



# VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

## EASTERN ENGLAND VETERANS ADVISORY & PENSIONS COMMITTEE (EVAPC)

### MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 22nd June 2017 @ the Army Cadet Headquarters, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire

Present: Mr JL Jelley – Chairman  
Dr M Almond  
Mr J Barnard  
Mr MR Berry  
Ms S Brenchley  
Dr I Calder  
Mr E Connolly  
Gp Capt B Griffiths  
Mr T Heslin  
Ms P Kingham  
Maj T Ormiston  
Lt Col PK Robinson  
Mr I Stewart  
Mr C Titmuss

Apologies: Mr R Catton  
Mr T Heslin  
Mr D Mincher (Vice Chairman)  
Mrs D Preston  
Mr S Burgess VWS

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

#### **Action**

1. The meeting commenced at 1030. The Chairman welcomed members and in particular Chris Titmuss as this was his first meeting. The Chairman invited him to provide a brief background introduction and his work with the RBL and his academic studies relating to veterans were noted.

2. There were no declarations of interest.

#### **ITEM 2 – Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 April 2017**

3. Approval of Minutes. The Minutes, circulated to members prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising. None

#### **ITEM 3 – Review of outstanding actions**

5. The Chairman attended VAPC Chairs meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> April at Norcross.

6. Mr Barnard is looking at the availability of hearing loops.
7. Chairman stated no further information received on possible appeal.
8. Chairman had distributed background info for Members attendance at County Covenant meetings.
9. Chairman had prepared and distributed summary of role and functions of EVAPC for members.
10. Chairman had produced an enhanced photo based members list but was unable to distribute due to IT constraints.

#### **ITEM 4 – Chairman’s Update**

11. The Chairman had attended by invitation the Cambridgeshire County Forum held here at the Reserve Forces & Cadet Association for East Anglia on 7<sup>th</sup> June. This was a great networking opportunity and had a good attendance of civic leaders. The Chairman noted in particular that he had met the Leader of Cambs CC, Cllr Mandy Smith who had promised to assist in granting us access to Covenant Board etc. Also, the Chairman had been invited by Brig Tim Seal TD DL VR (Chairman of Forum) to join as a member.

12. The Chairman would be attending the reconvened Essex Civilian Military Partnership Board at County Hall, Chelmsford on 29<sup>th</sup> June where he will present the VAPC and report back to members at next meeting.

**Chairman**

#### **ITEM 5 – Homelessness in Cambridge**

13. Ms Brenchley and Ms Kingham reported on their further investigations into the extent of the homelessness Veterans problem in Cambridge. They reported that there seemed to be a lot of strategy around the problem and a lot of work being done on the ground through individual organisations, but the connectivity between the two could be enhanced. The Cambridge Community Safety Partnership Panel brings together a number of agencies to understand the kind of community issues Cambridge is experiencing, deciding which are most important and what actions can be taken collectively adding value to the day-to-day work undertaken by individual agencies. Ms Brenchley/Ms Kingham will make contact with the panel and continue dialogue with both Rotary in Cambridge from a homeless ex-military perspective and a local church who are involved in addressing the problem also. Much discussion ensued on veterans’ homelessness issues, concerning inter alia; the need to identify the size of the problem and where and what the needs are; deciding what the EVAPC will do once data is obtained; the difficulties in obtaining personal information because of data protection issues.

**Ms  
Brenchley/  
Ms  
Kingham**

Mr Titmuss thought that there are no reasons for ex-service people to be homeless with the support offered by RBL, SSAFA and Stoll Housing among others. He suggested John McCarthy of the RBL East Anglia & Essex would be a good contact in this area.

#### **ITEM 6 – Covenant Meetings; Proposed “Areas of Interest” document for discussion, amendment and approval**

14. The Chairman thanked David Mincher and Diane Preston for kindly working together to produce the areas of interest document which had been circulated. Its purpose was to provide a guide for Members attending County Covenant meetings. The document was approved by all as a helpful guide and could be built upon as our local intelligence increases across each county. An associated discussion occurred which debated the process of the granting of Covenant grants. Mr Barnard felt there was insufficient scrutiny of these grants and had personal experience of questionable expenditure. Mr Titmuss said that these grants amounted to £10-£15m pa and were bid for by brigade area and were reviewed locally and centrally by the MOD. He went on to explain that a bid document with a business case had to be submitted for each application. Mr Robinson felt we were going in the wrong direction in even being involved in any Covenant matters. The Chairman rejected this notion explaining that we had debated this long and hard and it was the right direction and was compliant to our remit. Mr Griffiths explained that one of the reasons he joined the VAPC was to make a contribution in driving both accountability and advocacy around the Covenant.

#### **Item 7 – Strategic Plan**

15. The Chairman again noted that considerable progress had been made on the first page of the two year plan with significant engagement achieved. The committee was moving in the right direction but there was a lot to do to move the plan forward as a whole.

#### **Item 8 – Membership/Recruitment**

16. No update on this given the highly successful recruitment campaign earlier in the year. However, the chairman asked all members to be constantly vigilant of any individuals in their respective networks who would be interested and could add value to our work. He also again invited any expressions of interest for the position of Chairman/Vice Chairman to satisfy best practice of succession planning.

#### **Item 9 – EVAPC Meetings – Forward Planning**

17. Future meeting will be scheduled ahead of time to help members to plan their diaries to assist in maximising attendance. The next

meetings had already been set for 7<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> November.

**Item 10 - VWS Activity Report \* Replaced by BLESMA Briefing**

18. Mr Burgess was not in attendance and had unfortunately not provided any written report so Tom Ormiston very kindly agreed to brief members on the work of BLESMA. He gave a very interesting overview of the work done by BLEMA which included providing welfare through working partnerships and delivered by 7 Support Officers across the UK. Toms' own area was East Anglia and East Midlands. He further explained the rehabilitation work done which included supporting new amputees, assisting with finances and ensuring delivery against entitlement. They can also help with the costs of care homes and provide counselling services.

**Item 11 – Any Other Business**

19. None

**Item 12 - Date of Next Meeting**

20. 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017

21. 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Signed:

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