

Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committees (VA&PC)



Minutes: London Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee Meeting

Venue: - Naval Club 38 Hill Street, Mayfair, LONDON W1J 5NS

Monday 3rd December 2018

Time: 10.00 – 13.00

Present	Apologies	Observers / Guests
Lynn Verity (LV) Chairman	Alex Jablonowski (AJ)	Rob Rowntree (VETS UK)
Jim Blake (JB) – Deputy Chairman	Ken Courtenay (KC)	Barry Griffiths (Eastern
Gill Grigg (GG)		Region VA&PC)
Penny Long (PL)		
Julie Thain Smith (JTS)		
Paul Clabburn (PC)		
Bob Money (BM)		
Andrew Ross (AR)		
Roger Hood (RH)		
Heather Betts (HB)		
Jim Evans (JME)		
Lynne Calame (LC)		
Marion Knight (Secretary MK)		

<p>ITEM 1: Introductions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman welcomed Rob Rowntree (UK VETS) and Barry Griffiths from the Eastern Region VA&PC 2. The Chairman also informed the Committee that Gill Grigg was retiring after this meeting and was the longest serving member on the committee, Gill had given sterling service and Lynn personally thanked her for all her help over the years. This was endorsed by Rob Rowntree on behalf of VETS UK 	<p>ACTION</p>
<p>ITEM 2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apologies for absence were accepted from committee members AJ & KC 	
<p>ITEM 3: DECLARATION OF INTEREST</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Chairman reminded Committee members that they must declare any interest arising out of their personal/business life which could conflict with VAPC business. 	
<p>ITEM 4: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes of the Previous meeting were adopted, and MK was instructed to send the minutes to Norcross for publication 	<p>MK</p>
<p>ITEM 5: VA&PC South East Committee and Australian Veteran’s Scoping Study</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over the last couple of years, the Chairman explained how other committee members from various regions had requested to attend the London Committee’s meetings, Lloyd from West Midlands and Flick Drummond from the South East. She wanted to say thank you to all the London Committee members as this highlighted the level of respect for the work the London Committee had undertaken 2. The Australian Veterans Scoping Study team had visited the UK and had examined the way Canada and London worked with veterans. They had asked the Chairman to meet them and explain London’s programme, which she had undertaken in October give evidence which she has done. The study group were writing a report and the Chairman explained she would circulate this to all committee members when she received it. Rob Rowntree wanted to highlight the work Veterans UK undertakes with the Commonwealth 	

ITEM 6: - VETS UK REPORT, INCLUDING THE CHAIRMANS CONFERENCE- ROB ROWNTREE

1. Rob explained that looking after veterans was very much a team effort and that VA&PC's were very much part of that team
2. There are currently a lot of Government led veterans' initiatives and in the New Year there will be 2-3 workshops to get all the interested parties involved. This will include VA&PC members from various committees
3. Rob highlighted how the political environment in Ireland had changed over the years. VETS UK want to ensure a common level of service provided to both Northern and Southern Ireland regardless of the border
4. VETS UK needed to work with other partners such as RBL, the Ministry of Justice and other key stakeholders to ensure the appropriate support is available for appeals to tribunals and specifically that there is a speedier response time for dealing with issues raised by veterans

Rob explained that currently an extensive piece of work was being undertaken by VEKS UK regarding the delivery of the ID card for Veterans. All veterans leaving the armed forces from December 2018 will receive a card. The main aim is to get veterans to apply on line and currently looking for the on-line for the card and currently VETS UK is looking for on line solution providers. There will be other ways of applying for a card, apart from on line as not all veterans will be able to adopt the digital solution. It will not be mandatory for a veteran to obtain a card

5. Rob told the Committee that VETS UK were working on a warm handover to help when someone left the services and went into civilian life. The Defence Transition Service addressed issues of housing, finance, schooling and health etc. PC suggested CV writing should be an important part of this transition. Rob explained this would be in the remit of the Career Transition Partnership, but said he would follow this up as PC had raised it
6. VETS UK are looking at rail travel options for veterans specifically travel to remembrance services and events

ITEM 7: – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE SUB-GROUPS

HOUSING – PAUL CLABBURN – (refer to the sub groups report to the Committee circulated before the meeting)

1. The Chairman gave a quick overview to the visitors at the meeting. PC explained the work had moved on since the last meeting. The Breakfast Seminar now has a venue – the RAF club and has been arranged for Monday 3rd June with an 8.00 am start. PC thanked LC for arranging the venue free of charge
2. PC explained numbers have yet to be decided and the group are currently looking at funding and the content for the event
3. PC explained that top level invitations will be sent in the New Year. PC asked all committee members to follow up with their associated London Boroughs, if they have not had contact from their Armed Forces Champions
4. The first steering group meeting is due to take place on the 5th December 2018 and in attendance will be London VA&PC Housing group members, HQ London District, RBL and Kent University
5. The Chairman requested that the Housing group give a further update of the plans for the Seminar at the March meeting
6. PC informed the Committee that he is continuing to work with RBL to try and secure an Armed Forces Champion for London
7. AR explained he had been looking at how the Committee held information and he has set up files in the cloud which the Committee could all use. It is held on Google Drive LVAPC1921@gmail.com AR informed the Committee of the password. It was proposed the new system was trialed and was due to go live in January 2019. AR will send out an explanation memo. AR, BM and MK will be administrators of the system

