

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS WAR PENSIONS  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2006 AT  
BIRMINGHAM WPWO  
AT 11.00 AM**

**Present:** Harold Canning MBE – Vice Chairman  
John Atherton MBE  
Bob Belding MBE  
Margaret Britton  
Fred Davies  
Edward Drake  
Ken Fisher  
Ray Griffiths  
Alison Hine  
Derek Johnson  
Stan Taylor

**In Attendance:** Pat Cox – Committee Support  
Sue Rivington – Clerk to the Committee

**STATUTORY RULES AND ORDERS**

Copies of the Statutory Rules and Orders were tabled for the information of members.

**1. WELCOME**

Harold Canning welcomed members to the meeting advising them that Mike Burrows was unable to attend due to work commitments.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Mike Burrows and Gary Kibblewhite.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest of a financial or pecuniary nature.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting, having previously been circulated, were signed by the Vice - Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005. Proposed by – Fred Davies. Seconded by – Edward Drake

## 5. REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

### a) Consultation

### b) Raise Awareness

**AP1 11/05 Grapevine** **Cleared**

A copy of Grapevine, containing the article and pictures on the Worcester River Cruise, are available for members at this meeting. We are hoping to write a further article for the Grapevine entitled 'Life in the year of a WPC'.

### c) Support and Monitor the work of the War Pensioners' Welfare Service

**AP2 02/05 WM Job Shadowing** **Ongoing**

The following members gave short resumes of their visits with Welfare Managers from the Birmingham office. Margaret Britton and Edward Drake had visited with Linda Stokes, Stan Taylor and Bob Belding with Annette Walton and Harold Canning with Diane Paget. Everyone reported that all clients seen had different and varying problems – they found the experience very interesting and rewarding and those who were volunteer visitors for RBL or SSAFA, commented on how different the 'content' of the visits are – more in depth. Members still to job-shadow – Ken Fisher, Ray Griffiths and Derek Johnson. Stan Taylor, Bob Belding and Harold Canning would like to undertake further visits, especially to War Pensioners if possible.

**AP4 11/05 Norcross Visits** **Ongoing**

Ray Griffiths is to visit Norcross in April. Members who would like to visit in the future – Bob Belding, Ken Fisher and Stan Taylor.

### d) Assist Individual War Pensioners and War Widows

### e) General Action Points

**AP1 08/04 Member's Handbook** **Ongoing**

There will be a replacement copy for all members, following completion of the rewrite being undertaken at present by Sandra Lloyd.

**AP 5 11/05 Members Handbook** **Cleared**

**AP4 08/05 Guest Speakers**

**Ongoing**

The following suggestions were made regarding guest speakers – Dr Braidwood from Norcross, member of staff from Appeals section at Norcross, Harold Canning's daughter – an Inspector with the Inland Revenue, Housing Benefit Officer, member of staff from the Pensions Service.

**AP2 11/05 Veterans World**

**Cleared**

Members had received copies of issue 1 of Veterans World. Issue 3 is due out at any time.

**AP3 11/05 Guest Speaker**

**Cleared**

**AP6 11/05 Car Stickers**

**Cleared**

No further progress has been made regarding the provision of car stickers.

**6 SUB GROUP REPORT (SOCIAL EVENTS)**

The minutes of the last sub-group meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting. Harold Canning informed members that various options for a summer outing had been discussed and a decision had been made, pending full Committee approval, to organise a lunch at the National Arboretum at Alrewas on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Members agreed that this venue would be ideal, and it was agreed to confirm the booking.

**AP1 02/06  
Committee Clerk**

Venues had been suggested for a Christmas Lunch in the South

Bob Belding thanked the organisers of the Christmas Lunch at Hereford, confirming the views of many regarding the excellent venue, the lunch itself and the enjoyment of the members and clients who attended.

