

MINUTES OF THE 22nd MEETING OF THE EAST MIDLANDS VETERANS AND PENSIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD AT THE OFFICERS MESS, PRINCE WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER BARRACKS, GRANTHAM ON MONDAY 20th JUNE
AT 11.10am

Present.

Lt. Col. Peter POOLE (PP) Chair.
Patrick RENDELL (PR)
Larry HENSON (LH) Meetings Secretary.
David WILSON (DW) General Secretary
Barry SMITH (BS)
Michael WHITEHEAD (MW)
Bill DIXON-DODDS (BDD)
David LOMAS (DL)
John BERRY (JB)
Terl BRYANT (TB)

Apologies:

Paul DAVIES (PD)
Sukbir BINDRA (SB)
Ray BOYFIELD (RB)
Charlie STREATHER (CS)

Item 1. Opening Remarks.

1. The Chair (PP) welcomed all present, but expressed some disappointment that so many members were unable to attend. Whilst the occasional absence is understandable some members had missed more than three meetings and will be asked to consider their position. LH produced a chart showing attendance at the last 12 meetings.
2. On a sadder note PP has received notification from Debbie Bowles (DB) that she intends to resign from the Committee. Reorganisation within TRBL has meant that she is no longer involved in our area and the lack of context – and the journey to attend meetings had persuaded her that she should resign.
3. PP asked that it be minuted that he and the Committee as a whole had valued Debbie's knowledge, commitment and wise counsel over the years. Debbie would be much missed and finding a replacement with so many skills would be a difficult task.
4. Finally under this Item PP asked the Committee to note that Jon Parkin, Head of Veterans UK, has moved temporarily to the Vetting organisation in York. His place will be taken by Rob Rowntree.

Item 2. Declarations of Interest.

5. There were no declarations of interest that would affect the work of the Committee.

Item 3. Minutes of the last Meeting

PP thanked LH for the minutes which had been circulated to all members. The minutes, with one or two minor typographical amends were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting.

Item 4. Matters Arising.

6. Members were reminded that reports should be sent via the Secretary (DW) so that if necessary this could be passed to LH for inclusion upon the agenda.
7. The suggestion that some new members do not feel entirely at their ease was again discussed. It was agreed that matching experiences against their role in the Committee would help in this area. PR asked the Committee to note that good communications was essential and would similarly assist the process.
8. CS had previously suggested that an informal function might help, it was agreed that this would be included on the next agenda for discussion. Skype was mentioned as a good form of communication amongst members who could not attend. It was mentioned that Tesco's and Sainsbury's were keen to provide community rooms but LH reminded the Committee that at present Grantham was free of charge!
9. There was discussion on the new Rehabilitation Centre (DNRC) – Stanford Hall. PP had met General Greville Chapman who had expressed his hopes that the Centre would attract much local interest. Clearly as it is in the EMVAPC “patch” we should ensure that we are a “go to” organisation for this scheme. TB said that Headley Court will close on completion of the DNRC, regrettably the money spent by Help for Heroes on the site will be lost, but it had served its purpose for almost a decade. The capacity to accommodate 120 residents at the new Centre will provide more opportunity to deliver a centre that caters for both the D – Defence and the N – national elements of patient care. It was mentioned that the opening of Headley Court top veterans is only for assessment, the majority assessed will be returned to the NHS for treatment.
10. PP noted that the military charities must be careful, at a time when the military is decreasing not to get in to a position of over provision of in-patient beds.
11. PP said that in relation to Armed Forces Day, in view of its location, he would be attending to represent us and would be on the Veterans stand and he knew CS would also be in attendance.

Item 5 Christmas Lunch 2016.

12. BS said he had been to Nottingham Forest Football Ground (The Reds, The Foresters, Garibaldi's, or the Tricky Trees) and met the caterers and Chief Executive. He added that John McGovern who was famous for captaining the side and winning the European cup twice under Brian Clough and Peter Taylor will give a short speech during the lunch. BS said he had also attended the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham but felt it was too small as could only take 75.
13. LH passed on regards from RB who was well but absent and said we have £1377 available for the lunch. LH made it clear that any money we have must be subject to audit.

JB offered to audit the accounts which was gratefully accepted.

14. BS was asked by MW the lunch numbers and he said the venue could easily take 75 and possibly 85. LH stated the lunch was approximately £20 per head and is to be held on Friday 9th December 2016 at Nottingham Forest Football Ground, Nottingham, NG2 5FJ.

