

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS WAR PENSIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 23rd MAY 2006 AT
BIRMINGHAM WPWO
AT 11.00 AM**

Present:

**Mike Burrows MBE
John Atherton MBE
Bob Belding MBE
Margaret Britton
Harold Canning MBE
Fred Davies
Edward Drake
Ken Fisher
Ray Griffiths
Derek Johnson
Gary Kibblewhite
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

Mike Burrows welcomed members to the 10th meeting of the West Midlands WPC, apologising for his absence from the last meeting and thanking Harold Canning for taking his place.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Alison Hine.

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 21st February 2006. Proposed by – Bob Belding.
Seconded by – Fred Davies.

5. REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

a) Consultation

b) Raise Awareness

AP6 11/05 Car Stickers **Cleared**

The Clerk advised that the Communications section at Norcross had advised that they were not undertaking production of car stickers at the present time.

AP1 02/06 Social Event **Cleared**

The Clerk confirmed that the event at the National Memorial Arboretum had been booked for the 28th June 2006.

AP2 02/06 Disregard letter **Cleared**

The Clerk confirmed that all letters had been issued. As some Councils had not replied, it was agreed that the Clerk would issue reminder letters to members of the Committee, for their distribution to the Councils in their residential area.

**AP1 05/06
Clerk / Members**

AP4 02/06 Forward Look Diary **Cleared**

Copy issued to members.

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

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

The following members of the Committee are still to job-shadow a Welfare Manager :- Gary Kibblewhite, Ray Griffiths, Fred Davies, Derek Johnson and Ken Fisher.

AP4 11/05 Norcross Visits **Ongoing**

Bob Belding, Ken Fisher, Stan Taylor and Ray Griffiths had been advised that they are to visit Norcross in June. They have still to receive the 'joining' instructions.

d) Assist Individual War Pensioners and War Widows

e) General Action Points

AP1 08/04 Member's Handbook

Ongoing

Norcross are preparing a draft for checking by the Chairmen.

AP4 08/05 Guest Speakers

Ongoing

Mike Burrows confirmed that Harold Canning's daughter will be speaking at the next meeting about her role as an Inland Revenue Inspector.

AP3 02/06 CAC Agenda & Minutes

Cleared

The Clerk confirmed that the Committee Support section had been asked to forward a copy of these minutes to Bob Belding. Mike Burrows requested that all members receive a copy of the minutes following the next CAC meeting in June.

**AP2 05/06
Clerk**

6 SUB GROUP REPORT (SOCIAL EVENTS)

Harold Canning gave an overview of the last sub-group meeting, as members had been issued with a copy of the minutes.

28th June 2006 – National Memorial Arboretum @ Alrewas

He confirmed that the 'Local Funding for Veterans Day' application had been sent – a reply had not been received to date. Margaret Britton kindly offered to organise and run a raffle on the day – members were requested to provide prizes.

**AP3 05/06
Members**

5th December 2006 – Motor Cycle Museum

John Atherton confirmed that this date had been booked for the Christmas Lunch. Written confirmation is required – clerk to issue.

**AP4 05/06
Clerk**

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mike Burrows referred members to the new items in the 'Purple Box' which included information on the Chairs Conference. He reported on the last meeting of the CAC, which was attended, for the first time, by WPC Chairs in their role as the sub committee of the CAC. It should be noted that it has been accepted that WPCs are independent of the CAC, but it is felt that they now have more influence, and this should be used not wasted. A marketing paper had been submitted to the CAC, and the Minister gave the 'go ahead' for a National advertising campaign. A trial was recently held in the North East, but sadly the campaign did not reach the figures expected. An 'improved' model is being 'rolled-out' in Birmingham on 2nd October 2006. Members to be invited to a meeting on 14th June 2006, to discuss involvement in this event

**AP5 05/06
Clerk**

Further items discussed in 'closed' session –

Volunteer Visitors – WPC members should be volunteers as well as Committee members.

Policy for processing issues to Minister – Chairmen are responsible for their own areas regarding local matters, and are able to write to Ministers direct. It was agreed that if an issue impacts on other areas, then it should be raised with the CAC sub committee, so that a co-ordinated case is submitted to Minister.

Other matters discussed –

Conference chaired by Wendy Stewart, VA Director of Corporate Services.

