



**Council of Military Education Committees  
of the Universities of the United Kingdom**

**Annual General Meeting 2019**

**held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 1500hrs**

**at Victory Services Club, 63-79 Seymour Street, London, W2 2HF**

**Draft Minute**

**Present**

See Annex A

**Apologies**

General Sir Peter Wall (President); Lt Gen Richard Nugee; Maj Gen Jamie Gordon; Air Marshal Ed Stringer; Professor E Archibald; Dr J Smith

**1. Minutes**

- RECEIVED: The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 September 2018 (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_A)
- RESOLVED: The Minutes were approved.

**2. Matters Arising**

- NOTED: Dr Michael J A Smith had raised concerns from West Midlands MEC on the way the UOTC Study (Section 6 of Minute) paper was written and the possible reduction in student numbers. Col Nick Tougher noted the UOTC Study was written in language for ECAB, and only if there was significantly increased recruitment would there need to be savings. There was no intent to filter out anyone who was benefiting.

**3. Chairman's Report**

- RECEIVED: A report from the Chairman (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_B):

*Chairman's Report to Council*

*University Service Units*

*A major part of the Executive's work continues to be with the Service Staff Officers in support of our USUs, and our quarterly discussions have been informed by financial stringency, requiring affordability and value for money, but the quality of recruits remains strong.*

*Issues we have identified this year have included:*

URNUs: *Gapping of CO posts and Commander Universities.*

*Renewed URNU syllabus and engagement with Maritime Reserves on the transition process for URNU graduates.*

*COMCORE assurance visits using the OFSTED common inspection framework.*

*Review of CMI process and appointment of part-time National Adviser / Training Officer.*

*Erosion of sea time for fleet tasks.*

UOTCs: *Rebalancing of UOTC funded numbers within the overall headcount.*

*Advisory visits by OFSTED.*

*J P Morgan scoping a strategic relationship with UOTCs.*

UASs: *Challenges with the Defence Recruiting System.*

*Particular issues with Bristol UAS, Liverpool UAS/Manchester & Salford UAS, Northern Ireland UAS and Yorkshire UAS.*

*Project TELUM to deliver flying replacement, and implications for implementation.*

*Safety enhancements to the Tutor.*

### **University Officers' Training Corps**

#### Future Utility of the University Officer Training Corps

*The substance of the report on the UOTC Study contributed to a paper by Home Command to the Executive Committee of the Army Board, which endorsed the proposition, recognizing that UOTCs are essential in maintaining the Officer talent pool in the Army. There will be no change in the total number of Officer Cadets in the country, though there may be some rebalancing of establishments within the overall headcount. UOTCs will continue to offer opportunities to selected students who would benefit from, and contribute to, the breadth of activities, ensuring that unit membership remains broad in outlook.*

#### Independent Advisory Panel

*The Sandhurst Group's Independent Advisory Panel has conducted a deep dive into UOTC business. The Chairman, Brigadier Mark van der Lande, briefed our Executive Committee on this work, and we were involved at each stage. The Panel visited UOTCs mainly in the South of England, consulting widely and engaging with the MECs and employers, and has reported. The aim is to drive forward the good work already carried out at UOTCs and improve their efficiency in the longer term.*

### **Freshers' Fairs**

*We have again had reports of concerns of USU Commanding Officers that some student unions continue either to bar USUs from their freshers' fairs to make a political point or to set extravagant charges. We, therefore, issued a note which might be of assistance to officers.*

*Circumstances vary with the university, but approaches used by USUs include Officer Cadets negotiating access direct on a peer to peer basis, Officer Cadets taking an interest in union activities and influencing policy decisions, USUs establishing friends of USU societies which may be able to affiliate to the union, and university officers exerting soft influence.*

*A lack of understanding of USUs among union officers may be addressed by inviting union officers to visit USU events, MEC members using departmental contacts to engage with union officers and MECs inviting union officers to their events.*

### **Publications**

*COMEC Annual Conference 2017 Proceedings, Dynamics and Strategy in Universities and Defence?, is published on the website at [www.comec.org.uk/publications/](http://www.comec.org.uk/publications/).*

*We are updating the COMEC Conspectus to publicise to our strategic allies and others what we do and for whom. It is hoped that the content will be ready by November to be maintained in electronic form on the website, with costs explored for a hard copy later.*

*Occasional Paper No. 12 on the Moral Component will be produced in the Winter.*

### **Prize**

*The Prize (£500) recognizes outstanding achievement in leadership through military expertise, public service commitment and Service Unit activities.*

