



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

### **Annual General Meeting 2022**

**held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from 1600hrs – 1700hrs at Akehurst Hall,  
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4PQ.**

### **Draft Minute**

#### **Present**

See list at end of Minute

#### **In Attendance**

Mr J Norris (Secretary)

#### **Apologies**

General Sir P Wall (President); Mr J S Castle (Chairman); Dr R Hall; Cdr T Stevens

- The Vice-Chair welcomed those attending the AGM and noted the change to the conference schedule due to the period of national mourning. The Vice-Chair also noted her standing in for the Chairman due to illness.

#### **1. Minutes**

- RECEIVED: The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1 September 2021 (COMEC\_AGM\_2022\_A)
- RESOLVED: The Minutes were approved.
- NOTED: A query was raised regarding the location of the 2021 AGM minutes and the Secretary noted these were published on the COMEC website (<https://www.comec.org.uk/comec-agm-conference-2021/>)

#### **2. Matters Arising**

- NOTED: There were no matters arising.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

- RECEIVED: A written report from the Chairman.

## **Chairman's Report**

*This annual report is presented to the Executive and Council. It forms a summary of activities between September 2021 and now.*

### **CONFERENCE 2021**

*Held and hosted by RAF Halton. This was one of the first engagements that we attended face to face after so much time talking through computers. Underlying theme was Space and the way we must develop into this area. Workshop also a great success. Good cross section of the MEC community present, including COs and students. Our thanks go to Halton and the whole RAF team for a fantastic event.*

### **COMEC PRESIDENT**

*General Sir Peter Wall is coming to the end of his term. We are in the process of finding and securing a replacement.*

### **EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

*We have moved back to mostly face to face meetings, recognising the importance of talking directly to people during the network sessions. At the same time we have recognised convenience, so retain one of the meetings as on-line. The meetings are as follows:*

- *November – London*
- *February – on-line*
- *June – London*
- *September (AGM) – Conference venue*

*Our thanks go to the Army, who act as our excellent hosts when we are in London.*

### **MEC CHAIRS' MEETINGS**

*These only introduced over the last year or so. They are held roughly three weeks before the Nov, Feb and June meetings. Representation from the MECs has been good with around 80% attendance on most occasions. Invitations go to Chairs and Secretaries, with the Chairs encouraged to send a representative if they themselves cannot attend. Discussions are far more informal than the traditional meetings. Nothing is off the table.*

*As a note for your diaries, I am pleased to report that Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP has agreed to join us for Nov meeting. This of course has to be wrapped up in the usual caveats associated with those in Government.*

### **CONSTITUTION**

*I was elected on the premise that COMEC (and the MECs), could and should improve their relevance through 360°. The new COMEC constitution (and the suggested MEC constitutions) are an attempt to do just that. They are not directional or aspirational, they are designed to facilitate activity across the Defence and Veteran space. The additional activities are optional, should time and other resources allow.*

*We are at a position where the new Constitution has been agreed by the Executive. We now look for approval by the Council. The final draft is annexed to your papers. The Constitution will be covered under a separate agenda item at the AGM.*

## **CONFERENCE 2022**

*Considerable time and resources have been employed in developing the Conference, which this year comes from RMAS. I am eternally grateful to the sub-committee responsible.*

## **COMEC PRIZE 2022**

*Winner of the COMEC 2022 Student Prize: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Alice Walton-Knight of Cambridge UOTC*

*The panel would also like to highly commended two other students on their outstanding contributions to their USUs:*

- *Snr Welfare Mid Alastair McDonald of Wales URNU*
- *SUO Libby Rickard of East Midlands UOTC*

*I would like to thank the sub-committee for their enduring efforts and time in successfully running and judging the event.*

*I look forward to any discussion at the meeting.*

*Jim*

***J S Castle***

*Chairman*

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair thanked the Army and in particular Col J Powell, OCdt Ellis and team for hosting the conference.
- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted we are unable to ratify the constitution at the AGM and this would be discussed later in the agenda.
- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted the success of the MEC Chairs' meeting as a forum for sharing best practice which we hope to share more broadly for future meetings.
- NOTED: Linked to best practice from MECs, the Vice-Chair introduced Professor M Siva-Jothy who gave an overview of the student survey the Sheffield MEC undertook. There were 59 respondents and the URNU, OTC and UAS was represented. Key findings included:
  - Half of the respondents knew what the MEC was
  - Fifth knew what the MEC did
  - Third had a positive opinion on the MEC

Professor M Siva-Jothy noted as a result the survey a MEC representative will meet new recruits and brief them on the role of the MEC. It was noted challenges still remain around student support and connection between University welfare and unit welfare, and not all solutions work for all MECs. Professor M Siva-Jothy noted he would be happy to share further details to other MECs.