LH suggested inviting the players to attend and it was agreed LH would do the raffle.

Item 6. Future Functions 2016

15. Apart from XMAS Lunch there are no other functions planned and this item was passed over.

Item 7 Strategic Direction

16. BS said there had been three sub committee/scoping meetings with the committee chairs. This provided a vehicle to move forward on. A report will be sent to PP who will send it out electronically. This will incorporate key performance indicators and very importantly a time scale incorporated to show how well we are doing and engaging. PP thanked BS for the work he was spearheading.

Item 8. Welfare Sub Committee.

17. DW said this had been thrust upon him and he will contact all committee members in due course after receiving the report being forwarded to him from PP and BS. On a more general note PP said that when we recruit we should do this against the gaps in skills of our membership. This will be an agenda item on 19th September 2016.

Item 9. Health Sub Committee.

18. PP has rewritten the Health Sub Committee but is still to do the Key Performance Indicators and will include them before it is sent out. He added that he wished very much to engage with the Clinical Commissioning Groups.
19. TB said that he thought we need a medical representative on the committee as a voice who will be listened to as an expert. PP believed that we need to engage more with the Criminal Justice System, BS will add this to future reports.

Item 10. Communications Sub Committee (Including Chairs Meeting).

20. PR said he had drafted a letter as to who we are. BS referred to a letter from the Chairs meeting where he said there was a need for statutory underpinning to show we were all on the same side. JB said it should include wording "or in contact with". This will be sent out by PP in electronic Email after we have had the opportunity to read it. BDD and PR mentioned they had already been to visits and Melton Council and that 7th Brigade was holding an input meeting on 13th October.
21. PR said he had attended the Chairs meeting and stayed overnight. The AF Bill had been signed with us included and we have a statutory right to exist. The Statutory Instrument has been circulated. PR said asked the Committee to note that Bank Accounts can exist with an auditor and more than one signatory.

22. Other matters from Chairs Meeting

- a. All to monitor application of the Covenant.
- b. Committee web site.
- c. VWS reminded Committees that it was not the norm to accompany them on visits, more a question of availability on a one for one case.
- d. LH raised the question of Indemnity re visits made by us and PP would get the answer to this.
- e. A second Vice Chair of Chairs had not felt wanted.

Item 11 Feedback from Armed Forces Symposium.

DW said he had reserved a place on this but it had been put back until 13th October 2016. He is attending and hoped to secure a permanent place.

Item 12. AOB.

1. Central Advisory Committee. PP gave the Committee a verbal update on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Quinquennial Review (QQR)

a. Radiah Ford, Quinquennial Review lead, had explained her approach and progress to date. She thanked all those who had responded. The QQR team had also engaged with Admiral Lord Boyce, Professor Sir Anthony Newman Taylor, and Dr Anne Braidwood and reported to a Project Review Team (PRT) on a monthly basis. Peter Nicholson, deputy lead, explained that the QQR had started 15 weeks ago and had reached the analysis stage at which detailed examination would begin of the emerging themes. Overall, 40 stakeholders had been engaged including charities, claimants and Other Government Departments (OGD). He emphasised the team was committed to provide evidence-based recommendations which could be a mixture of solutions and topics for further investigation.

a. Radiah Ford re-iterated that this was to be a 'light touch' review building on the comprehensive review conducted by Lord Boyce. 15 emerging themes had been categorised based on issues raised by stakeholders. The Review team had not made any judgements or recommendations. She acknowledged that some issues had been addressed or were part of mainstream work in progress.

Emerging Themes:

- Status of the AFCS
- Emerging challenges
- Scope of AFCS, in particular applicability to Reservists
- Data Collection
- Categories of awards
- Tariff levels
- Interim awards
- Spanning and worsening
- Decision making
- Appeals
- Communication
- Comparison with other schemes
- Additional issues raised / Issues outside the scope of the QQR

Next Steps – the team would explore in more detail the issues raised.

ITEM 14 DATE VENUE OF NEXT MEETING.

This will be Grantham Barracks 10.30am for 11am Monday 19th September 2016

ITEMS 5 and 6

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ITEM 7 STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUB COMMITTEE PRESENTATION.

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ITEM 8, 9 and 10.

These will be carried over until the next meeting.

ITEM 9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

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ITEM 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND VENUE

Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham at 11am on Monday 20th June 2016

The meeting then closed at 1pm.