*The Executive have reviewed and maintained the criteria for the Prize, each criterion having equal weighting. From 2020, however, there is a new eligibility condition that nominees should have not more than three years' service with the USUs or Reserve Forces.*

### **MECs and COMEC**

*In addition to direct exchanges with some MEC Chairmen, we embarked on a consultation and review of our working relationships with MECs to improve engagement in order to enhance communications and exchange ideas, and we wrote directly to a few.*

*One suggestion is that we might ask a few MECs per Executive meeting for a brief report on their activities. Meantime, we invited MECs to share with us any papers they produce which might give an appreciation of their activities, public lectures, business updates, good practice, issues of concern or reports for their universities.*

*Other suggestions include reintroducing the designation of a member of the Executive as a contact for each MEC, and holding a meeting each year outwith London and the Conference on a regional basis.*

*You are reminded that MEC chairmen are welcome to attend meetings of the Executive as observers, though not at COMEC expense. MECs may also raise items of business for the agenda, and present them in person. The dates of meetings are published a year in advance on the events page of the website at [www.comec.org.uk/category/events/](http://www.comec.org.uk/category/events/).*

### **Networking**

*Our focus is with our USUs, though our remit extends to wider collaboration between universities and Defence, and to support for the Forces community. We have common allies, supporters, modernization agendas and aligned interests, and Defence seeks to work more effectively in partnership with the universities.*

*This goes beyond officer recruitment and the occasional Ministerial letter to Principals and Vice-Chancellors calling on them to step up and sign the Covenant. It encompasses teaching, as at King's College London and Reading, in-service degrees, as at Cambridge and KCL, and research and consultancy with Defence, as at Cranfield, and its suppliers, and perhaps also collaboration on issues such as cyber.*

*Defence intends to articulate its needs more clearly and work in concert with COMEC and our MECs, as the continuing presence in universities championing collaboration with the Armed Forces. To this end, the President is facilitating a meeting with Defence and Service Chiefs of Staff to discuss the value they see in Defence's relationship with universities and how COMEC might assist in its delivery. CGS recognises the importance of a clearer relationship in a range of areas and is discussing it at Chief level, logically this might fall to VCDS on behalf of the MoD and each Service. Propositions from members in this compass would be welcome, being as clear a possible what we want of the MoD and what we can offer to them.*

### **Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme**

*Defence, after two years considering its Engineering Champion's report on DTOEES value for money and reviewing its STEM graduate requirement, announced the closure of DTOEES. The final intake to the Defence Sixth Form College at Welbeck will be in September 2019 and as Defence bursars to the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme in 2021.*

### **STEM Graduate Inflow Scheme**

*Defence needs to increase STEM numbers and be more responsive and agile to compete for graduates. The replacement STEM Graduate Inflow Scheme will be targeted to increase significantly the recruitment of STEM graduates and will be open to undergraduates across all UK universities.*

*We have spoken with the Chief of Defence People on the Scheme. Details have yet to be determined, but we have offered to contribute in any way that may be appropriate in the*

*interest of our students to its design, development, delivery and promotion by the Defence Academy. Should the Scheme have a military training requirement in our USUs to maintain bursars' engagement, such a substantial increase in numbers has the potential to distort their healthy profile. This would need to be managed to maintain their wide membership with many different viewpoints and outlooks.*

### ***Armed Forces Covenant***

*Many universities have not yet seen the need to sign up to the Covenant, so we invited Defence Relationship Management to brief the Executive on the subject. When the Defence Minister and Universities Minister called on all UK universities in April to step up and support the Armed Forces and sign the Covenant, we invited the former to our Conference to follow through with us on his expectations of support for the Forces community. However, it seems it was not possible for him to step up and confirm his attendance due to the current Parliamentary timetable.*

*A Covenant is a demonstration of a university's support for the Armed Forces community. It is structured according to the disposition of the University, is of mutual benefit to both parties, and may pledge to promote the Armed Forces, support the employment of veterans, offer flexibility in leave for service spouses, support reservist employees or offer discounts to members of the Armed Forces. Information may be found at [www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/)*

### ***Security Related Issues in Higher Education***

*Universities UK has established a working group on security-related issues ranging from cyber resilience to physical security, including creating an overarching framework and updating their cyber security guidance issued in 2013. The questions relating to the threats and their responses in universities seem similar to those in Defence.*

