



Minutes: London Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee Meeting

Venue: - RAF Benevolent Fund, 67 Portland Place, LONDON, W1B 1AR

Wednesday 5th September 2018

Time 11.00 – 14.00

Present	Apologies	Observers / Guests
Lynn Verity (LV) – Chairman	Heather Nicholson (HN)	Alex Page - Head of Community Engagement Armed Forces - London
Jim Blake (JB)		Gemma Whitely – Armed Forces Covenant
Gill Grigg (GG)		
Jim Evans (JME)		
Alex Jablonowski (AJ)		
Penny Long (PL)		
Julie Thain Smith (JTS)		
Roger Hood (RH)		
Paul Clabburn (PC)		
Ken Courtenay (KC)		
Bob Money (BM)		
Andrew Ross (AR)		
Lynne Calame (LC)		
Marion Knight (secretary MK)		

ITEM 1: INTRODUCTIONS	ACTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman(LV) welcomed guests Alex Page (Head of Community Engagement Armed Forces – London) and Gemma Whitely (Armed Forces Covenant) 2. The Chairman (LV) asked for it to be noted that the Committee would be joined by 	

David Murray from the RAF Benevolent Fund at the March 2019 meeting	
<p>ITEM 2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apologies for absence were accepted from Committee member HJ 	
<p>ITEM 3: DECLARATION OF INTEREST</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman(LV) reminded Committee members that they must declare any interest arising out of their personal/business life which could conflict with VAPC business 2. No declarations of interest 	
<p>ITEM 4: PRESENTATION – ARMED FORCES COVENANT – ALEX PAGE AND GEMMA WHITELEY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee received a presentation regarding the Armed Forces Covenant and the work it involves and who benefits from it. Gemma explained an important part of the work is increasing the awareness and knowledge about the armed forces and the covenant. She also explained about the Armed Forces Covenant Fund 2. Gemma explained that the current project will be launched at the end of October 2018. The launch will take the form of a conference and will engage with all London boroughs. PC requested to be on the list of invitees 3. Gemma’s appointment is for two years, after which time it is hoped that the Armed Forces Covenant work will then be sustainable. Gemma explained that the London Boroughs will start initiatives within 6 months of the launch 4. PC talked about committee’s work on Housing for Veterans and believed their work could be shared with the Armed Forces Covenant representatives and the Committee and the Covenant team could profitably work together 5. AJ proposed that the London boroughs who had already signed the covenant should become members of the Employment scheme 6. The Chairman (LV) stated that there appeared to be areas of mutual interest between the Committee and the Covenant Fund and suggested a joint meeting should be held at which key representatives of the London VA&PC and the Covenant could take matters further. A meeting has now been arranged for Monday 8th October 2018 7. The Chairman (LV) also asked for support from the Covenant for the Committee’s Centenary celebrations which are being planned for VA&PCs in 2021. This will be added to the agenda for the meeting 	
<p>ITEM 5: – NEW MEMBERS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman (LV) welcomed Lynette Calame, newly appointed member to the committee 2. AR, BM and JME, previously co-opted members of the committee have now all been 	

<p>appointed full members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Total of 14 Committee members 4. The Chairman explained regrettably Mandy Hope, who had agreed to be a co-opted member of the committee had resigned due to other current commitments 5. PL asked for a thank you to be noted in the minutes to Jules Eaton who has resigned from the Committee. The Chairman (LV) stated that Jules would be sorely missed, particularly regarding his work with end of life care for veterans and their families 	
<p>ITEM 6: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman(LV) informed the Committee members that Flick Drummond, the Chairman of the SE VA&PC had thanked the Committee for allowing her to attend their last meeting. She had been very impressed with the work they undertake. The Chairman has agreed to attend a workshop on the 22nd October for SE committee 2. PC asked whether there was a report from Dave Luscombe (Regional Manager for Welfare for the South) for this meeting as he is not in attendance and he had agreed he would send a report for meetings he does not attend. GG will follow up 3. RH told the Committee that he has met with Jonny Mercer, but he was not able to help where the centenary work is concerned. RH asked whether he should pursue contact with the All Parliamentary Group for Armed Forces member James Gray. The Committee members noted that this was necessary as this was a promising connection 4. MK was asked to correct the spelling of the name of the Veteran’s Minister in the minutes 5. Item 6, point 4 the initials JE to be removed 6. The minutes were passed as a true and accurate record and MK will arrange for these to be passed to Norcross for publication 	<p>GG</p> <p>MK</p> <p>MK</p> <p>MK</p>
<p>ITEM 7: NATIONAL CHAIRMAN/VICE CHAIRMAN AND TERMS OF REFERENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paul Kingham has resigned his post as National Chair. Tony Phillips has resigned as both Regional Chair and as National Vice Chairman. The Chairman (LV) explained that she understood there were applicants for both these national roles who would take office at the next Chairman’s meeting 2. The Chairman (LV) acknowledged that the London Committee has not accepted the Terms of Reference as drafted by Veterans UK. LV stated it is was necessary that the Terms of Reference should limit the terms of appointment for the national roles to 3 years to comply with the Cabinet Office requirements as to accountability in public life 3. The Chairman (LV) will write to Andy Dowds and copy to the other Chairs of the 	

