



**EAST OF ENGLAND VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE**  
**(EVAPC)**  
**MINUTES OF THE MAIN MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2015 AT THE ARMY**  
**CADET HEADQUARTERS, WATERBEACH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Present: Mr JL Jelley – Chairman  
Mr AJ Barnard  
Mr MR Berry  
Mr T Heslin  
Lt Col PK Robinson  
Mr I Stewart  
Lt Col R E Toland (Secretary)

In Attendance: Mr S Burgess Veterans' Welfare Service (VWS)  
Ms S Howson VWS

Apologies: Mrs K Green  
Maj T Ormiston  
Mrs D Preston

Absent: Dr IM Calder  
Mrs J Logan (Co-opted Member)

**ITEM 1 - Welcome and Declarations of Interest**

1. The meeting was opened at 10:15 by Lt Col Toland, who had acted as Chairman whilst awaiting the appointment of a permanent Chairman. Lt Col Toland welcomed Mr Jonathan Jelley as the new Chairman.
2. There were no declarations of interest.

**ITEM 2 – Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 October 2015**

3. **Approval of Minutes.** The Minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were discussed and agreed as a true record and signed by Lt Col Toland.
4. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising. Mr Jelley then took the Chair.

**ITEM 3 – Election of Vice-Chairman**

5. The Chairman asked the committee to nominate a member to be appointed as Vice-Chairman. It was unanimously agreed that Lt Col Toland be appointed.

**Action**

#### **ITEM 4 – Objectives Review**

*(Afternote: During the course of discussion it became clear that the separate agenda items 5 and 7 (“EVAPC Strategic Plan” and “Communications”) were inextricably linked to this item and would therefore be taken together).*

6. The Chairman asked members for their view as to what the Committee’s objectives were and where the VAPCs were going in relation to their responsibilities to assist and advise veterans, advise the Minister, review government initiatives around veterans and communicate veterans’ welfare concerns and related issues to other agencies in accordance with the Guidance for VAPCs.

7. It was noted by members that case work, previously a significant aspect of the work of the erstwhile War Pensions Committees, had all but ceased. There was discussion as to how far this was the result of changing veterans’ demography and how much was a consequence of improvements in the working of Veterans UK and it was surmised that both issues had had an influence on case work numbers.

8. Members expressed the collective view that there was a lack of clarity around the aims and objectives of the VAPCs. This was felt to be a factor in the spate of resignations from the Eastern VAPC and the difficulties encountered by Veterans UK in its recent recruitment campaign.

9. With regard to communications much work was needed. Firstly, there was a requirement to identify the people and agencies with whom the committee should communicate and, importantly, what the committee wished to communicate. A communications plan was needed which would form part of an EVAPC Strategic Plan. The Chairman suggested that he should produce a draft and circulate to members for comment. At the same time the Chair would endeavour to obtain copies of any plans that other VAPCs might have published.

Chairman

10. The committee could make good use of the publicity material provided by Veterans UK, but it was noted that the current material gave the wrong Helpline telephone number. The Chairman agreed to write to Veterans UK pointing this out and ask for new material to be issued.

Chairman

#### **ITEM 5 – EVAPC Strategic Plan**

11. See Item 4 above.

#### **ITEM 6 – Committee Composition**

12. The Chairman asked for members’ views on the composition and

organisation of the committee. An option to allocate members to geographical areas was discussed but discounted for the present as the East of England had 11 first tier local authorities (i.e. County and Unitary Authority councils) and 41 District councils. The EVAPC's current member numbers made this impractical. There was general agreement that more members were needed but that 15 or 16 was possibly the optimum number. The Chairman noted that he could not recruit members; it must be done through Veterans UK. However, there was the option of co-opting prospective members in anticipation of the next recruitment campaign.

**ITEM 7 - COMMUNICATIONS**

13. See Item 4 above.

**ITEM 8 – Members’/VWS Updates**

14. Ms Howson briefed the meeting on the work of the Kidderminster branch of the VWS. Two additional welfare managers had been recruited and were now working in the Personnel Recovery Centre at Colchester. The VWS, over the past year, introduced new work processes, which together with “Customer Service Excellence” training and a new welfare referral system were improving the way in which veterans’ welfare was carried out. Ms Howson offered to provide the Chairman with a briefing on War Pensions and the Armed Forces Compensation Schemes. The Chairman expressed his gratitude and he would contact her in due course.

Chairman

**ITEM 9 – Any Other Business**

15. Mr Berry said that, notwithstanding his advanced years, he remained fully compos mentis and wished to continue his membership of the committee. The Chairman acknowledged this and the contribution that all members had made and were making to the work of the committee.

16. The meeting closed at 12:10.

**ITEM 10 – Date of Next Meeting.**

17. As it was intended that the new Deputy Head of Veterans UK would attend the next EVAPC meeting and with the holiday months of July and August approaching it was agreed that the Secretary would contact members out of committee to agree a date.

Secretary

Signed:

Chairman.....Date.....