

AGM 2023-24 CHAIR'S REPORT



SOUTH EAST RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION

Our Vision

To be an enduring and essential pillar in the delivery of support for the well-being of Reserve Forces' & Cadets' (RF&C) and, through our effectiveness and position in the regions, to be the independent body that represents their interests and promotes understanding between the Armed Forces and Civil Society.

Core Business Objectives

1. Support to single Service Reserves' recruiting as directed and funded.
2. Support to Cadets and administrative support to the Army Cadet Force.
3. Maintain, within funding, a compliant and appropriate infrastructure.
4. Deliver wider Employer, Civil and Community Engagement Support.

Principal Officers of the Association



President
Nigel Atkinson Esq
Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire



Chair
Colonel (Retired)
Charles Ackroyd TD RD DL



Chief Executive
Colonel (Retired)
Patrick Crowley MA MBE DL

Pillar Heads of the Association



Acting Head of Estates
Mr Steve Ward



Chief of Staff/Head of Engagement
Group Captain Keith Lane
RAF (Retired)



Head of Cadets & Youth
Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)
Peter Ellis QGM*

This report has been produced with the generous support of the Connaught Trust.



The Connaught Trust
Funding Reserves and Cadets



This is my sixth and final annual report as Chair of SERFCA. This year has been a memorable one and, of course, highlighted by the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla on 6 May 2023. I was fortunate to be present at the King's Birthday Parade in June and also at the annual Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in November, both remarkable and moving events. Unfortunately, the world environment remains unstable, as the war in the Ukraine continues and the tragic conflict between Israel and Hamas further develops.

Meanwhile, both the Reserves and the Cadets have been very active and successful, though their planning has been affected by the scarcity of training areas and other challenges. Major concerns are recruitment and retention in some Reserve units and maintaining the commitment of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) in these difficult economic times: the Volunteer has competing demands, as always. The major, imminent change in the way we do estates' business is the advent of the Future Defence Infrastructure Service (FDIS). Meanwhile, we have had a busy, but productive schedule of Employer and Community Engagement. I am pleased to report that our staff turnover has been much more stable this past year.

Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB)

The RFCAs' move towards a NDPB has been paused until sometime after the next General Election. Meanwhile, new staff have been recruited at Council level, providing additional governance across all 13 RFCAs, including a Human Resources cell. Thus, oversight has been improved but at the expense of added pressure on staff and further erosion of our autonomy.

Defence

Last year I said that 2021 had been the year of reports, but that was before the war in Ukraine. Perspectives have since been revised, which led to the Government publishing the 'Integrated Review Refresh 2023', followed by a new Defence Command Paper. It was acknowledged that Reservists are a vital part of the Armed Forces' order of battle, but disappointingly there was little specific mention of the Reserves. It also highlighted the very successful Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) and the aspiration to increase the number of cadets in schools by a further 60,000 by April this year. The latter figure is challenging, but I am pleased to report that the number of Combined Cadet Force (CCF) cadets in our region at year-end 2023 made up 25% of all CCF cadets in the United Kingdom in what was their 75th anniversary year. As we go to print in early 2024, the CEP goes from strength to strength with 103 CCFs in our region now, with the highest numbers in the State sector schools.

Reserves

The Council of RFCAs' External Scrutiny Team (EST) reports for both 2022 and 2023 were placed in the libraries of the Houses of

Parliament in November 2023. The EST is mandated to produce an annual report on the overall state of the Reserve Forces. Unfortunately, the assessment is that the health of the Reserves is poor and numbers continue to decline. This is not helped by the reduction in national numbers of between 3 and 4% in the last year. As all three Services grapple with the problem, SERFCA is doing its best to provide support to them by e.g. working closely as a member of the Regional Engagement Fusion Board with the new Army HQ SE, only formed in September 2023, to improve recruiting. HQ SE has the same boundaries as SERFCA and is responsible for Firm Base issues, including Resilience, Infrastructure, Cadets and Engagement.

Meanwhile, some Army Reserve units in the South East continue to adjust their establishment and/or operational role under 'Future Soldier' direction. This includes the setting up of Army Multi-Role Medical Regiments, affecting the role of medical reserve units in Abingdon, Brighton, Ditton and Portsmouth.

Cadets

The Cadets are as popular as ever: there is no shortage of youngsters who want to become involved and have fun whilst becoming better citizens of the future. This is brilliant news, but the challenge is gaining and retaining the commitment of CFAVs. Although the number of CFAVs is good across all five MOD-sponsored cadet





organisations, the time commitment is not always as high as it has been in the past and in schools, teachers have many competing demands when considering volunteering for the CCFs. We continue to do all that we can to alleviate the situation.

Nevertheless, training in 2023 has been well-received and very well attended. A lot of last-minute adjustments to annual camp plans had to be made in the wake of the demand for training facilities for Ukraine plus the need to carry out urgent upgrades to Cadet Training Centres due to a national passive fire risk inspection. We owe a debt of gratitude to our Professional Support Staff in the county Army Cadet Forces, who had to be ultra-flexible and sort out a number of critical issues in short order.

Another huge improvement this year has been the increase of more senior/older Cadets post Covid. They can and do provide a depth of experience and knowledge that encourages younger cadets to join and provides greater flexibility in the delivery of the training syllabus.

2024 will mark the departure of Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Peter Ellis QGM*, our Head of Cadets & Youth and Deputy in the East of our region. He has provided 16 years of sterling service to SERFCA and supported thousands of Cadets and CFAVs across the

nine counties of the SE. He will be sorely missed, and we wish him and Linda all the very best in retirement.

Engagement

I am hugely impressed by our Engagement output this year. The content of our five Armed Forces' Briefings in May/June with the theme of 'Twice a Citizen –The Challenges of Being a Volunteer' was very informative, as audiences received the only Tri-Service update across all the RFCAs. The autumn's eight Lord-Lieutenants' award ceremonies once again highlighted the high quality of volunteers contributing to both the Reserves and Cadets, whilst show-casing brilliant Cadets, some of whom were appointed Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets. Seven County Committee Meetings then followed in which Regular, Reserve, Cadet and Armed Forces' Champions from the Local Authorities were able to communicate with each other and share issues. Concurrently, they were back into the routine of running Civil Military Partnership Boards and delivered some very effective annual Armed Forces' Conferences.

Employer Engagement has had a very successful year with the continued Armed

Force Covenant signings with growing numbers of Bronze, Silver and Gold Employer Recognition Scheme awards.

Estates

All thirteen RFCAs, including SERFCA, are soon to adopt a new way of doing Estates business, namely FDIS. The Hard Facilities Management (buildings etc) will, with effect from 1 August 2024, be handled by the firm Vinci, whilst our Estates team provides assurance of that delivery and continues to deliver Soft Facilities Management (leases, tests, cleaning etc). This is a big change in the way the Estates output is currently provided and in next year's report, no doubt an initial assessment of progress will be in the Chair's report.

Meanwhile, the Estates team continues to deliver within an ever-reducing resource environment. Tranche 1 of the Reserves Estate Optimisation Programme, comprising the rationalisation of some Cadet sites and the sale of six locations is ongoing, though the more ambitious Tranche 2 and 3 aspirations are currently unfunded, which may eventually affect the Reserve Estate. In addition, armouries are being improved and electric vehicle charging points have been installed in some locations.

People

SERFCA staff continue to perform extremely well, despite the perennial resources challenge. My sincere thanks go to all of them and the Senior Management Team for what they have achieved over the six years I have had the privilege to be the Chair. My thanks also go to all our Vice-Chairs and Members, who give up so much of their personal time in support of Defence, the Reserves and the Cadets. Your dedication is impressive and much appreciated



REGIONAL UNIT FOCUS



Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Marine Reserve

Following the reorganisation of HMS KING ALFRED whereby it assumes national responsibility for the Information Warfare cadre, it has seen it reach initial operating capability and the establishment increasing from approximately 220 to 750. Over 75 King Alfred personnel have deployed in the year on operations and exercises worldwide. Additionally, unit personnel have been a fully integrated part of Team Portsmouth (HM Naval Base) where they have assisted and supported their regular counterparts on Base and ceremonial duties.

Army Reserve

3 PWRR

The Battalion started the year on the back of a massively successful Company level tour as the Falkland Islands Resident Infantry Company. A number of personnel were mobilised in order to support Operation INTERFLEX but the main effort was the work up training and eventual deployment to Estonia to partake in Exercise BALTIC FIST, working with comrades from 7 Rifles and the wider armoured battle group. The cost to individual reservists to attend training, in facilities that have maintenance challenges are some of many issues that the Battalion leadership have to manage but the future is bright and there remains an environment of positivity and recruitment remains above

the Army Reserve average. The Battalion exercised the freedom of Medway on behalf of the Regiment and continued to provide regular support throughout the year on civic and community engagement events.

4 PWRR

The Battalion has had a busy year working around routine training, supporting Operation INTERFLEX and preparing to deploy 120 personnel for their annual training exercise with the 10th Alpine Regiment of the Italian Army in the Apennine Mountains. Lower scale deployments saw the Battalion deploying a sniper instructor to Belize for 6 weeks and 2 warrant officers to Kenya supporting the British Army Training Team. 4 PWRR has a robust recruitment programme and strong

community presence; consequently, they have a healthy recruit pipeline.

7 RIFLES

7 Rifles have also taken their share of providing personnel for Operation INTERFLEX. As previously noted, they played a major role in the armoured battle group exercise in Estonia – Ex BALTIC FIST. Battalion personnel have undertaken a number of individual reinforcements but most notable was the mobilisation of one officer for 7 months duties in Kenya. Manning and recruitment will always be a challenge, however the Battalion has a physical establishment that is over their liability and has a healthy application pipeline.