Alan Burnham due to retire on 30th June 2006. The new VA Chief Executive will be Tim Taylor.

WPC Focal Point – providing a single point of contact at VA for all WPC work – Sandra Lloyd and Chrissie Lancaster.

Update Briefings were given as follows –

LT Col. Adian Griffith – Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Erik Newman – Raising Awareness – Veterans Awareness Day would be held on 27th June each year – as a Committee, we need to get involved with events held in the area, alongside the WPWS.

VA/WPWS/MoD presentation on Homeless Veterans. New section referring to this subject on the VA website. 23,000 leave the Armed Forces every year.

Anne Braidwood – Medical Policy

Sue Turner – WPWS

Sandra Lloyd – Reconstitution process and OCPA (Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments) guidelines.

Brief on Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.

Appraisals at present being completed for all Committee members. Once completed they will be sent to members – please feel free to contact Mike Burrows if there are issues you wish to discuss.

Reconstitution 2007 – thanks to all members who wish to continue for another term. It will be necessary to recruit 6 new members, in order to reach the maximum membership allowed. National adverts were due out on 15th May 2006, with a closing date of 14th July 2006. Interviews are to take place between 4th and 29th September 2006. If any member is aware of anyone who may be interested in joining, please notify Mrs Cox.

Following discussion, it was agreed that an application form should be sent to each member.

**AP6 05/06
Clerk**

8. VA/WELFARE REPORT

AFCS- Your Compensation Scheme Explained – Addendum
This is in addition to the copy of the booklet issued last year.
Further copies can be supplied if required. The amendments
have been updated on the Internet for anyone printing a copy.

STAFF RESOURCES

Birmingham - Office has been understaffed with 2 Welfare
Managers on sick leave - both myself and Derek Hughes have
undertaken Welfare visits to maintain the quality service
provided by the WMs. These members of staff are returning to
work this week. Interviews are also taking place for an Admin
AO to work alongside Leigh Peplow the Regional Admin
Manager. There have been no firm dates given for any
changes to the Shropshire area. This is still being looked after
by the Wrexham office.

WPC support- again no further information from Chief Exec's
office re WPC support for this committee, However a meeting
of support staff is being arranged for June. We understand this
is to talk about Budgets and Reconstitution.

INTERNET – The internet site has been revamped and easier
access to the WPC site is being looked at - Matt Twidale has
advised he is looking into this. Copies of minutes have now
been input onto the website.

FORWARD LOOK CALENDAR – members had been supplied
with the Agency's Forward Look Calendar, but felt it was rather
difficult to understand and not of much benefit. The following
events were happening in the Birmingham area around
Veterans Awareness Day – members to advise the Clerk if
they wish to attend:

24-25 June 2006 – Severn Valley Railway

25th June 2006 – Cosford – National Reunion Parade

28th June 2006 – National Memorial Arboretum @ Alrewas

27 – 28 June 2006 – Birmingham United Services Club

1 – 2 July 2006 – Severn Valley Railway

1st July 2006 – Northfield Carnival

1st July 2006 – Cosford – RAF Photographers Reunion

RATES 2006 – The new rates leaflets are now available. If
anyone requires a copy please advise the Clerk.

Edward Drake had recently read VA Leaflet 11, and felt that it
would provide invaluable information to members. Clerk to
issue this leaflet.

STATE PENSION – DWP are inviting more and more
electronic applications - State Pension being available by this
method, At a training course the other day I was told DLA / AA
claims are also available by this method.

**AP7 05/06
Members**

**AP8 05/06
Members
AP9 05/06
Clerk**

9. VIDEO – REACHING OUT TO VETERANS – A PARTNERSHIP

This short video, narrated by Simon Weston, had recently been produced for use in promoting partnerships.

10. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PANELS

Case 2 – A letter has been sent to this gentleman, advising him of the Norcross decision. This client has an ongoing appeal and is to take his case to the Commissioners.

Case 3 – A gentleman has requested advice and assistance regarding issues he wishes to raise with BT. Members felt that this may not be appropriate to the Committee. Pat Cox agreed to find out more details, and if necessary, Bob Belding agreed to visit on behalf of the Committee.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing raised.

12. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 22nd August 2006 at Birmingham WPWO.

There being no further business, Mike Burrows closed the meeting at 13.55 p.m, thanking everyone for their participation.