

**MINUTES OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND WPC HELD ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY  
2007 AT ERSKINE HOME, BISHOPTON**

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**PRESENT:**

Derek Evans (Chairman)  
Peter Newlove  
David McAllister  
Kate Nicol  
Alistair Marshall  
Ken McLachlan  
Dougie Moir  
John Porter

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Irene Robinson (Welfare Manager)  
John Costello (WPC Clerk)

The chairman opened the meeting by explaining to the committee his reasons for using Erskine Home as a location plus he made a special welcome to one of the members as this was their first WPC meeting for sometime following a period of ill-health. He welcomed Irene Robinson from the Glasgow Welfare Office and gave the committee a brief description of her role as a Welfare Manager and the areas that she covers.

**1. Attendance & Apologies**

Apologies received from Sheena Glass, Alan Tapp, Scott Gillon & Barry Acons.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed by KN.

**3. Matters Arising**

**ID Cards**

DE reminded the members who had not sent in new pictures to get them in as soon as possible and for those who had, their cards were being processed and should be issued from the WPC Focal Point in Norcross very soon.

**WPC Information Cards**

DMc has distributed the batch of cards he was given at the last meeting to the appropriate bodies.

**Data Protection Act**

DE confirmed to the rest of committee that they were working well within the guidelines laid down by the above act.

**Glasgow Old People's Welfare Association**

Following on from the talk given by Dudley Walker at the last WPC meeting DE informed the members that Sheena Glass is in fact the chairperson for the association.

## **Strathclyde Park Event on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Members were asked for ideas as to how the committee can utilise this event for publicity purposes.

### **Organised Trips**

KM & IR had a brief discussion on funds available for organising trips for pensioners & widows as the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust are apparently sitting on funds specifically set aside for organised trips. DE said that advertising costs should not be a cause for concern when considering these trips.

### **AP 05.1 DE to contact Sandra Lloyd at the SPVA to enquire about possible funds available for the WPC to organise trips for pensioners & widows**

### **Blue Badge Abuse**

Jackie Baillie MSP will be contacted again regarding this matter as KN felt too many parking spaces are being taken by drivers not suitably qualified to use them.

### **Contacts**

New Pensions Officer at RBL Scotland & Poppyscotland to be retained as useful contacts for the future.

### **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

KN confirmed that the minutes of previous meetings are being published and appearing on the Veterans UK website.

### **Recruitment**

Guidance on the whole recruitment process is still ongoing and a new application form is under construction.

The advert from the previous recruitment campaign is to be resurrected with contact names inserted plus a recruitment panel meeting has still to take place.

## **4. Correspondence**

KM asked JP what the RBL would do if they came across an ex-serviceman or woman who had incurred multiple debts and how could they best be advised?. JP suggested passing this type of case to the Citizens Advice Bureau but DE advised the members not to get involved in this type of case unless they had received the appropriate training and that the case should be passed on to the relevant agencies.

## **5. Recruitment**

The failure of the last exercise was put down mainly to applications being lost or not received and DE felt the applications should have been returned to the committee instead of Norcross.

DE confirmed that Mr Pat Reid will be invited for an interview in June to be considered as a member of the West of Scotland WPC on completion of the necessary application form and PN will be used as a reference as he recommended Mr Reid as a possible candidate to serve on the committee.

It was agreed to recruit further members locally instead of going via Norcross and the current application form is being modified and that it conforms to regulations set out by the Office for the Commission of Public Appointments.

The Chairman plus a Welfare Manager and one other named person will carry out any subsequent interviews and the WPC clerk's name will be given for the return of application forms plus a wider advertising base consisting of RBL, SSAFA, PCT & TA Bases is to be established.

Members were asked to pass any further ideas on advertising to JC and the RBL circular was a possibility.

DE asked for as wide a spectrum as possible to be covered and is looking to the end of June as start date for recruiting. Any new faces to the committee will hopefully be included in the November meeting.

