



EAST OF ENGLAND VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE
(EVAPC)
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2016 AT THE ARMY CADET
HEADQUARTERS, WATERBEACH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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

Apologies: Mrs K Greene
Maj Ormiston
Mrs D Preston
Dr IM Calder

ITEM 1 - Welcome and Declarations of Interest

Action

1. The meeting was opened at 10:30 by the Chairman who, on the first anniversary of assuming his appointment, thanked the members for their support in taking forward the business of the committee.
2. There were no declarations of interest.

ITEM 2 – Minutes of the Meeting Held on 10 December 2016

3. **Approval of Minutes.** The Minutes, circulated to members prior to the meeting, were discussed and agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising.

ITEM 3 – Chairman's Update

5. The Chairman briefed the committee on his contacts with two of the region's Covenant Committees; Hertfordshire and Norfolk. Having attended two meetings of the Hertfordshire committee and one in Norfolk the EVAPC now had an entrée to, and membership of, these two Covenant Boards. The Chairman agreed to forward the minutes of the Hertfordshire meeting, once received, to members. The Chairman remarked that across the Region uptake of the Covenant was patchy and he intended to follow up his contacts with the 52 Local Authorities

Chairman

across the Region to stimulate interest, but that realistically the EVAPC should target the 11 County/Unitary Authority Level Boards. A suggestion was made by the Secretary, that in view of the fact that Covenant Boards had responsibilities for disbursing public funds, then VAPCs' membership of Covenant Boards should be made mandatory which would bring an element of independent scrutiny and advice to the Boards. The Chairman agreed that this could be a way forward but for the present he would pursue the path of persuasion rather than compulsion.

ITEM 4 – Strategic Plan

6. As discussed at the EVAPC meeting on 15 Dec 15, there was clear agreement that a strategic plan for the committee was essential. Lt Cdr Mincher had kindly provided a first draft plan which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. There followed much detailed and valued discussion on the contents of the draft and Lt Cdr Mincher took notes with the intention of incorporating those deemed applicable and relevant into a second draft plan which when complete would be circulated to members for further comment. The Chairman thanked Lt Cdr Mincher for his efforts in producing the draft plan which represented a sound basis on which to build.

Lt Cdr
Mincher
Chairman
Secretary

7. Lt Col Robinson raised a concern about the ability of committee members to cope with the workloads that could be generated by attempting to implement all the elements of the draft plan. The Chairman recognised this concern and noted that this was clearly an area which needed to be monitored. This led on to the Chairman drawing attention to the uneven 'spread' of members around the region. For example, in Essex, the most populous county with the largest military garrison within its boundaries, there was no VAPC member, and only two each in Norfolk, Suffolk and Hertfordshire and none in Bedfordshire.

ITEM 5 - Member Recruitment

8. The Secretary reported that he had been in contact with Norcross to register the need to recruit six new members for EVAPC. Norcross took note but would not initiate any recruitment action until such time as the current MOD review of VAPCs was completed which they hoped would be in early April 2016.

9. The Secretary noted that prior to the appointment of the current Chairman the committee had lost a number of good members due to resignations. He suggested that it may be worth contacting those individuals to see if any would be prepared to re-join the EVAPC, perhaps initially as co-opted members. There was general agreement to this proposal and the Secretary would contact former members.

Secretary

ITEM 6 – VWS Activity Report

10. Due to pressure of work, in particular that associated with the implementation of the new WPC rules for veterans with mesothelioma, VWS were unable to be at this meeting. However, Mr Stuart Burgess had submitted a short email report and this was read out by the Secretary. It was noted that the EVAPC had not undertaken any monitoring of VWS activities and it was agreed that the Secretary would approach the manager of the Kidderminster branch of VWS with a view to arranging a visit by a small number of members.

Secretary

Item 7 – Any Other Business

11. Lt Col Robinson informed the meeting of the opening of a new Veterans’ Centre in Norwich on 31 March 2016.

Item 8 – Date of Next Meeting

12. The Secretary to consult members and arrange a date in June 2016.

Signed:

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