

Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the East Midlands Veteran's Advisory and Pensions Committee held at the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Officers Mess, on Monday 21st February 2011 at 10.30am.

Present Col Peter Poole, (Chair)

David Donovan,

Chris Harrison,

Terl Bryant,

John Berry,

Keith Meakin,

Charlie Streater,

Larry Henson. (Secretary).

Apologies.

David Harding

Bill Dixon-Dodds

Absent

Roy Boyfield

WELCOME.

The Chair welcomed everyone Present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies had been received from David Harding and Bill Dixon-Dodds.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations made.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

These were read and accepted.

MATTERS ARISING.

Terl Bryant said that John Parkin had stated there was no longer a need for the the new Committee Members to be interviewed. The Chair said this was

changed when he attended Norcross, Blackpool. EMVAPC were at present the smallest committee but other committees had far more co-opted members.

The Chair said that Ray Holland – the Chair of VAPC Chairs – was putting forward that no further interviews were necessary.

Terl Bryant pointed out that item 5 John Parkin is the head of Veteran Services and not Chief Executive Services as shown.

There was discussion over the previous ‘Strategic Aims’ and under ‘our values’ the word we should “maintain” inserted. The added use of “A” in front of first class inserted. To delete “Exhibit” and insert the word “Demonstrate”.

The Chair undertook to re-word the relevant paragraph.

SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS.

STRATEGIC AIM - ONE

It was agreed that David Harding – who was absent on 17th January 2011 would join this working group.

Larry Henson said Cllr Judy Shepherd – Northamptonshire CC- had agreed to join the Committee and the NCC Leader Jim Harker and the Chair Cllr Rosemary Bromwich had agreed EMVAPC could address the full Council of 73 Members prior to a full council meeting.

Terl Bryant said Glasgow had the need to ensure that personnel receive a smooth transition to civilian life. Keith Meakin said there is some confusion about who to speak to ie SVPA.

The Chair said if we experience problems, we should write to John Parkin.

Terl Bryant said there was no conformity when contacting Glasgow and Keith Meakin said it needed a “clear service wiring diagram”. John Berry said it was because of downsizing and the chair reiterated that Dr Kitchen or John Parkin will answer all complaints.

Keith Meakin mentioned an article six ruling where a claimant, now aged 87, had allegedly been overpaid £15,500 over ten years and asked to repay at £10 per week. They had written to John Parkin who had over ruled and had the sum written off.

John Berry said they should consider outsourcing with organisations such as Blesma.

The Chair agreed and re-iterated the need for a wiring diagram. Terl Bryant said it would be a nightmare to create and there was an agreement that despite difficulties one would be undertaken.

STRATEGIC AIM -THREE.

Terl Bryant said there was a person at SVPA looking at the complaints procedure. Terl said he was in contact, gathering, and collating complaints.

The Chair said he was looking for points in the region. He had contact with the Veterans Welfare and found we have no panel cases whereas the South West Region has a number.

The Chair said Kidderminster is our hub Centre and said some had contracts that worked limited days making contact and continuity very difficult.

The Chair felt we didn't know who covers our regions and suggested it may be helpful to call at Kidderminster sometime to chat with them informally to create a closer relationship.

John Berry said statistical data was required. The Chair said such information is available but not of the number dealing or those being dealt with. John Berry said such information would be helpful to see this information by regions.

Keith Meakin said it is important to not only go through the Welfare Service but also directly to Norcross. The Chair said it was important to differentiate between complaints and panel cases.

Keith Meaking said his understanding is Norcross should send us all complaints with a presentation and a statement of case.

The Chair then said he required knowing how each Sub Committee will achieve its aims and in the next two weeks this should be set out in order we can carry this through to the achievement stage.

Keith Meakin showed a document he had received and was a formal Veterans Agency Document. It shows how the complaints procedure is undertaken. The Chair said he would obtain an electronic copy and circulate to all members.

John Berry said the Conservative Government should be driving this and Prisons are linked up, which works well in the East Midlands. Prison Officers are assuming liaison and this is no longer a role of Chaplains. The Chair said Sarah Ashcroft at M.O.J. has overall responsibility.

