**ANNEX C TO**

 **RAFOS/SEC/18**

 **DATED 24 NOV 18**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

I’d like to start by once again thanking Sacha for her presentation - many of us have flown in all sorts of things but I have to say a motorised para-glider has never been on my list of ‘must try’ aircraft!

As most will know, the position of President of the Society remains vacant so it falls to me as a life vice-president and slowest moving serving member to say a few general words about the RAF in a year that saw us reach our 100th birthday. Anyone who joined in any of the celebrations to mark that august occasion will I’m sure be glad that they did so. The parade and fly-past in London in July were quite outstanding and around the country the static aircraft tour attracted simply thousands of people. Commemorate, celebrate and inspire was the catch phrase and I think the events did just that. Capitalising on the inspire segment will see us continuing to invest in promoting RAF careers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors - the STEM environment as it is usually called will be a key area for future engagement.

Our engagement in more operational activities has not let up either. The war against Daesh in Syria may finally be drawing to a close but at the same time there are signs of resurgence of trouble in Afghanistan so I suspect our involvement in the Middle East is far from over. We’ve supported NATO with the deployment of Typhoons to Romania to assist them with Air Policing over the Black Sea and are preparing to do the same over the Baltic Sea from Estonia next year. At home the resurgence of Russia as a bit of a pest has seen our Typhoons on UK Air Policing tasks more heavily used than at any time since the end of the Cold War and of course we remain in the Falklands so you can see that the small Typhoon Force is heavily tasked - effectively in 3 Continents at once. The Chinook force has been supporting the French efforts in Mali, our medical services took the lead for a UN hospital in South Sudan, recently handing over to the Vietnamese, and the Air Transport team flew emergency supplies to Indonesia after the earthquake and tsunami there. At the same time, we’ve supported some major exercises around the world from the Flag series in Nevada through a major NATO exercise in Norway and out to Oman for SAIF SAREEA where the exercise is just drawing down. On top of all this has been the introduction in to service of the new F35 or Lightning II at RAF Marham, and the work-up in the USA for the crews for our new maritime patrol aircraft, the Poseidon. Base reorganisation continues and as Henlow heads for closure we’ve also announced the move of basic airman recruit training from Halton to Cranwell, the closure of Linton-on-Ouse as the new flying training contract kicks in, the draw-down at St Athan and the closure of Scampton with the probable move of the Red Arrows to Wittering.

I noted last year that in such a busy Service, which is also undermanned by about 2000, it is perhaps not surprising that few have time for birding or to join a Society such as ours but we keep plugging our message and try to recruit more serving members where we can - indeed we’ve a few new Serving members this year than last and I’m pleased to say they’ve already become active on expeditions and one has been persuaded to stand for a role on the Committee! This leads nicely in to my task as Chairman.

First of all, let me thank you again for coming – it really is good to see the stalwart support we enjoy. We discussed last year whether we have got the format right and while there are twists and turns available to us, for the most part we seem to be content with the current arrangements. I note our membership figures have been revised and refined by the new Membership secretariat of Team W and while we’ve lost one or two in the process we’ve also re-engaged with some ‘lost souls’ and attracted a few newcomers. As we start our fifty-fourth year numbers are holding up and the activities of the Society are as interesting and diverse as ever. Importantly, once again we’ve supported the citizen science activities of a number of organisations but in particular the BTO, where our input is always welcomed and recognised in their publications, and the Seabird Monitoring Programme. Now as usual I need to record formally some thanks:

Your Committee have worked hard this year and deserve your thanks as usual. Some posts are up for renewal and I’m grateful to those who will stand again to carry on the good work. Scott Drinkel has deployed to the Falkland Islands and has asked to stand-down slightly early as a result. Scott has asked me to thank all those who have supported his Royal British Legion (RBL) fund raising efforts on his run for the fallen and you might like to know he has completed 2372.98 Km, which is almost 1500 miles in old money, in the year to 11 November. He has raised just over £1200 for the RBL but there is still the opportunity to provide a little more via his Just Giving page at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Scott-drinkel1](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Scott-drinkel1). I’m pleased to say that Jayne Lindley has offered to step in to his shoes (as PR member not his running shoes) and we’ll be seeking formal ratification of her appointment later. Among others, the role of Chairman is also up for re-selection and while I can stagger on for another year, after that I expect to be retiring from the RAF Reserves. Our constitution currently requires the Chairman to be drawn from the serving community so this leads to an interesting constitutional debate which we’ll get to later in the Agenda! Can I just say at this point a firm thank you to those who have completed their tours of duty on the Committee and record formally the Society’s thanks for your efforts. While it is slightly invidious to single out any member, I must thank Team Knight for once again keeping us all under control and I must note Colin Wearn’s hand in sorting today’s venue and catering out with the Mess Manager and his staff. Without all this support the AGM would not take place.

I’ve said before that the Society thrives on the activities of the Members every bit as much as the attention of the Committee. We’ve had a busy year with WINTER DUCK, ISLAY MIST and SIMMER DIM all being major expeditions contributing to the Society’s aims and objectives. But there is a diverse array of activities out there and next year we’ll be adding ringing in Gibraltar to the list once again. Keith has some other exciting opportunities to share for next year’s plan but remember anyone, and I mean anyone, can propose, plan and run an event or expedition - variety is the spice of life.

And on that note, I’ll hand over to the Secretary Bird to get on with business.