

**SOUTH WEST VETERANS ADVISORY & PENSIONS COMMITTEE**  
**(VA&PC)**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013 at The Rifles Taunton at 1100 hours**

PRESENT

**Mr S Coltman OBE (Chairman)**  
**Mr T Coyle**  
**Mrs J Dent**  
**Mr C Francis**  
**Mr P Heavey**  
**Mrs J Jennings**  
**Mr A Jones**  
**Mr K Naylor**  
**Mrs A Scales**  
**Mrs H Smith**  
**Brig C Wolverson OBE DL**  
**Mrs I Wills**  
**Mr J T Yerbury**  
**In Attendance**  
**Mrs J Wilcockson, Digital Literacy Coordinator, Wiltshire County Council**  
**Mr D Luscombe, VWS SW Region**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>101.0</b>	<b><u>WELCOME</u></b> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Jenny Wilcockson, the Digital Literacy Coordinator for Wiltshire CC and Dave Luscombe from the VWS.	
<b>101.0</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Mr A Durcan Mrs C Miskelly (Observer) Mr T Picher (V Chairman) Mr B Wilkinson Mr M Smith Mr J Willmot CBE The latter two members had advised that they were unable to attend due to the bad weather. Cdr T Herman OBE, RN, RN Regional Deputy Commander, SW & Wales Region.	
<b>102.0</b>	<b><u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u></b> The Chairman reminded members that should anything be discussed at the meeting, which might constitute a conflict of interest between their personal life and VA&PC business they should declare it at the outset. He mentioned his involvement with the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Tribunal as a Service Member and he ensured he did not sit on any cases that he had been previously involved in with the SW VAPC. No others were declared.	
<b>103.0</b>	<b><u>Regulations</u></b> Although No VAPC Regulations had yet been produced by the MOD/SPVA, the Terms of Reference for the SW VAPC had been circulated and, as there had been no suggested amendments, they would be adopted pro tem.	
<b>104.0</b>	<b><u>Appointments and Resignations</u></b> Mr A Croker had tendered his resignation.	

105.0	<b><u>To receive and consider the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012</u></b> These were accepted as a true record and were passed for publication on the website.	Chris Francis	
105.1	<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b> Any update on individual cases would be given in Item 8.		
105.2	<b>Medical Discharges (Para 89.2).</b> Chris Francis reported that a new RAFA employee had just started at RAF High Wycombe to look after all RAF Medical Discharges. He hoped to arrange a meeting with the Chairman in due course.		
105.3	<b>Legacy Issues – Musculoskeletal Problems Para 89.3.</b> In the absence of any problems from the RNHRD, it was assumed that contact had been made, as requested, with the SPVA.		
105.4	<b>Veterans Welfare Service (VWS).</b> The Chairman had received and circulated all the details of the Welfare Managers in the SW. <b>Action Complete.</b> During discussion on this matter, the changes to the State Pension Scheme were touched on and the press reports about increased NI charges. As the changes would not start until 2017, we would await further information but it did look as though all those in occupational pension schemes (like HM Forces) would no longer be opted out (as there would be no 2 <sup>nd</sup> State Pension).		
105.5	<b>SPVA Helpline (Para 92.0).</b> This matter would be picked up in the VWS Update at Item 10.		
105.6	<b>VAPC Action Plan (Para 97.0).</b> In the absence of the Vice Chairman, this matter would be dealt with out of committee and an update would be circulated in due course.		Vice Chairman
105.7	<b>Centralized Contact List (Para 99.0).</b> With the resignation of Arthur Croker, the Chairman asked the VAPC if there would be another volunteer to take this matter over. Please contact the Chairman.		
			All
106.0	<b><u>Chairman's Report to include Panel Cases.</u></b>		All
106.1	<b>JSP 536.</b> As a result of an RAFA Tribunal case, this JSP received some publicity. This JSP covers the payment of no fault compensation to Human Volunteers injured as a direct result of participating, as a non-patient (healthy) human volunteer in research conducted by the MOD.		
106.2	<b>Wiltshire's Joint Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy.</b> The Chairman would be sending in our comments by 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 13. If anyone had any further thoughts, they should send them as soon as possible to him.		
106.3	<b>Army Redundancy – Phase 2.</b> The VAPC had received no further information from 43 Bde. The onus was now on them to inform the VAPC if they required any further assistance.		
106.4	<b>SPVA/Tribunal/SPO/AFCS.</b> The Chairman had attended a recent Tribunal Training Meeting and the following items of interest came up:		
106.41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SPVA Assessment Appeals</b> – Tribunals can no longer give Assessments as composite %s unless there are specific reasons, normally medical. Also an appellant often says he does not want to have some of the multiple injuries reviewed; only those he is concerned about. However, all the case will be examined and some might be reduced if adequate reasons exist.</li> </ul>		
106.42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Medical.</b> It is planned that the SPVA Doctors will have a meeting with some Tribunal doctors.</li> </ul>		
106.43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Review Situation.</b> cf Cartwright (UT decision). As a</li> </ul>		