*I have been in communication with the chairman, Sir Peter Gregson, Vice-Chancellor at Cranfield, to facilitate our engagement and contribute to his review, which he believes has some specific questions emerging for which engagement with COMEC might be advantageous. UUK are asking for input from universities, and we would encourage members to contribute in whatever way may be appropriate. The group's policy manager will join us at the Conference for Cdre Annett's session on cyber.*

### ***Alliances***

*We have developed a link with The Air League, [www.airleague.co.uk](http://www.airleague.co.uk), which your USUs may join if the Services determine it is complementary to their Officer Cadets' training. Units which join the The Air League may support applications for a series of flying scholarships - worth around £3,500 each.*

*The Ulysses Trust, [www.ulyssustrust.co.uk](http://www.ulyssustrust.co.uk), may be able to provide financial support for unit expeditions or adventurous training.*

### ***Website***

*The website is maintained as an informational source of reference and of referral to other related sites.*

*There are feeds from our USUs, the armed forces, our strategic allies and associated organizations on the Dynamic Twitter Feeds page [www.comec.org.uk/updates/](http://www.comec.org.uk/updates/).*

*Publications are at [www.comec.org.uk/publications/](http://www.comec.org.uk/publications/).*

*Agendas are normally published on the Events page a week before the meeting, to be followed by the Minutes after they have been approved at the next meeting, at [www.comec.org.uk/category/events/](http://www.comec.org.uk/category/events/).*

### **General Data Protection Regulation**

*The Executive have adopted the GDPR Compliance Statement and privacy policy at [www.comec.org.uk/privacy](http://www.comec.org.uk/privacy) to inform data subjects about the collection and use of their personal data.*

- NOTED: Col Dominic Guinness encouraged institutions to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant and noted 30 organisations were signing up every week now. Col Dominic Guinness would be pleased to help with any queries.
- NOTED: Mr James S Castle noted a Veterans Champions network had been set up in Scotland and he would be happy to brief members further if of interest. The Chairman noted this is example of how MECs can facilitate discussions and relationships with veterans and supporting agencies.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

- RECEIVED: The Annual Statement of Accounts 2018-19 (COME\_C\_AGM\_2019\_C)

### **Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2019**

#### **Treasurer's Comments**

##### **Profit and Loss Account**

*At the end of the financial year, two MEC subscriptions were outstanding (and these are included in the Balance Sheet as debtors). One MEC has withdrawn from COMEC but with their membership subscription for 2017/2018 still outstanding. In consultation with the Chairman, I have written off this debtor item.*

##### **Balance Sheet**

*The balance sheet shows a surplus of income over expenditure, for the first time for a number of years. Our policy has for some time been to reduce our reserves (our total net assets) over a period of years to the equivalent of one year's income (currently £6,500). I had previously forecast that we would reach this level in 2019; but the unexpected surplus in 2018/2019 means that we still have a reserve of £8,439. Assuming that there are no significant changes in our pattern of income and expenditure, this deficit-reduction will probably not now be realised until 2021.*

There are, presently, no other indicators to suggest that the level of subscriptions should be reviewed.

## **COMEC Financial Statements 2019**

### **Income and Expenditure Account For the year ended 31 July 2019**

|   | <b>2019</b>  | <b>2018</b>  |
|---|--------------|--------------|
|   | <b>£</b>     | <b>£</b>     |
| <b>Income</b>   |              |              |
| <i>MEC Subscriptions due</i>                              | 6,650        | 6,650        |
| <i>Bank interest</i>                                      | 5            | 2            |
| <b>Total income</b>                                       | <b>6,655</b> | <b>6,652</b> |
| <b>Expenditure</b>  |              |              |
| <i>Annual Meeting and Conference (Sep 2018)</i>           | 1,166        | 1,065        |
| <i>Planning for following year's AGM &amp; Conference</i> |              |              |
| <i>Executive meetings</i>                                 | 2,350        | 2,614        |
| <i>Other meetings</i>                                     |              | 194          |
| <i>Representation</i>                                     | 131          | 355          |
| <i>COMEC Prize</i>  | 500          | 505          |
| <i>COMEC Occasional Papers</i>                            | 262          | 566          |
| <i>Website support</i>                                    | 41           | 477          |
| <i>Administrator</i>                                      | 1,500        | 1,500        |
| <i>Postage and stationery</i>                             | 34           | 55           |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                  | <b>5,984</b> | <b>7,331</b> |
| <b>Profit / (loss) for the year</b>                       | <b>671</b>   | <b>(679)</b> |

