



Minutes of
RNA Portland Branch General Meeting held at
Portland Masonic Centre,
on Wednesday 3rd June 2026

The meeting was opened at 20:06 by Chairman S/m Dusty Miller. 43 Members were present.

1. Chairman's Opening Comments:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if all Shipmates that were able to please be upstanding to remember those that perished in that mornings helicopter crash.

2. Apologies: were received from 17 Members.

The Chairman also welcomed the newest member S/m Pete. Shipmate President commented he would make a fine Standard Bearer. Shipmate Dusty also welcomed Lt (SCC) Rachel Harris RNR who was going to give us a talk on what the Sea Cadets had been up to later on. He also thanked Shipmate Nige for chairing the Committee Meeting last week while he was away.

S/m Dusty asked if everyone had seen a copy of the Minutes of the April General Branch Meeting and the Monthly Newsletter.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting were accepted.

Matters Arising: Nil

Proposed by S/m Daz Askew

Seconded by S/m Pete Foster

For: 36

Against: 0

Abstention: 7

The Chairman then introduced Rachel from Portland Sea Cadets, who were voted as our Charity for this year, who gave us an update on the past years events.

Rachel thanked the Branch for inviting her and for electing Portland Sea Cadets as the branch charity. She then went on to give a brief history of the Sea Cadets which was established in 1856 and the establishment of Portland Sea Cadets in 1956 in the old Boscawen area in Castletown. In 1995 in preparation for the closure of the Royal Navy in Portland the Unit moved to the old NAAFI shop in what was then the Westcliff Married Quarters estate.

Rachel then spoke about the activities that the Cadets have access to in the Unit which included Catering, Engineering, Seamanship, Navigation and the core activity Boating; one of the Cadets had qualified as an RYA Dinghy Instructor recently and also one of the Cadets who had just turned 18 had spent a week on TS Royalist and had returned saying it was the best week of her Cadet career ever.

The Unit was also active within the local community supporting local civic events which in the last 12 months had included the 85th anniversary of the Foylebank tragedy, VJ Day 80 Commemoration Service, HMS Illustrious Memorial Service, November Ceremonies with parade and service at Portland Cenotaph, Weymouth Armed Forces Veterans Parade, Mayors Civic Carol Service and performing Ceremonial Sunset for the Royal Navy Sailing Association Annual CTP!

The Unit also undertook a three day visit to Ypres in Belgium where 14 Cadets and 5 staff joined with Weymouth and Yeovil Sea Cadet Units and proudly represented Sea Cadets at one of the daily Remembrance Services held at the Menin Gate where one Able Cadet said the Exhortation and another said the Kohima Epitaph, both Cadets being from Portland Unit, an experience never to be forgotten.

Competitions were also a strong point for the Unit with Cadets winning through to Area and National level Sailing, Windsurfing and Powerboat Handling competitions last year, indeed had the National Powerboat Handling Competition not been cancelled due to high winds last year the Unit stood a very good chance of lifting the trophy.

Duke of Edinburgh is also a strong point with 3 Bronze awards, 5 Silver Awards and 3 Gold Awards being achieved in the last 12 months. Cadets can also be awarded a BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Teamwork, Personal Skills and Citizenship when they reach the rate of Ordinary Cadet. Additionally, six Cadets had achieved the BTEC Level 2 Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community award in the last 12 months.

Also working in the background is the Unit Management Team without whom the Unit would not be able to operate. They ensure the Unit has the right facilities, equipment and undertake the fundraising activities to keep the ship afloat. The Units now has a new Galley, new Heads and Shower facilities that include disabled access which enables the Unit to conduct residential training activities. Planned later for this year is the roofing over of the yard and building of three new training rooms which will more than double the availability of training spaces.

Rachel finished by thanking the Branch for their support.

S/m Dusty thanked Rachel for her update and the sterling work she does with the Sea Cadets. Shipmate Pete (Area Deputy National Council Member) then introduced Shipmate President Ben (Area Deputy Chairman) who presented her with a cheque for £500 which had been granted from the No 4 Area RNA Re-union Charity Chest, for which she was surprised and very pleased to receive.

4. Secretary's Remarks and Correspondence:

Email from S/m Jim Armstrong of Dorchester Branch asking if our branch representative to National Conference could also vote on behalf of Dorchester Branch. Reply sent confirming this with S/m Dusty copied in. Now confirmed that this would be Shipmate Karen on behalf of Dorchester.