106.44	<p>result of this a lot of appeals have been stayed and are awaiting action. The SPVA may amend the legislation on Reviews (Art 44 of the SPO).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AFCS Cases.</b> New evidence is often introduced at Tribunal in relation to tariff levels sought. If adjourned, the SPVA may say that their Review Powers are exhausted after the reconsideration. It therefore needs the Tribunal to make the decision, or the Tribunal uses a Consent Form with no hearing but there is no right of appeal here to the UT.</li> </ul>	
106.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Temp/Int Awards.</b> Only one temporary award case referred by a Tribunal has succeeded. On all those that failed, the Medical Advisor has produced detailed advice as to why they have not gone down that route. Work continues. MH awards are being reviewed again by IMEG. There maybe some changes, but these would not be retrospective.</li> </ul>	
106.46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
106.47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ATOS Medicals.</b> SPVA clients have to sign the Doctor's report (since Sep). Only 1 complaint had been received out of 800 WPMEs in Sep.</li> </ul>	
106.48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SPVA Decisions.</b> Only 8% of all SPVA decisions come to Tribunal.</li> </ul>	
106.5	<p><b>Welfare Reform.</b> Considerable information has been published and this may prove to be a considerable challenge over the next 4 years. One important point, on which the Chairman was seeking advice, was in relation to PIPs – when the DLA stops and PIP will only start at the time of the stoppage, if the person cooperates and meets the criteria. Question – if the DLA is removed, will any allowance be paid during the appeal process?</p>	
106.6	<p><b>AFIP</b> – This will be designed to grant PIP (Care &amp; Mobility) at the Enhanced Rate to all those in receipt of a 50% GIP under the AFCS. It is thought about 1,230 could benefit. In comparison to the PIP, there will be no further reviews and those with the Mobility element will, of course, be entitled to a Blue Badge. This VAPC, along with others, felt that the criteria were too generous. It will be interesting to see the fallout in the future.</p>	
106.7 106.71		
106.72		
106.73		
106.74		



	<p>involved in the new Recovery Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SPVA Helpline at Norcross has much improved its service although it has received a record number of calls. Waiting times have been considerably reduced and recently there has been no wait.</li> <li>• The VWS has had difficulties with the Vulnerable Service Leaver, as the protocol is not a mature process. The VSI/SI are generally well looked after and that process works well.</li> <li>• It is anticipated that the VWS will have a large workload with the introduction of the Universal Credit (UC) and PIPs. There is also a fair amount of work involved with the continuing change from Incap to ESA. It was mentioned that although ESA is granted for 12 months, there is a 3 month Revalidation Process, which started in Nov 12, but the information is not very obvious. It is hoped that the DWP guidance for UC/PIP will be better.</li> <li>• The VWS has recently briefed the RAF Administrators' Course on AFCS and the SPO. This had been well received.</li> </ul> <p>The Chairman thanked Dave Luscombe for his interesting contribution.</p>	
<b>109.0</b>	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> This will be on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at the Rifles in Taunton at 11am. However, this might change if the new Chairman has any specific problem</p>	<b>All</b>
<b>110.0</b> <b>110.1</b>  <b>110.2</b>  <b>110.3</b>  <b>110.4</b>  <b>110.5</b>	<p><b><u>Exchange of Information &amp; AOB.</u></b> The following came up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Francis reported that he had dealt with 3 RAF Medical Discharges of WOs/SNCOs who had initially been awarded a Tier 1 AFPS 05 award by SPVA, Glasgow but had successfully appealed and been granted Tier 2 Awards. As they have not yet left, they have not been assessed for any AFCS Award.</li> <li>• Jane Jennings outlined some of the impending changes in Phase 2 of the RBL Re-organization. This would affect the County Welfare Officers and County Manager Assistants. There would probably be some redundancies/changes and some County Officers would close. The new Main Offices would be in Plymouth, Bristol, Swindon &amp; Southampton. Some staff would now work from home. There would also be some changes in what types of assistance that would be given.</li> <li>• Amanda Scales mentioned a facility, Hannahs, near Newton Abbot (Post Code TQ12 6NQ, Tel 01626 325800), which is a Community Resource that Blind Veterans make use of. There is a school for the Brain Damaged and they host the Warrior Programme. It might be useful for meetings at some time in the future. Further details can be found at: <a href="http://www.discoverhannahs.org/seale-hayne">www.discoverhannahs.org/seale-hayne</a></li> <li>• Jean Dent mentioned the new Defence Discount Service, with a Defence Privilege Card, that can be accessed on line via <a href="http://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk">www.defencediscountservice.co.uk</a> This allows for discounts from a variety of organizations.</li> <li>• Tom Coyle updated the meeting on the postponed MOD meeting with the RM at Hasler Company. This had been postponed due to the bad weather. He will update the</li> </ul>	

	meeting in due course after the MOD/SPVA meeting takes place.	
<b>111.0</b>	<b>The Meeting ended at 1320hrs</b>	