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

- APPROVED: The Annual Statement of Accounts 2021-22

***Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement  
for the year ended 31 July 2022***

## **Treasurer's Comments**

### **Income and Expenditure Account**

*At the end of the financial year, four MEC subscriptions remained outstanding (one of them for two years). On the assumption that these subscriptions will eventually come to hand, they are included as debtors in the accounts and balance sheet for the year.*

*The formal accounts thus show a small excess of income over expenditure for the 2021-22 financial year.*

*This is unlikely to be repeated in 2022-23, largely because the September 2022 Conference is incurring significant additional costs from the previous year.*

### **Balance Sheet**

*Our policy has for some time been that we should reduce our reserves (that is, our total net assets) over a period of years to the equivalent of one year's income (ordinarily around £6,650). The excess of income over expenditure this year and last year has not been typical. However, even if our income and expenditure were to return to their previous pattern, I would anticipate that we will not achieve this target for several more years.*

**Professor James Patton Taylor MBE TD VR MA MTh PhD FHEA**  
**Honorary Treasurer**

**1 August 2022**

### **COMEC Financial Statements 2021-2022**

#### **Income and Expenditure Account** **For the year ended 31 July 2022**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Income</b>		
MEC Subscriptions due	6,650	6,650
Bank interest		1
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6,650</b>	<b>6,651</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Annual Meeting & Conference (held in Sep. 21)	852	
Executive meetings (general costs)	148	110
Executive Travel	2,666	555
COMEC Prize	500	517
COMEC Occasional Papers		280

<i>Website maintenance and upgrade</i>	<i>581</i>	<i>331</i>
<i>Administrator honorarium</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>1,500</i>
<b><i>Total expenditure</i></b>	<b><i>6,247</i></b>	<b><i>3,293</i></b>
<b><i>Excess of income over expenditure for the year</i></b>	<b><i>403</i></b>	<b><i>3,358</i></b>

### ***Balance Sheet***

***As at 31 July 2022***

	<b><i>2022</i></b>	<b><i>2021</i></b>
		<b><i>£</i></b>
<b><i>Opening balance at 1 August 2021</i></b>	<b><i>12,613</i></b>	<b><i>9,255</i></b>
<i>Income / (expenditure) for the year</i>	<i>403</i>	<i>3,358</i>
<b><i>Closing balance at 31 July 2022</i></b>	<b><i>£13,016</i></b>	<b><i>£12,613</i></b>
<b><i>Represented by:</i></b>		
<i>Current account</i>	<i>6,784</i>	<i>8,401</i>
<i>Savings account</i>	<i>2,358</i>	<i>2,358</i>
<i>Debtors and prepayments</i>	<i>4,249</i>	<i>1,964</i>
<i>Creditors</i>	<i>-375</i>	<i>-110</i>
<b><i>Total net assets at 31 July 2022</i></b>	<b><i>£13,016</i></b>	<b><i>£12,613</i></b>

- NOTED: The Treasurer noted the ongoing challenges of collecting subscription payments from MECs due to different finance systems. The Treasurer requested MEC Chairs and Secretaries support the payment of invoices by liaising with their University finance offices on behalf of COMEC to ensure all the necessary details are correct.
- NOTED: The Treasurer highlighted the most significant spend has been on Executive travel and travel to COMEC meetings, reflective of the diversity of the COMEC Executive membership across the United Kingdom and increased distance to meetings. Rail strikes and disruption have also increased costs this year.
- NOTED: The Treasurer noted the current policy of reducing reserves to no more than one year of income and discussions are underway on how best to use the surplus constructively.

### **5. COMEC Prize**

- REPORTED: The COMEC Prize Winner 2021-22 is 2nd Lt Alice Walton-Knight of Cambridge UOTC. The runners up are Snr Welfare Mid Alastair McDonald of Wales URNU and SUO Libby Rickard of East Midlands UOTC.
- RECEIVED: An excellent presentation was received by the prize winner 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Alice Walton-Knight.

