

MINUTES OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE EAST  
MIDLANDS VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS  
COMMITTEE HELD AT PRINCE WILLIAM OF  
GLOUCESTER BARRACKS, OFFICERS MESS, ON  
MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011 AT 10.30AM.

Present:

Mr Peter Poole (Chairman)

Mr David Donovan

Mr Ray Boyfield

Mr Chris Harrison

Mr Terl Bryant

Mr Bill Dixon-Dodds

Mr Larry Henson

Apologies:

Mr Charlie Streater

Mr David Harding

Mr Keith Meakin

#### ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair opened the meeting and said apologies had been received from Charlie Streater, David Harding and Keith Meakin. He went on to welcome Mr Jon Parkin to the meeting.

The Chair apologised for the delays in correspondence that had occurred since the last meeting. This had been partly the result of ill health – which had left him a little deaf - and partly the extra work due to the resignation of one Chief Executive of Combat Stress and the arrival of another. For interest he asked the Committee to note that the new Chief Executive of Combat stress is Commodore Andrew Cameron RN.

He asked that all Committee Members provide a pen picture of themselves.

#### ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### ITEM 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010 were agreed.

#### ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING

After discussion David Donovan was appointed Vice Chairman and Larry Henson as Committee Secretary.

#### ITEM 5. THE SPVA

The Chair then introduced Mr Jon Parkin, the new Chief Executive of the SPVA.

John Parkin then gave a resume of his own background, outlined his responsibilities, the WPS, AFCS, VWS and spoke of the Boyce Review. He went on to discuss the challenges facing SPVA. These included:

- Agency status itself, are there savings if it ceases to be an agency.
- The need to re-brand.
- Actions post Boyce (review of some 10,000 cases over the next year in order of seriousness)
- Privatisation of the WP part of the Agency. (reduction in staff numbers prior to privatisation.)
- New computer system in conjunction with Glasgow.
- Effects of change from RPI to CPI on WP and GIP and the effects on divorce etc.

He then discussed the review of complaints and the need to review methods and respond more quickly.

The Chairman thanked Mr Parkin for his briefing and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

As a trustee of an MS organisation Terl Bryant had some difficulties getting cases sorted out, Mr Parkin promised to get Dr Paul Kitchen to discuss what needs to be put into effect to improve the situation.

Terl Bryant commented that as people move from service life to civilian life there needed to be a seamless transition that meets individual needs, currently this seems not to be working and needs pursuing by us as a committee.

Mr Parkin mentioned that there was much work to be done to get ex service charities working together and that he was due to meet the head of COBSEO after the current meeting and that this would be a topic for discussion. Terl

Bryant mentioned that in relation to the ambition for COBSEO there are barriers concerning Data Protection.

The Chairman noted that there were a very large number of ex service charities and that they were proliferating. He spoke of overlaps in delivery between organisations and spoke of the dangers of ‘donor fatigue’ when we withdraw from Afghanistan and what that would mean to the future of many of these organisations.

The Big Lottery “Forces in Mind” initiative, to donate £50m over the next 20 years to help veterans with mental health problems was discussed. Terl Bryant felt that there was a big demand for the money from too many organisations and that if it were dispersed too thinly it would not have the effect intended.

The Chairman then asked about the future of the Ilford Park Polish Home. John Parkin said it was a fantastic place but he could not remove frontline nursing but may move 2/3 of other staff. He added it was a wonderful home, and though it does not fit easily within his organisational brief it exists by statute and will continue. Terl Bryant asked if there was perhaps not a different way by which the rights of the residents could be met. John Berry asked if Ilford Park could be contracted out? Jon Parkin said he saw no reason that this could not take place.

Terl Bryant asked about the Veterans Welfare Service and asked what support we could expect from them. Jon Parkin said should there be concerns he would ensure they were dealt with. Bill Dixon-Dodds said he had had difficulties in the past and David Donovan asked for direct contact rather than a central number at present. John Parkin suggested centres may be misplaced but despite that there was a need for closer working. John Berry suggested cross/co location is a way forward.

The Chair thanked John Parkin for his presentation and answering questions.

#### ITEM 6. MEETING VENUE AND DATES FOR 2011

The Chair then discussed venues and that Grantham is low cost (hire and lunch was £21) and consensus agreed that the venue was ideal for all future meetings. Future dates were set for:

21<sup>st</sup> February 2011,

13<sup>th</sup> June 2011,

26<sup>th</sup> September 2011

16<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

## ITEM 7. STRATEGIC PLAN

The Chair then produced two papers on the possible strategic the Committee should take. Members of the committee had already received these but extra copies were supplied. The basis for the documents was the need to identify:

- A strategic direction.
- A reporting schedule
- A performance matrix.

The chair then invited comment on the plan.

Terl Bryant suggested the word 'volunteers' added in 'Fundamental Belief'.

It was agreed the values and summaries were good but several members queried that there may be overlap between strategic aims and believed that there was scope to combine SAs 2 and 3. This view was agreed by those present. The chair agreed to amend the document.

Terl queried if it was reasonable, in 6 months, to deliver the plan particularly with District and County Councils. Larry Henson agreed and said that Northampton CC had agreed that the Chair could address the full Council of 73 Councillors.

The strategic aims tasks were allocated as follows-

Strategic Aim 1 - John Berry and Bill Dixon-Dodds.  
Strategic Aim 2 - David Donovan and Ray Boyfield.  
Strategic Aim 3 - Terl Bryant and Charlie Streather.  
Strategic Aim 4 - Larry Henson and Chris Harrison.

Those not nominated are asked to join one of the groups. Terl Bryant then lamented the lack of secretarial services.

In response to a question from Larry Henson concerning the time scale for the action plan to meet the aims, the Chair asked for a written outline one week before the next meeting.

## ITEM 8. AOB

The Chair showed publicity materials and members filled in a requirement form.

Larry Henson asked about committee membership and the chair mentioned it was 19 but there was a need for further recruitment. Larry said Cllr Judy Shepherd (ex Chair of the County Council) was willing to join if approached.

Terl Bryant mentioned causations of illness on lists supplied and queried prognosis. He illustrated a letter from a prisoner who had lost an appeal and had never been seen by the RBL representative. The Chair explained that there were only five in the British Legion team and that they were extremely busy. They did well in the time available but there were bound to be some gaps in the service.

Terl Bryant highlighted a SPVA letter to an individual who had been turned down for a WP down mentioning his service in the army. The applicant had in fact served in the Royal Navy. Jon Parkin said members could write to him regarding individuals and all problems.

The meeting then closed at 1pm.

#### ITEM 9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was set for Monday February 21<sup>st</sup> 2011 10.30am for 11am at Grantham.