**7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

In the absence of the Chairman, Harold Canning brought to the attention of members the issue of Council disregards, an item on the CAC minutes, which had been previously circulated to members. It was agreed that the annual War Pensions Committee letter referring to disregards, should be compiled and issued to members for signature prior to sending them to local Councils. The letter should make reference to AFCS and should have below the signature –'Committee Member and local Area Representative.

**AP2 02/06  
Committee Clerk**

Bob Belding asked for a copy of future agendas and minutes of CAC meetings.

**AP3 02/06  
Committee Clerk**

## 8. COMMITTEE MANAGER'S REPORT

Display Boards – Mrs Cox had brought along the display used by Region 3 at the National Welfare Conference. The theme of the Conference was 'Partnerships' and we chose to highlight the work of WPCs in the Region as well as detailing staff initiatives and achievements.

Staff Resources – Sheffield WPWO is scheduled to close during March. The work is to be divided between Leeds and Nottingham office. 4 members of staff worked at Sheffield – Sharon Scottrick left to take up a place at university, closely followed by Mary Mitchell, who retired. Initially the posts were advertised, but the posts were left vacant due to the lack of appropriate candidates. Following a decision to close the office, Marie Clarke has taken a post in another MOD department in Sheffield and the member of staff who remains at Sheffield, Teresa Quinn, will transfer to Nottingham WPWO. Birmingham office are also expecting changes with the Shropshire post codes being transferred from the Wrexham office following the retirement of Marguerite Ashley. The decision regarding the Committee support role will not be finalised until further discussions take place at the next Chairman's Conference.

Welfare Conference – staff have recently attended the annual Welfare Conference at York. This was a very enjoyable and informative Conference where many subjects were covered. Presentations were given by the Army Presentation Team, MOD Security and Fraud, Navy Welfare, RAF Holding Flight, Army Welfare, Spaces (work with the homeless), SHIP (self help group in Leeds), Mr Ray Holland and Mr Paul Kingham, 2 WPC Chairmen, who gave an overview of their role and the work of WPCs.

Pre 73 Widows Scan – all offices are well in hand with contacting these widows. It appears that many are managing very well and queries have been dealt with by the Welfare Assistants in the offices, necessitating very few visits.

OCPA Annual Report Stats – members will have received a proforma to complete regarding 'ethnicity', 'political activity' etc., Norcross has requested this information to issue to OCPA and apologies were given for the tight deadline.

Forward Look Calendar – the Communications section at Norcross are eager to maintain a National calendar of organised events in order to evaluate where they are best placed to 'advertise' the Veterans Agency and its work. If any member would like to attend any of the events, we may be able to accommodate you. Events in the Birmingham:

6-12<sup>th</sup> May 2006 – VE Celebration Week at 'Back to Back' National Trust site in Hurst Street – Birmingham staff to attend

all week.

21<sup>st</sup> March 2006 – Advice Surgery at the Nautical Club – Linda Stokes is giving a presentation between 11-12 noon at this event.

Members have requested a copy of the Forward Look Diary.

**AP4 02/06  
Committee Clerk**

## **9. GUEST SPEAKER**

The guest speaker was Mike Morris, County Field Officer for the Royal British Legion.

Mr Morris gave a very interesting and informative presentation on his role as County Field Officer. He advised members of how fortunate he felt in obtaining this recent appointment following a long service career. He gave an overview of the aims and objectives of the RBL, to assist ex-service personnel and their dependants, with the help of staff and volunteers. He reminded members that it is not prerequisite to have served to become a member of the RBL, but it is prerequisite to obtain assistance.

## **10. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PANELS**

**Case 2** – Following a 2<sup>nd</sup> WPC visit, further recommendations were sent to Norcross, but were again turned down. This client has an ongoing appeal and is to take his case to the Commissioners.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Nothing raised.

## **12. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2006 – venue to be advised.

There being no further business, Harold Canning closed the meeting at 14.30 p.m, thanking everyone for their participation.