

## **Scotland Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC) Meeting Minutes Thursday the 16th of March 2023 (17:00-19:00), Held Virtually.**

Present: Alan Hamilton, Chair (AH); Huw Sherrard, Secretary (HS); William Lindsay (WL); Mike McCourt (MMcC); Iain Findlay (IF); Kate Thomas (KT); Sandy Reid (SRe); Stuart Robert (SRo); Megan Brackley (MB); Audrey Cuthbertson (AC).

Apologies: Don Young (DY); Sue Raw (SRa); Mark Logie (ML); Jim Wilson (JW); Andrew Ward (AW).

### **1. Welcome & Apologies**

AH welcomed the Committee. HS noted the apologies.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising**

The Committee approved the previous minutes. AH noted a matter arising, but that it fell under item 3.

### **3. Update on Recruitment of Chair**

AH noted the recruitment of members was progressing slowly. Three people were interviewed for Chair, and the next step of the process is that the interviewing board will write up reports on each candidate, and the MinDPV will select a successful candidate from amongst them. AH was asked whether the Committee was happy to allow the MinDPV to allow him to continue as Chair on the interim basis until the appointment of a successful Chair. The Committee agreed.

### **4. Update on Draft VAPC Independent Review**

AH gave a brief overview on the progress with the independent review of VAPCs. MMcC inquired about when the findings of the review would be finalised and provided to the MinDPV.

### **5. Update from Members**

AH noted that a number of members had provided updates, and asked if any other members attending wanted to provide updates. SRo provided an update on the meeting of Veterans Aberdeenshire, which was largely positive: it held regular meetings, there was an effective Armed Forces Champion, and it was well connected with the local authority area - though potentially less input from the Armed Forces in the area institutionally than there possibly could be. SRo to pass on agenda to HS to distribute. There was a positive view of the Scottish Veterans Commissioner. MMcC passed on information relating to difficulties contacting, and receiving response from, Firm Bases and Armed Forces Covenant groups. SRo noted that Lanarkshire Firmbase - with an imminent change of name - was now jointly led by both local authorities within that area, and that it was well-established and effective in serving as a conduit for organisations supporting and advocating for Veterans and the Armed Forces community in that area. KT asked if more communications from Lanarkshire could be shared - SRo said that it could be done.

IF informed the Committee that he had made contact with a number of people in East Renfrewshire. HS provided an update on the situation in Clackmannanshire. AH asked if HS could circulate the list of members in relation to local areas, for an update from members.

#### **6. 2023 Annual Report**

AH noted the Ministerial priorities for the upcoming reporting duty. AH asked the Committee to provide input on their local areas and perspective in the coming weeks.

#### **7. AOCB**

AH noted the upcoming Veterans Scotland National Gathering on the 24th of March 2023, at 09:00 in Edinburgh City Chambers. JW had suggested that one or two members might attend from the VAPC. HS volunteered - MMcC stated they would check their availability.

**Signed as true on 29/06/23 by Carolyn Caddick, Chair**



*Carolyn Caddick*

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