



Ministry
of Defence



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

DATE OF MEETING: - THURSDAY 17 JULY 2014

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

Present:

Ed McGrachan (EM)
LizAnne Handibode (LAH)
Jim Allan (JA)
David Anderson (DA)
Audrey Cuthbertson (AC)
Tony Freeman (TF)
George Macdonald (GM)
Alan Murray (AM)
Mike Richardson (MR)
Neil Robinson (NR)

Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Secretary
Consultation Lead

Advocacy Lead

Awareness Lead

In Attendance:

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

Apologies:

Barry Henderson (BH)
Robert Lappin (RL)
David McAllister (DMcA)
Colin Phillips (CP)
Dudley Walker (DW)
Joe Stanfield (JS)
Emma Forbes (EF)

Assistance Lead

1. Welcome / Introduction

- 1.1 EM welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were a number of apologies as listed above.
- 1.2 The committee were informed that David Hunter has chosen to stand-down due to ill health.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

- 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

SEC NOTE: - Should the members listed above know what subgroup they wish to be assigned to please let JA know. Also should any member be interested in talking on the Consultation Lead role again let JA know.

- 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**

SEC NOTE: - I have now contacted the new Head of Comms at Norcross and I have asked for 500 A4 Flyers and 500 A5 Flyers. I have also asked for the PDF version of the flyer so this can be e.mailed out as well.

- 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**

- 2.4 DA highlighted a case where a veteran was fined by court due to overpayment of benefits, due to not informing SPVA to a change in circumstances. After a brief discussion, DA requested for a copy of the award letter that is sent out. (Letter to be depersonalized standard template, without any names or addresses) BF said he would try and get a copy of the letter.

SEC NOTE: - In the absence of BF, DC has been looking into this matter. He reported that there are a number of people using different templates and he would need the NI number of the case concerned to try and get a copy of the letter that was sent. Otherwise this item is closed.

- 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**

- 2.6 RBLS Seminar – NR reported that this was a success and thanked the member from the East of Scotland VAPC who gave a presentation on behalf of the VAPC. NR noted that nine MSP's attended. Members asked if it would be possible to see a copy of this presentation. **ACTION JA / NR**

- 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**

- 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. **STATUS: ONGOING**

SEC NOTE: Once the dates are sorted for 2015 I would suggest I forward these to BH who can check with Major Maxwell as to what one of the meeting he could attend.

- 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. **STATUS: ONGOING**

SEC NOTE: I have asked DMcG the chair of East of Scotland as to his thought on this matter, and will update when I can.

- 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**

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

- 3.1 No outstanding cases at the moment.

- 3.2 TF asked the question “What is the VAPC’s doing that VWS is not?” As it seems that the VAPC’s are just turning into a talking shop with the work getting done by VWS. Also TF said that he would like to full see the VAPC “Terms of Reference” as to its role. It was agreed that TF and EM would have a talk so that EM could gauge his concerns. **ACTION TF / EM**

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

- 4.1 Nothing to Report

5. **Awareness (AM) (Report Attached)**

- 5.1 Lots of different activates over Armed Forces Week. (Information Attached)

- 5.2 Need more flyers and of a better quality. **SEC NOTE: I have addressed this above in item 2.2**

- 5.3 LAH Reported on the possibility of getting advertising space in East Kilbride shopping centre, with the possibility of having a large display poster with a picture of the committee on it. LAH to speak with her contact over the costs of such a project. **ACTION: LAH**

SEC NOTE: As requested I have sent out feelers to Norcross as to what funds could be available for such a project and asked for advice on any branding guidelines.

- 5.4 NR offered to link any VAPC news items etc. into the Scottish Legion News. It was agreed that the letter to the press that has been sent out by LAH could be used, with a photo of EM introducing himself as the new WS VAPC Chair. **ACTION EM / JA / NR**

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

- 6.1 Nothing to report this period.

