

MINUTES OF THE 20th MEETING OF THE EAST
MIDLANDS VETERANS AND PENSIONS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD AT THE
OFFICERS MESS, PRINCE WILLIAM OF
GLOUCESTER BARRACKS, GRANTHAM ON
MONDAY 18th JANUARY AT 12.15pm

Present.

Lt. Col. Peter POOLE (PP) Chair.
Patrick RENDALL (PR) Deputy Chair.
Larry HENSON (LH) Meetings Secretary.
David WILSON (DW) General Secretary
Barry SMITH (BW)
Michael WHITEHEAD (MW)
Ray BOYFIELD (RB)
Debbie BOWLES (DB)
Charlie STREATHER (CS)
Debbie BOWLES (DB)
Sukbir BINDRA (SB)
Terl BRYANT (TB)
David LOMAS (DL)

ITEM 1. CHAIRMANS WELCOME.

The Chair (PP) welcomed all present. He said that a presentation has been give by the chair of the “STRATEGIC THINKING” sub Committee” (BS)

prior to the meeting and followed by discussion and that would be outlined by BS at the meeting.

ITEM 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Terl BYANT said he was now an Official Army Camp Visitor on the Independent Advisory Panel. There were no other declarations of interest.

ITEM 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

BILL DIXON-DODDS (BDD)

John BERRY (JB)

Paul DAVIES (PD)

ITEM 4 MINUTES

PP thanked LH and PR for the minutes.

MATTERS ARISING.

DW said he had secured a list of all force champions and Councils in the East Midlands Committee area and was thanked by PP.

DB said that she had noticed that sometimes there were very similar cases that had attracted different outcomes and would highlight these to PP.

PP said that in relation to the Covenant this did not relate to Northern Ireland and there were also issues whether the Merchant Navy Should be included and highlighted instances of this and it was agreed he would pursue this.

It was agreed by all attending that the Xmas Lunch at Leicester Cricket Ground was excellent and it was important to follow up on this achievement. RB felt this could be funded.

BS thought that we should hold another event (in essence a second event) which involved a Lord Lieutenant of the relevant County. PP mentioned that we would require a sponsor and to provide refreshments. PP said it was essential that we followed up the Xmas event and CS spoke of the Arboretum and the “ride to the Wall” involving Motor Cycles. Apparently the VWS have a stand there and we could link up. It was agreed CS would research this and bring ideas to the March meeting. There was discussion on the venue for the Xmas function and it was agreed that PR would explore the Derby area and dates for the Xmas function.

PP would explore whether we could do something for Armed Forces Day (AFD) which is to be held on 25th June 2016 at Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire.

After discussion it was agreed CS would explore the possibility of taking Veterans to the “Ride to The Wall” at the arboretum on 20th October 2016.

In response to item 8 1. to a question from BS, PP said there had been no feedback and he needed to obtain a report and he would chase up.

ITEMS 5 AND 6 CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND FUTURE FUNCTIONS 2016 (TAKEN TOGETHER).

RB said that the Lunch at Leicester Cricket Ground had now been paid which had been funded by donations and the generosity of JB. RB said we still had to pay for the prizes for guests and we were left in a reasonably healthy position for future functions.

MW said that there was a good response from some companies and he mentioned to them the aim of mutual help. He hoped for further response but it was essential we had pictures for feedback.

PR said these sponsors give a new dimension to the work of the Committee which is very helpful.

TB mentioned that Northern Rail may like to offer free travel and PR added that we need to decide quickly.

ITEM 7 STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUB COMMITTEE PRESENTATION.

BS then made a full and lengthy presentation on his work on this Committee to date which was aided by flow charts, an overhead and a key point report which will be circulated to all members.

PR said that in relation to education Academies are now stand alone and hard to reach.

DW said that he is hoping to get invited to the Notts and Derby Covenant Board as a guest speaker.

MW asked, 'if Ministers see the VAPC Committees as important' why do those at the centre not push us forward. PP said the minister is new and has been told of the VAPCs value and was keen for more geographical focus and to add VAPCs to the Armed Forces Bill which was passed recently. The CAC is chaired by the Minister.

PP said it was essential for each VAPC Committee to form its own strategy and then to liaise with one another.

PP said it was necessary to have performance indicators to judge our own performance.

BS said in fact we are the 'eyes and ears' for the Minister on Veteran Affairs.

BS said he will work with Deputy Chairs to formulate a strategic plan after a short amount of further work.

PP thanked BS for the tremendous amount of work he had done and will take it up with the Minister.

PP said that there was a need to become engaged with Hedley Court, Stanford near East Midlands Airport as from 2018 onwards it will be a big centre for UK Veterans.

DB said that after 20 years we were not being listened to very much.

BS and JP said that the Veterans Agency makes 100,000 decisions annually and there is no independent oversight and this would be an excellent role for VAPCs.

TB said the presentation must be truncated or must be in précis format and shown in its current form as it is easy to understand.

PP mentioned we must always show fairness and independence.

CS asked wow can we engage and all agreed to reflect upon this.

ITEM 8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

LH mentioned the VAPC website (part of Veterans Agency Web Site), and said he had been asking for some time about its poor state and always it was “soon”. PR promised to look into this and report back. LH said that minutes were supposed to be posted of all VAPCs but this is sadly lacking. PR made reference to his list of Committees and noted he was Chair and this would be discussed when the Committee meets.

PP said he will provide a digest of items put together by COBSEO on the Covenant on behalf of the third sector. They have changed the LOGO of the Covenant and he is aware of comments being received.

DB mentioned that there was a ground breaking legal appeal for service personnel. Tribunals will be open to the public. 3 - 4weeks ago a reporter had turned up but he had misreported. It was a case re hearing which had rejected a 50 decimal limit. The appeal was allowed. The applicant said that the problem was not short low problems but short sharp noise. It was not gradual but was traumatic short term.

TB mentioned a memo of understanding and has a document from the Department of Health which said Servicemen have equal treatment and not priority. He will follow this up and report back to the Committee.

ITEM 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND VENUE

Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham at 11am on Monday 21st March 2016 at 11am

The meeting then closed at 1.30pm.