Royal Air Force Reserve

The Royal Air Force Reserve remains a vital element of the RAF operational output, providing niche skills across a wide area of capability (aircrew, medical, movements, logistics, security and helicopter support). RAF Reserves saw service across the globe during 2023 undertaking duties as far afield as Australia, The Falkland Islands, Cyprus and the Middle East. The squadrons based in the South East have not been immune from the challenging recruitment environment and most have failed to meet their in-year targets. Accommodation shortages, limited availability of IT and gapping of headquarters type posts do little to enhance the 'experience' and these issues have been raised with the independent External Scrutiny Team. Given the real challenges and frustrations facing our Reservists, their continued commitment, enthusiasm and desire to serve with excellence is all the more inspiring. It must not, however be seen as a given and taken for granted.



University Royal Naval Units/University Officers Training Corps/University Air Squadrons

The university units report busy years activities to meet their mission of delivering leadership development through military training, social, sporting and adventurous training events. Overall, units are filling their cadet vacancies. Due to a high operational demand for training areas, it has been tougher for the OTCs to get good real-estate and frequent short notice changes have challenged the training staffs. Adventurous training and force development visits are effective activities to educate and maintain interest, however, fiscal restrictions have been a limiting factor and university units have had to either cancel, increase personal contributions and/or seek support from SERFCA. That said, student officers across the South East have enjoyed skiing, sailing, parachuting, mountain activities and waterborne activities at locations at home and abroad.

Staffing as at February 2023

RNR/RMR

ESTABLISHMENT	185	STRENGTH	179	97%
---------------	-----	----------	-----	-----

ARMY

ESTABLISHMENT	2822	STRENGTH	1999	71%
---------------	------	----------	------	-----

RAFR

ESTABLISHMENT	913	STRENGTH	610	67%
---------------	-----	----------	-----	-----

URNU/UOTC/UAS

ESTABLISHMENT	672	STRENGTH	659	98%
---------------	-----	----------	-----	-----

RESERVE FORCES IN THE SOUTH EAST

ABINGDON 1

Edward Brooks Barracks, Cholswell Road, Shippon OX13 6HW
A Company, 7th Battalion The Rifles
Tel: 01235 548 000
Waterloo Band and Bugles of the Rifles
Tel: 01235 548 028
145 Support Squadron, 202 (Midlands) Multi-Role Medical Regiment
Tel: 01235 548 021

ALDERSHOT 2

Army Reserve Centre, Seely House, Shoe Lane, Aldershot GU11 2HJ
CIS Troop, 8 Engineer Brigade
Tel: 01252 914 003
St Omer Barracks, Aldershot GU11 2BX
G Troop, 562 Tanker Squadron, 151 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 0300 155 2495
Mellor Building, Buller Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DN
Royal Military Police Reserve Section, 253 (London) Provost Company
Tel: 0300 165 5725

ASHFORD 3

Army Reserve Centre, Sir Henry Brackenbury Road, Ashford, TN23 3XH
A Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 1659 968
133 Divisional Recovery Company, 103 Force Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Tel: 0300 159 7381

AYLESBURY 4

Army Reserve Centre, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, HP19 3RN
1 Platoon of A Company, 7th Battalion The Rifles
Tel: 07773 240 037
710 (Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars) Operational Hygiene Squadron, 165 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 07966 745 480
RAF Halton, Aylesbury, HP22 5PG
7644 (Public Relations) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
Tel: 01296 623 535

BANBURY 5

Army Reserve Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury, OX16 9AN
142 (Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars) Vehicle Squadron, 165 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 01259 458 042

BENSON 6

RAF Benson, Benson, OX10 6AA
606 (Chiltern) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
Tel: 0345 606 9069
Oxford University Air Squadron
Tel: 01491 827 230 (ext 5227)

BLETCHLEY 7

Army Reserve Centre, Water Eaton Road, Bletchley, MK3 5HQ
633 & 634 Sections, 63 Military Intelligence Company, 6 Military Intelligence Battalion
Tel: 07966 534 630

BOSCOMBE DOWN 8

MOD Boscombe Down, Salisbury, SP4 0JE
Southampton University Air Squadron
Tel: 01980 663 233

BRIGHTON 9

Quebec Barracks, 198 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 5AS
B Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 159 2376
Brighton Detachment, 221 Hospital Squadron, 256 (City of London and South East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment
Tel: 01273 545 689

BRIZE NORTON 10

RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, OX18 3LX
501 (County of Gloucester) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
2624 (County of Oxford) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
4624 (County of Oxford) Movement Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
4626 (County of Wiltshire) Aeromedical Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
622 (Reserve Aircrew & Flying Support) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force
Tel: 0345 606 9069

CAMBERLEY 11

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Robertson House, Slim Road, Sandhurst, Camberley, GU15 4NP
Army Medical Services Band
Tel: 01276 412 620

CANTERBURY 12

Army Reserve Centre, Leros, Sturry Road, Canterbury, CT1 1HR
Battalion Headquarters and Headquarter Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 154 3873
The Kohima Band of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 161 4674
Canterbury Detachment London University Officers' Training Corps
Tel: 0207 414 3880

COSHAM 13

Army Reserve Centre, Tudor Crescent, Cosham, PO6 2SR
C Company, 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 02392 375 456
129 Medical Squadron, 243 Multi-role Medical Regiment
Tel: 07973 736 073

CRAWLEY 14

Army Reserve Centre, Kilnmead, Northgate, Crawley, RH10 8BD
D Company, 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 01293 586 418

EASTBOURNE 15

Carter Barracks, Seaside, Eastbourne, BN22 7NL
4 Platoon, B Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 159 2376

FARNHAM 16

Army Reserve Centre, Guildford Road, Farnham, GU9 9QB
A Company, 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 01252 716 236

HERMITAGE 17

Denison Barracks, Hermitage, Thatcham, RG18 9TP
73 Military Intelligence Company, 7 Military Intelligence Battalion
Tel: 0300 164 7120

ISLE OF WIGHT 18

Army Reserve Centre, Drill Hall Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5AA
IoW Troop, 266 (Southampton) Port Squadron, 165 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 01983 522 821

MAIDSTONE 19

Army Reserve Centre, Boxley Road, Maidstone, ME14 2AR
B Troop, 124 Transport Squadron, 151 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 01277 268 960
Army Reserve Centre, 461 London Road, Ditton, Maidstone, ME20 6DB
220 Squadron, 256 Multi-role Medical Regiment
Tel: 01732 842 424

MARLOW 20

Army Reserve Centre, Youens House, Old Horns Lane, Booker, Marlow, SL7 3DU
Marlow Detachment, Royal Marines Reserves (City of London)
Tel: 01494 652 012 (ext 2014)
2 Platoon of A Company, 7th Battalion The Rifles
Tel: 07773 240 037
871 (Marlow) Transport Squadron, 151 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 01159 008 656

MIDDLE WALLOP 21

Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, SO20 8DY
B Flight 679 (Duke of Connaught's) Squadron, 6 Regiment Army Air Corps
Tel: 0300 160 3621

MILTON KEYNES 22

John Howard Barracks, Blakelands, Yeoman's Drive, Milton Keynes, MK14 5NQ
261 (Horsa) Squadron, 158 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 01908 211 155

OXFORD 23

Falklands House, Oxpens Road, Oxford, OX1 1RX
Oxford University Royal Naval Unit
Tel: 01865 255 330
Oxford University Officer Training Corps
Tel: 01865 255 341
Oxford University Air Squadron
Tel: 01491 827 230 (ext 5227)

PORTSMOUTH 24

Semaphore Tower, His Majesty's Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LT
HMS KING ALFRED, Royal Naval Reserves
Tel: 02392 723 319
Portsmouth Detachment, Royal Marines Reserve (City of London)
Tel: 02392 547 392
Solent University Royal Naval Unit
Tel: 0800 689 5652

PORTSMOUTH (Cont) 24

Army Reserve Centre, Peronne Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5LE
295 (Hampshire Yeomanry) Battery Royal Artillery, 106 Regiment Royal Artillery
Tel: 0300 158 5450
128 Divisional Support Company, 103 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Tel: 07980 707 095
Army Reserve Centre, Peronne Close, Portsmouth, PO3 5LG
A Flight, 679 (Duke of Connaught's) Squadron, 6 Regiment Army Air Corps
Tel: 0300 160 3621

READING 25

Brock Barracks, Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1HW
Headquarter Company, 7th Battalion The Rifles
Tel: 07773 240 041
Detachment 135 Geographic Squadron, Royal Engineers
Tel: 01189 530224

REDHILL 26

Army Reserve Centre, Denmark House, Batts Hill, Redhill, RH1 1DS Battalion
Headquarters, 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 01293 586418
2 Troop, 579 Field Squadron, 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal & Search)
Tel: 0300 170 3960

ROCHESTER 27

Army Reserve Centre, Fort Clarence, St Margaret's Street, Rochester, ME1 3BG
Medway Division HMS PRESIDENT, Royal Naval Reserves
Tel: 02074 817 309
C Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 0300 165 9968
3 Troop, 579 Field Squadron, 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal & Search)
Tel: 01634 822882

SOUTHAMPTON 28

Army Reserve Centre, Blighmont Barracks, Millbrook Road, Southampton, SO15 0AJ
9 Platoon, C Company, 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
Tel: 02392 375 456
457 (Hampshire Yeomanry) Battery 106 Regiment Royal Artillery
Tel: 07878 681 241
266 (Southampton) Port Squadron, 165 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
Tel: 02380 725 016
25 Reserve Material and Personnel Exploitation, 2 Military Intelligence Battalion
Tel: 07973 739387
Army Reserve Centre, 32 Carlton Place, Southampton, SO15 2DX
Southampton University Officers' Training Corps
Tel: 02380 332 211

TADLEY 29

Army Reserve Centre, Lapraik House, Bramley, Tadley, RG26 5AW
C Squadron
Tel: 01256 884402

