

SW VAPC MEETING ON 10 DECEMBER 2018 AT 1130 HRS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

ATTENDANCE

Paul Cartwright (PC)	Ash Jones (AJ)	Jeff Spencer (JS)
Ben Bennington (BB)	David Newson (DN)	Irene Wills (IW)
Tom Coyle (TC)	Franklin Owusu-Antwi (FO-A)	John Yerbury (JY)
Chris Francis (CF)	Stephen Rowland-Jones (SR-J)	VWS: David Luscombe (DL)
Phil Heavey (PH)	Heather Smith (HS)	

APOLOGIES

Keith Naylor, Steve Turnbull, Scott Parker.

DECISIONS (lead on item in brackets)

Item	Action
<p><u>Welcome and Introduction (PC) - 1130.</u></p> <p>1. PC welcomed all to the meeting, outlined his initial observations and thoughts, and invited comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement for a simple SW plan focusing on how we intend to achieve our role, which ought to take account of best practice in other VAPC committees. ACTION: Where they so wish, members to send ideas on how we could best achieve our role to PC by 11 Jan. The setting up of Sub Committees and individual roles: by region and/or subject (i.e. Local Authority Covenants, Charities, Casework, PR/ Marketing, Veterans Gateway, Communications/Information Management, Secretary. SR-J suggested looking into getting a paid, non-voting secretary. ACTION: ideas on regional and subject responsibilities to PC by 11 Jan. ACTION: investigate ways to achieve Secretary function. <p>2. Thereafter recruit up to 4 extra members with the skills/regional coverage we need. ACTION: recruit accordingly in 2019.</p> <p>3. PC noted that he would like members to distribute reports and information two weeks prior to a meeting so that, at the meeting, priority is given to discussion and decisions rather than the exchange of information. ACTION: This requirement to be made clear in meeting calling notices.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Members PC</p> <p>PC</p> <p>PC</p>
<p><u>Minutes/Actions of the last meeting.</u></p> <p>4. NI Letter (PC). The deadline for a letter from SW VAPC expressing reservations about the NI Consultation process had passed - no further action.</p> <p>5. SW VAPC Flyer (BB). All agreed it was a good idea but remove 'Combat Stress' contact details, as many members had reservations about singling out one charity (although noted that this Combat Stress helpline was Government supported). ACTION: SP to finalise draft, including setting up email address (e.g. VAPC.SouthWest@....) by 11 Jan. ACTION: once email set up, PC to explore ways to publish and distribute to members and organise voluntary committee rota for answering emails.</p> <p>6. AFC Radio talks (JS). Have been sent out.</p> <p>7. AFC, VAPC and VG presentation notes (JS). ACTION: will be distributed to members once finalised.</p>	<p>SP</p> <p>PC</p> <p>JS</p>

<p><u>Oct 18 Chairs update (JS).</u></p> <p>8. Initiative to mark VAPC Centenary in 2021 highlighted.</p> <p>9. JS challenged all to use VAPC website to identify its shortfalls.</p> <p>10. Lynn Verity has written a draft constitution. ACTION: comments on constitution to PC by 24 Dec – he will forward a consolidated list of suggestions to Lynn. ACTION: JS will forward his three ‘one liners’ on VAPC role (asp) to initiate comment (to PC), who will then inform Lynn.</p>	<p>Members JS Members</p>
<p><u>Wiltshire Conference (BB/JY).</u></p> <p>11. This was considered a great success but concern was expressed about how it would be financed in future. ACTION: invite David Wood (DB) to next meeting to give us an update.</p> <p>12. It was noted that DB hoped to replicate Forces SE Connect in the SW.</p>	<p>PC</p>
<p><u>Veterans Strategy (All).</u></p> <p>13. Concerns were expressed about it being too vague, too general, with no information about how it would be resourced. It was agreed that a consolidated response in the consultation phase (by 19 Feb 19) would be the best way forward. One way to gather feedback was through Forums. JS highlighted forum in Cornwall set up for this purpose. ACTION: all were encouraged to consider similar forums in their regions before 19 Feb 19 deadline.</p> <p>14. Map of Need Project (MoNP). JS briefed the MoNP and invited members to view it via the Vets UK website¹. Concern was expressed about its limitations: e.g. validity (genuine veterans) and scope (% of issues recorded). It was generally agreed that this highlighted the need for a unique Veterans ID. ACTION: all to consider viewing the MoNP and provide feedback to PC by 13 Jan 19 on whether it might be useful and, if not, how it could be improved to be useful.</p> <p>15. H4H Recovery Centres (BB). Utility of using H4H recovery centres as a means of getting veterans’ feedback was discussed. ACTION: BB asked to suggest an H4H event that could be used for such a purpose by the next meeting.</p>	<p>Members Members BB</p>
<p><u>Covenant Reports (All).</u></p> <p>16. Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Report 2018 (JS). The report highlighted improved cross-government buy-in.</p> <p>17. County Covenant updates. AFC activity in the following regions was briefed: Somerset (PH), South Gloucestershire (FO-A), Cornwall (JS), Torbay (HS), Plymouth (IW), and North Somerset (AJ). Of particular note were the Armed Forces (AF)-led AF awareness courses and the need for more AF champions in Somerset, a lack of awareness about applying for funding in South Gloucestershire, that Bristol City were not engaging in AFC matters, and that Torbay were likely to ‘sign over’ to Devon due to the state of their finances. JS</p>	

