

VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS (VAPC) COMMITTEE – Annual Activity Report dated ...31 July 2017...

Annual Report from ...East MidlandsCommittee

Achievement against VAPC Objectives

Membership

Current Membership

Lt. Col. Peter POOLE (PP) Chair.
Patrick RENDALL (PR) (Deputy Chair)
Larry HENSON (LH)
John BERRY (JB)
Terl BRYANT (TB)
Barry SMITH (BS)
Michael WHITEHEAD (MW)
Paul DAVIES (PD)
*Jim WRIGHT (JW)
*Dick HARWOOD (DH)
*Stav MELIDES (SM)
David LOMAS (DL)
David WILSON (DW)
*David TAYLOR (DT)
Charley STREATHER (CS)
Bill DIXON-DODDS (BDD)

Co-opted Members

*Ben HODGES (BH)
*Ron GAITPAIN (RG)

*Recruited in 2017

Over the course of the year the Committee has lost two members. One due to a change of working location and the other due to excessive work commitments.

Raising awareness activity

To include Committee's Key achievements, Planned activity.

A copy of the Committee Strategy which includes details of the raising awareness activities expected during the year 2016/17 is attached at Annex A. The Strategy, which was first put together in 2016, has been further developed since the arrival of the new members and as such some of the targets it contains are in the process of being met as opposed to complete, however contacts made include engagement with local industry, education, local authorities, service charities and the NHS. The East Midlands Committee contains four sub Committees, each of which is charged with raising awareness within their own activity area, the plan for each is shown as an Annex to the main document.

Some of the more notable successes in raising awareness are shown below:

British Gas
BT Openreach
Grantham College

Raising Awareness of the Committee and its work is an ongoing action, not made easier by the fact that there is considerable "turnover" in political, charitable and statutory services personnel.

The Committee will continue to work hard to engage – and thus – raise awareness of VAPCs over the next year.

Engagement

To include examples of regional engagement, local authority, NHS, third sector etc to cover methods used, eg. face to face, correspondence, joint attendance at events etc.

To a large extent engagement and raising awareness are inextricably combined, for without the one there cannot be the other. As can be seen from our strategic document each of the sub Committees is tasked with a specific role to engage with their opposite numbers.

Policy/Governance Committee Lead - Group Captain (Retd) Barry Smith RAF

This sub Committee, charged with making contact with all Local Authorities and assisting them in their endeavours to meet the terms of the Covenant. This group has been successful in making contact with some 50% of the LAs in our region since February 17. This has been achieved in the main by joint attendance at meetings and face to face. Points to note:

- Engagement activity with stakeholders impacted by Local Authority elections in our region and the General Election.
- A meeting of the Veteran's Organisations of Leicestershire, chaired by Lady Gretton, identified difficulties of co-ordination within

the 3rd Sector.

- Initiatives to counter declining numbers of members in the various Associations include organisations with larger and more vibrant memberships within Leicestershire offering fellowship and comradeship to smaller organisations.
- The Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Clubs are seen as a success story by those engaged with them.
- Discussions with Lt Col Andy Turner and his staff at 158 Regt RLC & Army Reserve HQ in Loughborough covered:
 - a. Make-up of the Veteran population in our region and where are they settled? Our link to Vets (UK) is key in this regard.
 - b. Governance of military charities and the need for them to become cap badge agnostic (see commentary above).
 - c. How to better provide the Local Authorities, in particular, with the data on Veterans, future strategic plans of the Services and their subsequent impact on the community.
- Further meetings are planned with Bde& RAF staffs in our region to discuss these issues.
- There is a need to co-ordinate activities with the East Midlands Reserve Forces & Cadets Association (RFCA) organisation,
- Discussions with the Chief Executive of the East Midlands RFCA and his team have commenced. Given their new regulatory role with respect to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, we want to ensure that there is an understanding of the boundaries and any overlaps between our 2 organizations with respect to businesses and the promotion of the AFC in our region.

Welfare Sub Committee Lead - Major David Taylor

Charged with making and maintaining contact with all Third Sector ex service organisations covering the whole span of the ex-service community. In the first six months of operation the sub Committee has achieved its target of engaging with four of these organisations and under its new leadership is set to make a major breakthrough in this area over the second half of the year.

Health Sub Committee Lead – Dr Richard Hurwood

Under a new lead the Health Sub Committee has achieved engagement with the regional leads of the NHS and has made inroads in the target to liaise with CCGs. Contact with the major ex-service health charities (Combat Stress, Blesma and Blind Veterans UK has been achieved by relationships developed by individual members.

Liaising with NHS staff involved in developing DNRC site and facilities for service personnel and NHS patients.

Communications Sub Committee Lead – Michael Whitehead

A considerable amount of preparatory work has been done to ensure our members have access to a library of base/policy documents and regular updates and news items.

The Committee features on both twitter and facebook so we now have a social media platform which we are about to use more fully.

Our “share point” account on the MOD website is now established and we are beginning to further populate it with regular updates.

We now make sure that a rolling two years worth of minutes are available on the GOV.UK site.

Assistance to Veterans

To include any examples of personal assistance, wider reaching activities/events etc

Each year the East Midlands Committee identifies less fortunate veterans, widows and family members who may not be able to enjoy a Christmas Lunch. By obtaining sponsorship from local businesses and the ex-service charities the Committee provided a Christmas Lunch at the Nottingham Forest Football ground for some forty veterans and widows.

Two complex cases concerning the rights of veterans are still ongoing.

Chairman and one member sat on an Independent Complaints Panel dealing with three individual cases

Veterans Welfare Service Engagement activity

To include details of visits undertaken/meetings attended etc

None.

Consultation

To include any consultation activity either at Chair level or full Committee regionally/nationally/MOD.

The Committee has contributed to draft SI and all other consultations.

Contributed to the rewrite of the protocol for ICPs.

Committee input to the Veterans Research Hub (Anglia Ruskin University) – Chairman is member of Steering Group

Other activity

To include examples of best practice activity etc.

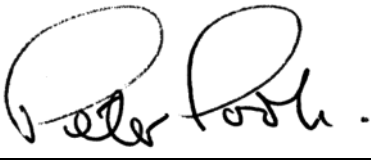
Committee members participated in centrally organised Member Training

Plans for next year

To include key objectives/plans

To build on the work that has been done this year. The objectives and plans for the next year are contained within the plan at Annex A

Other key points

Signed:  Lt Col (Retd) P M Poole MBE (Chairman EMVAPC)