TUNBRIDGE WELLS 30

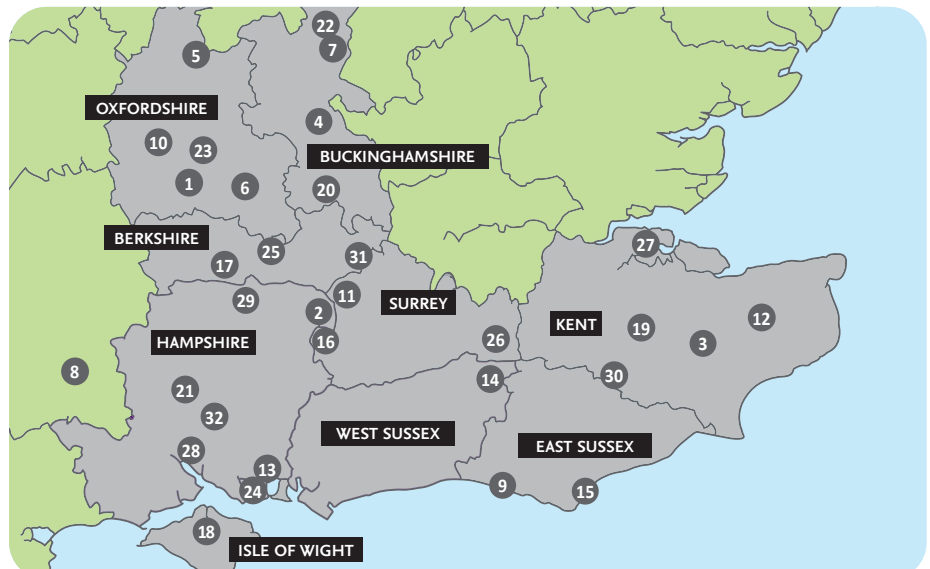
Army Reserve Centre, St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9HH
579 Field Squadron, 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal & Search)
Tel: 01892 556841

WINDSOR 31

Army Reserve Centre, Bolton Road, Windsor SL4 3JG
94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron, 39 (Skinners) Signal Regiment
Tel: 01753 860600

WORTHY DOWN 32

Worthy Down Camp, Winchester, SO21 2RG
Central Reserves Headquarters, Adjutant General's Corps
Tel: 01962 887 857
The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (MN)
Military Police Battalion, CRHQ, Adjutant General's Corps
Tel: 01962 887 373



COMMUNICATION

The Communication and Events (C&E) department has now been fully staffed for 18 months and continues to successfully deliver the annual calendar of high standard campaigns and events. The team engaged with an average of 3400 online viewers a day and over the course of the 2023 season of events, physically engaged with over 1500 people.



Scan me with your phone camera

Advertising in print magazines has been reduced due to the inability to accurately measure the return of investment. Conversely, online advertising has been increased through paid campaigns which provide a greater opportunity to analyse monthly statistics. A new monthly community newsletter has been released, marketing literature is continually updated and equipment for events has been replaced. Notably, a business sized card has been produced with a QR code that accesses a link tree which enables the viewer to navigate around the SERFCA topics/ documents most relevant to them.

The C&E Director sits on the HQ SE Regional Engagement Fusion Board to support with the Army's Engage to Recruit initiative – Op MOBILISE.

We are fortunate to be able to employ

a team of outstanding photographers and videographers. They are frequently out on the ground across the South East capturing thrilling imagery and video footage of reservist and cadet training, documenting personal interest interviews and providing general media support to a range of other activities. We are able to use this content to promote our social media and targeted campaigns as well as being the prime source of material for our major engagement events.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Our reputational social media presence continues to increase and our goal moving forward is to generate more engagement through paid campaigns. These were handled and reported on by an external contractor but we now have the capacity to bring it in-house which makes it easier to analyse the output and expense.

	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Reach	325,061	549,541	-	-	8,341	-	-	-
Impressions	991,780	837,123	96,589	55,758	-	35,309	244,173	-
Engagement	7,100	7,814	770	1,183	421	1,192	583	-
Followers	16,000	18,000	6,853	6,966	345	360	650	709
Views	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,052	30,208

Reach is the total number of people who see our content.

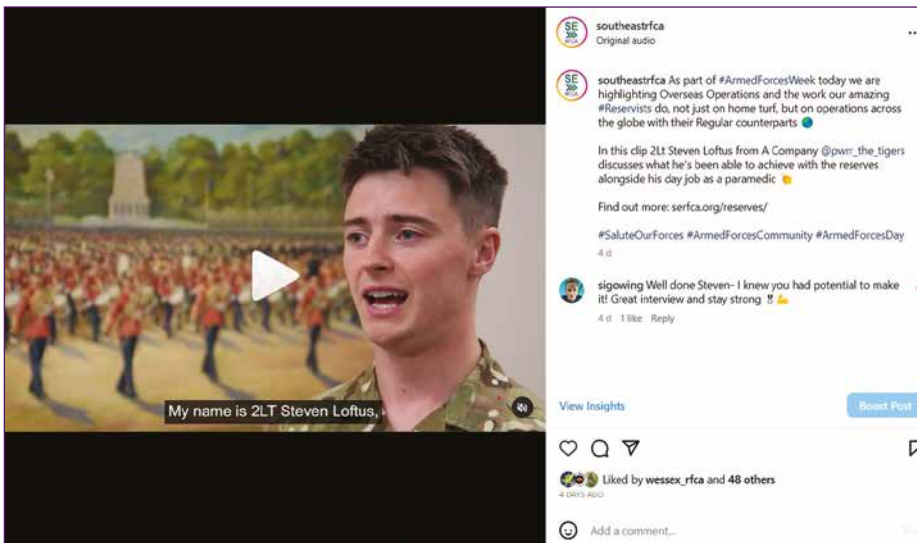
Impressions are the number of times our content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not.

Engagement is a measure of how people are interacting with our content. The term can cover a broad range of actions across all social platforms. It includes likes and favourites, comments, direct messages (DMs), replies to comments, shares and Re-tweets, clicks and mentions. Engagement is a great way to measure whether the content we are creating is actually resonating with our audience.

Please like or follow us at:

-  **Facebook: South East RFCA**
-  **X (formerly Twitter): @SouthEastRFCA**
-  **Instagram: @SouthEastRFCA**
-  **LinkedIn:
South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association**
-  **YouTube: South East RFCA**

The C&E team ran successful social media campaigns for Volunteers Week and Armed Forces Week in June. Photos, videos and biographies were scheduled across the week(s) promoting all 3 Services and the 5 Cadet Forces; both cadets and adult volunteers. During Armed Forces Week, the content was also relevant to the day's set theme: Monday – *Armed Forces Day Flag Raising*, Tuesday – *Sports*, Wednesday – *Reserves Day*, Thursday – *Veterans*, Friday – *Operations at Home and Overseas* and Saturday – *Armed Forces Day*.



Websites

Since its major revamp last year, the serfca.org website is now a reliable 'go-to' tool for spreading news stories and keeping general information up to date. The site generates an average of 900 visits a month.

The Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV) Microsite - adultvolunteer.org is due to be updated as soon as possible with a new CFAV video and the VCC locations being included on the interactive map.

Alternative Venues (AV) - alternativevenues.org continues to be utilised by the public to find suitable venues across our estate to hold meetings or for training sessions. Enquiries through the site have increased in the last six months which generates funds to be put back into maintaining the volunteer estate for the Reserves and Cadets.

All websites are regularly promoted and shared on our socials to exploit the cross section of platforms we maintain and push out to many different audiences.

The Gov.uk page for 'The Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for the South East' has been updated recently and gives a short overview of what we do and the latest news stories of our activities. Search 'SERFCA gov.uk' online.

Volunteers Week Campaign Evaluation Figures

Channel	Interactions/Engagement
LinkedIn	163
Twitter	60
Facebook	289
Instagram	240
Video Views	All views on any video content
LinkedIn	209
Twitter	889
Facebook	676

Stats captured from 1st - 7th June

Armed Forces Week Campaign Evaluation Figures

Channel	Interactions/Engagement
LinkedIn	150
Twitter	98
Facebook	304
Instagram	289
Video Views	All views on any video content
LinkedIn	666
Twitter	395
Facebook	871
Instagram	5710

Stats captured from 19th - 25th June

SERFCA Monthly Update (SMU)

The SERFCA Monthly Update is now in its fourth year and continues to be a relevant and valuable form of internal communication to keep staff and members up to date. It is a useful summary of the ongoing activities of SERFCA's departments such as Engagement, Estates, Cadets and Finance.

SERFCA Community newsletter

A new community newsletter was launched in June to provide a quick-read snapshot of what the Reserves, CFAVs, Cadets, Engagement and Estates have been up too. All links within it, refer the user to the SERFCA website to increase traffic. To date, over 280 people have subscribed and this number continues to grow.



Link Magazines

A Spring Cadet Link and a Summer Reserve Link have been produced in April and August respectively and hard copies are distributed to over 1,000 recipients including Units and Employers and they are included in information packs handed out at events. The magazines are released electronically to all those who engage with us, added to our website and promoted through the SMU and newsletter. They are a useful recruiting tool which can be handed out to potential recruits and volunteers and, we hope, an enjoyable read.

Requests for latest magazines can be made to Emma Rickwood, Comms & Events Director, on se-commseventsd@rfca.mod.uk



Technical Support

The C&E department is able to support SERFCA departments and Units with technical audio visual support such as setting up AV equipment, PowerPoint presentations, sound systems, Zoom meetings, webinars and other marketing materials such as pull up banners. The latest equipment loan being to 4 PWRR for their annual Battalion brief. Full training and instructions were provided and feedback was that the brief was a success.