<p>regional committees with regards this matter before the next Chairman's meeting. PC to advise on letter</p> <p>4. GG stated there are certain Committee's meetings the National Chair and Deputy Chair should attend and provide reports of these meetings to the regional committees. GG to provide LV with a list</p>	<p>LV & PC</p> <p>GG</p>
<p>ITEM 8: – ANNUAL REPORT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman (LV) has written the annual report and this has been circulated 2. The Chairman (LV) informed the Committee that she had received an invitation from an Australian Study group for Veterans welfare (Department for Veterans affairs). They had made contact because they had picked up London VA&PC's details from the website. LV meeting with them on 26th September 2018 and they in turn are to prepare a paper for the Australian Government 	
<p>ITEM 9: – REPORTS FROM SUB GROUPS</p> <p>POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – GILL GRIGG – REPORT CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE MEETING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GG highlighted key points from her report and other information with reference to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Case work involving a widow from Australia who she was pleased to report was receiving grants for education for her children b) Changes to local bus timetables causing difficulties in some communities <p>HEALTH AND WELFARE – PENNY LONG – REPORT CIRCULATED BY JULIE THAIN SMITH PRIOR TO MEETING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committee members continue to attend the London NHS/Armed Forces Network meetings 2. JTS said she was in communication with Alex Page about Armed Forces Covenant funding for the GP project the sub group were undertaking <p>HOUSING – PAUL CLABBURN – REPORT CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE MEETING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 11 of the 33 London Boroughs have responded with regards to the housing seminar. PC said the committee needed to agree whether the seminar is a viable option 2. Disappointment was expressed that Westminster, Enfield and Lewisham boroughs have not responded to our enquiry/invitation 3. After some discussion it was agreed that the committee would try to arrange a housing seminar and would work with Kent University. The University would facilitate the seminar/workshop, but London would be responsible for funding. The committee believe it would be appropriate to apply to the Armed Forces Covenant Scheme for London for funding 	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The aim of the seminar, which will last approximately 2 hours, is to enable the London boroughs to adopt best practice/guidance to deal with veterans housing needs 5. PC would invite the Royal British Legion, Stoll and other specialist organisations to contribute 6. The Chairman (LV) was keen to involve and work with the Armed Forces Covenant representatives where possible. PC will act as liaison 7. The Committee will aim to hold the seminar in the Spring of 2019, depending on the availability of Kent University. PC will be the liaison member for the committee 8. PC told the Committee that it is important that we keep an up to date list of Armed Forces Champions or representatives from the London boroughs. AR will be responsible for collating the list once the names have been established by the Committee members contacting the London boroughs 9. PC explained that when we start sending out invitations we will need to track invites and responses and BM will take the lead on this 10. The committee agreed we should acknowledge the responses we have received. PC will draft a response for committee members to send to their nominated London boroughs 11. LC will take responsibility for the London boroughs originally allocated to Jules Eaton 12. A sub group has been formed by PC, AJ & LC for the purpose of organising the seminar's funding and location 13. PC agreed the recent Tobias Ellwood MP's letter which deals with the Covenant should be included in the Committees communication with all London boroughs 14. PC referenced a leaflet Norcross have produced with regards the Covenant which he will circulate and invite feedback from the Committee members. He will then draft one specifically for the London VA&PC to be handed out at the seminar 	<p>PC</p> <p>AR</p> <p>BM</p> <p>PC</p> <p>LC</p> <p>PC</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT- ALEX JABLONOWSKI</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AJ reported the Employment Scheme is doing well, 3000 people have signed up now and the chances of Barclays withdrawing from the scheme is now receding 2. JB told the Committee that there is a Disabled Veterans Education Fund which is another way of veterans being supported into future employment 	
<p>CENTENARY – ROGER HOOD – REPORT CIRCULATED PRIOR TO MEETING</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was agreed that LC would join this sub group and GG and PL would concentrate on their areas of interest. The Committee acknowledged all the hard work that this sub group had undertaken to complete the initial feasibility study 	

<p>2. RH referenced his report. He has contacted the Royal British Legion with regards their centenary celebrations to ensure the proposed VA&PC proposals are unique and that conflict does not arise. He has agreed to have regular catch ups with the Royal British Region. He explained the overall theme for VA&PC's is the past 100 years and future 10 years and that the celebrations should be focused between May – September 2021</p> <p>3. RH highlighted some of the key ideas as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) TV documentary b) A commemorative stamp c) A presence at the National Arboretum which he explained was a subsidiary of the Royal British Legion and they will facilitate d) A Guildhall lunch – hosted by the Lord Mayor of London <p>4. RH hopes funding will come from sponsors as this is a big undertaking and explained that these ideas need support from the whole Committee. LV will take the proposals to the other regional committees to gain volunteers at the Chairman's meeting in October, RH to draft for LV a summary which could be circulated to the other chairman</p> <p>5. PC expressed some concerns that this is a further big commitment for 2019 with housing already on the agenda and this will be an ongoing commitment.</p> <p>6. PC suggested the sub group should create a file of veterans who will be publicly prepared to speak about how they have been helped by VA&PC's</p> <p>7. The Committee agreed to start work on gaining agreement for a Royal mail stamp</p> <p>AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION –JIM BLAKE & PAUL CLABBURN – REPORT CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE MEETING</p> <p>1. There was nothing further to add to this agenda point</p>	<p>RH & LV</p>
<p>ITEM 10: – TREASURERS REPORT - ALEX JABLONOWSKI</p> <p>1. £30 in the bank account</p>	
<p>ITEM 11: - PANEL CASE</p> <p>1. The Committee have received an appeal to be considered if appropriate at a panel hearing. The Chairman (LV) has asked JB to take this case and he will seek the support of other committee members to form the panel if this should be necessary</p>	<p>JB</p>
<p>ITEM 12: DECEMBER MEETING AND CHRISTMAS LUNCH – 3RD DECEMBER</p> <p>1. The Chairman (LV) has been in touch with John Pritchard and established the Naval Club can host the Committee on the 3rd December for their meeting, followed by lunch. GG to organise. It was agreed that this was a suitable venue</p> <p>2. GG to book dates for the 2019 meetings at the RAF Benevolent Fund offices</p>	<p>GG GG</p>