

Trustees' Annual Report for the period	
Period start date	Period end date
01 January 2025	31 December 2025

Section A: Reference and administration details

Branch Name	Newcastle & Gateshead 0370
Other names / number Branch is known by	RAFA Newcastle
Registered charity number (if any)	231590
	c/o 82 Beckside Gardens
	Chapel House
	Newcastle upon Tyne
	Postcode NE5 1BQ

Names of the Branch charity trustees who manage the charity (generally known as the Branch Committee) (Please include all trustees for the Branch including custodian trustees in relation to branch property) *(Note: Details required are for the period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 25 only)*

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
1	Christopher Lloyd-James	Chair	
2	Debbie Owens	Secretary	
3	William W Houston	Treasurer	
4	Karen L Bowers	Vice Chair	
5	Kevin Mongan	Wellbeing/Committee	
6	Ken Allen	Wings officer/Committee	
7	Roy Knox	Wings Admin/Committee	
8	Michael Collins	Committee	
9	Ms Molli James	Committee	
10	Alan Proudlock	Committee	Resigned Ill Health during year

Section B: Structure, governance and management

Description of the branch's trusts

Type of governing document (e.g. trust deed, constitution)	Royal Charter, Rules, Byelaws, Area and Branch Regulations of the Royal Air Forces Association.
How the Branch charity is constituted (e.g. trust, association, company)	Unincorporated association
Trustee selection methods (e.g. appointed by, elected by)	Elected by the branch membership

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

<p>You may choose to include additional information, where relevant, about:</p> <p>Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;</p> <p>The branch's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works.</p> <p>Relationship with any related parties (including branch club).</p> <p>Trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.</p>	<h4>The Charity's Organisational Structure</h4> <p>The charity is a branch of the Royal Air Forces Association which is a Royal Charter body and registered as a charity in England and Wales under number 226686 and in Scotland under SC037673 ("the Association"). The Association has many branches all of which share the same charitable object as the Association and are subject to the same constitution.</p>
	<h4>Trustee Induction & Training <i>(Please insert any induction training or training courses completed by Trustees)</i></h4>
	<h4>Related Party Relationships <i>(e.g. Club if operated)</i></h4> <p>The Branch does not have a Club. Associated with several RAFAC squadrons in local area, listed in the 1056</p>
	<h4>Risk Management <i>(include details of any Risk Management documents held)</i></h4> <p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>

Section C: Objectives and Activities

<p>Summary of the objects of the branch set out in its governing document</p>	<p>To promote, through the comradeship engendered by its members, the welfare by charitable means of all serving and former members of Her Majesty's Air Forces, their spouses and dependents, together with the widows and widowers and dependents of those who died whilst serving or subsequently.</p>
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Section D: Achievements and performance in 2024