John Berry highlighted that M.O.J. also has the probation service with 35 Probation Offices Centres. Alan Lilley is running a pilot with a clear signposting service to put others in touch with him. A grant from the Butler Trust will be an incentive for them to move forward. It is hoped there will be referrals out to Blesma and others. Signposting is the simple easy solution with the Central direction from London.

John Berry said raising awareness does not fit well with the probation service, but the question is “how far do we go down the chain as it is pointless if there is no user in that area. He added that “mixed mapping” is very difficult.

The Chair said in our area the bottom line is five counties, and he suggested we pitch at County level and he couldn't see any other way of doing it. Larry Henson mentioned other organisations and suggested a booklet and John Berry said it was for the SVPA to do. The Chair said we are the focal point and the need to get to know us. He added it was also our own focal point.

John Berry said a “welfare pathway” was essential. The Chair said most users go to SAFA or Combat Stress. He added the Legions figures show there are 350 users in the region but it can be misleading as they include all members of the family.

The Chair mentioned Veterans are classified into different categories ie. From 1 day service up to 22 years plus. He added there were 98,000 in the army and 20,000 in the other services which is less than Sainsburys, and there may be less call on services.

John Berry mentioned more could be done via a “redundancy pathway” and it was agreed to follow up.

SUB GROUP TWO.

David Donovan said he had been ill since the 1st February. He is making his presentation in the absence of Roy Boyfield who was not present. He highlighted the changed aims which set out three bullet points that are do-able.

Point three was discussed and the Chair spelt out the “was no funding for anything” and mentioned the use of local radio and had passed on David Donovan’s name. The Chair highlighted obtaining advertising literature and the need to get it out and mentioned “the big white wall” and mentioned magazines and the possibility of contacting “start here”. He added there were no press releases or advertising planned.

John Berry said the web site could be simply in the first instance on who to contact.

ITEM 4.

The Chair agreed with David Donovan when he says that organisations have to ask for help.

The Chair said it was important to understand we should be the conductor and not orchestra.

John Berry said the discharged are signposted on where to look for help. The Chair said unfortunately they probably would not look at the information until later, when they need it, or will contact the Legion. He added not only do they not need it when leaving, they are often disgruntled and seek it later and highlighted a survey in which only three of every hundred leaving ever seek help.

Access to any referral service should be David Donovan, Keith Meakin or Larry Henson.

POINT SEVEN (equipment).

The Chair said there is no equipment although there had been three caravans but no one had seen them and it was not known if they now exist let alone roadworthy. Nothing was available.

POINT EIGHT (resources).

The Chair said there was money in an account somewhere, which could fund a lunch and there was a consensus it was a good idea and in reply to Larry Henson's query whether we could afford it the Chair said it was achievable and easy to arrange.

John Berry said we must embrace representatives of other agencies and agreement was reached to

- a. find the money
- b. Book Masons Hall venue
- c. Invitees organised at the next meeting.
- d. Be organised by David Donovan's sub group.

SUB GROUP 4. (secretarial)

Larry Henson went through his list he and Chris Harrison had compiled, and it was accepted.

The Chair said speakers were definitely needed and disagreed saying more sub committees may be needed.

ITEM SIX (Chairs meeting Norcross).

The Chair agreed to list his report.

Peter you mentioned these!

Covered

NHS Leicester meeting.

£50K Mental Health Nurse.

Contacts Councils to John Berry.

NHS East Midlands Forum Group.

GP Consortia.

Chairs meeting. Different flavour – dodgy external speakers -Messianic rubbish nuggets of rare moments.

Housing concerns

Chairs performance Matrix.

Terl Kidderminster.

Compensation scheme by targets.

Scheme preview.

Redundancy

CPI V RPI
Privatisation of WP.
Flo Chart of personnel
PR External Strategy.
Closed meeting – prisons –NHS-Welfare Pathway.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

David Donovan said he had access to the Ex Servicemens pathway and everyone agreed it would be helpful. They have two ex servicement full time who could help us.

He also mentioned a forthcoming meeting with REMPLOY and he would let them know what we could offer.

The Chair said we do not deal with individuals but move them on with the exception of appeals. The focal point is Sandra Price.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

Monday 13th June 2011 at 10.30am at Grantham.
Further meeting added2012

The meeting closed at 2.10pm.