Merchandise

All SERFCA employees have been provided with updated, branded, smart winter jackets which has been positively received, especially by those members of staff who are regularly out on site or visiting clients. All members are invited to purchase a SERFCA tie or neck scarf for £15. Please enquire to Abbi Richards, Comms & Events Coordinator on se-commsevenstc@rfca.mod.uk



Grant Support to Reserves and Cadets

- Produced a recruitment video for 73 MI Coy.
- Funded the production of a video and photos for 3 PWRR's Freedom of Medway Parade.
- Provided a grant to 266 Sqn for A6 branded notebooks to give out to potential new recruits at events and shows.
- Funded 1000 ACF wristbands for The Royal County of Berkshire ACF.
- Funded the production of seven new pull up banners for Buckinghamshire (The Rifles) ACF.
- Produced a video showcasing The Connaught Cadet Challenge Competition.
- Publish 'Reserves Recruiting' and 'Cadet Force Adult Volunteer' adverts in various relevant magazines across the South East.
- Produced videos throughout the year to promote Reserves and Cadets:
 - 'Reserves – Twice the Citizen' and 'Cadet Force Adult Volunteers - Twice the Citizen' showcased at the Armed Forces Briefings in June.
 - 'Reservist Annual Training' and 'What skills could you learn from being a cadet?' were launched at the Lord-Lieutenants Awards in September/October



All videos can be found on our YouTube channel @SouthEastRFCA

How to Promote Your Story

To assist the South East RFCA please follow, share and re-tweet our messages with friends, families, colleagues and other influential individuals.

If you would like your story promoted on our sites or in our magazines, please contact Emma or Abbi on 01252 357629/357616 or se-commseventsd@rfca.mod.uk / se-commsevenstc@rfca.mod.uk

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the South East, we try not to stovepipe our activities and although our outputs may be grouped within the three pillars of Estates, Cadets & Youth and Engagement, we acknowledge that all have overlapping interests. Community engagement is that description of activity which enables SERFCA to connect Defence with Society.

Our principal format remains the Armed Forces Briefings which are a coordination of subject matter expert briefings from the a joint-Service briefing team – pulled together by the Army Engagement Group, regional cadet and reserve updates and a 2023 theme of 'Twice the Citizen.' Five events were held at the following military locations around the region: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Aylesbury ARC, 36 Engineer Regiment Maidstone, Crawley ARC and The College of Logistics Worthy Down. We are delighted that attendances remain high and feedback positive, demonstrating that there is a need for this type of engagement to be undertaken.



Our 9 Lord-Lieutenants recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers in their counties at their annual award ceremonies which are organised and hosted by SERFCA. Where spare capacity existed, we are honoured to be able to host the presentations of 1 x OBE, 6 BEMS and a host of other notable awards. In 2023, we were able to recognise 120 meritorious service awardees and formally welcome 40 new Lord-Lieutenant's cadets.

Towards the end of the year we held our annual County Committee meetings and, as always, were delighted at the wide range of attendees. As is always stressed by respective Chairs, whilst the meeting is a fantastic opportunity to catch up and be briefed on matters of the moment, the most useful work is conducted in the margins as Defence connects with Society.

Maintaining contact with the many county and local authorities within the Region remains a high priority within SERFCA's business as usual. Our support to the many Civil Military Partnership Boards (CMPBs) in the South East underlines our ongoing commitment and is a key enabler to the provision of timely, appropriate and entitled public services for members of the Armed Forces family.



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Although both public and private sector organisations have faced major challenges in a demanding external environment, it was noted that there remained a renewed confidence having come out of lock-down. The Regional Employer Engagement Directors (REEDs) made the most of the opportunity to re-engage with accounts and sought, within taut financial limitations, to provide a comprehensive, worthwhile and appropriate engagement programme. Liaison with central staffs, the single-Services and employers played a major part in the success of our events and thanks are offered to all involved. The feedback has been very complimentary with many new relationships forged.

The EE Team have continued to embrace the new hybrid way of working, both virtual and face-to-face, which is favoured by employers and has reaped the benefits of saving time and the costs associated with travel.

The number of South East regional accounts has risen again this year from almost 1300 in 2022/23 to 1500 (AFC/ERS engaged) in

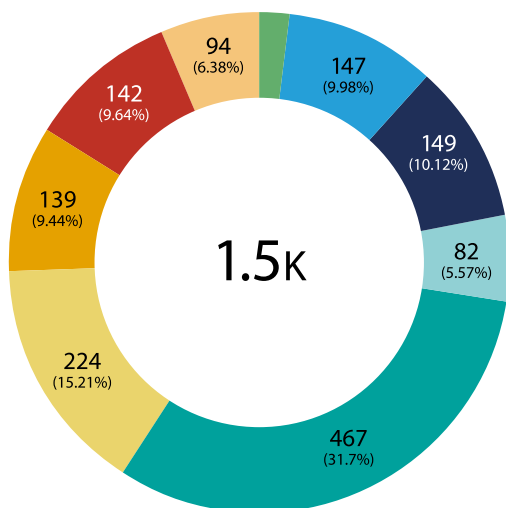
2023/24. Our staff establishment remains at 3 x REEDs and 1.3 x admin support. Whilst the success of the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) should be applauded, without a commensurate increase in staff we are likely to see a diminution in the quality of the support being offered. EE staff at all levels are aware of the dichotomy presented by quality versus quantity.

South East RFCA	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Change
Armed Forces Covenant	1252	1473	+221
ERS Bronze Awards	627	695	+68
ERS Silver Awards	142	151	+9 (taking into account 4 accounts did not revalidate in 2023 and some have moved to Gold)
ERS Gold Awards	83	115	+32



Armed Forces Covenant (AFC)

The Armed Forces Covenant is a vital element of the ERS journey and is properly celebrated by those organisations that sign it. As of 1 Feb 24, the South East had registered 1474 AFC signatories, an increase of 222 on the 1252 of the previous year or nearly 19 every month.



Billing State/Province

- Berkshire ●
- Buckinghamshire ●
- East Sussex ●
- Hampshire ●
- Kent ●
- Oxfordshire ●
- Surrey ●
- West Sussex ●
- Other ●



A large proportion of Covenant signings are signed on line on the initiative of the individual organisations, however, where resources permit, our REEDs will facilitate a bespoke signing. The MOD is particularly keen that senior officers engage with these signings to underline the value Defence places upon support for the AFC. New signatories in the SE have included Metaverse, Rheinmettal, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, Universities of Portsmouth and Southampton and re-signed covenants by Aquila and Williams Shipping.

EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARDS (ERS)

Bumper year for South East accounts. 26 New Gold and 6 revalidations. 39 Silver and 12 revalidations.

For the first time, we were privileged to be granted permission from the Second Sea Lord to use his official residence, Admiralty House, in His Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth. The awards were presented by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson Esq followed by an outstanding buffet supper from the Embassy Team and music from the RAF Salon

Orchestra and a floodlit Beating Retreat from His Majesty's Royal Marine Band Portsmouth.

For the second year, we held the Gold awards ceremony aboard HMS Warrior. Guests enjoyed the musical repertoire of the RAF's Salon Orchestra during the presentations and refreshment and after, the presentation of awards by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of

Hampshire and Rear Admiral Terry, Director Navy People. The evening concluded with fantastic displays from The Gurkha Kukri Display Team, Royal Logistic Corps Corp of Drums and a magnificent fanfare from musicians of the Kohima Band of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The evening culminated in a musical display from the Gordon's School Cadet Force Pipe Band.

GOLDS Awarded in 2023		
Organisation	Head Office	
Aggie Weston's	Hampshire	
Allianz Holdings Plc	Surrey	*
Antac Support Services Ltd	Buckinghamshire	
Aquila Air Traffic Management Services Limited	Hampshire	
ARAMARK LIMITED	Hampshire	*
BAM UK & Ireland	Surrey	*
BFBS	Buckinghamshire	
Buckinghamshire Council	Buckinghamshire	
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust	Buckinghamshire	
Canterbury City Council	Kent	
Capgemini UK Plc	Surrey	*
Centrica	Berkshire	*
Combat Stress	Surrey	
Diamond Light Source Ltd	Oxfordshire	
East Sussex County Council	East Sussex	
FM Conway	Kent	
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust - Frimley Park Hospital	Surrey	
Havant Borough Council	Hampshire	
Joint Security Services Ltd	Kent	
Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Buckinghamshire	
MKC Training Services Ltd	Kent	
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	Oxfordshire	
Parico Limited	Hampshire	
Quadrattek Infrastructure Ltd	Hampshire	
RJC (Mechanical) Ltd	Hampshire	
SeaSafe Systems Ltd	Isle of Wight	
Sustainable Criminal Justice Solutions CIC	Hampshire	
Team Endeavour Racing UK CIC	Hampshire	
TEKEVER Limited	Hampshire	
Thakeham	West Sussex	
The Royal NAAFI	Hampshire	

GOLD Revalidations		
Organisation	Head Office	
Amey plc	Oxfordshire	*
Compass Group	Surrey	*
Defence Medical Welfare Service	Hampshire	
Kent County Council	Kent	
NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board	East Sussex	
Portsmouth City Council	Hampshire	
Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust	Surrey	
Southern Gas Networks PLC (SGN)	Surrey	

* Denotes Defence Relationship Management National Account



SILVERS Awarded in 2023		
Organisation	Head Office	
Activate Learning Group	Oxford	
Armoured Engineering Ltd	Romney Marsh	
Aspris Children's Services Limited	Woking	
AWE Plc	Reading	*
Bridewell	Reading	
City Veterans CIC	Southsea	*
Conrad Energy Limited	Abingdon	
East Hampshire District Council	Petersfield	
EC Safety Solutions Ltd	Strood	
EKFB	Milton Keynes	*
Fighting With Pride	Brighton	*
Forces Support Limited	Witney	
Frazer-Nash Consultancy Ltd	Leatherhead	
Henderson Facilities Management Ltd	Sittingbourne	*
Hovertravel	Ryde	
Isle of Wight NHS Trust	Newport	
Jobs 22 Ltd	Milton Keynes	
JOLTS Consulting Limited	Fleet	
K A Watts Plumbing and Heating Ltd	Eastleigh	
Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust	Maidstone	
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust	Ashford	
McCarthy Bainbridge Ltd	Woking	
Micro Focus Software UK Ltd, part of OpenText	Newbury	
Milton Keynes College Group	Milton Keynes	
Mission Renewable	Wantage	*
Mole Valley District Council	Dorking	
Novatech Limited	Portsmouth	
NSSLGlobal	Redhill	
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey	Guildford	
Peter Bruinvels Associates	Dorking	
Rewards.Earth Ltd T/A Carma	Thatcham	
Riva South Ltd	Eastleigh	
Royal Engineers Association	Chatham	
Safran Helicopter Engines UK	Fareham	
Securitem Consultancy Ltd	Harrietsham	
Shaping Portsmouth	Portsmouth	
Streetwise Safety Training Ltd	Crawley	
Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Leatherhead	
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	Redhill	
Surrey Police Station Headquarters Mount Browne	Guildford	
Sussex Chamber of Commerce	Burgess Hill	
Thanet District Council	Margate	
The Army Flying Museum Ltd	Stockbridge	
tImNexus Ltd	Brighton	
Worley Financial Associates	Southsea	

