

Functions 2006:

As per matters arising the dinners will have a new format and a greater sense of discipline during the sit down part of the evening.

In no way does the PMC or his committee wish to stop the idea that the dinners are a way for the wing staff to meet up in a social way and enjoy themselves.

With this in mind the committee agreed to meet up after the March dinner to discuss the new format and the results of the same.

It was agreed that a meeting will be held at the RAFA club (venue to be confirmed by the PMC) at 1900hrs. This will allow for any amendments to be made prior to the October dinner.

AOB:

The PMC thanked the committee for valued input and stated that the support he had received together with ideas looked a promising way forward for the wing mess and its events.

It was acknowledge that in the minutes of last year's meeting messrs Adris & Dean stated that they would like to organise a third function for the wing, it was noted that this was not forthcoming and no event planned at this time.

Date & Time of next Mess Committee meeting – Wednesday 19th April 2006 @ 1900hrs - Venue: RAFA Club Coventry