

MINUTES OF THE 28th MEETING OF THE EAST MIDLANDS VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE HELD AT THE OFFICERS MESS, PRINCE WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER BARRACKS GRANTHAM ON MONDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2018.

Present:

Peter POOLE (PP) Chairman.
Patrick RENDALL (PR) Deputy Chairman.
Larry HENSON (LH) Meetings Secretary.
David WILSON (DW) General Secretary
Michael WHITEHEAD (MW)
Barry SMITH (BS)
David TAYLOR (DT)
Dick HURWOOD (DH)
Stav MELIDES (SM)
Bill DIXON-DODDS (BDD)
Janis MUMFORD (JM)
Helen DREW-BRADLEY (HDB)
Jim WRIGHT(JW)
Gail CRAGGS (Veterans Welfare Service).

Apologies:

John BERRY (JB).
Ron GAITPAIN (RG).
Janis MUMFORD (JM)
Ray BOYFIELD (RB)
Ben HODGES (BH).
Gillian EKINS (GE)

ITEM 1 – WELCOME / OPENING REMARKS

1. PP said that he was glad now to be fit enough to be able to retake the Chair after a period of absence through illness. Throughout his illness he had been able to keep abreast of the work done by the Committee to be central to the provision of advice to those responsible for ensuring that the actions required under the Covenant are carried out. He went on to thank all Committee members for their support during this difficult time and particularly the Vice Chairman (PR) and Sub Committee leads.

2. PP went on to introduce and welcome Janis MUMFORD (JM) who brings considerable NHS expertise to bring to the committee. He also welcomed Gail CRAGGS from the Veterans Welfare Service. To enable Gail to get away promptly he would bring forward item 9 on the agenda.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. There were no declarations of interests that would affect the work of the Committee.

ITEM 3 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. Minuted above.

ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – MATTERS ARISING.

5. The minutes of the last meeting were examined and unanimously approved. There were no matters arising.

ITEM 9 - VWS REPORT.

6. The Chairman thanked Gail Craggs, on this her first visit to the Committee, for sparing the time to give a short presentation on Veterans Welfare Service matters (VWS). Gail provided a resume of the work she and others from the VWS, had been involved in since our previous meeting. These included presentations, seminars and VWS representation with job centres, charity organisations and the NHS - all in addition to her normal everyday VWS role.

7. Gail advised the Committee that a new Regional Welfare Manager (Michelle Shackleton) has been appointed. She added that her predecessor Dan Isherwood would remain with Veterans UK and was starting the hand over process at this time.

8. The Committee was advised that the VWS was trying a number of new ways of working including a two tier Welfare Manager role. The new system which began in July 2018 together with the effects of a new IT system will be evaluated shortly.

9. Gail reminded the Committee that the VWS operates in 4 regions based on Glasgow – Kidderminster – Blackpool - Portsmouth making the regions large and difficult to cover. There is a Central Telephone number - 0808 1914218.

10. Whilst discussing VWS performance Gail said that whilst the summer months had been fairly quiet they were expecting an upturn in enquiries/claims/request now Autumn had arrived.

- PR asked if the VWS could provide statistics on the number of calls requesting help and information by category had been received.
- JM said it would be helpful to know from which region enquiries came.
- SM asked what VWS was doing to publicise and create understanding of the VAPC role. Gail agreed that there needed to be greater awareness.
- PP questioned the degree of coordination between all those involved in delivering assistance to veterans – VWS, NHS, Local Authorities, business. Gail said that whilst work was being done with the business sector the bulk of their clients were not of working age or were disabled. PP urged a closer working relationship between EMVAPC and VWS.
- DT queried whether the provision of statutory support to veterans was sufficient for the cases undertaken by VWS. There was a general acceptance that the ex service organisations did a good job of plugging any areas of concern.
- SM asked about the recent high profile media cases which had arisen and whether VWS had previously been in touch with the veterans at the heart of these cases. Gail was unable to comment and PP made the point that many veterans disappeared from the radar until they were in some distress.

PP thanked Gail for her input to the meeting and hoped she would attend future meetings.

ITEM 5 FUTURE RECRUITMENT PLANNING.

11. The question of tenure of a position had been raised by a number of longer serving members. The Chairman said that he had checked the rule with Veterans UK and the upper limit for serving on a committee was 10 years. PP said at this time our numbers totalled eighteen, including two co-opted members - but that before the end of the coming year several members and the Chair would reach the end of their time.

12. With this in mind he would attempt to recruit three more members this year, he emphasised that it was necessary to identify skills required for the sub committees work, see what is missing, and to look for suitable organisations such as Blesma and RAFA to see if we can find suitable persons to join our committee. DW said he had a good candidate in mind, PP advised members to point potential members to the Government recruitment website.

ITEM 6 – ITEMS FOR NEXT CHAIRS MEETING..

13. The Chairman asked members to let him have any matters they wanted him to raise at the Chairmans Conference in October. The following were identified:.

- Quality of training.
- Veterans UK reaction time to questions.
- Sharing best practice.
- ID cards.
- Indemnity for members visiting veterans.
- Veterans Gateway performance/future funding.
- CJS veterans.

NB. Next Chairs meeting on 17th/18th October - any further input by the beginning of October.

ITEM 7 – COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT.

14. The draft 2018 Annual Report had been distributed to sub Committee leads prior to its delivery to Norcross, the Chairman thanked all those who had contributed to the report, the final version of which had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting.

