



Minutes of RNA Portland Branch General Meeting
held at Portland Masonic Centre,
on Wednesday 1st July 2026

The meeting was opened at 20.05 by Chairman S/M Dusty Miller. 36 Members were present.

1. **Apologies**: were received from 13 Members.

2. **Chairman's Opening Comments**:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He thanked all those who had attended the HMS Sidon Memorial and the Veterans' Parade in Weymouth.

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

3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting** were accepted.

Matters Arising: Nil

Proposed by S/M Dodge Howes

Seconded by S/M Doc Foster

For: 30

Against: 0

Abstention: 6

4. **Secretary's Remarks and Correspondence**:

Email from S/M Brett Crabtree, Area 4 Secretary, ref Charity Bike Ride – Trafalgar Way 2026, by Russ Timpson (former RN submariner).

Email from Rev Fiona Wheatley ref Avalanche Service on Sunday 13th September 2026 at St Andrew's Church Southwell at 16.00.

Matters Arising: Nil

5. **Items discussed at Committee Meeting**

Nil

6. Reports:

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

The following events have been confirmed:

Saturday 4th July - HMS Foylebank 86th Anniversary Commemoration. 10.30 for 11.00.

Sunday 13th September -Avalanche Memorial Service, St Andrew's Church Southwell at 16.00.

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday

Wednesday 11th November – Armistice Day

More details will follow when they are received.

Unconfirmed event dates are :

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

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

Saturday 17th October – HMS Illustrious Memorial Service.

Sunday 6th December – Civic Carol Service.

Hopefully we will receive details of these events soon.

S/M Ben added, that the Branch desperately needs a Standard Bearer as he is unable to continue this important role. Please have a think about it. Full training will be given.

b. Social Secretary's Report – S/M Dave Prowse reported:

Skittles Night – Friday 5th June at the Trinity Club, Dorchester. The Branch had enough for a team but were up against some good sides, so no trophies were won this year. However, some raffle prizes were won. Thanks to all who played, especially to Ben for arranging the transport.

Vitality Blast 20-20 Cricket – at the Utilita Bowl near Southampton. Sunday 5th July. Women's match at 11.30 v Lancs; men's at 15.30 v Kent. Pickup points to be announced. S/M Nige will have the tickets.

Buckham Fair - Sunday 2nd August. Advance tickets £20, on the day £25. It is supporting Dorset County Hospital. 7 are interested. S/M Dave suggests that you purchase your own tickets on line and make your 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 the August Meeting.

Trafalgar Night Dinner 2026 – Saturday 24th October in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. 18.45 for 19.15. Entertainer is Donna.

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

Annual Dinner 2027 – Saturday 24th April at the Masonic Centre Main Hall.

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

Nil report.

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

The coffee morning is booked for Saturday 15th August at Easton Methodist Church Hall. The Tombola has been arranged and there are just a few items left if you would like to contribute. Raffle prizes have started to come in so that is good. Thanks for your support and help.

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

There are a total of 98 Members plus our friends from Bridport and Dorchester. S/M Pete McCraw, a new Full Member received his welcome pack.

f. **National Area/Conference Report** – S/M Pete Shoesmith / Dusty Miller / Ben Cartwright reported:

The National Conference- S/M Dusty reported:

The Hotel was okay a good mile from the venues but there were good bus and metro links that were free if you showed your RNA membership Card. Saturday morning was manic as everyone came down at 0730 for breakfast so they could get to the conference in time.

The meet up on Friday went well after they changed the venue. We started at the old venue then soon realised our mistake but the new one was just around the corner. We got there at 1830 and it was already jammed. We found a space and chatted to Bill Oliphant briefly and had a good night.

The Conference was held in the Lowry Building with views over the canal, Old Trafford and Media City. The conference very well attended, and it seems streaming it live went down well with 25 people watching online and as far away as Malta.

The outgoing General Secretary/CEO Bill Oliphant and Sara Field who have now left, both received Life Time Membership awards. Plus, the train driver whose actions saved lives when the knife man attacked passengers on his train also received a Life Time Award.

Bill is temporarily replaced by Kate Aldous who is the Governance Support Officer and will run things till Bill's relief is chosen. Interviews will take place late June early July due to people being away.

Sara who has gone to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is replaced by Jon Boreham a former WO Caterer.

Plymouth was voted for the 2028 Conference.

