



Ministry
of Defence



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

DATE OF MEETING: - Thursday 20 November 2014

**ADDRESS: - Kentigern House
65 Brown Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, G2 8EX**

Present:

Ed McGrachan (EM)
LizAnne Handibode (LAH)
Jim Allan (JA)
Tony Freeman (TF)
David McAllister (DMcA)
Alan Murray (AM)
David Anderson (DA)
Audrey Cuthbertson (AC)
George Macdonald (GM)
Mike Richardson (MR)
Neil Robinson (NR)
Barry Henderson (BH)
Dudley Walker (DW)
Joe Stanfield (JS)

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

In Attendance:

David Chauvelin (DC) **Veterans Welfare Service**

Apologies:

Emma Forbes (EF)
Robert Lappin (RL)
Colin Phillips (CP)

1. Welcome / Introduction

- 1.1 EM welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were a number of apologies as listed above.
- 1.2 Committee would like to thank DC for arranging the visit to Kentigern House.

2. **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

- 2.1 2.1 Committee Structure. EM informed members that he still has to speak to the members who need assigned to a sub group. These are EF, JS & BH. EM wishes to speak to these members to gauge their preference as to what group they would like to join. It has also been noted that DA wishes to be replaced as Consultation Lead, while still remaining part of the committee.

ACTION EM

Deferred to future meeting.

- 2.2 2.2 VAPC Flyers. There is still an issue trying to get flyers from Norcross. DC advised that there is now a new Head of Communications in place and it may be worth contacting her to find out what is happening. **ACTION JA**

VAPC Flyers currently under review at Norcross, once these have been approved, currently with Chair of Chairs (VA&PC) JA has been told that we can have all the flyers we want up to and including A3 size, once they are approved.

ACTION EM to Follow Up

- 2.3 2.3 VAPC Presentation Pack. The New VAPC PowerPoint has been completed and is currently under review to make sure the information is correct. Once this has been completed the document will be sent out. **ACTION JA / AM / DC**

PowerPoint has been checked with communications at Norcross, they are happy with it with AM approval it is ready to be sent out to members. JA to hold the original copy and any member who wish to use it is to ask JA for the latest version. JA will send the current version out to members so they can have a look at.

ACTION JA

- 2.4 2.5 Help for Heroes "Sporting Days" It was noted by DH that there are sporting days available through Help for Heroes, Band of Brothers Team and it may be worth getting more information on this. JA has contacted H4H requesting this information and there has been no response to these enquiries. JA informed the committee that he has a meeting with the Regional Co-ordinator for Scotland from H4H and will bring the subject up with her. **ACTION: JA**

No Written leaflets at moment due to reprint. All information on website at

<http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/sports-recovery>

ITEM CLOSED

- 2.5 2.7 Back log of Cases – NR has highlighted his concerns with the length of time it is taking Norcross to clear cases. Working with DC and the new Head of Operations at Norcross some progress has been made, but is still slow going. Records show that there are over 100 cases still outstanding for up to three years, with no decision made. NR is working to resolve these cases and will update at the next meeting. **ACTION NR**

NR reported that recent cases are starting to come through the system, historic cases still a problem. The only way forward for NR to review incoming cases as they come in.

ITEM CLOSED

- 2.6 2.8 The Transition of Service Leavers. This was touched on at the April 2014 meeting. As this could be a major topic of discussion it was agreed that it would be left as an agenda item for another meeting. BH mentioned inviting Major Gene Maxwell, from 51 Brigade, along to this meeting. This has been deferred to another meeting.

Major Maxwell will be attending on 19 Feb 2015 for the joint meeting at New Haig House

- 2.7 2.9 Veterans Commissioner – Former Navy Commodore Eric Fraser has been appointed to the post, and will take up his new role in September 2014. It was tabled to invite the Commissioner to one of the meeting. After a discussion it was agreed to try and hold a joint East and West meeting at New Haig House in Edinburgh and invite the Commissioner to this meeting.

Veterans Commissioner has confirmed that he will attend, the joint meeting on 19 February 2015.

- 2.8 2.10 Familiarization Courses – Thanks to all who responded to this subject! The names of the interested parties have been submitted to Norcross. No dates are available at the moment, but will be sent out when they become available. The submitted names are: AC, DA, MR, EM, DW, JS, EF, BH, and JA. **STATUS: ONGOING**

No Dates from Norcross as yet

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

- 3.1 No activity to report this period.
- 3.2 EM, asked about three cases that forwarded to him by Norcross, these where Mrs Mc – Case Closed, Mr E – Case Closed & Mr M this was handed to DW & JA to check the records to see what the finding on this where, so the information could be passed on to Norcross.
ACTION DW/JA/EM

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

- 4.1 Nothing to report this period.
- 4.2 RL reported to the committee via JA that Combat Stress is see an increase of cases over the last six months, from all conflicts and ages. Resent conflicts are still a minority but starting to increase.
- 4.3 ATOS – NR raised concern that ATOS where refusing to visit clients on the Islands, and wanted to know if this was down to ATOS, being ATOS or contract wording. JA was asked to contact Norcross to clarify this and see if the new contractors would have the same service.
ACTION JA

It has been noted from sources that ATOS contract finished on October 2014, but a new contractor has not been found or appointed. It is believed that ATOS is now working on a month to month contract until such a time that a new contractor is appointed.

