

VAPC Meeting 15th May 2019
held at Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for
Yorkshire & The Humber,
20 St George's Place, York, YO24 1DS

Item	Discussion
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1. General Items.

a. Introduction, Apologies, Minutes of Last Meeting/Matters Arising

i. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting especially our new member Jonathan Treen. All members then give a brief introduction of themselves. The Chairman then explained that this 1st meeting would be in the form of a 'reset' meeting, establishing areas of responsibility, who should represent and attend the various meetings at local authorities etc. throughout Yorkshire & Humber VAPC area.

ii. The minutes of the last meeting, which had been circulated beforehand, were discussed, confirmed and agreed.

iii. All matters arising were dealt with or would be covered in the Agenda.

b. Recruiting and Membership.

i. The Chairman then explained that 8 members were due to complete their formal length of membership although confirmation of actual commencement of appointment dates appear to indicate that they are likely to remain extant through November 2020. **Action:** Chairman to confirm with Norcross before next meeting.

ii. Proposed by Helen Singleton and seconded by Duncan Bell that Dr David Jolliffe to be the VAPC Vice Chairman (subject to his agreement). This was carried unanimously.

c. Reports: Members External Events; Quarterly Newssheet Items.

i. The Chairman then briefed members on his visit to Norcross and on his selection panel interview held at Edinburgh.

ii. Following formal appointment the Chairman attended a mandatory Chairs Induction Day at Veterans UK which was an extremely valuable insight into current activities. He briefed on a very positive visit overall and had observed that the Call Centre were very professional and extremely responsive to

veterans calls; the call watch dashboard indicated calls were dealt with almost immediately. He felt that Yorkshire & Humber committee should support increased manning when appropriate given the most valuable works being done at Norcross.

iii. ID Cards. It was noted that only Veterans who have left the military since December 2018 will automatically be given one of the new ID cards. It is likely others will be able to apply from end 2019 but as the application process is not yet confirmed, we should expect actual roll-out may not meet 'other' Veterans expectations.

iv. It was highlighted that individual members of the VAPC would require committee Identity cards for any quality assurance welfare visit they might have to attend. A question was also raised in respect of whether DBS clearances may also be required which will be referred through Veterans UK.

v. Peter Shields informed the members that as of last week they could no longer contact Welfare Officer's directly. This was felt by committee members to be a very contentious decision and was discussed thoroughly. Peter has agreed to provide a data disclosure authority template that members could use with any ex-service personnel they were dealing with.

Action Point1: Chairman to contact Veterans UK Management to highlight these points and report at next scheduled meeting.

Action Point 2: Secretary to distribute this template to all members when it became available.

vi. Secretary reported on his meeting at Rotherham. It was apparent that although Rotherham was executing the Covenant thoroughly in some cases had limited information on what was occurring in other areas. He arranged to pass on all the information from other areas he had available and Rotherham agreed that he could also distribute what was happening their area.

d. Chairs & National Covenant Conference – Action and feedback.

i. The Chairman briefed members on the Chairman's conference at MoD. Engagements took place with Rt. Hon Tobias Elwood, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, General Nugee Chief of Defence (People) VWS senior staff and Head of AF Covenant Team.

ii. AF Covenant updates – various Covenant initiatives were 'briefed' and VAPC's updated. It was clear the Minister 'et al' were clearly determined to maintain momentum in respect of overall Armed Forces Covenant activities.

iv. VAPC work-streams as a result of briefings from Conference were discussed which included review of Veterans Champions registers.

v. Set 2 Tasks will be sorted out and it was emphasised that closer collaboration with other agencies would be beneficial.

vi. The Chair attended and briefed members as to the results of the National Conference held at Newcastle. This was a constructive conference with contributions from across the UK and a unique opportunity to share best practice and be updated on various initiatives.

2. NHS Medical Support.

a. GP Services and Data recording – update.

i. It was highlighted that it seemed entirely up to the GP as to whether they took notice that they were dealing with veterans. Registration as a Veteran is still extremely sporadic (from both GP's and Veterans side) and can complicate treatment processes. We should continue to promote the benefit of registration particularly that of accessing Military Medical Records prior and during consultations. It is believed this remains a weakness and the Health sub-group will continue to report on local experiences.

b. Mental health services – update from Subgroup members - if available.

i. It was stated that there were mental welfare teams at 3 centres. The TILS service is back online and that Combat Stress is extremely active.

c. Update from Duncan Bell with regards PTSD and his continuing communication with Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence.

i. Duncan stated that Veterans were having to resort to Common Law via solicitors to pursue cases against the MoD.

ii. It probably needed a case study from solicitors Irwin and Mitchell who appear to be dealing with 25% of the claims. Up to now there had been 31 payments for PTSD from MoD and 25 in the pipeline.

3. Developing Collaboration in our Region

a. Local Authority: Update from members of all developments.

i. Developing collaboration is vital. There is a lot of good work being done by the various LA's but would benefit from further dissemination of best-practice across our Region.

b. DWP progression: Developments as to how progress is being made with identifying them as the Armed Forces Champion.

i. This work is progressing well and some excellent examples were noted.

- c. **Support to Veterans and Early service Leavers** – discussion.

No reports available.

4. Various.

- a. **VAPC Centenary (19 Aug 2021):** options for marking the occasion.

- i. This will provide an ideal opportunity to raise awareness.

- ii. Designated 100 + 10

- iii. Andrew Palmer agreed to be our representative on centenary committee and the Chairman will email Andrew's details to the Committee Chairman.

- b. **Management Plan: Develop strategy 2018-2022**

- i. As committee is in process of re-setting our strategic aims and objectives the current plan will be re-distributed to members for comment and recommendations.

- c. **Veterans Gateway: Update and awareness.**

- i. It was agreed that this should be recommended for inclusion in induction training at Norcross

- d. **Veterans Strategy:** Update.

- i. This was discussed during previous items but will need to be now formalised.

5. VWS Monitoring & Welfare Items.

- i. During in-depth discussions it was agreed that we need unambiguous guidelines and formal Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) if misunderstanding is to be avoided. It is clear that VAPC's have a duty to undertake a monitoring and quality control role, but all agree it has to be seen in a supportive nature.

6. Any Other Business.

- i. The Chairman went around all members asking for any comments.

- ii. The importance of clear 'aims and objective' are paramount to our functioning effectively.

- iii. Members agreed that any other available information, such as the minutes from the Chairman's Meeting should be readily available to all members.

iv. Hospital car parking fees – it was highlighted that at some hospitals parking for veterans with a War Pension was free! This was the case at Harrogate Hospital.

v. Medical issues - Veterans can ask for a 2nd opinion.

vi. With the development of our new strategy this VAPC (Y&H) can lead the charge!

7. Next Meetings.

i. The next meeting would be in October. The Secretary will email everyone asking for dates of their availability and then confirm the date.