SILVER Revalidations	
Organisation	Head Office
Aldershot Football Club	Aldershot
Brighton & Hove City Council	Hove
Challenger Troop	Tunbridge Wells
Chichester College	Chichester
Clements Technical Recruitment Ltd (T/A Clemtech)	Denmead
Crawley Borough Council	Crawley
Essential Teaching UK	Portsmouth
Great Park Homecare	Windsor
Horsham District Council	Horsham
Priority Freight	Dover
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Royal Berkshire Hospital	Reading
Sussex Police	Lewes
University Of Chichester	Chichester

* Denotes Defence Relationship Management National Account



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Highlights for Employer Engagement this year have included two very successful iterations of 11 Security Force Assistance Brigade Army Leadership Challenge at Longmoor in April and September when brigade hosted up to 200 employer participants taking part in a variety of mental and physical challenges helping them to develop teamwork, leadership and communication skills, problem solving and self-learning, all while having fun!

Two Fireside Chats at The Artists Rifles Club, Bisley have been well received with talks from guest speakers Col John Baynam on his time in Rwanda and Dr David Abrutat, curator of the GCHQ museum. The relaxed evenings conclude with a tasty supper.

HMS TYNE superbly hosted a small group of Silver and Gold ERS employers for a lunch and a tour of the ship during Cowes week, providing a great opportunity to quiz the ship's company and hear about life on board.

SERFCA and 6 Regiment Army Air Corps held a very successful Business Breakfast at Middle Wallop. Over 50 guests were treated to breakfast in the Officers Mess followed by briefings and a tour of a hangar housing a new Apache helicopter.

The October Regional Employer Engagement Group was again supported by over 60 employers in the virtual meeting, providing SE Silver and Gold Award employers a forum to provide feedback on the support SERFCA deliver through defence relationship management to employers. The attendees received updates from the single Service representatives and briefing by Lt Col Currie, CO 103 Force Support Battalion REME and Kerry Hudson from CGI UK Ltd.

Two 'Going for Gold' Workshops were run in January giving employers hints and tips on what to include when submitting a successful Gold nomination. 28 Silver Award employers attended over two days and presentations from CGI and Frimley NHS Trust were presented.



THE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TEAM HAS SUPPORTED A VARIETY OF EVENTS IN 2023-2024

Month	EE Activity
April 2023	REEG Commandant's Parade RMAS
June	P2000 HMS Puncher Trip Eastbourne Buckinghamshire Council Armed Forces Conference Kent & Medway Covenant Conference RAF Brize Norton Business Breakfast Reserves Day / Armed Forces Week West Sussex Covenant Conference
July	RMAS Reserves Commissioning Course Parade
August	Cowes Week HMS Tyne Employer Reception Commandant's Parade RMAS
September	Silver Awards Admiralty House HMB Portsmouth
October	Gold Awards HMS WARRIOR REEG South East Army Challenge Day 6 AAC Business Breakfast Middle Wallop
November	Fireside Chat Bisley RSME Chatham Insight Day
January 2024	ERS Going For Gold Workshops
February	Fireside Chat, Bisley
March	AGM Surrey Annual Covenant Conference Army Leadership Challenge Day Gold Leadership Luncheon Blighmont Employer Engagement Event Maidstone Army Reserve Employer Engagement Event

CADETS IN THE SOUTH EAST



HAMPSHIRE – ALDERSHOT 1

Combined Cadet Force for the South East
SO2 Cadets, 11th Security Force Assistance Brigade,
Roebuck House, Cavans Road, Aldershot GU11 2LQ
Tel: 01252 347888



**VOLUNTEER
CADET CORPS**
ROYAL NAVAL & ROYAL MARINES CADETS

HAMPSHIRE – PORTSMOUTH 2

Headquarters Volunteer Cadet Corps,
Royal Navy Cadet Forces Training Centre, Building 175, HMS Excellent,
Whale Island, PORTSMOUTH, Hampshire PO2 8EQ
Tel: 023 9254 7495



HAMPSHIRE – PORTSMOUTH 2

Southern Area Sea Cadet Headquarters
Old Management Building, HMS NELSON, Portsmouth PO1 3HH
Tel: 023 9272 5664



**ARMY
CADETS**

BERKSHIRE – READING 3

County Headquarters, The Royal County of Berkshire Army Cadet Force,
Anson Block, Brock Barracks, Oxford Road, Reading RG30 1HW
Tel: 0118 902 3540

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE – AYLESBURY 4

County Headquarters, Buckinghamshire (The Rifles) Army Cadet Force,
Army Reserve Centre, Viney House, Oxford Road, Aylesbury HP19 8RN
Tel: 01296 744553

HAMPSHIRE & IOW – WINCHESTER 5

County Headquarters, Hampshire and The Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force,
Newburgh House, Newburgh Street, Winchester SO23 8UY
Tel: 01962 865711

KENT – MAIDSTONE 6

County Headquarters, Kent Army Cadet Force,
Yeomanry House, Boxley Road, Maidstone ME14 2AR
Tel: 01622 750328

OXFORDSHIRE – BICESTER 7

County Headquarters, Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Army Cadet Force,
Brotheridge House, St George's Barracks, Arncliffe Wood Road,
Upper Arncliffe, Bicester OX25 1AB
Tel: 01869 259681

SURREY – GODALMING 8

County Headquarters, Surrey (PWRR Bn) Army Cadet Force,
Queens House, Hallam Road, Farncombe, Godalming GU7 3HW
Tel: 01483 425371

SUSSEX – BRIGHTON 9

County Headquarters, Sussex Army Cadet Force
Army Reserve Centre, 198 Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 5AS
Tel: 01273 552222



ABINGDON – THAMES VALLEY WING 10

Headquarters Thames Valley Wing, RAF Air Cadets,
North Lewis Block, Edward Brooks Barracks, Cholswell Road,
Shippon OX13 6HW
Tel: 01235 547990

MAIDSTONE – KENT WING 6

Headquarters Kent Wing, RAF Air Cadets,
2 Yeomanry Cottages, Boxley Road,
Maidstone ME14 2AR
Tel: 01622 754188

EASTBOURNE – SUSSEX WING 11

Army Reserve Centre Eastbourne, Carter Barracks,
103 Seaside, East Sussex, BN22 7NL
Tel: 01323 899900

SOUTH LONDON – SURREY WING 12

Headquarters Surrey Wing, RAF Air Cadets 192 Merton Road, South
Wimbledon, London SW19 1EG
Tel: 020 8542 4893

WINCHESTER – HAMPSHIRE & IOW WING 5

Headquarters Hampshire and The Isle of Wight Wing, RAF Air Cadets
Newburgh House, Newburgh Street,
Winchester SO23 8UY
Tel: 01962 890728

CADETS TRAINING CENTRES

NATIONAL – CAMBERLEY 13

Cadet Training Centre Frimley Park
Frimley Road, Camberley GU16 7HD
Tel: 01276 898205

BERKSHIRE – TADLEY 14

Berkshire Cadet Training Centre
Campbell Road, Bramley, Tadley RG26 5BQ
Tel: 01256 883610

HAMPSHIRE – LISS 15

Hampshire Cadet Training Centre
Longmoor Training Camp, Longmoor, Liss GU33 6EL
Tel: 01420 538567

ISLE OF WIGHT – PORCHFIELD 16

Isle of Wight Cadet Training Centre
Jersey Camp & Newtown Range, Locks Green, Porchfield,
Isle of Wight PO30 4PF
Tel: 01983 523503

KENT – FOLKESTONE 17

Kent Cadet Training Centre
Dibgate Camp, St Martin's Plain, Folkestone CT20 3JG
Tel: 01303 261947

OXFORDSHIRE – BICESTER 7

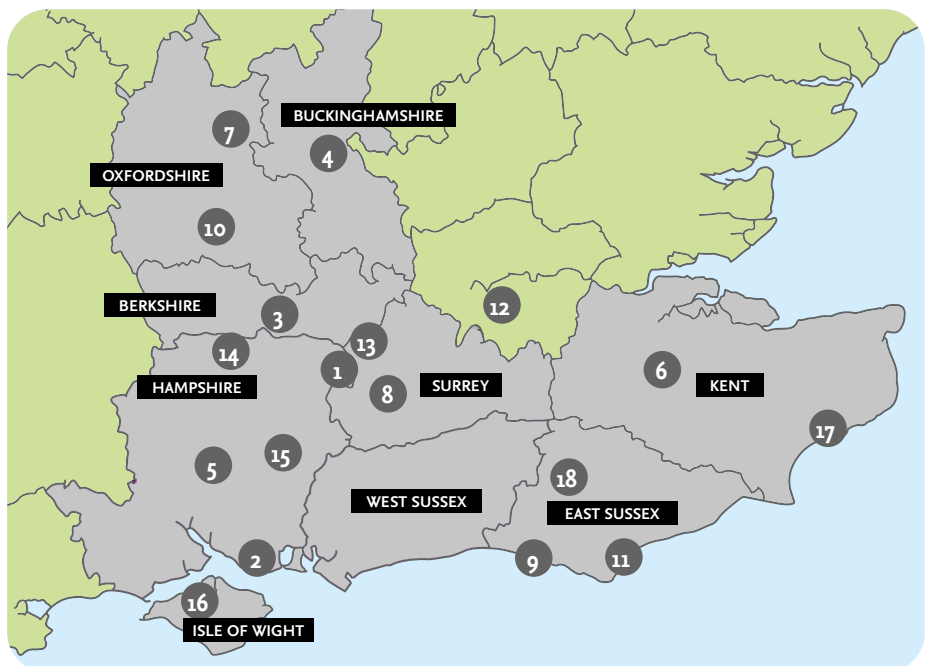
Buckinghamshire / Oxfordshire Cadet Training Centre
Read House, St George's Barracks, Arncliffe Wood Road,
Upper Arncliffe, Bicester OX25 1AB
Tel: 01869 259681

