

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ARMY POLO ASSOCIATION (APOLOA) HELD AT THE KRH OFFICERS' MESS, ALIWAL BARRACKS on FRIDAY 29th FEB 2008

Present: Maj Gen Eliot, Lt Col Lockhart, Maj Boyle, Maj Phillips, Maj Doherty, Maj James, Maj Gaselee, Maj Shaw, Capt Todd, Capt Hicks, Capt Heelis, Mr Mark Cann, Brig (Retd) John Wright, Sgt Britton

Apologies:

Meeting started 1415hrs.

Introduction

1. The Chairman opened the meeting, welcoming the Chairman ASCB (Gen Eliot) thanking KRH CO (Giles Harrison) and PMC (James Cullinan) for the use of the Mess. The Chairman also thanked all those present for making the effort to come to the meeting.

The Chairman then set down his Mission Statement and Aims for the 2008 season describing it as the Bible which all Army Polo Players must follow. In particular he emphasised the second Aim within the Mission Statement, '*To coordinate and advise players identified at RMAS, Bovington, RMCS and in particular direct and assist RAPA (BA(G) Polo Club) IOT focus their activities.*' APOLOA will continue to run three levels of teams; senior, developing and novice; these will cater for all standards, provide the appropriate levels to all members and the necessary exposure for the Association in the wider community.

The Chairman appointed Major Gill Shaw (AGC) as the Women's Army Polo Team Captain and thanked her for all her hard work last season. The Women's Army Polo Team is an example of how polo is increasing in popularity within the Army and that APOLOA must endeavour to continue supporting it at all levels.

The Chairman then thanked Alex Hayman-Joyce for all his hard work as the Secretary of APOLOA and introduced new Sec Capt Philip Kaye.

CSPA Update

2. The Chairman briefly covered the main points from the CSPA Meeting in London 14 Feb.

Chairman: remains Capt Richard Mason RN

V-C Brig (soon to be MG) Adrian Bradshaw

Director: Maj Mark Cann

Hon Sec: Capt Nick Cowley QRH, currently being understudied by Ben Vestey.

CSPA Capt: Remains Lt Col Nick Hunter

Tours in and out: tbc but **IN** Ghana, Nigeria, or USA. **OUT**: ECUSPA Confirmed.

Scholarships: Available from CSPA but only retrospective and dependant on articles for WEBSITE and CSPA magazine, photos are required. Mark Cann added that he

would like to see more articles from polo players away on operations to add some weight to the CSPA magazine.

Insurance: All are advised that PAX insurance should be taken out by all players.

BMW continue to offer a 15% reduction for mil from London showroom at Park Lane.

Club Updates

3.

a. **Tidworth Polo Club** - Brig (Retd) J Wright outlined TPC's 2007 season. He announced that the Combined Services Arena Polo Club at Cholderton was now open and in full use. The Tidworth Equitation Centre is now also up and running and he thanked Gen Eliot for his work in that department. He also announced that there are now more servicemen playing polo than the whole of TPC's membership in 1995. Last season saw a TPC membership of 168 members, 45% of which were military.

b. **RAPA** - Maj R Boyle SCOTS DG outlined RAPA's season. They has 10 members, 8 of which were also HPA members. Fallingbostel and Hohne continue to be the two centres for RAPA polo. Horses continue to be a problem and RAPA are trying to encourage players to buy some ponies. The SDG have 3x ponies. He made an appeal to receive some cash in 2009 from CSPA to help fund RAPA. Tpr Harety (SDG) won the prize for the most improved player last season and will have the ponies this season while the SDG BG is on Operations. German civilians continue to take an active role in playing with Servicemen. Maj Boyle then announced that he will be in Afghanistan this season and that someone may want to take over in his absence, though he was happy to organise things from 'a distance.'

The Chairman questioned the Accounts. – They have been Audited by the SDG Accountant.

The Chairman and Mark Cann discussed a pony buying scheme for players and need to look into in more detail. Gen Eliot agreed.

The Chairman thanked Maj Boyle.

c. **RMAS** – Maj J Gaselee LG the new Chairman at RMAS summarised last years activity and outlined the plans for 08. Last season 30x Cadets played polo and RMAS won both divisions in the Capt & Sub's Tournament. 40x Cadets from 2 terms have already signed up for polo.