- NOTED: Ms C Kinkead noted there were 13 nominations submitted overall across the three services and the standard this year was outstanding.

## **6. COMEC President**

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted discussions were ongoing and General Sir Peter Wall had agreed to remain in post until a new President has been appointed. The Vice-Chair thanked General Sir Peter Wall for his ongoing service to COMEC.

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

- NOTED: There are four vacancies on the Executive occasioned by the completion of term of office for Major Ian Stoney (eligible for re-election), and the resignation of Simone Bedford, Paul Ivey and Andy Smith.
- NOTED: Nominations have been received by the due date in respect of the following:

### Executive Committee Member

- o Major Ian Stoney (Leeds MAFNEC)
  - o Dr Fred Ruddell (Queens University Belfast MEC)
- RESOLVED: There being two nominations received by the due date for the four vacancies, Major Ian Stoney and Dr Fred Ruddell are duly elected for a term of four years. The remaining vacancies will carry forward to the 2023 AGM.

## **8. COMEC Constitution & MEC Terms of Reference:**

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair updated the AGM that the Executive had decided the draft COMEC Constitution and Terms of Reference could not be ratified at this time. Although there was agreement in principal on the direction of travel it was felt more time needed to be spent working through the detail in consultation with the MECs. The Vice-Chair therefore welcomed thoughts and feedback from the AGM.
- NOTED: There was wide ranging discussion with contributions from both MECs and Service staff. The feedback and opinions can be summarised as follows:
  - o The Constitution should be led by needs of the MECs and there was a feeling of imposition by COMEC.
  - o MECs noted there had not been enough time to consult – the draft Constitution and Terms of Reference was only circulated 2 weeks before the AGM.
  - o Some of the new aspects of the constitution sit outside the remit of service staff which needs further consideration.
  - o It was suggested that it would be useful to have student / cadet input and representation.
  - o Some MECs wanted to see side by side changes between old and new constitution with a summary top sheet. It was observed a number of sections had been copied and chopped losing vital nuances that were carefully crafted, with legal professionals, for the previous version. It

was suggested an amendment could be made to the existing constitution wording.

- It was asked if COMEC was sufficiently equipped to deliver on the proposed new objectives?
- It was commended the Executive did not ask the AGM to ratify at this stage noting the AGM was not well attended and did not enough time to have meaningful advanced discussion with their MECs.
- ACTION: It was suggested that the members of the Council should provide written comments to COMEC by a reasonable date followed by an online discussion before re-submitting to next AGM.

#### **9. Future Conferences:**

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair welcomed input on the format for future conference, including discussion on timing and location. It was requested any feedback be passed to the Secretary.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

- NOTED: No other business was raised.

#### **11. Dates of Next Meeting**

- NOTED: The date and location of the next Conference and AGM will be announced after confirmation of the arrangements with the Navy.

COMEC AGM Attendees 2022

<b>Category</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>
COMEC	Mr	Jason	Norris
COMEC	Major	Ian	Stoney
COMEC	Prof	Mike	Siva-Jothy
Prize Winner	OCdt	Alice	Walton-Knight
MEC	Dr	Michael	Smith
MEC	Dr	Doug	Bertram
COMEC	Gp Cpt	Rob	Caine
COMEC	Col	Lisa	Brooks
Unit	Lt Cdr	Lynsey	Youngson
COMEC	Ms	Carol	Kinkead
MEC	Dr	Marianna	Kaimaki
Unit	Lt Cdr	Barry	McWilliams
COMEC	Rev Prof	Patton	Taylor
VC Representative	Prof	Deborah	Goodwin
MEC	Prof	David	Parrott
COMEC	Dr	Margi	Vilnay
MEC	Prof	Edward	Spiers
MEC	Prof	David	Dunn
COMEC	Col	Jacqueline	Powell
MEC		Katie	Dodd
COMEC	Dr	Gerardine	Matthews-Smith
MEC	Ms	Julia	Leng
MEC	Dr	Fred	Ruddell
Unit	Wg Cdr	Mike	Dewar
MEC	Dr	Andrew	Foey
MEC	Prof	Andrew	Neil