

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS WAR PENSIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 2005 AT
BIRMINGHAM WPWO, EDGBASTON, BIRMINGHAM
AT 11.00 AM**

Present: Mike Burrows BEM – Chairman
Harold Canning MBE – Vice Chairman
John Atherton MBE
Fred Davies
Edward Drake
Ken Fisher
Ray Griffiths
Gary Kibblewhite
Stan Taylor

In Attendance: Pat Cox – Committee Manager
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

The Chairman welcomed members to the 5th meeting of the West Midlands WPC, and wished everyone a belated Happy New Year.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Bob Belding, Alison Hine, Verene Hood, and Derek Johnson. Mrs Cox advised that contact had been made with Verene – she has had a successful hip operation and is making a good recovery.

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 Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 23rd November 2004. Proposed by – Edward Drake. Seconded by – Harold Canning.

5. REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

a) Consultation

b) Raise Awareness

AP8 8/04 Future Social Events

CLEARED

AP1 11/04

CLEARED

AP2 11/04

CLEARED

See Agenda Item 6.

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

d) Assist Individual War Pensioners and War Widows

e) General Action Points

AP1 8/04 Members Handbook

ONGOING

Amendments still awaited. Update is to be completed by WPC Support Staff early in March. Amendments will be issued as soon as possible following the meeting.

AP12 8/04 Housing Disregard Letters

CLEARED

AP3 11/04

CLEARED

AP4 11/04

CLEARED

Letters amended and issued to all Councils in the West Midlands Committee area.

AP5 11/04 WPC Co-operation

CLEARED

Mrs Cox advised that agreement had been reached with the Chairman of the East Midlands WPC, that reciprocal visits could be arranged to main meetings. Ken Fisher expressed an interest in attending the next meeting. The East Midlands meeting dates for this year are 28/07/05 and 27/10/05.

**AP1 02/05
Ken Fisher**

AP6 11/04 WPC Co-operation

Request for item on Agenda for next Chairman's Conference

**Ongoing
CLEARED**

AP7 11/04 WM Job shadowing

Mrs Cox advised that the Regional Welfare Manager was happy for Committee members to job shadow Welfare Managers in the field. Fred Davies and Edward Drake had accompanied Welfare Managers on a number of occasions. The rest of the members present at the meeting were interested in participating.

**AP2 02/05
Pat Cox
Members**

6. SUB GROUP REPORT (SOCIAL EVENTS)

a) Harold Canning gave a short resume of the sub group meeting held 27th January 2005. The minutes of this meeting had previously been circulated to all members. Letters of thanks from participants in the Christmas Lunch were circulated. A balance of £1176.22 is held in the

account following this event.

b) Discussion regarding future events – the following venues were considered as possibilities:-

Severn Valley Railway

Worcester River Trip

Black Country Museum

Bridges Old Time Musical Hall

Information regarding these venues was circulated and members discussed the suitability of the venues. It was decided that the Worcester River Trip would be the most appropriate, as the boat could be chartered for the sole use of the Committee and guests. Guests must be able to make their own way to the venue – public transport is available and there is adequate parking. The sub-group were tasked with checking availability for August/September, hopefully to co-incide with the August meeting of the Committee.

A further discussion ensued regarding Veterans Awareness Week. Many events are taking place nationally. The Agency mobile units are to be located in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Birmingham City Council are planning an events programme and a member of staff from Birmingham office will be informed when these are finalised. The Committee as a whole, will not be involved in organising a specific event. Members were asked to notify the Committee of any events taking place in their area at the next meeting.

**AP3 02/05
Events Sub-
Group**

**AP4 02/05
Members**

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that he will be attending the VA Plenary Forum on 23rd March, where the Minister is scheduled to give an update on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, and the WPC Chair's Conference on 21st/22nd April. Reports will be given at the next meeting.

Veterans Recognition Card - an application leaflet was circulated. This is a private enterprise with cost implications for membership. Stan Taylor held a card, which he could use to obtain discount at certain establishments, although he tended to use it as an identity card.

The following items were tabled for members perusal:-

VA Action Plan

CAC Minutes

Modus Operandi–BLESMA / Combat Stress / SSAFA / RBL /

RBL Scotland

8. COMMITTEE MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr John Arnold – retired from the Agency at the beginning of 2005. This has resulted in a change in Management structure, and Mrs Marguerite Ashley is acting Regional Welfare Manager, with 'overseeing' responsibilities for Committee Managers and Clerks

VA Customer Focus Groups 2005-2006 – following the success of the first group meetings, Tony Burke and Sue Turner have asked for further meetings in the new financial year. The West Midlands WPC has been allocated 14th September 2006 for their meeting and RBL office in Worcester is a likely venue. The meeting will take the same format as before, commencing with a Buffet Lunch at 12.30pm for all attendees. This will be followed by a general discussion with VA Senior Managers. It is hoped that 10 War Pensioners and War Widows will attend and members were asked to give thought to possible attendees.

PMP – the Agency is now near the end of the direct payment exercise. As at 31/01/05, 97.87% of clients are receiving direct payments, 0.57% still have order books and 1.56% are receiving payable orders. The Welfare Service has visited clients who for whatever reason have been unable to establish a relevant method of payment.

WPC Members – Visits to Norcross – an email has recently been received from Chrissie Lancaster – VA Communications – asking for a nomination to attend Norcross for the day on 22nd February 2005. As it was the day of this meeting, a nomination was not sought. The following members expressed an interest in a visit to Norcross – Edward Drake, Ken Fisher, Ray Griffiths and Stan Taylor.

Recruitment – we are looking to recruit 4 new members to the Committee. Advertisements will be issued to local organisation including the War Widows Association and the NHS.

9. GUEST SPEAKER

Erik Newman, Head of Communications at Norcross was unable to attend the meeting due to traffic problems on the M6.

10. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PANELS

There are no complaints panels outstanding. The previous reported case went to Appeal in January, and the client is still awaiting the decision.

The Chairman circulated a letter received from Ray Holland, the East of England Chairman which asked for information regarding Complaints Panels heard by WPCs. The Chairman confirmed the response he had made to this letter, advising

that this Committee had heard 1 complaint in the last 2 years as reported in the first paragraph. It was worthy of note that the WPC recommendation was presented to the Chairman of the Tribunal.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Hospitalisation Deduction – Mr D Johnson
As Derek Johnson was unable to attend this item was deferred to the next meeting.

AP5 02/05
Pat Cox
Derek Johnson

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 24th MAY 2005

Future Meetings - Diary dates for meetings for the second half of 2005:-

Tuesday, 23rd August 2005

Tuesday, 22nd November 2005

There being no further business, Mike Burrows closed the meeting at 13.10p.m, thanking everyone for their participation.