### **Balance Sheet As at 31 July 2019**

|   | <b>2019</b>  | <b>2018</b>  |
|---|--------------|--------------|
|   | <b>£</b>     | <b>£</b>     |
| <i>Opening balance at 1 August 2018</i> | 7,768        | 8,447        |
| <i>Profit / (loss) for the year</i>     | 671          | (679)        |
| <b>Closing balance at 31 July 2019</b>  | <b>8,439</b> | <b>7,768</b> |
| <b>Represented by:</b>                  |              |              |
| <i>Current account</i>                  | 4,985        | 2,483        |

|                                |                     |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b><i>Savings account</i></b>  | <b><i>2,354</i></b> | <b><i>4,349</i></b> |
| <b><i>Debtors</i></b>          | <b><i>1,900</i></b> | <b><i>1,286</i></b> |
| <b><i>Creditors</i></b>        | <b><i>(800)</i></b> | <b><i>(350)</i></b> |
|                                |                     |                     |
| <b><i>Total net assets</i></b> | <b><i>8,439</i></b> | <b><i>7,768</i></b> |

- APPROVED: The Statement of Accounts 2018-19.

## **5. COMEC Prize**

- REPORTED: The COMEC Prize Winner 2019 is Lt Matthew Smith of Sheffield UOTC. The runner up is OCdt Alexandra Yorsten of EMUOTC
- NOTED: Ms A Lyon noted the standard of nominations was extremely high and the selection panel were in awe of the activities undertaken by cadets.

## **6. COMEC Relations with MECs**

- CONSIDERED: Working relationships with MECs, and the timing and structure of future events.
- NOTED: The Vice-Chairman, Mr Bryden Ritchie, led the discussion conscious of working with three audiences (Military, MECs and students). Mr Bryden Ritchie referenced the paper by George Sutherland in the delegate packs which describes the origins, development and functions of COMEC.
- NOTED: Mr Bryden Ritchie emphasised COMEC is not a command structure, but more akin to a trade association of MECs. COMEC exists fundamentally for networking, and communication has been the biggest challenge in recent years. It was asked of delegates if we could come up with better strategies for community exchanges, co-operation and sharing of best practice. This may help solve operational issues like Freshers' Fairs attendance and charges: would a joint memorandum of understanding help to support USUs in their engagement with student unions?
- NOTED: A wide ranging discussion was had around Freshers' Fairs and relationships with student unions. Brigadier Alan Hill felt this issue was localised, and Mr Alistair Finlay noted the unique situation in Northern Ireland due to history and politics: while an overarching statement might be helpful the key is the personal relationships locally. Ms Carol Kinkead noted direct discussions with the National Union of Students (NUS) might help to facilitate matters. OCdt Sam Baker noted going through the University to the student union helped facilitate attendance at the fair at Birmingham University.
- NOTED: Discussion also centred on COMEC's role. Should the focus be on supporting USUs rather than trying to tackle larger issues like cyber? This could include supporting recruiting, OFSTED links and helping identify what undergraduates are looking for. Mr Bryden Ritchie noted that COMEC has a role to inform the academic community of military issues as this feeds into possible solutions. It is the military that is seeking talent and consultancy on cyber matters from universities, and COMEC is seen as a facilitator of that.
- NOTED: Professor Paul Ivey noted that USUs are the best corporate training programme available, and this benefit needs to be communicated and re-enforced.



- NOTED: Discussion was had about communication churn between service units and COs, as well as the ability of universities and MoD to collaborate and share information. It was noted the MoD trusted partner policy was preventing wider ties.
- NOTED: Mr Bryden Ritchie asked that discussion continued throughout the conference.

#### **7. Nominations to the Executive Committee**

- NOTED: There are three vacancies of Ordinary Members occasioned by the completion of term of office for Prof E Archibald, Ms A Lyon and Dr R Hall.
- NOTED: Nominations to Executive Committee Member have been received by the due date in respect of the following:
  - Prof Alastair Adair (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D1)
  - Prof Elizabeth Archibald (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D2)
  - Prof James Davenport (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D3)
  - Dr Ross Hall (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D4)
  - Prof Paul Ivey (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D5)
  - Prof Michael Siva-Jothy (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D6)
  - Dr Margi Vilnay (COMEC\_AGM\_2019\_D7)
- RESOLVED: There being seven nominations received by the due date for three vacancies, a vote was held. Dr Ross Hall, Prof Paul Ivey and Dr Margi Vilnay are duly declared elected to the Executive Committee as Ordinary Members for a term of four years.

#### **8. Any Other Business**

- NOTED: There was no further business to consider.