ALL

PC

AR

CENTENARY – ROGER HOOD (refer to the sub groups report to the Committee circulated before the meeting)

1. RH explained the focus is on the National Arboretum. The Committee will need the West Midland Region's help and support with this initiative. The West Midlands Region has not yet been approached
2. The Conference facilities at the Arboretum are excellent and if a booking is made, it will form the focus point of the main centenary event. Roger has secured the support of Kingsley, the National Chair of VA&PC's for this venture. The event is proposed to run from mid-morning to mid-afternoon and it is planned will include a ceremony of some kind to mark the centenary and a buffet lunch. Trees are the preferred option for a memorial, with a plaque of some kind commemorating 100 years of VA&PC's
3. The sub group are also looking to arrange a London event for the centenary at the Guildhall, (dependent upon cost and funding) LC will contact the new Lord Mayor of London to discuss this option over the next 3 months
4. LC has been in touch with the Royal Mail with regards a centenary stamp and she has been given a point of contact. LC believes designing the stamp will be expensive. The Chairman suggested a competition between local schools and colleges for the design and HC suggested involving the Military Families Association
5. RH will continue to pursue the documentary idea. Some ideas were discussed to help with this piece of work which included, publications through Vets UK to find people who may have a story to tell of how they or their families have been helped by VA&PCs, a PHD student to write a piece about the VA&PC's

LC

LC

RH

<p>history and how it was set up. PC suggested the Imperial War Museum may have information and agreed to make contact</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. LC has set up an e mail account CentenaryVAPC@gmail.com 7. Rob Rowntree agreed to be the VETS UK link and agreed to arrange a London Venue for the Chairman's 'conference in March 2019 as it is important that all committee's buy into this initiative and offer support, as it should be a UK wide celebration. PC explained a communications plan is key and Rob stated that each region needed to own its own plan and he also agreed to do some newspaper cutting research. JB suggested we also refer to the National Archives 8. RH explained funding would be important as money will need to be raised and he will be looking for help from Committee members for sponsorship ideas 	<p>PC</p>
<p>POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – GILL GRIGGS – (refer to the sub groups report to the Committee circulated before the meeting)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GG drew attention to the Strategy for Veterans Paper, a consultation paper which requires a response from the Committee by the 21st February 2019. The Committee members agreed they would give their feedback and thought through the cloud as set up by AR 2. The chairman stated that given GG's retirement JB will oversee this sub group and this group will be additionally supported by BM and JME 	<p>ALL</p>
<p>HEALTH AND WELFARE –PENNY LONG - (refer to the sub groups report to the Committee circulated before the meeting)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PL highlighted that end of life care appears to be no longer on the agenda where veterans are concerned 2. Veterans Aware Hospital Programme – only 1 London hospital on the list 3. JTS will continue with her piece of work for this sub group and agreed to review her paper again in January 2019 to ensure all areas are covered 	<p>JTS</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT – JIM EVANS – (refer to the sub groups report to the Committee circulated before the meeting)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JME informed the Committee that he had attended the Barclays conference and 116 companies had signed up to the Employment Scheme. Barclays have agreed they will keep funding this project 2. JME reported that the Barclays intern days for veterans were proving successful 3. Tobias Elwood had held a round table meeting with employers who supported the Barclays initiative 4. The Defence Employers Recognition Scheme has been closed for 9 months; however, it will reopen for a month in early 2019 for applications. JME said he would raise with the London Boroughs their participation 	<p>JME</p>

<p>ITEM 8: TREASURERS REPORT</p> <p>1. £30 in the bank account</p>	
<p>ITEM 9: PANEL CASE - JB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JB explained that a service woman had raised a complaint about her treatment from VETS UK. He in turn had raised the matter with Norcross as to whether the case should be heard at this stage 2. There is no review built into the AFC scheme for deterioration of a medical condition, which is the substance of the complaint. The Committee feel the appellant will have to raise her concerns with the Ombudsman given it is about a process which she considers unfair 3. JB to liaise with JTS & HN to get a definitive response out to the service woman 4. PC commented there should be proper training for appeals, if VA&PCs are expected to take on this responsibility and this was endorsed by the Committee 	<p>JB HN JTS</p>
<p>ITEM 10: DATES OF MEETINGS 2019</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GG has booked the dates and venue for next year's meetings and had circulated them to Committee members. The dates are as follows: Wednesday 27th March, Wednesday 12th June, Wednesday 4th September and Monday 2nd December. The venue for the meetings is the RAF Benevolent Fund and GG has agreed to confirm the December 2nd meeting as this has not yet been booked with the RAF Benevolent Fund 2. With GG retiring MK has agreed to take on responsibility for room bookings going forward and for refreshments at meetings. GG and MK will contact each other in the in New Year regarding a handover 	<p>GG</p> <p>MK GG</p>
<p>ITEM 11: AOB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman informed the Committee that MK was retiring from Marks & Spencer in March 2019 and that she had agreed to stay on as secretary to the Committee 2. MK to liaise with PC with regards ongoing Marks and Spencer contacts to support any future committee work 3. The Chairman thanked everyone on the Committee for their hard work and wished everyone the very best for the festive season and New Year 	<p>MK PC</p>