

# North West Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committee

Minutes of meeting held Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012

At

Kimberley Barracks, Preston

Commencing at 10.30am

## **Members Present :**

Cllr Mike France (Chairman)(MF) Lt Col. John Lighten (JL)

Tony Hynes(TH) Terry Whitehead (TW)

Cllr Edward Nash (EN)

Cllr Gillian Cuthbertson (GC) Stan Rawcliffe (SR)

Kevin Hartley (KH) Brenda Brown (BB)

## **Also Present :**

VWS Officers – Russ Egan Acting Regional Manager (RE)

David Brown – Secretary (DB)

## **Apologies recieved:**

Mike Downes (MD) Michael Grell (MG) Shauna Dixon (SD) Andy Bacon (AB)

<p>1.</p>	<p><b><u>Introduction and Welcome</u></b></p> <p>The Chairman introduced BB to the members and Russ Egan – Acting Regional Manager from the Veterans Welfare Service. He invited both to give the members present a brief pen picture of themselves.</p> <p>The Chairman said he would like to invite a representative from the SPVA to our meetings and have a slot on the agenda for them.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b><u>Apologises</u></b></p> <p>Mike Downes (MD)</p> <p>Michael Grell (MG)</p> <p>Shauna Dixon (SD)</p> <p>Andy Bacon (AB)</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b><u>Minutes of previous meeting</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed a true record of the proceedings.</p> <p>Proposed: TW</p> <p>Seconded: GC</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>TH enquired why the Secretary was not put on committee as after listening to his qualifications at last meeting he is better qualified than us here. He enquired re the Colonel that was on the panel and MF said he was out of order and the matter was concluded.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b><u>Declaration of Interest</u></b></p> <p>MF said that this subject has changed and that each organisation is expected to consider its own standards as well as abiding by the OCPA guidelines. The main concern for the committee is to establish if a member had a conflict of interest with the running of the committee or parts of the agenda. Each member has a duty to declare their interest (If one exists) and it's up to the committee to decide if a conflict of interest existed and decide if that member should stay or leave the meeting whilst the subject was discussed. MF also proposed that a register of the declarations and outcomes be kept by the secretary and that it was worth while keeping it on the agenda. If there were no conflicts raised then no entry would be made.</p> <p>Proposed: MF</p>

	<p>Seconded: KH</p> <p><b>No declarations declared.</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Sub Groups</u></b></p> <p>MF handed out A4 sheet with what each Sub Group encompassed. MF asked for each member to pick a group and put their names forward. To date he had 3 names but would like the whole committee to nominate themselves to whatever group they felt that they had skills or an interest in.</p> <p>TH said that he was unsure about the sub groups. He also stated that he found it strange that NW is such a large area but yet doesn't hear of any complaints or cases being passed to the committee. He stated that he would prefer to be left out of the groups. MF said he would prefer he joined one as then all members would be involved more in the committee and could help to spread the word about the committee and our role. TH said that as the committee was not well known, would it be possible to write direct to Regiments and inform them about the role of the committee. MF said he could still do that, but the sub groups had a different role. MF stated that his aim would be to increase it from 12 to 20 by bringing on new members. MF said everyone has their own skills, which they can utilise in the sub groups and by bringing all the experience together across the region can use that experience to shape the committee.</p> <p>MF reiterated to TH that as we are all here to raise the profile of the VAPC writing to Regiments isn't a problem even though as KH put it all soldiers on leaving the services get a 78 page booklet containing all names and addresses of organisations that can be of assistance to them and the VAPC is one such name.</p> <p>MF said in many cases the direct approach does not work. The informal approach, with networking all organisations, did appear to have more success. The networking events, brings them on board and the spreads the word about the committee more easily. MF wants to use the experience within the committee to raise the awareness. MF asked TH which group he would prefer to join to which he replied the PR Group.</p> <p>The make-up for the groups is as follows:</p> <p>Mapping &amp; Coordination:</p> <p><b>AB, JL</b></p> <p>PR:</p> <p><b>EN, KH, BB, GC, TH</b></p>

Governance & Compliance:

**TW, MG, SR**

GC said that she had sent a letter to her local newspaper, which she give a copy to members and indeed was printed. TH said he had sent letter to Merseyside Radio, which had been read out.

MF asked could we have a lead spokesperson for each group.

PR – GC

Mapping –

Governance – TW

MF asked could each sub group meet and come back to the next meeting with a plan, comment on existing procedures or develop new ideas. MF said he would speak to members not present to come up with a lead for the other group.

MF mentioned that one option to use to increase the size of the committee from 12 to 20 was to co-opt members who would like to join the committee but couldn't join yet due to the recruiting process. Co-opting them on could be a way to not lose them. He has 3 names as potential new members to date, 2 in Cumbria and 1 in Cheshire were we don't have anyone in those areas. MF asked the committee their thoughts on bringing these potential members on board early as co-opted members. BB said that these new members should go through the strict procedures which everyone else had to go through, which MF assured her they would, but bring them in earlier as co-opted members may be useful.