SURREY – GODALMING 8

Surrey Cadet Training Centre
Queen's House, Hallam Road, Farncombe, Godalming GU7 3HW
Tel: 01483 425371

SUSSEX – CROWBOROUGH 18

Sussex Cadet Training Centre
Crowborough Camp, Beacon Road,
Crowborough TN6 1UB
Tel: 01892 667968



CADETS & YOUTH PROMOTING THE CADET EXPERIENCE

Overview

In May, we celebrated the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. The pomp and ceremony were beamed around the globe as we all marvelled at the outstanding presentation and drill from a cast that represented the best of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. Prominent amongst the participants in London and at celebrations around the country were members of our cadet forces. There were too many to single out individuals but suffice to say, they all conducted themselves immaculately – well done to all who were involved.

We are delighted that cadet numbers across all Service boundaries have either stabilised or grown, as we consign the challenges of Covid and lock-down to a distant memory.

However, our cadet forces are enjoying less success with the recruitment and retention of cadet force adult volunteers (CFAVs); whilst the single-Service sponsors continue to seek solutions and options to address these challenges.



The highlight of the year for most cadets is the opportunity to attend summer camp. In 2023, the optimism of a post-Covid era was severely tested as fire safety issues were identified, quite late in the day, across a significant portion of the cadet training estate. On top of restrictions already in place, due to demands on training areas for training Ukrainians, this was a speed bump not appreciated by the planning staff. Thankfully, as a result of close cooperation with Estates staff and contractors, summer camps went ahead and many thousands of cadets were able to enjoy all that is good from these events.

Cadet activity is not just confined to the weeks of summer camp; it is a truly 365 day a year activity. In October, 40 new Lord-Lieutenants' cadets were appointed and publically recognised at one of the 8 Lord-Lieutenants' awards ceremonies. It is at these same

ceremonies that we were able to acknowledge the noteworthy contributions of the CFAVs and in 2023, 61 individuals received the recognition of their respective Lord-Lieutenant. What may not be known is that SERFCA plan these ceremonies at least 12 months in advance

and nominations are sought as early as February of the awarding year.

Although each of the cadet formations work within single-Service guidelines, there are many areas where best practice and regulations are common. SERFCA has enjoyed supporting Joint Service Cadet & Youth Committees across the Region's counties where best practice and assets are shared for the mutual betterment and enhancement of the cadet experience.

Sea Cadet Corps/Voluntary Cadet Corps (SCC/VCC)

Waterborne and shore based activities have been conducted throughout the year and units report that positivity is returning almost as business as usual. The VCC held a number of Captain's ceremonies during a buoyant recruiting year. The Royal Navy have appointed Commodore Jo Adey, Commander Maritime Reserves, as the Commander of the Royal Navy Cadet Forces and we also await the findings of a newly commissioned review of the Royal Navy Cadet organisation.





Army Cadet Force (ACF)

The successes of 2022 created a bedrock of support for 2023 with 2100 cadets enjoying a wide range of activities on annual camps. Notwithstanding the issues surrounding fire checks and training area changes, these numbers were up by nearly 100. The increased attendance figures are testament to the persistence and diligence of SERFCA Professional Support and Estates staff and as noteworthy, the volunteers.

Staff inevitably turned over throughout the year and we were delighted to welcome new Commandants in Kent, Surrey and Oxfordshire.

Air Training Corps (ATC)

Headquarters Air Cadets initiated a reorganisation of the boundaries of their regions which are now more closely aligned to those of the RFRCA's; SERFCA now deals with 2 (South West and London & South

East) rather than the 3, which included Hertfordshire. The Air Training Corps have enjoyed a bumper year of training which has included supporting the Royal International Air Tattoo, attending Drill & Ceremonial and National Air & Space camps as well as Regional, Wing and Squadron camps. Most importantly, cadets are now flying and in addition to air experience opportunities aboard RAF air transport and rotary aircraft, access to gliding and Grob Tutors is improving.



SCHOOLS CADET EXPANSION OFFICER

Phase 3 of the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) had an ambition to grow Combined Cadet Force (CCF) numbers to 60,000 by April 2024; currently there are 52739 cadet across the UK. A revised strategy to be known as Cadet Force Strategy 2030 (CF2030) should go live in 2024 and will provide an up-to-date strategic direction for the MoD's Cadet Forces.

County	Legacy				CEP				Total Schools		Totals
	IND	STATE	PARTNER IND	PARTNER STATE	IND	STATE	PARTNER IND	PARTNER STATE	Ind	State	
Kent	8	8	0	0	2	7	1	5	11	20	31
Surrey	5	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	8	5	13
Sussex	6	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	6	6	12
Hants (IoW)	5	2	0	0	2	3	0	5	7	10	17
Berks	5	2	1	1	1	3	0	3	7	9	16
Oxon	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	10
Bucks	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	4
Totals	39	16	1	1	6	20	3	17	49	54	103
Army Partnerships			20		RAF Partnerships				2		
Independent			49		State						54

Fig 1

The South East has been very successful in recruiting new schools and has seen excellent growth in cadets numbers. Currently there are 103 schools (Fig 1) consisting of 54 State and 49 Independent Schools. There are additional schools that have submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) to establish a new CCF contingent or to be part of a partnership CCF. Since October 2020 cadet numbers have grown to 11772, which is an increase of 2461 (Fig 2). In the South East, CCF cadet numbers make up 22% of the total numbers in the UK.

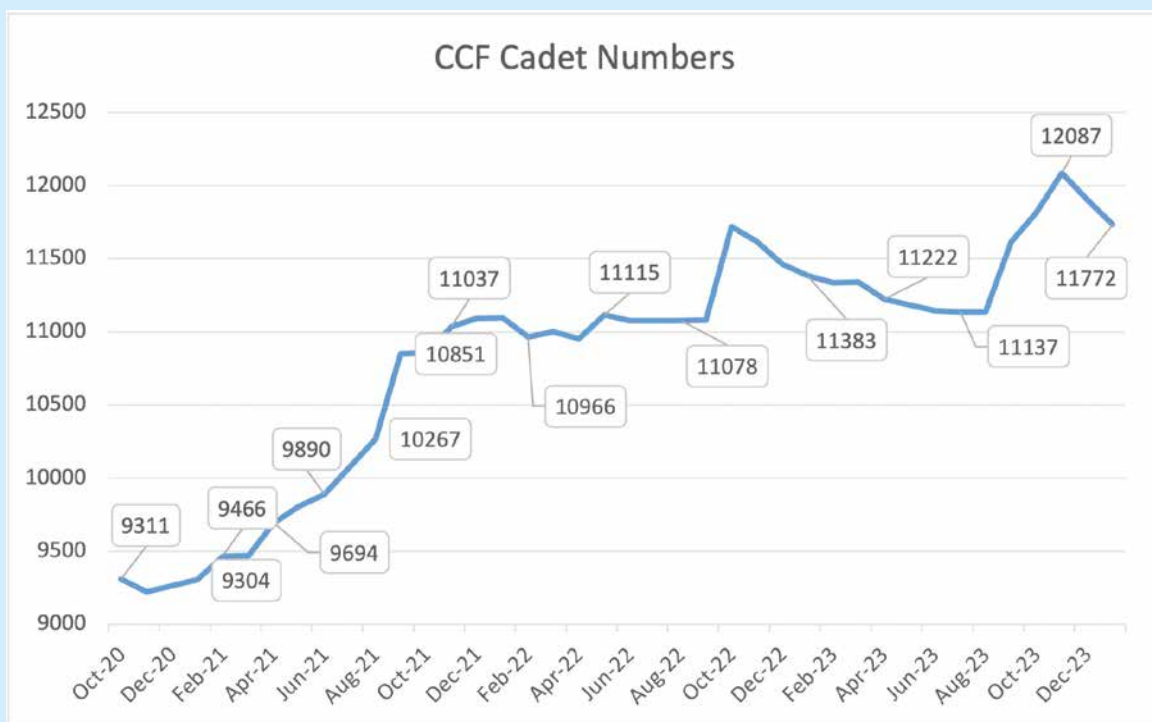


Fig 2

There have been concerns regarding the recruitment of CFAVs – a common issue for most youth organisations. This may be COVID linked as adults reevaluate their life v work balance and those CFAVs that are committing, are often volunteering for less time. In schools, younger teachers (those without families) are more likely to move after 2-4 years, creating the problem of the retention of CFAVs and losing key qualified personnel; this is certainly not helped where some schools have issues regarding recruiting and gapping of teachers. Northampton University are finalising a second report on the benefits of cadets within the school environment. The benefits to young people were clearly highlighted in the first report and are worth repeating:

- The ability to **communicate** clearly.
- The ability to **lead** a group and work as a team.
- **Resilience** to keep going.
- Improved **social mobility**.
- **Improved mental and physical wellbeing**.
- Enhanced **employability**.

ESTATES & FACILITIES REPORT 2023/24

As a result of an established team, Compliance, Governance and Business As Usual taskings have added to and enhanced SERFCA's growing reputation as an RFCA with a positive approach to meeting statutory and mandatory compliance obligations.



