



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Veterans Advisory & Pensions
Committees (VA&PC)



**WEST OF SCOTLAND
VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING RECORD**

DATE OF MEETING: - THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2015

**ADDRESS: - Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association,
Lowland House, 60 Avenuepark Street,
Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, G20 8LW.**

Present:

**Mr Ed McGrachan (EM)
Miss Elizabeth-Anne Handibode (LAH)
Mr Jim Allan (JA)
Mr Tony Freeman (TF)
Mr David McAllister (DMcA)
Mr Alan Murray (AM)
Mr David Anderson (DA)
Miss Audrey Cuthbertson (AC)
Mr George Macdonald (GM)
Mr Mike Richardson (MR)
Mr Neil Robinson (NR)
Mr Dudley Walker (DW)
Mr Joe Stanfield (JS)
Mrs Emma Forbes (EF)**

**Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Secretary
Advocacy Lead
Assistance Lead
Awareness Lead
Consultation Lead**

In Attendance:

**Mr Rob Rowntree (RR) Deputy Head of Veterans UK
Mr Martin Goudie (MG) Business Development Manager, Veterans Welfare Service**

Apologies:

**Mr Barry Henderson (BH)
Mr Robert Lappin (RL) (Co-opted Member)
Surgeon Lieutenant Laura Morrow (LM)**

1. Welcome / Introduction

1.1 EM Welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Introduced two visitors – Mr Rob Rowntree, Deputy Head of Veterans UK (Norcross) and Mr Martin Goudie, Business Development Manager, Glasgow Veterans Welfare Service.

1.2 There were apologies as listed above

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 Item 1.3 Robert Lappin – Robert has decided to step down from the VAPC as his work with Combat Stress is taking up most of his time. EM is going to enquire if he wishes to become a co-opted member of the committee, as he is still keen to assist the committee where he can. JA is going to ask Robert if he would be willing to provide an update report on the work of Combat Stress, for future meeting as the charities work is of interest to the committee.

ACTION: EM / JA

We are pleased to report that Robert has agreed to remain on the committee as a Co-opted member, attending meeting when his work load allows. Norcross has been informed of the change in membership.

2.2 Item 2.1 – Committee Structure – The new members, with the exception of LM have agreed on which sub groups, they would like to be in. An updated list of sub group membership was handed out at meeting, and a copy is attached here. LM will be asked which group she would like to join when her deployment ends and can attend a meeting. Otherwise item closed.

2.3 Item 2.2 (From November 2014) – Familiarization Courses. We were lucky to have RR at this meeting, who explained training has been put on hold, due to the new instruments etc currently being written, therefore he did not want to give training, just in case role changed. This caused a deal of debate at the meeting with members not happy as some of the membership have been in post for over a year with no training and no idea of what their role in the committee is. It was agreed that a basic training program would be given at the next Scottish joint meeting in January 2016, until a full training program can be actioned.

SEC Note: - RR agreed with JA, that an hour slot at the Joint meeting would provide a chance to cover basic items, bearing in mind the VAPC role could change when all the reviews are done. We are not sure at this stage if it will be RR or one of the other Deputy leads that will be at the joint meeting in January 2016.

2.4 Item 2.3 (From November 2014) – Members Handbook / Governance Document. Both these items are currently under review and being rewritten by Norcross. There was not a time frame for this work to be finished. We will keep an eye out for this.

ACTION: ONGOING

2.5 Item 2.4 (From Joint Meeting – Feb 2015)

Statutory Instruments – It has been confirmed by EM that at the chairs conference that the VAPC's are indeed still working to the old 2006 Instruments, as these have been automatically passed over to the VAPC from the old War Pensions Committees, until such a time that new instruments and guidelines have been written. We will keep an eye on this.

ACTION: ONGOING

- 2.6 Item 2.5 (From Joint Meeting – Feb 2015)
VAPC Flyers and Awareness materials – This has been an ongoing headache for the committee. MG has offered at the last Chairs Meeting to produce a standardised leaflet to keep the committees going. He is still waiting on submission as to content from the National VAPC Chair.
- 2.7 6.2 A joint Consultation taskforce was suggested between the East and West committee's to see what item the VAPC could consult on. JA to sound out the East committee
ACTION: JA
JA enquired to East committee no Response, will try again, but at the moment the East Committee is without a sitting chair
ACTION: JA
- 2.8 Item 7.2 It was agreed that SM and JA would work on a briefing document on the VWS showing how the service works, how cases are handled, where cases could be passed to the committee and an update on the current schemes managed by VWS.
ACTION SM / JA
Status - Ongoing
- 2.9 Item 7.3 In May 2015, EM & JA had a meeting with BF @ Kentigern House, to see how the VAPC and VWS can work together. It was agreed that we should be working together and not against one another, as seems to be the case at times. If a VAPC member has a concern about the VWS, please express it, so it can be acted on or a reason for that issue to be given. This goes vice versa with the VWS team.