5. Awareness (AM) (Report Attached)

5.1 The issue of posters raised again, when will these be ready?

5.2 Event being held at Kentigern house on 09 December 2014. This would be a possible awareness opportunity. Could we get some media for the event? BH will be attending via his day role and AM said that if need he could attend the event as well.

ACTION JA Asked to contact Norcross to see if we could get any media for the event.

5.3 NR asked members if there received a copy of the Scottish Legion News in the post as all members details where sent a copy. A number of members expressed they did not get a copy. Would these members please contact NR should they wish to get a copy!

ACTION ALL

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

6.1 Nothing to Report this period

6.2 DA ask if EM could pass on e-mails etc that may be sent to him that the group could look into.

ACTION EM/DA

7. Veterans Welfare Service (Report Attached)

7.1 Please refer to the attached report from DC.

7.2 DC informed the members that BF would be back as from the February 2015 meeting.

8. Chairman`s Report (EM)

8.1 EM attend his first chairs con in London, and noted a number of points from the meeting.

Funding is an Issue

Training – Nothing moving. No Funding

VAPC Structure – VAPC role not yet written into law, still under the old War Pensions scheme.

What would the members like to see the as defining role of the VAPC?

ACTION ALL

Recruitment – 51 Vacancies advertised, it is estimated that there are 30 applications, 2 for WS.

AFPS – the planned changes are causing a lot of concern.

9. Members Handbook / Governance Document

9.1 TF & EM to speak out with committee regarding this and update at the next meeting.

ACTION TF / EM

10 Website / IT

10.1 JA reported that the planned transfers to Gov.uk is going slower than expected, each of the committees are being taken in turn to have their content transferred and updated, starting with the East of Scotland. Then each committee would be taken in turn. No time frame has been set as to when this work will be finished.

- 10.2 Committee Operational Areas. It has been noted that the area map of the 13 VAPC's is wrong. Norcross claim they know nothing about this. It has been requested that the map be updated ASAP to aid anyone looking to see what VAPC they would need to contact. **ACTION JA**
JA issued the meeting with a document showing the correct Scottish areas, and a copy has been attached for those would where unable to attend.
- 10.3 The direct Scottish contact information is now fully activate and the members where issued with the information, please pass this information onto anyone who may wish to contact the VAPC. Please remember that Veterans UK/VWS should always be a client's first point of contact, before contacting VAPC. A copy of this has been attached for those who were unable to attend
- 10.4 The Scottish VAPC Facebook page is now set up and live. The Scottish committees have full control over this via JA. Please note that this will only work if the members supply the content. JA has stated that he would be willing to carry out daily updates should the members supply content. The page can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/vapcsscotland>
- 10.5 The committee members expressed their thanks to JA for his work on the Website / IT front.
11. Joint VAPC Meeting
- 11.1 The joint Scottish VAPC meeting will take place on at New Haig House on 19 February 2015. A draft agenda was given to the members for feedback, could JA please have your feedback ASAP.
ACTION ALL
- 11.2 The joint meeting is planned for February of every year. The plan is to invite speakers and service charities to the meeting to talk about their originations. Could all members please send JA contact information on any speaker / Charity etc that they would like to be invited to future meeting, so that they can be formally asked if they wish to attend. The joint meeting will only work with the help and input from all members of both committees.
ACTION ALL
12. **AOB**
- 12.1 **GENERAL REMINDER (1):** - Please remember to inform group leads of awareness activity and consultation opportunities in your area. **ACTION: ALL**
- 12.2 **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**
- 12.3 **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

- 12.4 **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**
- 12.5 **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**
- 12.6 JA – The members contact database will be sent out shortly. Could all members please check the information that is held for them and inform JA of any changes ASAP. **ACTION ALL**
- 12.7 **Annual Report**
The annual report is due to be produced, could all members who have any input please forward this to JA ASAP.
ACTION ALL

13. **DONM**

The Next Meeting has been scheduled to take place on: - **THURSDAY 19 February 2015**
At: - **New Haig House, Edinburgh. This will be the joint East and West Meeting.**

Dates for the rest of 2015 are: -

Thursday 21 May 2015

Thursday 27 August 2015


Thursday 26 November 2015

These date will be at the normal venue at Lowland House, Glasgow

Attachments:

Awareness Sub Group Progress Report
Veterans Welfare Service Activity Report
Scottish Contact Information
Scottish Operational Areas

Minutes prepared by: -
Jim R. J. Allan
Secretary, WS VAPC
22 November 2014


Date:- 21st May 2015
Ed McGrachan, Chair – WS VAPC