#### **9. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings**

- NOTED: The Executive will give careful consideration in consultation with MECs to the timing and structure of future events.

## **Annex A: List of AGM Attendees**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Professor Alastair Adair     | Queen's Belfast MEC (Ulster University)                      |
| OCdt Sam Baker               | BUAS   |
| Sqn Ldr K D Bebbington       | UGSAS  |
| Lt Col Jon Brinn             | CO London OTC  |
| Mr James Stuart Castle       | Glasgow & Strathclyde MEC / COMEC Executive                  |
| OCdt Morgan Chamberlain      | UGSAS  |
| Lt Col Rupert Clements       | CO Bristol OTC   |
| Cdr Neil Downing             | Commander Universities, BRNC / COMEC Executive               |
| Group Captain Howard Edwards | Comdt 6 FTS, RAFC Cranwell / COMEC Executive                 |
| Lt Col Alastair Field        | CO Cambs OTC   |
| OCdt F Fife                  | UGSAS  |
| Mr Alistair Finlay           | Queen's Belfast MEC  |
| Col Dominic Guinness         | Ministry of Defence / COMEC Executive                        |
| Dr Ross Hall                 | MEC for Wales (Chair) / COMEC Executive                      |
| Sqn Ldr Al Hawes             | SO2 Fg, 6 FTS, RAFC Cranwell                                 |
| OCdt M Hawthorne             | UGSAS  |
| Brigadier Alan Hill          | Exeter MEC   |
| Professor Paul Ivey          | London MEC (Deputy Vice Chancellor & Chief Business Officer) |
| Lt Lewis Jones               | Commanding Officer Sussex URNU                               |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Dr Ian R Jones           | Aberdeen MEC                               |
| Lt Vivienne Joynes       | Commanding Officer Bristol URNU            |
| Dr Marianna Kaimaki      | Cambridge MEC                              |
| Ms Carol Kinkead         | Queen's Belfast MEC / COMEC Executive      |
| Dr Ben Kotzee            | West Midlands MEC                          |
| Mr Roderick G Livingston | COMEC Chairman / Glasgow & Strathclyde MEC |
| Lt Cdr Ollie Loughran    | Commanding Officer Edinburgh URNU          |
| Miss Ann Elizabeth Lyon  | COMEC Executive                            |
| OCdt William MacDonald   | BUAS                                       |
| OCdt J McClintock        | UGSAS                                      |
| Lt Col Andy McLannahan   | CO Northumbrian OTC                        |
| Dr Andrew McLaren        | Glasgow & Strathclyde MEC                  |
| OCdt A McNeil            | UGSAS                                      |
| Lt Toby Milligan         | Commanding Officer London URNU             |
| Mr Matthew Moss          | Cambridge MEC                              |
| OCdt A Nairne            | UGSAS                                      |
| Mr Peter Neville         | MEC for Wales                              |
| Professor Nick Norman    | Bristol MEC                                |
| Mr Jason Norris          | COMEC Secretary / Tayforth MEC             |
| Miss Karen Osterburg     | Edinburgh MEC (Heriot Watt)                |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Professor Adrian Parker        | Oxford DMI   |
| Professor Jonathan R Rayner    | Sheffield MEC  |
| Mr Bryden Ritchie              | COMEC Vice-Chairman / Edinburgh MEC                        |
| Dr Fred Ruddell                | Queen's Belfast MEC  |
| Professor Michael T Siva-Jothy | Sheffield MEC  |
| Lt Eleanor Smillie             | Commanding Officer Oxford URNU                             |
| Dr Michael J A Smith           | West Midlands MEC  |
| OCdt S Snowdon                 | UGSAS  |
| Major Ian Stoney               | Leeds' MAFNEC / COMEC Executive                            |
| Air Marshal Edward J Stringer  | Director General Joint Force Development & Defence Academy |
| Rev Prof Patton Taylor         | COMEC Treasurer / Queen's Belfast MEC                      |
| Brig Dr John R Thomson         | Edinburgh MEC  |
| Mr Paul Thomas                 | London MEC   |
| Sir Neil Thorne                | Leeds' MAFNEC  |
| Col Nick Tougher               | Deputy Commandant Reserves / COMEC Executive               |
| Dr Margi Vilnay                | Tayforth MEC   |
| OCdt A Warner                  | UGSAS  |
| APO Maia-Aimee Webster         | UBAS   |
| Lt Phill Yates                 | Commanding Officer Liverpool URNU                          |
| Lt Matthew Smith               | COMEC Prizewinner & Sheffield UOTC / 212 Field Hospital    |