¹ It is suggested that everyone looks at that site as if they are a veteran in need, and note the ways to ‘connect’ with VAPC for the variety of Vets products.

<p>noted that a Wiltshire Conference (items 11 & 12) attendee was from Bristol City Council. ACTION: JS to provide FO-A with details of the Bristol City Council contact asp.</p>	<p>JS</p>
<p>It became clear to PC during this item that members had adopted regional responsibilities. ACTION: members are requested to highlight the counties/districts they lead on, or would like to lead on, by 24 Dec.</p>	<p>Members</p>
<p><u>VWS Overview (DL).</u></p> <p>18. Welfare Managers. SW Welfare Managers had gone from 60% of posts filled to 100%. Some issues in the Bristol area but action in hand to rectify.</p> <p>19. WPS and AFCS Statistics. Whilst the 'Average Clearance Times' and 'volume' statistics included in the Hd Veterans UK report were useful, they had some limitations: don't give a full picture of what's still out there; and don't show what the long-term issues are that take 2+ years to clear. [In AOB, CF noted the average time was 1 year with some taking 2, in his 80 appeals this year.]</p> <p>20. VAPC Casework Involvement (this also came up in item 22). There was agreement that we should remain involved in casework, as required, including through a strong VAPC-VWS link. There were various questions about the status of RBL, VAPC and VWS in appeals/tribunals and possible conflicts of interest. DL suggested his welfare managers would hand out SW VAPC flyers. ACTION: investigate how and when SW VAPC should become involved in casework, appeals and tribunals by next meeting. ACTION: send VWS details to BB/SP for inclusion on the SW VAPC flyer asp. ACTION: investigate by 24 Dec whether VAPC are represented on the OPT/War Pensions committee (in Norcross). If not but should be, CF happy to be nominated.</p>	<p>PC DL PC</p>
<p><u>Veterans Gateway (VG) update (JS).</u></p> <p>21. VG website has a housing dashboard that is worth viewing. ACTION: distribute 'log in' information to members so they can view as 'partners' asp.</p>	<p>JS</p>
<p><u>VAPC casework oversight.</u></p> <p>22. JY noted he had only dealt with one case recently and it had taken 2 years. TC, CF and IW also covered casework issues. Action as per item 20.</p>	
<p><u>AOB.</u></p> <p>23. TC suggested that learning lessons from other VAPC committees (item 1) should take account of our high concentration of Veterans, which may mean we need to do things differently. DASA stats suggested 19% of Veterans lived in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, and 60% lived South of the line of the M4. ACTION: SW 'differences' to be taken into account when formulating a SW VAPC plan.</p> <p>24. JY suggested, and there was some consensus, that if the next meeting needed more time for discussion, it might include an overnight stay. SR-J noted it might be possible to approach charities to help sponsor this. ACTION: feasibility of 'overnight meeting' to be investigated before next meeting.</p> <p>25. There was some discussion about how the DBS were unable to do pension forecasts and appeared to be overstretched.</p>	<p>PC PC</p>

<p>26. Some members had not seen the VAPC handbook until it was distributed prior to the meeting and wondered whether feedback was expected/could be given. ACTION: investigate the status of the handbook by 24 Dec.</p>	<p>PC</p>
<p>27. PC noted that the next Chairs meeting is likely to be on 20/21 Mar 2019 in London and that he was unable to attend. ACTION: a volunteer is required to attend as the SW Rep, by 24 Dec.</p>	<p>Members</p>
<p>28. PC suggested the next meeting should be on either the 25 Feb or 4 Mar 2019. It was also noted that it might be best to meet prior to the 19 Feb consultation deadline (item 13) [post meeting note: 11 or 18 Feb?]. ACTION: confirm availability, by 24 Dec, on 11,18, 25 Feb and 4 Mar for next meeting.</p>	<p>Members</p>
<p>The meeting closed at 1315.</p>	