The motion to streamline the paperwork etc; this was also backed by the National Council and outgoing General Secretary who asked everyone to vote for this so it gave them a mandate to look at changing things. This was passed.

It finished at about 1330, a nice buffet was had and then we took a boat trip down the canals.

The Gala meal was held at the Imperial War Museum and not only was the venue outstanding, but so was the meal and the amount of complimentary drinks!

On Sunday the Drum Head Service went well. It was held next to the football pitch you see outside the BBC Studios; this also linked in with Salford celebrating 100 years as a city.

I feel sorry for Plymouth and Durham as it's going to be a hard act to follow.

S/M Pete thanked Dusty and Karen on behalf of the Branch for attending the National Conference.

The Area Meeting – S/M Ben reported:

It was on Saturday 16th May at the Roach Social Club, St Austell.

In the absence of the President, the Meeting was opened by the Chairman at 13.00. The Standard was marched on by the new Ceremonial Officer and the names of those who had Crossed The Bar were read out. He then introduced Cdr Richie Turrell, XO of RNAS Culdrose who gave a very informative brief about the changes happening at the Air Station and the future of RN aviation in general. Annette Laurie, (Area PRO) was co-opted onto the Committee as Assistant Secretary, who then took the minutes of the meeting with the help of Bob Featherstone and a voice recorder. The previous meeting's minutes were accepted with no amendments.

There are still vacancies on the Area Committee: Assistant Ceremonial Officer, Area and Deputy Standard Bearers. Stop Press: there is a new Area Standard Bearer from Plymouth Branch.

St Ives and Delabole are now informal groups and Newton Abbott is in the process of becoming an informal group. Exeter and Launceston Branches have closed completely.

The RNA minibus that is presently kept in Plymouth is being transferred to Wales due to lack of use.

Mark Slawson, the Deputy President, gave a brief on the updated 85 page document that will become the new Royal Charter. It is still a work in progress at the moment.

Bill Oliphant, the General Secretary and CEO has left for pastures new.

Plymouth Branch intends to host the 2028 National Conference on behalf of Area 4. S/M Les Yeoman of Plymouth will be lead and will formally make a proposal at the National Conference in Salford.

The next meeting will be held on 19th September 2026 in Weymouth.

The meeting was closed at 14.48.

S/M Pete thanked Ben for attending and reporting on the Area Meeting.

S/M Dusty added that 'Informal Groups' are when Branches are no longer able to continue but wish to meet up socially. Formal work is undertaken on their behalf by Central Office.

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

The branch website received just under 1800 visits in June. This reduction on May (2500) was due to continued security measures. The website has also been reported as "404" on a number of occasions, this is due to Server technical events which are beyond Webmasters control.

The Longcast Calendar now includes Committee Meeting dates and dates for Bideford 2027. The Gallery now includes photos from the Dorchester Skittles evening and HMS Sidon Commemoration. The Veteran's Breakfast poster for Sunday 5 July 26 at the Masonic Hall, is on the branch website, Noticeboard and Facebook page. If any members have images from the Veterans Parade could they please share with Webmaster?

h. **Wellbeing Report** – S/M Lin MacCormack reported:

S/M Joan Seal has been in hospital, both DCH and Westhaven. She is now back home in the care of S/M Tony.

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

The Branch Account stands at £3,229.04

The Social Fund stands at £510.19

The Annual Charity Fund (Portland Sea Cadets) stands at £125.75 (after 3 months)

Matters arising: Nil

Proposed by: S/M Ginge Sarsfield

Seconded by: S/M Tony Seal

For: 36

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

7. Any Other Voting Items :

Proposed by: Seconded by:

For: Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

8. AOB

S/M Dave listed pick ups for those attending the cricket. He reminded everyone that it is cashless at the ground.

S/M Dave informed everyone that our Chairman S/M Dusty scored a 9 at the skittles!

S/M Nige stated that the Skittles Team Bolter Fund was £80 from last season. It was agreed by the team that they donate it to Branch funds.

S/M Karen added that at the National Conference there were 21 Standards at the Service. The RNA was pleading for more Standard Bearers to come forward. This is echoed for our own Branch as we desperately need a Standard Bearer.

9. Chairman's Closing Comments:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending tonight's Meeting on a great night when England won at football, thanks to Harry Kane!

10. Date of Next Meeting: - Wednesday 5th August.

11. Meeting Closed at: 21.10

Chairman

Secretary