



SOCIALSECURITY ACT 1989

SOUTH EAST VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2013 AT BLIND VETERANS UK, Ovingdean, Brighton

PRESENT:

Dr P Lawrence – Deputy Chairman
Mrs L Gannon – Secretary
Mrs R Campbell
Canon P Bruinvels
Mr M Robjohn
Mr R Draper
Mr P Bateman
Mrs H Brown
Mr T Roper

APOLOGIES:

Mrs S Smith, Mr I Parker, Mr K Newton, Mr W Gillett and Mr E Sturley.

1. Apologies and Introduction by Chairman

Apologies as listed. The Deputy Chairman said that the adverse weather conditions prevented some members' attendance at the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest

The Deputy Chairman reiterated that if any matter under consideration encroached on a member personally, financially or politically, it must be declared.

3. Appointment of Chairman/New Members

The Deputy Chairman said that permission to recruit had just been granted. He said that it would provide helpful continuity if a current Committee member were to seek the Chairman's position, but the important issue was to get the best people on to the Committee.

He said that we could have up to 20 members and asked the Committee to search for a Chairman and potential members. It is highly desirable to have at least one Member to represent each of our eight Counties.

[Post Meeting Note - Adverts now placed, awaiting applicants.]

There followed a general discussion regarding the effectiveness of VAPCs. It was felt that more guidance from SPVA would be helpful.

It was agreed to ask an SPVA manager from Centurion Building to the next meeting, to update the committee on work being undertaken in our area.

[Post meeting Note - Organised, SPVA Manager warned of the meeting in July.]

4 Members' Updates

Mr Bateman said that he was still awaiting training but was signposting the VAPC as much as possible.

Mr Roper said that some Councils have a Veterans Champion in each Town Hall; he had written letters, no response to date.

Canon Bruinvels updated the Committee on Veterans' issues/events being held in Surrey and reiterated that he felt members should market themselves more.

Mrs Campbell said that she had been to the Stoll Drop In Centre in London to promote the SEVA&PC, but felt that veterans attending might respond better to a male presence. Mrs Gannon suggested that the London Committee should attend this event.

Mrs Brown updated the Committee on work currently being undertaken by BVUK. She said that she attended a hub at Tedworth House quarterly and would report back to the Committee after her next meeting. She would give members a tour of the building, should they wish.

Mr Draper said that he was currently involved in four Welfare cases. Oxford is trying to set up a Veterans Hub along the lines of the Veterans Outreach (Portsmouth), which he and Mr Lawrence had visited and admired.

Mrs Gannon updated the Committee on the work of the Veterans Outreach (Portsmouth) and the good work being undertaken there and suggested that the most important thing was the venue. She also discussed the Benefits reform, as a fellow worker at RNBT had been to a presentation. She could forward the presentation to those who wished to see it.

Mr Lawrence said that he had made a point to the Minister by letter for fair Terms and Conditions of Service for Reservists to be in place by 2015, to allow for 5 years 'snagging', prior to FR20. He also noted a lot of work being done in the South to effect a seamless transition into "civvy street", from housing to health matters.

5. Sub Committee to Design Response to Consultation on FR20

It was agreed that it was now too late to form a sub-committee, as consultation had closed, but Mr Bateman agreed to accept the Committee's comments and submit a draft to Mr Lawrence, for him, as Deputy Chairman, to write detailing SE VA&PC concerns.

6. Any Other Business

Further discussion took place on transition to civilian life; there is a generous resettlement package available to everyone leaving the services, but it must be for individuals to avail themselves of the offer. It was felt that some Service people were still failing to help themselves. Units perhaps had more to do in this regard.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 2nd July at TRBL Headquarters, Borough High Street, London, **commencing at 1130.**