**AP 05.2 JC to draft letter to Pat Rice inviting him for an interview sometime in June and advise him that PN will be used as a reference.**

## **6. Committee Chairman's Report**

DE attended the Veterans Plenary Forum on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June which was attended by various Regimental Associations, Policy Department, Operations Department. He gave the members a brief overview of the day which included a talk on Priority Treatment and the apparent lack of it in some hospitals across the country.

IR & DE between them spoke of the services offered by Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham to injured service personnel and that SSAFA have fully funded accommodation available to families who travel from Scotland to visit patients there.

The local RBL can assist with B&B accommodation and Regimental Funds can help with transport costs and this information was conveyed to IR by Casualty Visiting Officers when she attended a training session at a TA base in Maryhill, Glasgow.

SSAFA are able to access Selly Oak when needed and once patients have been treated the aim is that they should be able to rejoin their units, as the treatment is of a high quality.

PN confirmed that as a member of BLESMA he is able to call upon welfare personnel in the Lanarkshire area to help with welfare matters should the need arise.

Veterans who served up until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1984 are eligible to apply for the Veterans Badge.

Homelessness is still a big problem within the ex-service community.

Members suitably qualified will be asked to visit War Pensioners whether they are accompanied or not. Visits will be arranged and co-ordinated by Welfare Managers.

The roles and functions were explained whereby there are 13 Chairmen and the Central Advisory Committee who are responsible for monitoring the work of the Service Personnel & Veterans Agency at Norcross and the work of the Welfare Service is monitored by the War Pensions Committees.

IR informed the members of the individual assessments carried out by the visiting staff from the Glasgow Welfare Office and that they would not leave a visit until a complete picture of that person's needs was established.

DE then spoke about the number of visits likely to be carried out in a year by WPC members and this figure has been put at possibly twelve, he then gave a breakdown of where the visits would be done and by whom. The above will be put forward to Alan Mayers for his consideration.

Issues raised at visits which need further action will be passed to the relevant WM for that particular area.

### **AP 05.3 DE & IR to resolve the reporting chain post-visit.**

The first visit by any member will be accompanied and subsequent visits are to be cleared with the client under the Data Protection Act.

DE confirmed there is a training package and course currently being put together by Mr David Wright from the War Pensions Committee based in Portsmouth and the various modules which are to be used were explained to the members.

A discussion ensued as to what type of benefits knowledge the members felt they required and IR suggested the services of an outside provider who had given training to members of the Welfare Service which was very in depth, this idea was put on hold as the knowledge of benefits needed by the members is limited. The type of visits to be done by members was also covered.

The following subjects were covered briefly as part of the Committee Chairman's report:

- A. Statutory Disregards by local councils iro War Pensions whether paid weekly or by lump sum gratuity.
- B. Service Pensions overlapping with certain DWP Benefits.
- C. The Duties of Care scheme which comes into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007 was covered in various formats and members must guard against complacency. The scheme will be monitored on a regional basis rather than by area and the requirements under Disclosure Scotland will not apply to SSAFA caseworkers who were taken on before 2003.

## **7. WM 's Report**

IR spoke about the SPVA launch on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April which took place on board the Tall Ship in Glasgow and involved staff from the Glasgow Welfare Office and Kentigern House.

Initially there are no major changes planned to the way we operate and Sir Trevor Spires gave a further presentation at our National Welfare Conference on how he sees our role within the wider MOD.

Widows exercise was completed on time and the tremendous effort put in by Welfare Staff was reflected in a message of praise from Alan Mayers.

A short case study was given on a casualty from the Iraq conflict and about the people & services involved in his care, currently this person has no unmet needs.

IR attended a presentation given by Lt.Col Homewood at the TA base in Maryhill, Glasgow and she was given some facts about cases he is actively involved in. He said he was more than happy to work in partnership with the War Pensioners's Welfare Service.

A short talk was given on Mary Spence's involvement with the Professional Guidance Group and the partnerships that the Welfare Service currently enjoys with Gary Gray of Poppyscotland & Tommy Moffat from FEBA (Forward Edge Battle Area).

