

BRITISH ARMY POLO ASSOCIATION
RAMSHILL FARM
MANSTON
STURMINSTER NEWTON
DORSET
DT10 1HD

www.britisharmypolo.org

07775 440 241 & 01258 472 590

ASCB

17th Oct 22

Army Polo Association – APOLOA - ACCOUNTING PERIOD – 1 Nov 2020 to 31st Oct 2021 AND ACTIVITY REPORT TO END SEP 22.

1. **Articles of Association.** It is confirmed that The APOLO Board have reviewed once again the Association Charter for polo and that they meet the requirement to be an accepted charity. **Charter redrafted in 2021.**

2. **Object of the Charity.**

Vision.

A flourishing and diverse military polo playing community, regularly training entering teams into tournaments at many levels and enhancing the British Army's reputation at home and abroad.

Mission.

The Army Polo Association (APoloA) encourages, supports, and organises polo at all levels. By widening membership, and increasing opportunities to play the game, we will underpin the Army's wider intent to foster esprit de corps, increase fitness, and enhance morale within all parts of the British Army.

APOLOA:

- Is open and inclusive to all ranks, all parts of the Army, all levels of expertise, and equally to women and men.
- Actively encourages individuals who show initiative in developing their own and others' playing ability.
- Aligns overseas tours and sponsorship with Defence Engagement aims and objectives wherever possible.
- Respects the values and standards of the British Army, in particular courage, discipline, and integrity.

3. **Summary of Main Activities 21-22.**

a. **Membership this season is 158 compared to 187 in the post Covid**

rush in 21, a reduction of some 14%. (Note: of the 158: 41 Ors, 40 females, 25 reserves)

Three factors explain this reduction. Reduced availability of ponies nationally to hire in 22, a knock-on effect of 20/21 Covid uncertainty, and therefore a reduction in hire stock exacerbated by hard ground causing lameness. The second factor was the Ukraine conflict that meant individuals and Regiments were unavailable. Thirdly, the very dry summer that meant grounds were unplayable from mid July until the latter part of August. This particularly affected the ASCB Capt's & Sub's Trophy which saw a reduction of Army teams from 16 to 7. This carried over for the AGC tournament on Aug BH. It is anticipated that membership will increase for 2023, as pony stock from our providers is set to increase and also Army teams will be better able to plan their seasons financially and for fixtures run according to plan.

- b. For the first time, APOLO ran a full Arena season that started in Nov 21 and finished in Mar 22.
- c. Grass season individual coaching got underway in April based around TPPC and also the new polo hub in the north at Bramham Park. Other centres were Druids Lodge PC and Dorset PC.
- d. APOLO continued to expand its reach across the UK playing at new clubs for the first time; Army teams now regularly play at 4 of the 5 top clubs in the UK.
- e. The first Tournament of the season was the RA on the Platinum Jubilee BH. 10 teams (14 in '21) took part with a total of 46 players (58 in '21) of all ranks in 4 Divisions.
- f. The ASCB Captain's & Subaltern's Trophy did not take place on 16/17 July. A new date of 20/21 Aug produced 7 Army teams (16 in 21), with 33 players (76 in 21) of all ranks taking part. A further factor reducing players was that this date was in the leave period for many units and individuals whose plans could not be changed.
- g. The AGC Tournament rounded off a very frustrating mid part of the season on the Aug BH Monday with an entry of 9 teams (18 in 21), with 33 players of all ranks (66 in 21) taking part.
- h. The potential for wider Defence Engagement opportunities have continued with a successful Senior Army Team (+7 goal team the highest to tour since 1994) travelling to Egypt in late Sep. An invitation to tour India in Dec 22 is being staffed.
- i. Summary of matches:

