

MINUTES OF THE 4TH MEETING OF THE EAST
MIDLANDS VETERANS ADVISORY AND
PENSIONS COMMITTEE HELD AT PRINCE
WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER BARRACKS,
OFFICERS MESS, ON MONDAY 13th JUNE, 2011
at 10.30 AM.

Present:

Lt Col Peter Poole (PP)	Chair
John Berry (BB)	
Keith Meakin (KM)	
Terl Bryant (TB)	
David Harding (DH)	
David Donovan (DD).	
Larry Henson (LH)	Secretary
Ray Boyfield (RB)	

Apologies

Charlie Streather (CS)
Bill Dixon-Dodds (BD)

ITEM 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair (PP) welcomed all present and asked the committee to note that he had received apologies from Charlie Streather (CS) and Bill Dixon-Dodds (BD).

He said that he had received a letter of resignation from Chris Harrison. He added that this would be a great loss to the committee as Chris had given wonderful committee service for many years and it was resolved that PP would write an appropriate letter of appreciation. PP mentioned that there was an appropriate commendation in place for such service and he felt this could be awarded to Chris Harrison. LH suggested that if this was granted perhaps members would agree it could be presented at the lunch being organised in Leicester later in the year. This was unanimously agreed.

PP said that via LH, he had been invited to address the full council of Northamptonshire County Council on the work of the Veterans Agency and the EMVAPC Committee in particular. However, he was unable to attend due to a bereavement and a CT scan. LH undertook to liaise with the chair of NCC to secure a fresh invite.

ITEM 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

ITEM 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 21st FEBRUARY 2011.

These were read and agreed.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING.

PP said that guests had been invited but could not attend, and that others had been invited but he added at the next meeting a Colonel MASON would attend to address the

committee. PP added there would be need to make more time available.

There was discussion on an urgent response made by PP regarding pensions and that there was a need to run this via the committee and KM remarked that we do not need to be against everything and lets learn by it and that there needs to be investigation of the background before replying.

PP said he had attended the Chairs conference and that questions put needed to be more specific due to lack of timing.

JB pointed out that under item 5 there were 35 Probation Trusts and not Offices.

PP said there was no change to Committee Selection and recruitment and added the need for us to find new members. TB mentioned serving Officers at Wittering and Cottesmore who may be willing to join.

PP said that we may Co-opt members and eventually they may be collectively interviewed.

DD said he would send his profile to all members. LH said he had now collated all profiles and would send them out by Email in due course.

There was discussion on the wiring diagram KM had mentioned and was agreed it hopefully would be addressed.

ITEM 5 SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS

STRATEGIC AIM 2.

TB said that people do not read the signposts they are given. PP said the timing appeared wrong in giving out information and it needed to be revisited.

PP said resettlement should commence on the first day of engagement and somebody should point this out. TB suggested PP should write to the Minister. JB said resettlement should start earlier overall.

There was discussion of the relationship between the CJ Act and the army. JB highlighted that resettlement was difficult in times of no jobs.

TB said he has 30 on his books with MS as ‘non-deployable’ and there is a difference, according to who is the applicant, and PP highlighted there is a difference between the types of discharge being given.

KM highlighted a case that received £470,000 in compensation but could not get a medical discharge. Administrative discharge means receipt of resettlement payment instead of medical discharge plus other benefits.

JB said there is a push to reduce ‘Medical Discharge’ to ‘Administrative Discharge’ to save money. KM said that Administrative Discharge had a stigma whereas Officers are medically discharged. Some may not be retired and therefor have to soldier on. The consensus was that medical discharge was more beneficial.

KM highlighted a case of a person with eyesight problems who had been on lengthy sick leave but had not been referred to the PRU. PP said it was not helpful by not making referrals.

KM high lighted a man doing 22 years with 2 years to do but requires 5 years treatment and queried whether he would get that treatment on the NHS.

Panel cases.

CS had visited but was not present to report.

KM said it was strange that we do not get panel cases and LH queried, “Can we ask why we do not get to advise?”

PP thought it more appropriate to gently ask the more specific question on how many cases there were in our area.

