

**Minutes of East of Scotland WPC on Thursday 4/10/07 at New Haig House, Edinburgh**

**Present**

**In attendance**

Tim Usher (Chair)  
Jamie Campbell  
David Hamer  
Bill Milne  
Fergus Robertson  
Ella Rennie  
George Macdonald  
George Wood  
Michael Gallagher  
Sandy Bell  
James Christie

John Lynch (Welfare Manager)  
Fiona McLean (Committee Clerk)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 11a.m. He welcomed Colonel Sir Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn from the army Benevolent Fund

**1. Apologies**

Peter Eydes, John Drysdale, Johan Larsen, Fergus Robertson

Non-attendees David White, Jean Smith

**2. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The chairman thanked everyone present for coming.

He advised of recent developments regarding the relationship between the WPCs and the SPVA, such as monitoring of the Veterans Welfare Service. The chairman's philosophy is that because the committee is so geographically spread out it is not possible to do some of the things other committees do. It is felt more important to have members who know their local area. The lack of issues coming to committees reflects on the quality of work done by local VWS offices. It is felt it is better to manage by exception, and that raising awareness of the work of the WPC so that people know they exist if they need them is the way forward.

**3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true reflection of the last meeting.

**4. Matters arising**

Visits by WPC Members.

The protocol for WPC members to do visits was noted and will be distributed. It was felt that monitoring visits or accompanied visits with VWS were not required. The protocol will be provided upon request.

The chairman is to write to the SPVA chief executive to suggest an acknowledgement slip should be enclosed when documents are returned to Norcross. Missing documents are an issue.

The chairmen's offer to rewrite standard letters has not been taken up.

Bridging cases (where a condition could stem from before or after April 2006) have been flagged as an issue of concern.

An email was received by the chairman asking if committees could raise awareness of priority treatment and PTSD with PCTs in their area. Members were asked to send out the standard letter as a reminder to Trusts and let the Chairman know of any response.

It was not felt formal action on training or publicity was necessary.

An IT liaison officer for the committee to work with Paul Kingham, Chairman of the North east England Committee was sought, and Michael Gallagher accepted the role.

#### **5. Colonel Sir Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn (Regional Director of Fundraising-Army Benevolent Fund)**

The fund was set up in August 1944 by Generals who served during World War 1 to ensure those serving in World War 2 would have assistance not afforded to soldiers in the immediate aftermath of World War 1. Those requiring welfare assistance are referred to the Fund's London Office. All other branches are fundraising. Grants can be given to individuals and organisations. Funds are raised by appealing directly to supporters, but also by sponsorship of people doing events such as marathons, street collections, and appeals to businesses. They are also supporting "Hope for Heroes" to improve facilities at Headly Court Rehabilitation Centre and have a Current Operations Fund for those currently on active service. There is a scheme whereby personnel give one days pay a month to their Regimental Association to be used for charitable purposes, but this is voluntary.

#### **6. Committee Chairman's report on activity/correspondence**

The RBLS/ RBL have publicly raised the issue that they feel the Government is failing to keep the military covenant. There have also been press reports expressing concern about injured military personnel, especially those with multiple injuries, and also service housing.

The Training CD produced is more suitable for caseworkers, and will therefore not be distributed. The members' handbook is still being updated. The revised Chairman's handbook is still awaited.

Gulf War Syndrome-this has been accepted as an umbrella term for a group of conditions, but not as a complaint in it's own right.

Recruitment-the problems raised by triennial reconstitution have been raised, as has the length and relevance of the application form. A form will be sent out with the minutes of this meeting asking for members' plans at the next reconstitution.

## **8. Committee Managers Report (WPWS and recent changes)**

There have been various changes to the welfare service. The first of these is that the service will now be known as the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS). The areas covered by each office have changed due to a new member of staff, David Chauvelin, starting work in Edinburgh. A list of which VWS member of staff covers which area will be sent out with the minutes of this meeting. Details of the medical assessment programme have been received and are enclosed with the minutes.

## **9. Individual Reports (All members report on their own activity)**

George Wood-He has recently dealt with several cases for SSAFA in England, but none in Scotland. There will be no Berwick Tattoo.

Ella Rennie- Attended a reception held by Gordon Brown with Des Brown and Derek Twigg for 100 War Widows

Bill Milne- Has helped in 1 case and assisted with the MIU

James Christie- has dealt with 1 case in his role with SSAFA

George MacDonald- has done about 6 visits in 6 months for VWS as part of the WPC. He also organised the annual trip from Wick for War Pensioners and assisted with the MIU.

Sandy Bell- has visited 1 veteran to provide assistance

Jamie Campbell- has publicised VWS in local hospitals, and the Museum of Ships at War. He has also been helping set up a website the Museum at Greenwich.

David Hamer- reminded people that RAFA have trained advice workers if VWS can not help. He has also been publicising the work of the VWS/WPC when he has contact with other organisations.

Michael Gallagher- visited Porterfield prison in Inverness with Fiona Wilson. He has also put up leaflets and spoken to staff about the work of the VWS/WPC at Doctors Surgeries.

## **10. AOCB**

Sir Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn was thanked by the Chairman for attending and for providing much useful information.

## **11. Date and Venue of next Meeting**

The next meeting of the East of Scotland War Pensions Committee will be at new Haig House, Edinburgh on Thursday 6/3/08 at 11a.m.