- Women in Polo tournament at Tidworth Park, entered an Army Team, they came 3rd out of 4 teams. 8 May
- The Novice/Development Army team came 2nd out of 9 teams at the RAF Cranwell 2 day tournament. 14/15 May
- The Armed Forces Polo Association (AFPA) selected 3 Senior Army players to play at Cirencester for the Cirencester Park PC VE Commemoration Day. 24 June
- The Sassoon Cup match v RAF was won by the Army Development Team, the team included an OR for the first time. 3 July
- Three Army players were selected by AFPA to play against a touring US Mil Team in July on 3 occasions at Druids Lodge P 7 July, TPPC 9 July and Guards PC10 July. An OR Army player was selected to play for the AFPA for the first time.
- The Rundle Cup match v Royal Navy 9 July was won by the Army Development Team, this team included an OR for the first time.
- The Army Novice Team came 2nd in the Riley Cup – a Tri Service event at TPPC 23 July
- The Rupert Thorneloe Day played at Kirtlington Park PC 24 July commemorated the 13th anniversary of his death in action and involved 4 Army players at Senior level.
- The 3 Day Major General's Tournament, played against civilian teams at the Guards Polo Club, was won by an Army mixed Senior/Development Team for the second year running. 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sep.

f. In summary a total of **1,232 'player opportunities'** took place in the season. Note that whilst there was a reduction in player numbers and teams it did mean that those who took part in all tournaments played 4 chukkas per day whereas in '21 due to a shortage of ponies (Covid recovery) most players only played 2 chukkas.

4. **5 Year Plan Financial Review.** This was undertaken post the receipt of the Auditor's comments in Jan '22. Due to the unusual circumstances brought about by Covid, the APOLOA Board, which met in Jan, made a number of recommendations that included fixtures, funding lines and a detailed 5 year Management Plan to be drafted – The Army Polo Association (APoloA) encourages, supports, and organises polo at all levels. By widening membership, and increasing opportunities to play the game, we will underpin the Army's wider intent to foster esprit de corps, increase fitness, and enhance morale within all parts of the British Army. **The revised Plan is attached** - in order to focus on the Board/Council changes, responsibilities, TORs and a concept of 'Operations' for the future. **Particular emphasis has been on finding a new Sponsor to replace HACKETT Clothing after 15 years of support that ended in Dec '21. A number of opportunities have been explored but economic conditions have meant none have so far been successful. A recent sponsorship**

meeting on 11 Oct indicates greater potential and with the help and advice of Oliver Agyles and Mongoose, the ASCB Sponsorship Agent, there is confidence that it will reach the next stage. It is stressed that sponsorship is vital for the success of APOLO to deliver in the medium term.

5. **Board Meeting Actions.** The Board reviewed all aspects of the Charter (redrafted 21), Sponsorship, ASCB Liaison, Tours, Membership, Draft Plan, Fixtures, Finances and Media. This is reflected in the 5 Year Management Plan.

6. **Operating Grant.** The Operating Grant of £23,615 has been expended in line with the bid provided to the ASCB. Due to the Accounting period, the Treasurer has only taken into account Expenditure/Income from 1 Nov 21 to 30 Sep 22 based on advice from ASCB in the previous year in order to cover both Income and Expenditure for 22/23 in the OP Grant Submission for 23/24.

7. **Investments.** The investments – *Blackrock AF G&I Inc A Account (value as at 30/6/22 £38,511.80 - Note for 6/21 value was £40,398.33)* - provide the fund with reserves that are in line with the Board's Strategic direction contained in the 5 Year Plan.

8. **Financial Review.** Having reviewed the financial accounts up until 30 Sep 22 the following noteworthy comments are made:

- a. **Exceptional Expenditure.** It is clear that the implications of Ukraine and the Cost of Living Crisis has meant that the forecast expenditure has been about 25% higher than previous years. For example ponies could be hired for £65 per chukka in 20/21, this has risen approximately to between £80 for a beginner pony to £90 for an established player. Transport costs have added to this figure but combining pony transport with various providers has reduced this somewhat, but it still means that pony hire is sometimes in the region of £95 per chukka which is on the limit of affordability. In the past with sponsorship cover this could have been mitigated; thus it is most important that a sponsor is found as soon as possible.
- b. **Financial Performance.** The figures taken into account up to end Sep, and Forecast Income/Expenditure for this period is approximate, but broadly in line with expectation taking into account the increases in base costs. The Account closes on 31st Oct and will be audited as previously.
- c. **Reserves.** The APOLO Board confirms that the fund has sufficient reserves to operate in line with the 'reserves policy' set out in the 5-year plan.

SW Ledger
Lt Col – Dir APOLOA