7. **Veterans Welfare Service (DC)**

- 7.1 DC reported the BF has had his review of Service leavers project extended for a further three months.

- 7.2 VWS is still working hard to forge relations with the various service charities and organisations. With this in view, the VAPC has been invited to have one of our meetings at Kentigern House, where members could have a tour of the building and meet some of the staff.

SEC NOTE: DC and I are in communication to arrange the next meeting of 20 November 2014 at Kentigern House.

- 7.3 This period VWS have made 268 visits

- 7.4 VWS attended AFD events in Stirling (85 Enquiries), Glasgow (47 Enquiries) and Inverness (28 Enquiries)

- 7.5 Access Logs. Since this withdrawal of this facility, VWS have not been guaranteed 100% notification of all new War Widows so that no one loses out.

- 7.6 Plans to visit SVR and reconnect with Erskine to see what help can be given.

- 7.7 Out of Hours Telephone Service. Been very successful. To date the service has resulted in 145 calls being redirected to Combat Stress and 85 to The Samaritans.

8. **Firmbase**

- 8.1 AM Has attended meeting in Ayr and Dumfries. They are currently trying to secure funds.

- 8.2 AC Touched on Lanarkshire in the absence of DMcA. Still very strong with plans in place to build new housing.

9. **Chairman`s Report (EM)**

- 9.1 EM Apologises for not having a full report as he is still finding his feet. In saying that following items were covered.

- 9.2 Recruitment – Annual recruitment is due to start in September. It has been agreed the West of Scotland will try to get three new members to bring our committee up to twenty. AM noted that we could really use someone in Ayrshire. Anyone who may know of someone interested in joining the committee please inform EM /JA. **ACTION: ALL**

SEC NOTE: MR will also be able to make his formal application during this period.

- 9.3 Member Expenses – EM enquired as to the process for the payment of expenses. To make life easier for everyone, it has been agreed that all expense claims to be sent to JA, who will sign these off and send to Norcross for payment. EM will remain to sign off claims from JA.

SEC NOTE: Unless we are told otherwise you can choose to e.mail these forms to JA making sure you have signed them as the claimant beforehand. This is only if you do not have any receipts for payment. Other you will have to post your claim form with the original receipts.

10. **VAPC Website**

- 10.1 All members should now have received a copy of the report on the new website written by JA. If everyone could read this, Apologies for the amount of information. But as stated this is our only chance to get the website we want, so your input is needed. **Please have all your responses to JA in by 31 July 2014** so these can be forwarded to the development team. Outwith this date your view may not be able to be taken on board. **ACTION ALL**

SHOULD ANYONE NOT HAVE A COPY OF THIS E.MAILED REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT JA

11. **AOB**

- 11.1 **GENERAL REMINDER (1):** - Please remember to inform group leads of awareness activity and consultation opportunities in your area. **ACTION: ALL**
- 11.2 **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**
- 11.3 **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**
- 11.4 **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**
- 11.5 **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**
- 11.6 EM was asked if he would be willing to send a thank you letter to GG on behalf of the committee, thanking in for his time as chairman over the last four years. **ACTION: EM**

SEC NOTE: I have VAPC headed paper, please let me know if you wish this to be sent to you.

17. **DONM**

The Next Meeting has been scheduled to take place on: - **THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014**
At: - **Veterans Welfare Service, Glasgow Welfare Centre, Kentigern House,
65 Brown Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, G3 8EX**

Times may be slightly different for this meeting only, to allow the building tour. We are looking at 12:00hrs – 16:00hrs. This will be confirmed ASAP.


Dates for 2015 will be circulated at the next meeting, shown above: -

**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:

Awareness Sub Group Progress Report
Veterans Welfare Service Activity Report

Minutes prepared by: -
Jim R. J. Allan
Secretary, WS VAPC
19 July 2014


Date:- 25th May 2015

Ed McGrachan, Chair – WS VAPC