The key problem is finance which Maj Gaselee has made his main issue to resolve as it will determine the Club's future. Gen Eliot enquired about the finance situation which has made a loss of £14000 over the last 2 years. Mark Cann pledged that he would step in if required and give assistance explaining how Sandhurst is a success story and should not be given up. Brig Wright thought that the polo at RMAS was too cheap and should increase its membership fees.

The Chairman reassured all that he had been up to RMAS and that Maj Gaselee has already doubled the fees for non Cadets and has the issue under control. He then thanked Maj Gaselee for all his hard work.

d. **RMCS** – Lt Col C Lockhart who is currently running the Defence Academy Polo outlined last season. They have a good relationship with Inglesham Polo Club and had 30x Tri-service players of which 8 were regular players. Of note they entered 3 events and reached the final of the SUPA tournament.

Henry Cummings is due to take over from Lt Col Lockhart. They are currently funded through the Defence Accademy Athletics Union. The Chairman emphasised that if they are to get any assistance from APOLOA, they must be APA members which was not the case last season.

The Chairman and Lt Col Lockhart need to discuss this issue further. Mark Cann suggested some sort of commercial membership to encourage beginners.

Membership

4. The Secretary summarised last year's season and how it undoubtedly suffered due to the increased Operational strain seeing a lot of players away in both Iraq and Afghanistan. However, there was still a membership of 55 Officers, 14 Other Ranks and 3 OCdt's. This was extremely good and there was a continual interest in new players taking up the game, particularly in the Corps. The Captain's and Subalterns was proof of APA success as 12 teams entered!

The membership fee has been increased from £25 to £30 which will be the first increase in 5 years. Working off last year's membership this will earn us £1650, a vital contribution to our funds. It is quite clear that if you are not a member, you will not play for the ARMY Team.

APOLOA membership forms are available on the website at www.cspa.org.uk and at the back of the room.

Accounts

5. The Secretary went through the accounts and explained the 'hard deck' concept.

Training

6. The Secretary outlined the following:

Training days: It is APOLOA's aspiration to hold a number of training session particularly for the more senior players. Jamie Le Hardy, Ben Vestey and Crispin West have all been approached and The Chairman is heading up to Beaufort Polo Club in the near future to make further arrangements.

Polo Courses: There are a number of 3 day courses being run at TPC, which are highly recommendable to any beginner to get involved in. It also gives you 3 months free membership at TPC. Dates can be found at the TPC website, www.tidworthpolo.com.

John Wright added that the courses are undoubtedly the best way to start the season for a beginner/ novice.

Fixtures

7. The Secretary went through the fixture list which can be found on the APLOA web page. Brig Wright and The Chairman agreed that the Capt and Sub's Tournament needs to be of a higher standard this season.

Tours

8. The Chairman restated tour policy. Gen Elliot added that you can now only send 1x male and 1x female Army team per annum abroad on tour. Mark Cann emphasised that all tours need to be officially sanctioned by all parties due to the difficulty of reciprocation. It cost CSPA £18,000 to host the Americans last Season.

Maj Boyle then added that the RDG are off to India shortly to play polo. This needs to be investigated!

The Chairman added that all players must be members of the Army Sports Lottery. Gen Elliot backed this and explained how ASCB has recently been re-vamped. There are now 20 prizes to be won per week, including a £10,000 first prize. There will also be 2 bumper prizes per annum and one is now able to purchase up to 5 tickets a week.

Sponsorship

9. The Chairman announced that Hackett would remain the Army Team Sponsor for 08. Funds will continue to be built up as discussed earlier as all Sponsors have a limited term and plans have to be made to prepare for that day.

C&S : MABWAY have agreed to sponsor the weekend for an increased fee.

The Chairman thanked Mark Cann for all his hard work in this department. Mark Cann emphasised that all sponsorship should go through CSPA in order to 'close the deal' something that CSPA are experienced in. .

AOB

10. The Chairman opened the meeting up to the floor.

- Gen Elliot made us all aware of the forthcoming Defence Internal Audit following three incidents on internal audits.
- Capt Heelis announced that all military players can get a 10% discount on stick repairs with Full Swing Polo. Mark Cann said that he would advertise that on the CSPA web page.
- Mark Cann suggested having a players meeting nearer the start of the season.
- Mark Cann suggested putting a percentage of the APOLOA 'hard deck' funds into a more profitable account.

The Chairman then thanked all those present for a valuable meeting.

Meeting ended 1550hrs.