Summary of the main achievements of the branch during the year	Chair Report
	<p>Colleagues, as in previous years our first meeting of 2025 was in February with the AGM being held a few weeks later. Turnout was small but am indebted to all members who attend and re-elected the main Trustees for another year, with the additional Committee members elected in March.</p> <p>April ANZAC memorial was a trying time, but thanks to support of committee and members the Branch held a very respectful service in St George's, Jesmond, with special thanks to the RAF Air Cadets and Naval Cadets for their assistance.</p> <p>Later in the year, we achieved a milestone for the Branch by holding the Battle of Britain service in St Nicholas Cathedral in Newcastle, with a Cathedral signing of the Armed Forces Covenant - a full report on both is shown in the Commemoration report by the Vice Chair. My thanks to Karen Bowers who not only carries out both this Branch role but also takes on responsibilities of Parade and Marshall of Standards effortlessly.</p> <p>The Branch attended an event at Eshott airfield and made friendships with the Large Model Association and now have regular invites to attend their events, helping to promote RAFA membership and benefits and collect on behalf of Wings appeal. Follow up to that I was invited to RAF Elvington to promote RAFA at a very large model air display and took that opportunity to collect for the Wings appeal.</p> <p>RAFA Branch organised a D-Day Remembrance event in Newcastle Eldon square memorial which drew significant public and press attention. As can be read in the Wellbeing/Social report, some other events are shown that members have attended throughout the year as well as our regular monthly members meetings, now enhanced by the sterling efforts of Kevin Mongan who introduced quiz and games nights, he also led a merry band round Newcastle hostelryes! The last social event of the year for the Branch was our Christmas evening, well attended and enjoyed, where we presented awards and trophies to those organisations who supported us.</p> <p>Our intrepid band of Wings volunteers have raised a very respectful Wings appeal yearend total of over £9000.00, again well done to Bill, Ken, Michael, Mollie and Roy to name a few for their year round efforts, with special thanks to our RAF Liaison Officer, Mark who rounded up personnel from RAF Boulmer and RAF Leeming to assist in amazing collection days at our Central station and also to those cadets who assisted in street collections.</p> <p>I was in meetings with Paul Greenwood, BMWO with RAFA, with a view to increase Branch's area of responsibility with our neighbour Branch, Whitley Bay & North Shields – a vote to finalise this responsibility will take place at AGM 2026.</p> <p>Finally, my thanks to our Secretary Debbie, who also takes on this role with the Joint Ex Services Association, with 2510 (West Denton) RAF Air Cadets on Civilian Committees, liaises with Northumbria University Air Squadron and attended various Armed Forces Day events on behalf of the Branch.</p> <p>Thank you all for a wonderful 2025 and look forward to a bigger, better 2026.</p>

Treasurer Report

Branch and Welfare funds remained healthy during the year ending 31/12/2025, with no debtors or liabilities outstanding

Branch General Account = £2803.63

Branch Welfare Account = £3510.06

Deposit Account at CHQ = £1801.23 Total of 3 accounts £8134.92

Wings Appeal Account = £1516.18 (Ringfenced within the General Account)

£1000.00, retained, as part of the Branch Trustees Governance Policy, to ensure there are sufficient funds, safeguarded at CHQ, readily available should there be any occasion that the Branch must cover unforeseen expenditure.

Full report on all incomes and expenditures as shown in the annual 1056 return will be given to members at the AGM.

Summary of the main achievements of the branch during the year (cont)

Branch Welfare Officer Report

Following the sudden HWO departure, regret the Branch did not have a Welfare officer during 2025 causing complications regarding the Welfare account that took several months to be finalised with the appropriate number of signatories, and was only in the last quarter that provided any financial support for local Branch wellbeing activities/transport etc. Sadly, any Welfare requirements, financial or otherwise had to be passed to HQ for their attention. Despite requests, no volunteer with requisite training/experience came forward, but the committee is hopeful this valuable position can be filled at forthcoming AGM.

Fundraising Report *(please insert details of the Branch Fundraising activities i.e. Wings Appeal events)*

From a small band of active members, ably supported by RAF Air Cadets and personnel from RAF Boulmer throughout the 2025 appeal year, the Branch was honoured to raise and return to HQ over £8000.00 towards the RAFA Welfare programme. It is now increasingly difficult to arrange collections in local supermarkets, however monies raised came in many ways

Charity donation tins in several establishments, pubs, shops, offices. etc.
Home collection boxes and individual donations received.

Sales of merchandise by branch members in residential and private homes

Coffee mornings, raffle etc. in residential homes

Attendance at Armed Forces Day events throughout the region by members

Monthly collections within a shopping centre by two members

Central station at Newcastle on 2 occasions with members and RAF Personnel Plus, an investment in a small credit card reader taken to many events made a significant increase in collections.

Appeal for full year totalled £9519.39 with £8003.21 returned to CHQ by October 2025.

Branch account received £1152.00 in private donations/raffles.

Membership Engagement Report *(please insert details of the Branch Membership Engagement (newsletters, social media etc.)*

Most of membership engagement is via email or post of monthly meeting reports, notice of forthcoming events etc. The website is updated regularly with notice of events/meetings and photos of events that had been held. The Branch Facebook page regularly has items submitted by members. The Membership secretary regularly reviews Branch admin on the RAFA Portal system for notices of new joiners/leavers etc and contacts those shown as lapsed to make enquiries if any reason for this. If not already advised of a member death, then HQ will notify and the Branch can contact the family regarding any funeral wishes and ask HQ for insert in AIRMAIL if desired.