There was a short discussion amongst the members who are concerned about large payments being made to vulnerable service leavers with drink or drug related problems. They felt that to make these payments direct to this particular group may lead to the money being used for the wrong purpose and then ex-service charities being overstretched with requests for financial help, therefore the group asked IR how viable it would be to have the Welfare Service involved along side the SPVA at Norcross on the best way to have these payments disbursed. IR advised the group that the Welfare Service were not in a position to say how best these payments should be made and that Third Parties or Power of Attorney would only be considered if the person themselves could not act on the grounds of mental health or other incapacity.

**AP 05.4 DE to raise with Norcross the problem with vulnerable service leavers receiving large sums of money direct and then becoming charity cases once the money has disappeared.**

## **8. Publicity & Social**

DM has sent letters to Clyde FM, Radio Scotland & Smooth Radio (formally known as SAGA) about the possibility of the SPVA being allowed airtime to advertise the Falkland Islands 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

He has also written to the Big Issue in Scotland but unfortunately to organise an event along the lines of a benefit concert would require up to nine months notice.

Using the actors from BBC Scotland's 'Still Game' is posing a big problem and DM has requested leaflets and posters to be sent to Margo Sharp from RBL Scotland who has a display stall at the World Pipe Band Championships being held in Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton on the 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Sandra Maxwell from the Glasgow War Pensioners' Welfare Office has written to Glasgow City Council asking if they could arrange a lunch for veterans to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands Campaign.

A short discussion about band involvement ensued.

#### **AP 05.5 Chairman to create new ways of publicising the Welfare Service.**

DM expressed his annoyance with the SPVA in Norcross at the lack of funds being made available to produce an A5 size leaflet publicising the services of the War Pensions Committee. He felt that the chairman should be in a position to quiz the SPVA about just how much support they are prepared to give the committees and to establish exactly how much it would cost to produce the above mentioned leaflet.

DE asked for the following statement to be included in the minutes: "I totally agree with the concerns of this particular member that more help should be forthcoming from Norcross to publicise the work of the War Pensions Committees".

One member felt that the right tools needed to be provided by Norcross if they are to carry out their role effectively.

DE explained the background to the whole A5 size scenario to KM as this was his first WPC meeting for sometime due to ill-health, he then went on to point out the fact that the current A4 size factsheet needs replaced due to it being out of date. He then stated that a couple of years ago he asked the RBL to distribute some WPC literature with their own newsheet only to be refused by the RBL staff as they felt threatened for some reason.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

KN asked IR about a case she is involved with, where the person is working but still in a lot of pain and can this person claim anything further on top of their basic War Pension plus the person wanted to know if an occupational pension prevented them from claiming Unemployability Supplement. IR explained to KN and the rest of the group that any cases they come across where the person maybe entitled to other allowances through their War Pension, should be encouraged to make a claim.

DE explained the Terms of Reference iro the WPC Clerk and the responsibilities that the clerk has to the committee to ensure its smooth running.

#### **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007 with Stirling Castle as a possible location.

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## **POST MEETING NOTES**

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DE would like to regrettably inform the members that he has received a written notice of resignation from Mr Dougie Moir. This has been reluctantly accepted.

DE will spend much of the summer away in Ayrshire. He would like to inform the members if they have any important matters they wish to discuss with him, he can be contacted on either his home no. of 01638-221733 or mobile no.07710-429450. A message can be left on either number.

**ACTION POINTS FROM THE WEST OF SCOTLAND WPC MEETING  
HELD AT ERSKINE HOME , BISHOPTON ON 9.5.07**

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**AP 05.2** JC to draft letter to Mr Pat Rice inviting him for an interview sometime in June and advise him that PN will be used as a reference.

**AP 05.3** DE & IR to resolve the reporting chain post visit.

**AP 05.4** DE to raise with Norcross the problem with Vulnerable Service Leavers receiving large sums of money direct and then becoming charity cases once the money has disappeared.

**AP 05.5** Chairman to create new ways of publicising the Welfare Service.