Email from Portland Town Council reference invitation to an event commemorating the life of Councillor Sandy West on Thursday 18th June 18:00 at 20:00 at the Islanders Club. Posted on our Facebook page and Website. S/m Ben confirmed he was attending.

Email from Terry Green, Secretary of The Portland Lodges Standing Committee, enclosing a letter thanking Portland Branch RNA for donation of £300 in respect of our Associate Membership.

Email received from Alan Mirams stating the Funeral for Ernie Munson is now a private family affair. Posts on Facebook and Branch Website have been taken down.

Email received from Area Secretary advertising Liskeard Branch's 40th Anniversary Parade to be held Sunday 23rd August. If anyone would like to attend with the Standard there is a free BBQ on completion at Liskeard RBL.

Letter received from General Secretary Shipmate Bill Oliphant thanking the branch for the donation of £250 to Central Office.

Matters Arising: Nil

5. **Items discussed at Committee Meeting**

There were no items discussed at the Committee Meeting.

6. **Reports:**

a. **Ceremonial Report / Diary:** – S/m Ben Cartwright reported:

The following events have been confirmed:

Saturday 6th June – Portland D-Day wreath laying, Victoria Gardens – no service.

Tuesday 16th June 11:00 – HMS Sidon 71st Anniversary, Yeates Road.

Sunday 21st June 10:00 – Weymouth Veterans Parade. Brunswick Terrace DT4 7RN.

Saturday 4th July 10:30 for 11:00 – HMS Foylebank 86th Anniversary Commemoration.

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday.

Wednesday 11th November – Armistice Day.

More details will follow as they are received.

Unconfirmed event dates are:

Monday 22nd June – Armed Forces Flag Raising Event, Victoria Square, Portland. No details on timings held at present.

Saturday 15th August – VJ Day Memorial Service at the memorial at All Saints Church, Easton.

Thursday 3rd September – Merchant Navy Day Service, St George's Church, Portland.

Sunday 13th September – Avalanche Memorial Service, St Andrew's Church, Southwell.

Saturday 17th October – HMS Illustrious Memorial Service, Portland Marina.

Sunday 6th December – Civic Carol Service.

Hopefully we will receive details of these events soon.

b. **Social Secretary's Report:** S/m Dave Prowse reported:

Skittles Night – Friday 5th June 18:45 at the Trinity Club, Dorchester, along with Dorchester and other branches, FAAA and Drumgrange. We now have a driver for the minibus. S/m Dave to let Jim Armstrong know our final numbers. Raffle prizes would be welcome. Bangers and chips will be available as usual.

Vitality Blast 20-20 Cricket at the Utilita Bowl near Southampton on Sunday 5th July. 'Double header' v Kent Spitfires – women's match at 11:30 and men's at 15:30. Nine tickets have been purchased and the parking paid for. Pickup points and times to be arranged with Nige.

Buckham Fair - Sunday 2nd August. Advance tickets £20 available now from their website. It is supporting Dorset County Hospital. 7 on the list but no mention on website for group bookings; S/m Dave suggested that individuals purchase their own and make own travel arrangements.

Away Weekend 2026 – Thursday 8th to Monday 12th October at Daish's Hotel, Shanklin, Isle of Wight. There are 31 on the list. We will be sharing a coach with pickups at Bridport bus station, Victoria Square and Weymouth Esplanade. The balance is required at August meeting. S/m Dave will collect any amount you wish to pay at each meeting to spread the cost.

Trafalgar Night Dinner 2026 – Saturday 24th October in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. Entertainer is Donna.

Christmas Social 2026 – Saturday 5th December in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. Entertainment – Steve Williams Disco.

Annual Dinner 2027 – S/m Dave has asked whether the main hall is available for Saturday 24th April, he is still waiting on a reply.

c. **HMS Portland Liaison Officer Report:** – S/m Nigel Rimell reported:

Nil report. However, S/m Nige had heard that HMS RICHMOND was due for decommissioning which now takes the Type 23 numbers down to 6, but HMS SUTHERLAND was spotted off Portland.

d. **Fundraising Report:** - S/m Karen Miller reported:

Proceeds from the evenings Rum Raffle totalled £106.00 to be split between the Charity and the Branch fund.

The coffee morning is booked for Saturday 15th August at Easton Methodist Church Hall, 09:00 for 10:00 start. S/m Karen to Contact S/m Bernie Cranny for list of 50 items for the Grocery Tombola. There will also be a raffle with prizes needed. Shipmates that can were requested to make cakes for sale at the event.

e. **Membership Secretary's Report:** – S/m Karen Miller reported:

There are a total of 98 Members.

f. **National / Area Conference Report:** – S/m Ben Cartwright reported:

S/m Ben reported that he and S/m Bob attended the Area Meeting in Roche, Cornwall.