Summary of the main achievements of the branch during the year (cont)

Wellbeing / Social Report *(please insert details of the Branch Wellbeing and Social events/activities)*

BRANCH EVENTS 2025

- 10th May Branch Members attended Rothbury House for RBL V.E. day event
- 11th May Branch held a V.E. celebration with music at Local Cricket club 1-5pm
Branch members and residents attended
- 14th May Branch officials attended the Spring Reception at RAF Boulmer
- 17th May Kenton Veterans Hub held a Church service with stalls by organisations promoting help for veterans and families. Refreshments provided with an opportunity to chat with many other veterans. Branch members attended
- 31st May St George's, Jesmond summer fayre, Branch members supported
- 2nd June RAFA Big Quiz after meeting, supported by members and residents
- 6th June "Toast to the Fallen" at Newcastle Cenotaph, Branch members attended.
Chairman was interviewed by local radio and BBC Television.
- 21st June Branch members supported Spennymoor Armed Forces Day, collecting
- 22nd June Branch members attended Flag raising for AFD at Stanley
- 28th June Branch members supported Consett Armed Forces Day, collecting
- 29th June Branch members supported Stanley Armed Forces Day, Collecting
- 7th July Games night held after Members Branch meeting
- 4th Aug Games night held after Members Branch meeting
- 1st Sept Games night held after Members Branch meeting
- 6th Oct Games night held after Members Branch meeting
- 3rd Nov Games night held after Members Branch meeting
- 27th Nov RAF Boulmer invited Branch to Members Veterans lunch with entertainment and an escorted tour of the operations room.
- 1st Dec Branch Christmas Social evening, buffet and quiz attended by members residents and RAFAC adult staff as guests of honour
- 19th Dec Well attended "well oiled" members social pub crawl around Newcastle's Black Eye Friday – "Reported" no members suffered any fatalities and safely home by 20.00 hours!! (Must have been on shandies!!!) proved so popular it is planned to make this a quarterly event for 2026 – All enquiries to join contact Kevin Mongan, Social and Wellbeing

Commemoration Report *(please insert details of the Branch Commemoration events/activities (Remembrance, Standard Bearers Attendance at Funerals etc.)*

NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH OF RAFA
CEREMONIAL REPORT 2025

The Newcastle and Gateshead Branch had a very successful ceremonial year in 2025, starting with the annual ceremony to commemorate ANZAC Day. Due to unforeseen circumstances the event was held at St George's church in Jesmond on Sunday 28th April. In attendance were the Station Commander from Royal Air Force Boulmer, Wg Cdr Charlotte Best, who brought her daughter with her and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, who was joined by a congregation made up of Veterans, Air and Sea cadets. The National anthems of Australia and New Zealand and the hymns were played by the Backworth Band. The Marshal of the Standards paraded along with five Standards and two Cadet Banners. The service was a poignant one with readings to honour the bravery and sacrifice of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers killed during that campaign. A roll of honour was read out for the airmen of both Nations who

are laid to rest at West Chevington Cemetery.

The next event in the ceremonial calendar was the commemorative service for the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, which was held on Sunday 14 September. Unlike previous years the service was held in St Nicolas Cathedral and was an outstanding success. The Chairman of the Branch led the Act of Remembrance and the Vice Chair presided as the Marshal of the Standards. The service was well attended by members of the Royal Air Force Community, including Royal Air Force Boulmer, RAFAC and the UAS. The first reading was given by an Officer Cadet and an Air Cadet supported the Chairmen with the Kohima Epitaph. The service also saw the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant by the Diocese of Newcastle and the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force. The Band of the Fusiliers provided music, and the Colours of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers paraded the Queen's Colour and the Regimental Colour. The Colours and the Newcastle and Gateshead RAFA Standard were presented to the Altar for the duration of the service. It was very pleasing to see so many Standards on parade. There was even one which had travelled from as far afield as Stockton to attend the event. It is hoped that the Battle of Britain Service can be held in the Cathedral again in 2026.

