

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

7. The minutes of the previous meeting were formally agreed.

8. All matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting were complete.

ITEM 5 – RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

9. The Chairman stated that interviews for new committee members are due to take place following this meeting.

ITEM 6 – PANEL CASE

10. A member updated on the outcome of the recent panel case he had Chaired, he said that the client had accepted the advice given, and would not be pursuing the matter further.

ITEM 7 – MONITORING OF THE VETERANS WELFARE SERVICE

11. A member gave a brief on her experience whilst accompanying a Welfare Manager (WM) from the Streatham office on client visits. She said that the day had been very worthwhile, and all of the very different cases handled with sensitivity. She explained the Guardian Angel facility used by WMs when undertaking visits, which she considered was an excellent idea.

12. A member asked what the average yearly caseload is for WMs, John Cattermole provided details of numbers involved, he then explained that the region covered by each Welfare Office is assigned to individual WMs by postcode.

13. The Chairman stated that one of the main responsibilities of the Committee was to monitor the Veterans Welfare Service. Two further members were identified to accompany WMs on visits and will discuss details with the RWM.

14. The Chairman invited Claire Parsonage to provide an update on current issues within the Veterans Welfare Service:

- Applications to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) have increased.
- Fortnightly advice surgeries are been undertaken at Selly Oak Hospital. WMs in other regions have also held advice surgeries, a number of which have taken place at RAF and Army establishments.
- Staff training has been arranged to provide an overview of the military procedures undertaken prior to medical discharge. This will assist in ensuring a seamless transition for personnel leaving the Service. SSAFA Bereavement Counselling courses have been undertaken, and all staff at the Streatham office have attended the RBL prison in-reach course.

15. John Cattermole spoke about the stronger links being forged with military staff when dealing with Seriously Injured Leavers (SIL) and the

greater defined roles where there is a death in Service. He also explained the mentoring service provided by WMs, and said that there is a continuing trend towards younger Veterans who require assistance from the VWS. Responding to a question from the Chairman, John explained that where necessary other members of staff in the office assist with any increase in workload.

ITEM 8 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16. A member raised the issue of minutes from meetings posted on the internet. A discussion followed which resulted in the agreement that in future names will be removed prior to publication.

17. A member said that if anyone wished to accompany him on his visits they were welcome.

18. The Chairman advised that the WPC Chairs meeting will take place next week; he asked if anyone had any items they wished raised to contact him.

19. Following a question from a member who enquired whether the AFCS is under review, Claire Parsonage said as far as she was aware that was not the case although there has been a lot of media interest, a committee member said that he believed that certain elements of the AFCS would be reviewed after five years.

20. A member offered to arrange for distribution of leaflets and if required advertise in a Patients Panel newsletter.

21. The Chairman gave details of the proposed re-structure of the CAC, full details will be provided once the new structure is agreed.

22. The Chairman provided feedback from the WPC Chairs meeting for inclusion in these minutes:

- *The question of WPCs being involved in the AFCS was put strongly to the Director of the Veterans Agency (VA) at the Chairmen's Conference - she agreed that it was important that the independent WPCs were there to represent individual AFCS War Pensioners who were having problems. She agreed to take the matter up strongly with the MOD.*
- *Also it was agreed at the Conference and by the Director of the VA that the Chairmen's committee should continue to be a sub-committee of the new Central Advisory Committee chaired by the Minister for Veterans.*
- *I will also be writing to the Minister for Veterans on both these very important topics. JGH*

ITEM 9 – CLOSING REMARKS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING

23. The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting at 12:20 hrs.

24. The next meeting will be on **11th June 2008 at 11:00hrs** in the **3rd**

Floor Committee Room at the Royal British Legion Headquarters Pall Mall London SW1Y 5TY.

25. The details of the meeting planned for 18 September 2008 (*likely to be new RBL HQ site*) will be advised as soon as confirmed.