KM said the name of a former member was improperly given to give advice when it was not his role.

ITEM 6

PP said he had a meeting with Leicester but nothing was particularly taking place. He came away with no positive feeling and had found a better reception in Lincolnshire.

PP spoke to Claire Philips re appointment of personnel and timeline. There was discussion on SHAs and PCTs and the GP Consortia had not yet taken off. It was a bit of a mess.

DD said the REMPLOY meeting did not take place as he discovered it was using it as a marketing exercise for them and was not happy with the format so did not attend. He

added that REMPLOY were looking for an MOD contract and he was not happy with the conflict of interest.

DD said that in relation to the pathway there was a small booklet he circulated but he was not sure how long it had been around but it had been several years.

PP says it was an agency report who had started it, but gave no guidance, and suggested any work being done should be forwarded to fill in where necessary.

SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS

JB produced a report (previously circulated) and talked through the work of 'In Reach'. He spoke of his contact with personnel and prisons and contact with Combat Stress and Blesma. He added that there was training this autumn 2011 for In Reach staff. In future in reports there will be a question "are you veteran" when compiling reports. He added that setting up a meeting with Leicester County Council was proving difficult due to downsizing. Various contacts had been made but the NHS was a nightmare but mapping was coming in OK.

RM said Lincolnshire 'Help for Heroes' was very busy. He had approached Wetherspoons but all the branches were linked with help for heroes.

PP mentioned Veterans Day but not a lot was known. There were events in St James Park, Cardiff and Glasgow which seemed positive but overall it was disjointed.

DD asked where were the pamphlets that had been promised? PP promised to follow this up and promised we will get a special pamphlet for East Midlands and he will aim to get it done in the next two weeks. He added that this type of thing needs to be included in the end of year report and he will ensure that these will be done as soon as possible.

DD asked about meetings with Forces Champions and difficulty had been experienced as an Email had not been received and he will forward this on to members.

DD asked about ID Cards for EMVAPC members and PP replied the machine was broken. He asked could the DWP Machine be used but the answer was 'no' so, there would be no ID card at present. He may ask for photographs again.

PP will arrange for business cards.

DD had not heard from Radio Derby.

DD attended the March 2011 meeting in Wrexham of 'Forces for Good' and there were many organisations present. He was not sure what they were trying to achieve but it was similar to COBSEO. There was however, powerful backing for 'Forces for Good'.

PP said he would arrange a poster for EMVAPC with associate organisations and DD cautioned the need for these organisations to give permission to publish their logos.

DD asked about a website and PP said this would be part of the Veterans Website under East Midlands.

KM said correspondence he had read showed there were problems with ESA rules and changes to blue badge rules. They were changing from BFPO to post code.

LUNCH FOR VETERANS.

RB and DD will look into a list of eligible names of veterans and after discussion it was agreed-

- a. The date for the Lunch would be a Thursday in early December 2011 – possibly the 8th.
- b. The invites would be 60 of which 30 may turn up.
- c. We would look to the more deserving cases.
- d. Invitation to the Lord Mayor.
- e. There is £750 available in the Bank.
- f. It would be lunch not dinner.
- g. PP to write a piece on how to raise funds for us to follow.
- h. CS and RB to organise the event.
- i. PP to speak with Chrissie Lancaster re mail.
- j. PP to write to Army Development Fund.

ITEM 6.

Army Recovery Centre.

PP said this was in effect the ‘personal recovery centre’ and a second organisation was to be opened by Help for Heroes in Wiltshire on Military land. PP added that No 3 would be in Colchester – No 4 in Catterick and No 5 in Scotland.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

RB asked if anyone was pulling together feedback and PP said not at present but that it would be helpful. DH, DD and RB to give feedback on their organisations.

DD raised the 'Life Force Booklet' – this to be discussed at the next meeting.

KM mentioned the AFCS and the uplift on a number of cases with quite good results and one man with 28 injuries had received a £190.000 increase.

LH mentioned the possibility of more help from Blackpool.

Forthcoming meetings are

26th September 2011.

16th January 2012

5th March 2012

18th June 2012

The meeting closed at 1pm.