We are supposed to be working together in the interest of the Veterans after all.
ACTION: ALL
Ongoing as Standard Practice
- 2.10 Item 8.2 It was table could we get hold of the current complete list of all Firmbase locations and match them up with the VAPC's in that area, as these can good working groups.
ACTION: JA
List handed out at meeting, with copy attached. Item now Closed.
- 2.11 9.2 the possibility of a National Conference for members was suggested, as it has been reported that Members are feeling excluded from the chairs conference. The idea is still in on the drawing board, so the plan is to have selected members form each of the VAPC's attend and change these people around at each conference. EM will keep us updated with this.
ACTION: EM – Ongoing
- 2.12 Item 9.4 E. mails from Norcross – A number of members from all the regions have been questioning e. mails from Norcross asking for NI numbers and other personal information. EM confirmed that these are genuine. The reason for these are a change to the payment system for expenses, where VAPC members are not MOD staff, our information needs to be put onto the system so that expenses can be paid, hence the requested information is needed to do this. Members are asked to respond to these e. mails where they arrive.

It was asked by members, why a simple warning e. mail, was not sent to the committee secretaries to let the members know that these e. mail where real, as some members treated them as spam. EM agreed to feed this back to Norcross, as it is a fair point.

ACTION: EM – Closed (Also flagged up to RR at the meeting)

- 2.13 Item 9.5 it was asked if the committee meeting dates could be adjusted to near the chairs meeting, so that the membership can get the updates sooner. To allow this the committee meetings as of 2016 would be January, April, July & October, if all members agree. This would also mean that after our booked meeting in November 2015 would be slightly closer to January 2016, not the full quarter. Please let JA know if you are all happy with this change.

ACTION: ALL

**Planned dates are Now: - Thursday 26 November 2015,
Thursday 28th January 2016 (Joint Meeting),
Thursday 28th April 2016,
Thursday 28th July 2016,
Thursday 27th October 2016**

Sec Note: It was noted at the last meeting, that reviewing the past minutes sent the whole meeting off the rails, and we were constantly covering old ground, when bullet points for future discussion, would be the correct way forward, in order to allow the agenda to flow as planned. Members are requested to adopt this procedure from the next meeting (as we lost almost an hour). If an item from a past meeting is still in need more discussion, please flag this, so that we can move on and take the outstanding matter up at a more convenient time for all members, if need be at the next meeting.

3. Advocacy (TF) (No Report this Period)

- 3.1 No new cases going into group at moment

Sec Note: - The case highlighted at the last meeting has been looked into by EM & TF, not much the VAPC can do as this is more a SSAFA case. TF said he would give the client another telephone call to close down the case and make sure that he is happy with the options open to him

ACTION: TF

4. Assistance (DMcA) (No Report this Period)

- 4.1 No New cases going into group at moment

5. Awareness (AM) (No Report this Period)

- 5.1 Cannot fill role due to lack of support materials

- 5.2 With the update of the Firmbase groups, AM asked members who live with the area to try and attend or at least get a copy of the Minutes from the Chair, and AM will show this information in his report

APC Glasgow – DW
HMS Neptune – DA & MR
Ayrshire – AM

Dumfries – AM
Dunbartonshire – EM
Lanarkshire – DMcA, AC, LAH
ACTION AS NAMED ABOVE

6. Consultation (DA) (No Report this Period)

6.1 As the rest of the sub groups, nothing come into group for them to work on.

SEC NOTE: Re the sub group roles handout, EM has asked members to comment on this, please feedback to JA – ACTION: ALL

7. Veterans Welfare Service (MG)

7.1 How can VWS support the VAPC's more, was asked. Please feedback to JA and refering back to Item 2.9 above.
ACTION ALL

8. Firmbase

8.1 Refer to item 5.2 above

9. Chairman`s Report (EM)

9.1 Tri-Annual Review – outcomes due in two to three weeks' time. Members will be updated when these come in.

9.2 The next Chairs Meeting will take place on 21 October 2015 in London. Members where asked for any items they wish EM to take to the meeting. Please send these to JA.
ACTION: All

10. Covent Fund

10.1 All members have been sent the e. mail regarding this new fund. Members feel that the VAPC's could win a grant. There are two tiers: -

Small – Up to 20k

Large – Over 20k

In order to apply we would have to come up with a proposal that we are unable to get funded for by Norcross. Posters where suggested, put as Norcross is supposed to supply these, this may not be an option. However, a joint Scottish Poster with Norcross does not supply may be a selling point. MR has agreed to take the lead on this item so please feedback to him our ideas.

