

SW VAPC MEETING ON 04 MARCH 2019 AT 1130 HRS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

ATTENDANCE

Paul Cartwright (PC)	David Newson (DN)	Irene Wills (IW)
Ben Bennington (BB)	Stephen Rowland-Jones (SR-J)	John Yerbury (JY)
Tom Coyle (TC)	Heather Smith (HS)	Wilts CC: David Wood (DW)
Chris Francis (CF)	Jeff Spencer (JS)	
Ash Jones (AJ)	Steven Turnbull (ST)	

APOLOGIES

Phil Heavey (PH); Franklin Owusu-Antwi (FO-A); David Luscombe (DL), VWS.

DECISIONS (lead on item in brackets)

Item	Action
<u>Welcome and Introduction (PC) - 1130.</u>	
1. PC welcomed all to the meeting and noted that Keith Naylor had decided to retire from the Committee after 7 years of service.	
<u>Minutes/Actions of the last meeting (PC).</u>	
2. Members' ideas on achieving SW VAPC role. Some contributions received. Will be taken forward in a planning workshop (Jun 19). ACTION: Include in draft 'SW VAPC plan discussion paper' by mid-May.	PC
3. Members' ideas on regional and subject responsibilities. Some Members had highlighted the counties/districts they, in effect, lead on. ACTION: As above.	PC
4. Investigate ways to achieve Secretary function. 3 options identified; approach the TAVR Centre, approach industry, find a willing co-opted volunteer. JS suggested a possible volunteer. ACTION: Investigate further by next meeting (04 Jun 19).	PC
5. Distribution of Reports for Meetings. This had not been done for this meeting but will, hopefully, become routine. ACTION (ongoing): The requirement to distribute reports and information 2 weeks prior to meetings is to be made clear in meeting calling notices.	PC
6. Finalise SW VAPC Flyer. PC and BB had not been able to reach Scott Porter (SP). Furthermore, JS had made some progress with a national comms plan, which might lead to standard email addresses for each regional VAPC (e.g. VAPC.SouthWest@...) – see item 28. It was decided to hold back publishing the Flyer pending confirmation of an email address standard. If this does not materialise, SW VAPC will revert to the original plan and 'go it alone' with SW Flyer/email contact. This would be as per the latest draft, with contact details for VWS and an SW VAPC email address added. ACTION: Update on National Comms Strategy progress at next meeting.	JS
7. AFC, VAPC and VG presentation notes (JS). Action complete.	
8. Comments on VAPC Constitution. PC thanked members who contributed to this – unfortunately, the constitution was finalised in Dec 18 so no further amendments were made. Action complete.	

<p>9. Invite DB to next meeting. Action complete.</p> <p>10. Consider Regional Veterans forums to inform Veterans' Strategy. JS held forums in Cornwall. Action Complete.</p> <p>11. Utility of Map of Need Project (MoNP). Action complete.</p> <p>12. H4H Recovery Centres (BB). BB suggested a meeting in Tedworth House in May. ACTION: BB to organise.</p> <p>13. Bristol City Council contact. JS had provided FO-A with the details. Action complete.</p> <p>14. Casework, Appeals and Tribunals. Since the last meeting, PC had been sent one AFCS case for consideration, which TC and CS had advised on, allowing PC to send a reply¹. Action complete.</p> <p>15. VAPC representation on the OPT/War Pensions Committee (in Norcross). PC made enquiries with Vets UK and put CF's name forward. Action complete.</p> <p>16. View VG Website Housing Dashboard. Action complete.</p> <p>17. Consider feasibility of 'overnight stay' to allow planning workshop. Vets UK would not fund hotel accommodation for a SW VAPC planning workshop but might be prepared to fund an evening meal. JS suggested staying at RAF St Mawgan. ACTION: JS to investigate cost/feasibility², PC to approach Vets UK for authorisation.</p> <p>18. VAPC Handbook Status. PC confirmed that the Handbook had been published in Dec 18 (although see footnote 1). Action complete.</p> <p>19. SW Rep for next Chairs Meeting. JY had volunteered to rep PC at the 20/21 Mar Chairs' Meeting. Action complete.</p>	<p>BB</p> <p>JS PC</p>
<p><u>Veterans Strategy Consultation Feedback (PC).</u></p> <p>20. PC thanked contributors to the SW VAPC response and outlined some of the atmospherics at the MOD consultation and the likely way forward. Others highlighted their feedback and there was a brief discussion. JS outlined the feedback from his Veterans' Forums, which had been sent in separately.</p>	
<p><u>SW Plan 2019/20 (PC).</u></p> <p>21. PC stated that SW VAPC needed 'a plan', probably covering 2 years, that included an approach, priorities, individual responsibilities, and therefore what sort of new members we might recruit (to cover gaps in our expertise). Following a short discussion, it was agreed that PC would draft a skeleton plan and an extended meeting would be held to flesh this out, hopefully in June, as per paragraph 17 above. ACTION: Skeleton plan by mid May (connected with Actions in Items 2 and 3).</p>	<p>PC</p>

¹ Post meeting note: while this suggested the system was working, Section 7 of the new VAPC Handbook, 'Complaints to VAPC', has not been written.

