

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST MIDLANDS VETERANS
ADVISORY & PENSION COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 19TH SEPTEMBER 2016
AT PRINCE WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER BARRACKS**

Members Present

Lt. Col. Peter Poole (PP) Chairman
David Wilson (DW) Secretary
Barry Smith (BS)
Michael Whitehead (MW)
Ray Boyfield (RB)
Paul Davis (PD)
Bill Dixon-Dodds (BDD)

Apologies received from:

Patrick Rendell
Sukbir Bindra
Charlie Streater
John Berry
Larry Henson
David Lomas
Teryl Bryant

Item 1 - Opening Remarks

PP welcomed the small gathering to this the last meeting of the year and commented as follows:

- Formal congratulations to David Lomas on the award of the MBE in the Queen's Birthday honours list.
- SB has been contacted in relation to her continued absence from meetings suggesting that she may wish to consider her position on the Committee.
- PP drew the Committee's attention to the Gilligan articles in the Sunday Times which centred on the proliferation and duplication of ex-service charities and their inability to deliver what they promised. Bad publicity of this sort did show the need for the committee to fulfil its role in oversight of the delivery of LIBOR money through charities. Not be confused with the Charities Commission role.
- PP briefed the Committee on the change in role of John Parkin and his replacement Rob Rowntree. and an invitation to Rob to attend a meeting of the Committee
- Debbie Bowles has been thanked for her services to the committee and wished well for the future.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last Meeting/Matters Arising

The Minutes were passed as a true record. Discussion on matters arising were:

- Committee support for the VWS was emphasised but there were questions around insurance for members who accompany them on visits.
- With regard to the Committee's role in "Oversight" of the VWS members noted that as it is not engaged with the VWS it cannot have oversight or pass comment on quality of their services to the ex-service community. Chairman agreed to ensure that our relationship with VWS is strengthened.
- There was discussion around our charter and the delivery of welfare in the East Midlands.
- PD spoke of RAFA training in dealing with people suffering from Dementia which led BS to enquire if there was thought to be a potential for a crisis in ex-service

welfare – no real answer.

- The subject of a committee function arose and it was agreed that PP would look into a venue for a social event in spring 2017 somewhere in Leicestershire.

Item 3 – Christmas Lunch

RB confirmed that sufficient funds are available and PD confirmed a donation from RAFA. M W spoke of his contacts with existing and potential sponsors also the need of an audit trail to show sponsors of delivery to recipients of the Christmas Lunch. BS spoke of his contacts with the venue and the flexibility they had shown, there was a contract / commitment document on its way which BS would sign and also ensure that the 10% deposit was paid. LH had committed himself to organising the free raffle after the success of the previous year. MW spoke of the need to have a mixture of vets PP said he would contact War Widows. **Action taken but little success.** PP spoke of the need to “get our message out” and the difficulty of contacting Vets as we do not have access to any lists of veterans. It is important to act quickly in getting people to attend including “Paying Guests” and do we have targets. It is assumed that C S will be able to arrange several vets through BLESMA. Transport remains a difficulty but perhaps increased sponsorship could involve transport.

Item 4 - Health Sub Committee

PP asked the Committee to note that it has been confirmed that Reserve Forces, when deployed, were to be treated the same as for Regular deployed forces in issues of health, thus receiving the same settlements as regulars. PP also mentioned the increasing reliance of the Armed Forces on the reserve element.

BS Spoke on the change in the new employee model of forces particularly the delay in payment of gratuities and pensions. This whilst only affecting those in the new model, will in time cause concern to veterans

Item 5 - Communications.

BS spoke of getting a MOD e-mail address for Committee work which with “reply to all” would enable all members to have access to information.

Item 6 Community Covenants.

DW had attended a Derbyshire Covenant meeting at the County Offices in Matlock on 19 July 2016. Attending also were representatives of all Districts / Boroughs in the County, each being either an Elected or Officer Appointed Forces Champion. DW had given a brief on the, newly recognised, role of VAPC's and access by Chairmen of VAPC's to the Veterans Minister who is keen to know of trends in Ex- Forces welfare needs. There are to be further meetings and DW had requested to attend. DW also undertook to check on the symposium about veterans this had been put back to October

Item 7 - Feed Back.

BDD asked about the amount of work required by committee members, all of whom were already busy - and mostly on charity issues, to deal with the Strategic Objectives and what authority do we have. BS said that in his current strategic plan, Sub Group Chairs were expected to work for 10 days a year or 20 half days. 4 half days of these were quarterly Committee Meetings and 4 half days were envisaged as training which left half a day a month. This would be easier once the Committee was fully recruited. PP was to approach Veterans UK over the issue of recruiting.

PP asked the Committee to note that he, the Vice Chair and BS would further review the Strategy document prior to the next meeting and would look at the Aim, business plan, the life time of the plan and the role of the secretary should be mentioned/ defined. Training needs to be focused and not be confused with the mass of information available on the net and already supplied by the good offices of BDD and others.

BD D spoke of a communication to CCG 'S in Nottinghamshire from Dr Jonathan Leach Chair of the Armed Forces and Families Clinical Reference Group, this dealing with the recognition and recording of former forces families - former MOD records are not available to GP's. BDD hoped that this could letter could move outside its current delivery base to a national level.

Item 8 – AOB.

- PD reported that RAFA had moved to Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road, Leicester. LE3 1UT.
- PP asked the Committee to note that Newcastle University are running MA courses for veterans using distance learning techniques.
- PP, a member of the steering group of the Veterans Research Hub (VRH) at Anglia Ruskin University, told the Committee that the project has received Libor money and is establishing a database of research which will be available to all.
- Sub Committee Chairs to meet at PP's home on Monday 26 September.

Next full Committee meeting will be at 11.00 am. on the 16 January 2017 - location as normal.