Remembrance Sunday, as always, was a very busy day for Branch members as many attended events throughout Newcastle and Gateshead, laying wreaths and paying respects. The Chair made his annual trip to the Cenotaph in London with the RAF Regiment Association; the Vice-Chair laid the Branch wreath and Mr Dave Gilbert paraded the Branch Standard at the war memorial in Old Eldon Square, Newcastle; The Secretary and the Treasurer attended a service at the Newcastle West Road Crematorium and Cemetery, Mr Mongan laid a wreath at Rowlands Gill, Mr Allen attended an event in Gateshead and Mr Collins attended a service in Gosforth. Throughout the year Branch members and Standard bearer attended funerals when requested and any special Birthday or commemorative occasions as well

Looking forward to the ceremonial season for 2026, planning is well underway for the annual ANZAC service of commemoration at West Chevington cemetery. This year's event will be held on ANZAC Day, Saturday 25th April at 2.15pm.

K.L Bowers, Vice Chair and Parade Marshall

Community Engagement Report *(please insert details of the Branch Community Engagement activities (other groups you connect with, joint events such as Veterans Breakfasts)*

RAF Air Cadets – Branch members Debbie Owens and Michael Collins are on the Civilian committee for 2510 (West Denton) sqn and 1114 (Gosforth) sqn RAF Air Cadets respectively. We are indebted to those other RAF Air Cadet squadrons who attend and assist the Branch at events and Wings collections. Chair and Secretary attend meetings with the University Air Squadron, who give valuable support to the Branch at Ceremonial events. Attended invited events at RAF Boulmer, whose personnel also give valuable support to the Branch not only ceremonial but with Wings collections days throughout the year. The Branch extends invitations to many other military organisations to attend our ceremonial events, now include invites to Army and Sea Cadet organisations who are happy to take part in our events, reaching out to the wider military and civilian communities.

Section E: Financial Review

Statement on Branch Expenditure *(How has branch expenditure supported the key objectives of the branch)*

Out with the costs necessary in the running of the Branch, other expenditure was made to ensure key objectives – ensuring members and their families, and wider RAF community were able to meet and socialise and to pay respects to the fallen at Remembrance.

From Branch Account

£240.00 for 12 monthly room hiring with local Cricket Club for members to meet and socialise.
£616.88 Costs incurred arranging ANZAC and Christmas social event for members and families, Military guests, RAFAC, Lord Lieutenants, and the general public.
£200.00 Wreaths for members to attend several Remembrance service locations.

From Welfare Account

£202.20 Branch incurred Wellbeing Transport expenses – aiding members to attend events *
£500.00 Donation to RAF Leeming's Contact houses Appeal
* See Welfare Officer report – as unable to access Welfare monies until last quarter of 2025. Of the Branch incurred above payments a total £682.20 has since been paid back into the Branch account, and at 31/12/25 £20.00 outstanding still to be repaid

Full reports for Incomes and Expenditures for Branch, Welfare and Wings Annual Accounts are contained in the RAFA form 1056 online.

Statement on Branch's Reserve Policy *(Branch Regulations stipulate that any Branch with total assets amounting to more than £5,000 should have a reserves policy and any Branch with assets over £10,000 should consider transferring excess funds across to the Branch Deposit Fund held at Association HQ. A template reserves policy can be found on the Branch Portal)*

The Branch has £1801.23 held in deposit with CHQ (if required for any future expenditure).

There is also a sum of £1000.00 which is held in deposit at CHQ, to cover any unseen costs or debt etc. if resulting in the closure of the branch.

The Branch held no more than £5000.00 in the General account at the end of the year

Statement on Branch's Investment Policy *(Please include a statement on Branch investments and holdings and how these are managed (if applicable))*

N/A

Section F: Declaration

We confirm that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the branch's trustees

We confirm that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the relevant Charity Regulator on public benefit.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the branch's trustees

Signature

Full Name

Position (eg. Chair, Secretary)

Date