GC mentioned that prior to this committee; the co-opted members were taking over the previous committee. MF assured members that this would not happen and that his suggestion was only an option. TW said we need to be big enough to accept help and it is for all of us. SR said previous co-opted members were introduced first. TH said he was not in favour of co-opted members unless they have a specific role to play. He asked could the members who were unsuccessful in getting into this committee come on board also. MF said any member could nominate a person to be co-opted as he wouldn't want to lose people who are keen to join but unfortunately the recruiting process is out of his control. MF said it would be worthwhile co-opting these 3 members as they are from areas where we have no representation.

TH asked was the VAPC advertised in Cheshire/Cumbria and was told by MF that when it comes to recruiting it is widely advertised, but most recruits come by way of word of mouth. TW said that the selection is on

	<p>merit and not always with military background. EN said it may prove useful to co-opt specialist into the Sub groups.</p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that the 3 members be contacted with a view to attending the next meeting for consideration as a co-opted member.</p> <p>Proposed: MF</p> <p>Seconded: TW</p>
7	<p><b><u>Website and Pen Pictures</u></b></p> <p>MF said that the VAPC section on the website is being updated. It was going to be moved around to a different section but that pen pictures of each member of the committee is important so that people can identify who is on the committee. MF asked would all members email DB with their pictures for collating. Any contacts could be sent through the Centre and then onto MF. EN asked why we can't put all your own details on so that veterans can contact the individual members. MF said this was a personal choice and didn't mind either way.</p>
8	<p><b><u>Business Plan &amp; Purpose</u></b></p> <p>MF admitted that with having been very busy the business plan was not done, but would like to hand this over to the Governance Group. MF said that he had received various example plans from other committees, but that Yorkshire &amp; Humber's was good and very thorough. GC asked could this be emailed to everyone, which MF agreed to do. TW to lead the group on this task.</p> <p>TW asked would it be possible for emails of the members within his group; DB to do this. MF said he would get a complete list of names and emails and forwarded to all members.</p> <p>TH said about business cards but MF said unfortunately could not claim the expense back. TH asked about the upcoming course he was attending, had not received any information. MF suggested contacting Charlotte at the Centre.</p>
9	<p><b><u>Around the Region</u></b></p> <p>MF said this will be on the agenda so we can see what is going on around the Region.</p> <p>MF said that the networking events for each county area were progressing, 5 have been held in Lancashire which have been very successful and he has now compiled a guest list of who should attend. It helps to bring all the other organisations together informally and helps to spread the word. One has been held in Carlisle for Cumbria, which is how he got the 2 members.</p>

	<p>These events are planned to be run every 2 months and he has now got a venue in mind for Manchester. MF said ideally he would like to see an event in each county within the Region. He would like any member to attend their local events, which helps to break down barriers as they are an informal gathering of veterans related contacts.</p> <p>GC asked could she obtain a guest list so as to give her an idea to set one up in Merseyside. MF said he will email her this. The use of TA Centres is great, ease of parking, and the venue is normally free. The last one cost £350 including food and this was for over 100 people.</p> <p>MF said it was impossible to attend every veterans related event around the region and would like members to attend if possible. The Centre said that travelling expenses can be claimed for such events.</p> <p>TH asked where these meeting originated, MF said there was 2 types of meeting the formal meeting type or the sit down over a cup of coffee type but it was important to get involved in all the meetings. It was asked could an Event Calendar be set up, DB to do this but if anyone becomes aware of an event let DB know so he can circulate.</p> <p>BB said that in Liverpool next year it will be very busy with a number of ships docking in the port. Also some 1940's events and that this would be an excellent place to network and advertise. Perhaps we could have a stall on Armed Forces Day.</p> <p>GC said the Royal Naval Conference is in Liverpool in June 2013.</p> <p>KH mentioned about the Personnel Recovery Centre – Fulwood Barracks 126 soldiers; Live at Ease which is run by the NHS although not sure on this one yet and then there is the Military Veterans Service run by Pennine Trust which is working well.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b><u>Notices/Information to members</u></b></p> <p>KH passed documents around re Wounded Injured Sick.</p> <p>MF said that we have 43 local authorities in our Region. We need to find out if all LA have got an Armed Forces Covenant and get a copy and send them to DB so that he can compile a list.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b><u>Expenses and Committee Budget</u></b></p> <p>TH asked does the committee have a budget and MF said no. MF said that they can claim expenses to and from meetings. TH asked if you pay for something which isn't in the handbook, can it be claimed for – No.</p>

<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>GC mentioned the Freephone number, there were problems with this but RE said that this had all been sorted now.</p> <p>MF asked could the member's find out from their local authorities who have a covenant in place.</p> <p>GC said she would look into the Merseyside area</p> <p>MF said he would do Lancashire</p> <p>KH said he would do Tameside</p> <p>TH said that DB was doing a great job even though he was only here as a co-opted member.</p> <p>EN mentioned 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 3pm – re dedicating memorial and adding 2 new names at St Annes.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><u>Date of next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>MF to confirm date and venue of next meeting, but it would be in January 2013 on a Tuesday.</p>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_