A big change affecting all RFCAs on the 1 August 2024 is the introduction of Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS). The new system will change the way we deliver Hard Facilities Management across the Estate. Working alongside a commercial partner, VINCI, SERFCA and Greater London RFCA will provide our Reserves and Cadets the support to their working environment with more staff and more assurance. Good times ahead for Estates!

Along with change, comes training. In 2023 a number of the SERFCA Estates team received high quality external training, relevant to their role. This will continue in 2024 when time & funding permits, as the additional training required by FDIS is likely to be a priority.

The Reserve Estate Optimisation Programme (REOP) continues at pace. Tranche 1 which equates to 6 sales and 8 relocations is progressing well. The current situation is that 3 disposals and 2 relocations are complete with the ARC at

ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN 2023/24

- Local Improvement Infrastructure Funding (LIIF) to ARCs has been significantly utilised this year. Ensuring welfare facilities and improvements to enhance the experience of the reserves is given as much support as possible.
- Substantial support to a new Cadet facility at RAF Little Rissington.
- An upward trend in compliance and governance reporting.
- 5 Phase 2 Aintree armoury refurbishments completed.
- Aintree surveys for 17 new locations completed and ready to start in April 2024.
- 52 sites inspected for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) – no issues were identified.
- 6 Cadet Training Centres (CTC) underwent comprehensive fire safety inspection and rectification works.

Reigate under consideration. In addition, the appointment of a role specific REOP Projects Officer has been instrumental in the decision to bring forward the delivery of 3 new builds under Funding Business Case 2 of REOP Tranche 1.

Another project of significance, due to finish by March 2024 is phase 1 of the installation of 10 Electric Vehicle Charging Installations (EVCIs). Starting at ARC Banbury in the north to Royal Tunbridge Wells in the south. A further 10 installations around the region are planned for 2024/25.

Utility Management

Although our annual £1.5m utilities budget was removed in April 2016 and DIO took on responsibility for the payment of all utilities. We continue to manage, encourage and give guidance to Unit Energy Managers. Reducing our carbon footprint and taking an active approach to energy savings measure remains a top priority.

We have had to prioritise our work and financial distribution this year due to less funding and limited utility re-investment opportunities. However, next year more focus will be on LED lights. This year at RAF Little Rissington we capitalised on installing an air source heat pump ECO Heating System thought to be one of the first such systems in the MOD. This ECO Heating System utilises Heat Pump technology to use the heat energy from the ambient air for low cost heating and hot water production. This system will greatly reduce the cost of heating their offices and flat and should allow us to claim the Government Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI).

Gas compliance upgrades and boiler replacement programmes continue with vigour across the estate. At a cost of £200,000, ARCs at Redhill, Brighton and Royal Tunbridge Wells will have major gas network upgrades which should be completed by September 2024. Additionally, Joint Cadet Centre Basingstoke and CTC Dibgate are due to have new boiler systems and underfloor heating fitted by March 2024.



Vehicles

The Association has had a significant reduction in funding for its replacement vehicles within 2023/24. This has limited the purchase of replacement vehicles to 7 minibuses for our ACF counties. We continue with the effort to reduce the Association's carbon foot print and reduce running costs by purchasing low emission vehicles. As the expected Government penalties for diesel car drivers starts to be introduced we intend to dispose of our diesel vehicles and seek to maximise usage of hybrid and electric vehicles.

Regional Generated Income (RGI) Project

The income generated by RGI continues to provide vital funding support to Estates. Without this option, the work required to comply with a SERFCA wide fire Inspection on the CTCs would not have been funded. Had this work not been completed the CTCs could not have been available for the Cadets and would have resulted in the cancellation of a number of 2023 annual camps.

Work has begun on modernising the SERFCA Alternative Venues (AV) website and processes. Focusing on a more user friendly and site specific check box process. New contracts

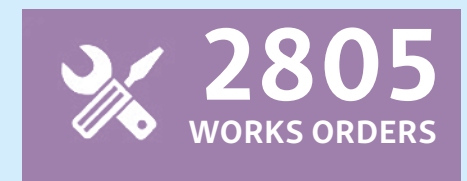
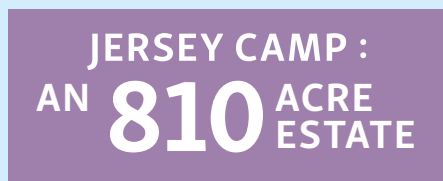
are also being introduced. This adds a more modern feel to the SERFCA AV experience.

Further use of RGI has been maximised for works not funded by DIO. These projects have involved roof, windows and door

replacements and are essential for the long term structural integrity of our ARCs and cadet buildings. In total, SERFCA has utilised £1m of RGI funding during 2023 to undertake maintenance across the Cadet and Volunteer estate.



The Estate at a glance



NEWTOWN RANGE & JERSEY CAMP

The impact of Op INTERFLEX on the Defence Training Estates created a challenging reduction in availability of training facilities across Defence which resulted in a significant rise in interest and bookings from cadet forces, reservists and regular units across the country that had lost their planned bookings. Not surprisingly, activity continues to be busy and our dedicated team continue to keep the doors open with planned and preventative maintenance. This ensures all Statutory/Mandatory Inspections are completed making the estate safe and compliant for units' use.

During 2023, we received bookings for accommodation, exercises, ranges and adventure training from 56 cadet, reserve and regular units, supporting 2178 cadets, 656 reservists and 351 regular personnel over 240 days. On top of civilian gun club bookings, RGI Bookings and our well established Newtown Conservation Group visits have all contributed to a busy and productive 2023.

2024 bookings are high and should lead to a full and eventful forecast of events.

Annual & Weekend Camps

Central District Sea Cadets one of many ACF, SCC & CCF cadet units to utilise the estate this year conducted multi training activities in Jul/Aug. They successfully conducted numerous range days first aid, command tasks, navigation as well as utilising our Combat Laser Rifles.



Numbers 501, 504, 605 & 4626 RAuxAF Sqns of the Royal Air Force Reserves conducted their Annual Continuous Training (ACT) at Jersey camp. The units successfully undertook combat marksmanship, basic military skills, mandatory training skills & Force Development planned around the setting up of a Field Hospital; probably as important were the team building and adventure training activities which abound on the Isle of Wight.

The Isle of Wight College Public Services Course booked and utilised the Jersey camp and training area under RGI. They planned and directed introductory military training, utilising the estate's many facilities adding to the course's experience with potential further bookings in the future.

The Lambleaze farm tenant has now established a thriving sheep farm and is supported by his family who moved from Yorkshire and

are now in their second year on the Island. Both Elmsworth and Lambleaze farm tenants work in close collaboration with the Range staff to de-conflict planned military exercises/training & live range days on the training area.

Additional assets have been purchased through the Estates team and Chief of Staff utilising lived experience and RGI welfare funding, which have include commercial freezer units, a rational combi oven and easy chairs. Jersey Camp staff have taken advantage of additional funding sources to ensure that facilities within the camp and training area are modern, relevant and add value to the Jersey Camp experience.



CONSERVATION

White Tailed Eagles

For the first time in England in 240 years, a pair from the 2020 Isle of Wight release have bred and nested on private land on the South Coast. An egg was laid on the 21 March and subsequently hatched on the 29 April and ringed/tagged on the 13th June 23 (Ring No G625).

A further three pairs are also known to be located on the South coast, in Brading Marsh, Poole Harbour and North Dorset.

2023 Release

A further 4 Fledglings were collected from the Isle of Lewis and translocated to the Island release site and released on the 26 July.

To date, 29 White Tailed Sea Eagles have been released, of which 14 were male and 15 female. Male fatalities are much higher at 9 to the female rate of 4. The remaining 16 birds, however, have exceeded the expected survival rate.



Conservation Group

All annual surveys/projects such as the webs counts, bird ringing, botany, entomology surveys and the ongoing Osprey and Nightingale projects continue to be conducted by our dedicated Conservation group members.

VALE

We have filled 22 roles since the AGM in 2023. This number comprises 17 new starters and 5 internal promotions.

Cadets & Youth

Among the new starters is Linda Morgan-Monk, replacing Pete Marlow as Cadet Executive Officer of Kent Army Cadet Force. This is one of three changes of CEO this year, with former Quartermasters Steve Raffell and Ray Pendrich stepping up to take over from Glyn Arnold at Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force and Pete Dale at Surrey Army Cadet Force.

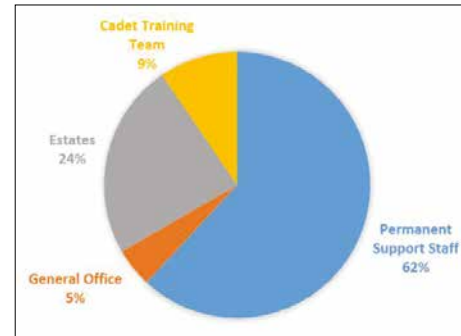
The three new CEOs are each mentored by an existing CEO arranged by the Head of Cadets and Youth, as well as being supported with a comprehensive training programme which ensures they have the requisite knowledge to undertake this pivotal role.

Estates

The clear majority of new arrivals this year have been among the PSS and the Estates Department, including a new fixed term role of Project Officer to help the Estates Department prepare for REOP – welcome to Christina Levanzin. Estates has also welcomed two new Estates Officers, Daniel McCann and Andrew Hart.

Following the salary increases over the last year due to the benchmarking exercise and this year's annual pay award, there has been a noticeable rise in the quantity and quality of candidates we have been able to attract; this has helped to reduce the timescale of recruitment.

As always, SERFCA staff members, particularly the PSS, have demonstrated that this is more than just a job to them, with 319 days of special leave being granted for Reserve and Cadet duties.



