



SOCIAL SECURITY ACT 1989

SOUTH EAST VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 2017 AT CASTAWAY HOUSE GOSPORT

PRESENT:

Canon P Bruinvels – Deputy Chairman
Mrs L Gannon – Secretary
Ms K Fryatt
Mr T Roper
Mr K Newton
Mr M Robjohn
Major J Kennedy-Smith

1. Welcome

Mr Bruinvels welcomed attendees and introduced a new member/observer

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Gillett, Mr Williams, Mr Talbot, Mr Reeves, Mrs Smith, Mr Bateman and Mr Draper.

3. Declaration of Interest

The Chairman reiterated that if any matter under consideration encroached on a member personally, financially or politically, it must be declared.

4. Chairman's Actions

Mr Bruinvels said that Mr Mates had stood down due to ill health and that he would take up the post as Acting Chair and would be applying for the position through the correct channels.

He had written to Norcross re new members and adverts were going out to recruit for regions in need of further members. He felt that the committee had become negative and wished to turn this around under his Chairmanship.

5. Introduction of Observers

Covered under Item 1.

6. New Chairman's Forward Plan

Mr Bruinvels said he had been formulating his plan for a long time – a copy had been emailed to all committee members prior to the meeting. He felt that we could be more involved in Civilian member Partnership Boards and would be writing to all Chairs of Boards to put SE VA&PC forward as useful members/contacts. Ms Fryatt thought it would be good to also contact Task Force Commanders, advising them of our role.

Mr Bruinvels handed out the latest demographics for those claiming as veterans. A new question would be added to the next census asking if people had military service.

The committee were concerned that there are veterans who do not claim any help and a discussion took place on how to reach them – although many would not ask because they do not want to be helped.

Mr Bruinvels said that the committee should have a dedicated Armed Forces Champion member, and said he would seek a training course for this.

He felt that local authority staff need to be trained on the Armed Forces Covenant, and the VA&PC needed to be part of it, which would help identify veterans.

He said that our details on the veterans UK website was very out of date – Mrs Gannon agreed to find out how to get this sorted.

He concluded that there were quite a few ways to raise our profile – LL's, LA's, large businesses, CAB's, DWP etc.

7. Report from Chairman's Conference

Mr Draper had provided a paper from the last Conference. If any member was interested in being a member of a working group, please let Mrs Gannon know.

8. Update on Transition and Careers Fairs

Major Kennedy-Smith gave a very good presentation on Transition and careers fairs. She felt that serving personnel do not prepare or plan early enough for release. The main issues for leaving had been job satisfaction. Other factors were lack of forward planning, desire to settle into own homes, pay and allowances. Work was being undertaken in service to help with these issues.

Other ways to help were a new employment model, flexible employment, career breaks. These issues may not persuade service personnel to stay in but certainly gave options for consideration

9. Service Charity Focus

Due to time constraints, this item would be covered at a later date.

10. Members Reports

Mr Roper said that he had been working with a Gurkha, had written to an MP re the witch hunt on personnel that had served in NI, felt that DDS needed more focus, VAPC needed its own literature for handing out (flyer?) and said that he was worried about Universal Credit.

11. Any Other Business

No items were forthcoming.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 7 February, hopefully at 11 Bde HQ.

The next meetings were scheduled for Wednesday 2 May and Thursday 27 September – subject to change.