In the absence of the Area President the Delegates meeting was opened by the Area Chairman at 1300. He introduced the XO of RNAS Culdrose who gave a very informative brief about the changes happening at the Air Station and the future of the RN in general.

S/m Annette Laurie (Area PRO) was co-opted onto the Committee as Secretary for that meeting in the absence of the Area Secretary and S/m Bob (Area Webmaster) was elevated to Committee Member from Advisor.

S/m Les Yeoman (Plymouth Branch) was invited to join the Committee as he is taking the lead on hosting the 2028 National Conference to be held in Plymouth.

Newton Abbot Branch is in the process of becoming an informal group, St Ives and Delebole Branches have also just followed this route. Exeter and Launceston Branches have closed completely.

The RNA Mini-bus presently kept in Plymouth is being transferred to Wales due to lack of use.

Cdre Mark Slawson, Deputy National President, gave a brief on the draft update of the Royal Charter. It was hoped to promulgate changes at National Conference, more to follow soon!

Bill Oliphant, General Secretary has left for pastures new.

S/m Bob remarked that the next Area Meeting is Saturday 19th September at Southill Community Centre in Weymouth. Currently S/m's Ben, Pete & Bob are attending.

S/m Pete thanked both S/m's Ben and Bob for standing in at the Area Meeting.

g. **Webmasters Report:** – <https://rnaportland.org> S/m Bob Featherstone reported:

The branch website received just over 2500 visits in May. This reduction on April (4500) was probably due to increased security measures discouraging malicious hits.

A few cosmetic changes to the menu on the Branch Website main menu have been made, this is to better balance the look and feel on the website.

Veteran's Breakfast on Sunday 7 June 26 at the Masonic Hall. Poster is on the Branch Website and Facebook.

h. **Wellbeing Report:** – S/m Gill Essom reported:

S/m Dennis Matthews has now moved away and S/m Gill sent him a welcome to his new home card. He was also 89 last week and a Birthday card was sent. He phoned Carol & Vaughan and a thank you note has been received.

S/m Gill rang Iris Jones, she was possibly moving to be nearer to her daughter in Gloucester. S/m Gill has the daughters telephone number.

S/m Len Christopher was recovering from his surgery and hopes to be back at meetings soon.

Dicky Dawes is poorly.

i. **Treasurer's Report:** – S/m Pete Shoesmith reported:

The Branch Account stands at £3189.04

Social Fund £510.19

The Annual Charity Fund (Portland Sea Cadets) stands at £72.75 (after 2 months)

Matters arising: S/m Pete said he was continuing to investigate bank charges.

Proposed by: S/m Ginge Sarsfield

Seconded by: S/m Alex Oswald

For: 43

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

7. **Any Other Voting Items:**

S/m Dusty stated that as he was going to Conference to represent the Branch, there were 2 items Shipmates needed to vote on:

- That Plymouth Branch host National Conference on Friday 16th – 18th June 2028.
For: 43 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0
- Shrewsbury Branch propose a review and simplification of Branch Administrative requirements. This motion asks the National Council to:
 - Review and simplify administrative and reporting requirements
 - Provide more consistent and practical guidance to branches
 - Ensure administrative processes support not hinder the work of volunteers
 - Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy that divert effort from the associations core missionFor: 42 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

8. **AOB:**

- S/m Dusty – South Atlantic Scarves and Neck warmers are available at the Veterans Hub Wyke for a donation.
- S/m Pete – Conference draw tickets still available, if not sold the Branch will buy (£15 worth).
- S/m Nige – Skittles season ended at the end of last month, Piranha's were top of the bottom half in Div 3; if anyone wants to sign up for the new season starting September all most welcome.
- S/m Pete – There is a system for posting cheques in to the bank which he is going to investigate to see whether that incurs bank charges.
- S/m Dusty – Visit to Head Office 17th July – 3 spaces left if any one is interested. Travel by train, arrive 11:30, get shown in, get scan, trip round the harbour and then either shops in the dockyard or Ship Anson!

9. **Chairman's Closing Comments:**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the evenings really good meeting, have a nice rest of the evening and safe trip home.

10. **Date of Next Meeting:** - Wednesday 1st July 2026.

11. **Meeting Closed at:** 21:27

Chairman

Secretary