VADE

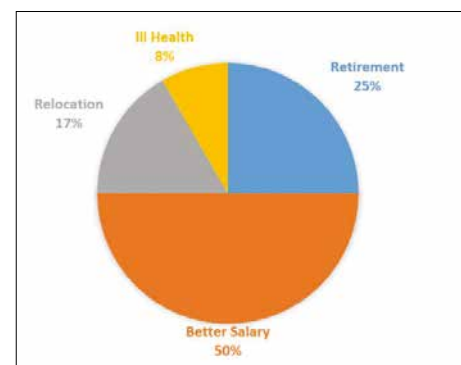
We have said goodbye to only 12 members of staff this year, a significant reduction after 24 left last year. The cost of living has had an inevitable impact on people's choices, with better salary being the most common reason for leaving. The other primary cause and the reason we have said goodbye to two Cadet Executive Officers this year has been their retirement.

We bade farewell to our longest serving member of staff this year, Mrs Dorothy Nash. The cleaner for Surrey Army Cadet Force for 36 years took her well-earned retirement at age 70. Mrs Nash, known as Dolly by her colleagues, will be greatly missed by the ACF staff who worked with her.

Among our other leavers this year:

- Ben Clay, Cadet Administrative Assistant, relocated to Scotland and joined Highlands RFCA after 11 years at Sussex Army Cadet Force.
- Pete Dale, Cadet Executive Officer for Surrey Army Cadet Force, retired after 5 years.
- Glyn Arnold, Cadet Executive Officer for Oxford Army Cadet Force, retired after 7 years.

We still await the results of the results of the Employee Opinion Survey conducted by CRFCA, but empirical evidence suggests that for the majority of our employees, SERFCA continues to offer a fulfilling working experience with security and excellent benefits.



FINANCE NOTES

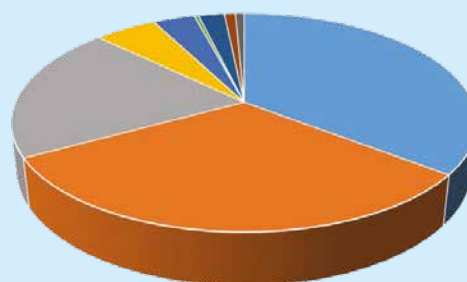
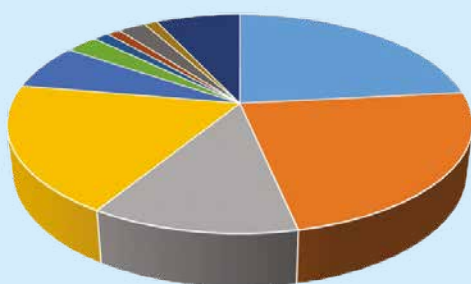
- The charts below illustrate the Association's funding sources and main categories of expenditure for period ended 31 December 2023.
- The overall Control Total Funding for FY23/24 will be at par compared to FY22/23. This does not include brought forwards from FY22/23 to FY23/24.
- Key Points to note are:-
- Overall funding for 9 months is lesser by £1.0m from whole of previous year funding. £2.5m is carried over to FY23/24 in capital funding
- supplied by DIO for various projects. £0.6m is carried over for Vehicles and RAFAC-Input.
- Estate management expenditure is low by £1.2m. This is due to lesser need of statutory and mandatory works and reactive maintenance after
- FY21/22 on coming out of COVID restrictions, and in FY22/23.
- Staffing costs will be higher than FY22/23 due to Minimum National Living Wage and Cost of Living allowance. There are still few staff vacancies.
- As per Council's policy, this year no 2% reserve holding of its annual funding has been exercised for Grant in Aid, funding Sundry and DRM.
- Brought Forward reserves are returned.
- Of the £950k revenue generation from RGI in FY23/24, £385k was reinvested in Estates, £46k was returned as welfare/betterment grants.
- £495k is NDR rebate out of £950k revenue.

Funding Sources

RC - RFCA Grant-in-Aid	£ 3,173,145	23%
DIO - Hard FM	£ 3,163,448	23%
DIO - Soft FM	£ 1,649,262	12%
DIO - Projects - CDEL	£ 2,571,801	19%
DIO - Projects - RDEL	£ 914,650	7%
RC - Vehicles	£ 369,469	3%
Funding Sundry	£ 177,359	1%
RFC - DRM	£ 151,487	1%
RAFAC - Input	£ 313,939	2%
Army Infra - RDEL	£ 148,005	1%
RGI	£ 950,529	7%
	£13,583,095	

Expenditure Categories

Estates Maintenance	£ 3,195,889	35%
Staff Costs	£ 2,846,036	32%
Infrastructure	£ 1,821,499	20%
Capital Expenditure	£ 469,179	5%
Reserve & Cadet Support	£ 312,040	3%
Transportation	£ 32,361	0%
Administration & HR Support	£ 193,139	2%
IT & Comms	£ 83,211	1%
Recruitment Support	£ 64,907	1%
	£9,018,262	



CHAIR'S CONCLUSION

2023 continued the trend back to 'normality' post Covid 19, whatever 'normality' may mean. The coming year is going to be equally challenging, particularly as pressure bites hard on budgets and the RFCAs adjust to FDIS. Nevertheless, the Reserves and Cadets will continue to flourish and SERFCA will continue to deliver its core outputs of Estates, Engagement and Cadets & Youth. Highlights will be the centenary of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and D-Day 80. I shall miss the enthusiasm, camaraderie and 'can-do' attitude that prevails at all levels of SERFCA, and I wish my successor, Brigadier (Retd) Peter Gilbert, all the best in his new role.

MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



Become a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer and have a great time helping:

Sea Cadets
Army Cadets
or Air Cadets

With rock climbing, shooting, kayaking, first aid, sailing and loads more.

No qualifications or military experience required as full training is provided.

Visit adultvolunteer.org

You'll make a big difference to their lives ... and yours.



EMPOWERING YOUR BUSINESS GROWTH WITH EXPERT SUPPORT

ABS IT Services, a multinational corporation, was founded in the UK in 1995 & began operations in Goa in 2006, later expanding into Europe. For over 29 years, our commitment has been to provide exceptional Managed Service Provider (MSP) solutions, characterised by cost-effectiveness, steadfast reliability & continuous innovation.

We underpin our offerings with industry benchmarks such as ISO 27001 and ISO 9001, alongside the ITIL framework, & adhere to stringent regulatory standards including GDPR. Our services cater to a diverse clientele, encompassing government sectors such as Councils, Education, the NHS, MOD, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), & the Cyber Defence & Risk (CyDR) Team, as well as various private enterprises. We ensure our practices align with the pinnacle of security & quality requirements, affirming our dedication to excellence in IT services.



MSP Services

Total IT Infrastructure Support
24/7/365 SPOC Centre
M365/Azure Migration
Cloud Solutions Support
Software Development



SmartNet Services

SOC/NOC Services
Public WiFi/5G Solution
VPN Solutions
Network Solutions
Remote Working Solution



Security Services

Security Accreditations
Penetration Tests
Vulnerability Assessments
Information Security
GDPR Compliance Consultancy



Data/Voice/Comms

Leased Line Provisioning
Fibre Broadband solutions
4G Broadband Solution
Rural Broadband Solution
Telephone Services



0800 145 5225



SalesSupport@ABSbiz.net

Supporting communities in Kent since 1781.

With offices across Kent and London,
we provide specialist legal services for
individuals and businesses in the Southeast.

- + Contracts & Transactions
- + Conveyancing
- + Employment
- + Family
- + Licensing
- + Probate
- + Property
- + Tax & Estate Planning
- + Wills

To find out how we can help,
call us on **01622 698000**
or email enquiries@wmlaw.uk

whitehead-monckton.co.uk



WM Whitehead
Monckton

Whitehead Monckton Limited (no. 08366029), registered in England & Wales.
Registered office 5 Eclipse Park, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3EN. Authorised
and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under no. 608279.



PREMIER

Driven By Quality & Excellence
Your One-Stop-Shop



Garage equipment

Let us help you source quality equipment for your workshop. We handle everything from brand new builds to garage redesigns.



Industrial doors & automated gates

Our in-house engineers oversee all door and gate installations at our clients' commercial premises.



Liquid engineering services

This division deals with the storage, distribution and management of a wide range of liquids and oil products across multiple industries.

Need Some Help?

If you would like to find out more about our services or would like to discuss how Premier can help you please contact us.

Telephone: 01234 765308

Email: info@premiergarageequipment.co.uk



premiergarageequipment.co.uk



McCarthy Bainbridge Ltd MEP Consulting Engineers.

McCarthy Bainbridge are Mechanical and Electrical Services Consulting Engineers providing advice and design services on all aspects of Building Services, Energy Assessment and Sustainability for our clients.

We have an enviable client list for which we offer specific individual solutions in many different sectors that include, Defence, Education, Local Authority and Housing Association works as well as Bespoke projects for private customers.

Our reputation and client standing ensures working relationships continue to thrive with all new and existing clients.

We are VINCI Facilities - experts in the management, operation and adaptation of the built Environment.

We offer a comprehensive range of Facilities Management and Building Solution services across a wide range of public and private sector organisations. We are committed to working towards a lower carbon society, focusing on sustainable and innovative methods to exceed our partners goals and add value amongst all of our stakeholders.

Scan QR Code to view our Net Zero Offerings



M&E Maintenance | Energy & Water Management | Cleaning | Building Fabric Maintenance & Minor Works | Security | Grounds Maintenance | Catering | Mobilisation & Transition | Property Management | Customer Response Centre | Refurbishment & Conversion | Major Repairs and Voids | Design & Build | Aids & Adaptations | Fit Out | Fire Safety & Cladding Remediation | Internal & External Planned Works | Social Value & Community Investment | Change Management & Delivery Solution | Asset Management & Whole Lifecycle Stewardship | Engineering Excellence & Compliance | Smart Place & Insights



The Connaught Trust

Funding Reserves and Cadets

Thinking of applying for a grant?

We have funds available to promote military efficiency within the CADET AND RESERVE forces for all three services in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and adjoining counties.

Our grant funding can help with activities and equipment such as:

- Adventure Training Expeditions
- Improvements to Existing Facilities
- Sports Equipment
- Battlefield Tours
- Training Equipment



Apply Now!



www.connaught-trust.co.uk