ACTION: ALL

ACTION: MR – Feedback on any Idea for funding.

11. **EF Item**

- 11.1 EF brought up the issue of veterans who have lost limbs not getting the service on the NHS they are promised and deserve. She pointed out a Facebook petition that is currently going on and asked the members how we could help this matter on.

I have attached the information from EF.

ACTION: ALL

12. **Website**

- 12.1 The VAPC web pages have now moved on and each committee has been asked to post one item per month to their page, via the Website Officer of their committee.

ACTION: ALL

- 12.2 What do you want on our page? At the moment the membership list has been updated, I will be sending of the minutes over the next few weeks.

ACTION: ALL

13. **Annual Joint Meeting**

- 13.1 Planned working agenda for our next annual meeting was handed out at the meeting. Following this I have updated the document to show the current agreed changes. You will see that there is still a 30-minute slot to fill. Does any member have any suggestions for a speaker etc to fill this? Please update JA. I have attached the updated plan.

ACTION: ALL

14. **AOB**

- 14.1 Some members have been asking why the current Government mileage rate and the MOD one are not the same. The question was asked of Norcross and their answer was given out on the handout at the meeting. A copy has been attached.

- 14.2 **GENERAL REMINDER (1):** - Please remember to inform group leads of awareness activity and consultation opportunities in your area. **ACTION: ALL**

- 14.3 **GENERAL REMINDER (2):** - Would any member that carries out any Awareness activity, please inform AM so it can be reported. There have been occasions where Awareness activities have been carried out and not reported as AM does not know about it. **ACTION: ALL**

- 14.4 **GENERAL REMINDER (3):** - All members need to communicate with each other, as to what they are doing and pass on any information that may be of benefit to someone else.

ACTION: ALL

- 14.5 **GENERAL REMINDER (4):** - It has been noted that discussion documents etc that have been sent out in the past for input, have resulted in no responses from members of the committee. Could all members please take the time to read these future documents and requests, and please respond. Even if it is to say that you have no feedback. This will allow the person(s) asking for feedback to know that the members are reviewing the material and it is not just being ignored. **ACTION: ALL**

14.6 **GENERAL REMINDER (5): - REQUESTS TO NORCROSS.** It was tabled by AM to have a sole point of contact for requests to Norcross. Committee agreed that all contact requests to go through JA, so these can be logged and tracked, rather than everyone making requests.
ACTION: ALL

14.7 **GENERAL REMINDER (6): - SCOTTISH VAPC FACEBOOK PAGE.** Please remember that we have a joint East and West of Scotland Facebook page. Input is required from all members so that we can reach as many Veterans as possible, please send your submissions to JA and pass out the link to you contacts: - <http://www.facebook.com/vapcsscotland>
ACTION: ALL

15. **DONM**

The Next Meeting has been scheduled to take place on: - **THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2015**
At: - Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, Lowland House,
60 Avenuepark Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, G20 8LW.

Times are Lunch 13:00hrs, Meeting start 13:30hrs, we will aim to finish for 15:30hrs,
(Latest being 16:00hrs)

Future Dates Are: - THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2016 (JOINT VAPC MEETING), THURSDAY
28 APRIL 2016, THURSDAY 28 JULY 2016 and THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2016.

Sec Note: The agenda for the day will be sent out, nearer to the date of the meeting. Should any member wish items to be included in the day's agenda, please send full details to JA
ACTION: ALL.

Attachments:

EF's Petition
Flyers Update
Sub Group Roles
Website Guidelines
Expenses Answer
Sub Group Members
Planned Joint Meeting Agenda
Firmbase Meetings

Minutes prepared by: -
Jim R. J. Allan
Secretary, WS VAPC
08 September 2015

Countersigned:
As a true record of the above meeting

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed McGrachan', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Ed McGrachan,
Chair – West of Scotland VAPC

Signed on: - Thursday 26 November 2015