ITEM 8 – BUSINESS PLANS UPDATE.

15. BS had circulated the Business Plans and it was agreed these were comprehensive and well written and everyone present thought the targets were achievable.

ITEM 10 – SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS.

16. Health – Lead DH.

a. GP Registrar Training. DH said JM is leading on this, training is taking place in Leicester and Northamptonshire. JM is examining how the reach of this initiative can be extended to Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Next year there will be training for GP registrars in Kettering on 6th March and Leicester on 23rd May. We have offered our physical support for the future training.

b. GP Accreditation. 'We are an Armed Forces Veterans friendly accredited GP Practice'

This motto was promoted by NHSE in July; progress has been delayed as a project manager is due to be appointed to run the scheme nationally.

c. EMAS Liaison. RSH attended the EMAS AGM and raised our EMVAPC profile with Pauline Tagg – the Chair. She is keen to promote EMAS representation at the various Civil Military Partnership Boards.

d. Prisons. JB has been working with Nottinghamshire NHS Trust on a project to speed up the transfer of prisoners with mental health issues to secure hospitals (where necessary). This may benefit the welfare of some ex service personnel.

e. Veterans and Custody (jointly with Welfare Sub Committee) Work being carried out with the Welfare sub committee. See below.

f. DH was aware that "Gainsborough NHS Neighbourhood Team" was doing some work with veterans and undertook get details. **Afternote:** DH has contacted Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust (Media Dept - Sue - Tel: 01522 309194) she will email DH if any r colleagues could help... awaiting response!.

g. DH noted the Veterans Gateway number given at the meeting. (0808 1914 2 1918) rang it and found that the number is no longer in service, a recorded message does say many people are still phoning it. **Afternote:** On the website, Veterans Gateway phone number is 0808 802 1212 (not as catchy, is it?) This will be clarified at the next meeting as an action arising.

17. Welfare – Lead DT.

a. Service Mapping Exercise. DT reported that the mapping exercise to identify all veteran related charities and services within the East Midlands area continues. The sub-committee has begun to compile lists of contacts and organisations by region. Once complete, each area will be analysed to identify areas of shortfall or examples of best practise. The outcome of the research and any actions required will be an issue for the committee as a whole..

b. Veterans in the CJS. Jointly DH and DT have followed up on the report by Inspector Lovegrove which maps veterans arrested across the 5 East Midlands Forces over an 11

month period. The idea is to put some flesh on an initiative which would help to keep veterans out of custody when it is appropriate to do so by putting context and texture on to their military experience if it is material to the crime. The next action is to put a small number of key agencies together to understand how EMVAPC can provide support to this initiative.. Discussion at the meeting required that we stop short of sponsoring (or even facilitating) this idea, but it was felt appropriate that we could be honest brokers with other key agents. They may be from police/TRBL/Skillforce/ Princes Trust. Progress will continue through October and November. .

18. Policy and Governance - Lead BS

a. BS said that the sub-committee had met and reviewed plans and targets before the 2018 update of the strategy and plan. More widely the sub-committee was concentrating on Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire now that engagement activity with Northamptonshire and Leicestershire was good. It is apparent that some local authorities are less willing to share but all see the benefits of discussions surrounding sharing of best practice.

b. The SC Report for the period to September 18 is attached to these minutes.

19. Communications – Lead MW.

a. The Twitter account was now up and running thanks to BH for his efforts. MW urged members to sign up to Twitter and follow our account and send contributions directly to him so that we could tweet more than we are at the moment.

b. MW agreed to send around an electronic screen shot of the twitter handle. (NB -This has now been done since the meeting)

ITEM 11 – LEAVE BEHIND PUBLICITY MATERIAL

20. PP said this item had already been lodged as an agenda point at the Chairs meeting in October. .

ITEM 12 – EMVAPC BADGES

21. Another item already lodged with Veterans UK.

ITEM 13 – CHRISTMAS PLANS

22. PP said it had been agreed that there would not be a Christmas lunch due to difficulties in finding deserving veterans. After much discussion the consensus was that we would use any further monies in the account to fund Veterans attending other functions when we ourselves could attend. It was emphasised that we would pay for our own tickets. PP added that when the money had been spent the bank account should be closed. (RB and LH to note). LH suggested that prior to making commitments that they should check on finance availability.

23. SM offered to invite any member as a guest in the Mess at Grantham as he himself was a member.

ITEM 14 - DATA VAULT UPDATE

24. MW confirmed that the Data Bank was now fully functioning and that all pillar heads had been sent an electronic copy of what was stored in their files and that this would happen on a monthly basis from this time.

25. MW said that BDD was an invaluable source of information and he and MW were working together to ensure the information flow rates were as balanced as possible. Heads of pillars were asked for more feedback when asked if they wanted documents to be archived in the Data Bank.

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

26. PR raised the issue of GDPR . He had received an Email saying that the author had been made redundant and therefore the information video had not been done.. All agreed with PP that we need advice and guidance on this and said that he would refer to it at the next Chairs meeting

ITEM 16 -- DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

27. LH said that the next Committee Meeting is to take place at Grantham Barracks on Monday 21st January 2019 at 10.30am.

.
PP thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 1.50pm..

Peter Poole

Lt Col (Retd).

Chairman EMVAPC

**Meeting Secretary Larry Henson telephone 07946756265 or Email
lzhenson@gmail.com**