² Post meeting note: requirement is accommodation (accn), meetings rooms (2?) and meals. Either dinner on 3rd, overnight accn on 3rd, breakfast and lunch on 4th, or lunch, dinner and overnight accn on 4th, breakfast on 5th.

<p><u>Wiltshire Conference Update (DW)</u></p> <p>22. DW brought the Committee up to date on Wiltshire CC's Veterans' projects in the SW³, principally: a training package, the formation of a SW Regional Executive for high level AF Covenant business and to provide quality assurance (a Kitemark), data sharing/collaborating, Salisbury AF day 2019, Forces Connect SW portal, a promotion film, and an outreach programme. He noted that to get funding required evidence and that his post was only funded until October. He also stated he would be happy to deliver the training package to any audience. In open forum, questions were asked about the benefits and a good discussion was had about who should drive and fund the project. DW was also questioned about why Plymouth had pulled out and he noted that they had wanted to go it alone due to their RN-centric nature and already good awareness of Veterans' issues. There was also a question about Kitemarks, noting that LAs should not mark their own homework. It was suggested that a Kitemark role was, perhaps, a suitable one for VAPC.</p>	
<p><u>Cornwall Festival Initiative (JS)</u></p> <p>23. JS outlined the plans for a 'Vets Fest' near St Austell between 5 and 7 Jul, which hoped to attract 1200 visitors. Although primarily about bringing Vets together and having fun, showing Vets in a positive light was an important aspect, with Associations and local Employees involved rather than Charities. The possibility of a VAPC stand was raised.</p>	
<p><u>Annual Appraisals (PC)</u></p> <p>24. PC stated he would be following the Appraisals Process. He also suggested that, if a Vice Chair was appointed, they might be given responsibility for coordinating a 360-degree appraisal of the Chair.⁴</p>	
<p><u>VAPC Annual Report to Minister (PC)</u></p> <p>25. PC noted it would be nice for the SW to feature in the 'key achievements' section in the next report.</p>	
<p><u>Signposting Charities and Benevolence (JS)</u></p> <p>26. JS suggested closer cooperation with the RAF Benevolent Fund, who is celebrating its 100th Anniversary, the RFCA, Defence Relationship, SW Covenant Coordinator and NHS Trusts. He also suggested the need for more diversity in form of non-military committee members. This led to a discussion about who should be on a SW VAPC 'contact list' and how to engage with those that did not engage.</p>	
<p><u>Covenant Activity (All)</u></p> <p>27. The following updated the Committee about AF Covenant work in their areas: JY (Dorset), JS (Cornwall), SR-J (Salisbury), IW (Plymouth), HS (Torbay - due to be subsumed into Devon). Of note was an agreement that there needs to be a culture shift in LAs, towards the AF Covenant being everyone's business, and that there was no RN rep at the Plymouth Covenant meeting, which was unusual. Plymouth had gone back to focusing on housing, homelessness, mental health and celebrating Armed Forces Day.</p>	

³ Wiltshire CC leads a partnership of 8 Local Authorities (LAs).

⁴ Post Meeting Note: PC would follow Section 4 of the Handbook and conduct formal appraisals towards the end of each member's 3-year appointment.

<p><u>Communications (JS).⁵</u></p> <p>28. JS outlined his proposal for a National VAPC website and communications, independent of Vets UK, which had been taken up by the National Chair and his Deputy. How it would operate and be funded were key considerations.</p>	
<p><u>VAPC Casework (All).</u></p> <p>29. PC noted the case sent to him by Vets UK (see Item 14). JS, JY and TC also highlighted the casework they were involved with, 4 cases in all. Of note was a case involving hearing loss through long-term exposure, which resulted in a medical discharge but no additional compensation. A claim was being pursued due to the severity of the loss.</p>	
<p><u>AOB.</u></p> <p>30. There was a brief discussion about the VAPC role in delivering the AF Covenant. PC stated that this could be discussed in more depth at the June workshop (see items 2 and 3).</p> <p>31. The poor support regarding pensions was highlighted. For example, for those on the 05 Scheme, the process only starts on a recipients' 65th birthday and there is then a 30-day period to get everything done. Inevitably there will be a gap in income. On the other hand, an individual reaching the state pension point will have a readout of the date and the amount they will be paid three months or so in advance so that they can plan accordingly. If DWP can do this, why not the MoD? It was also noted that War Pensions were paid every 28 days rather than monthly. ACTION: PC to raise both issues with Hd Vets UK.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 1330.</p>	<p>PC</p>

⁵ The Chair inadvertently skipped this item and it was discussed in AOB. Connected to Item 6.