
Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes

Cross Party Group Title:	Armed Forces and Cadets
Date of Meeting:	23/9/2020
Location:	Zoom

In attendance:

Name:	Title:
Darren Millar MS	Member of the Senedd for Clwyd West
Alun Davies MS	Member of the Senedd for Blaenau Gwent
Jack Sargeant MS	Member of the Senedd for Alyn and Deeside
Caroline Jones MS	Member of the Senedd for South Wales West
Mark Isherwood MS	Member of the Senedd for North Wales
Michelle Lewis	Office of Hefin David MS
Brigadier Jock Fraser	Naval Regional Commander
Brigadier Andrew Dawes	160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales
Air Cdre Dai Williams	Royal Air Force
Millie Taylor	SSCE Cymru
Curtis Shea	Secretary
Peter Evans	Welsh Government
Simon Firth	CAIS

John Williams	Royal British Legion
Megan Greatrex	The Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund
Ryland Doyle	Office of Mike Hedges MS

Apologies:

Name:	Title:
Llyr Gruffydd MS	Member of the Senedd for North Wales
Rhiannon Passmore MS	Member of the Senedd for Islwyn
Nick Beard	RFCA Wales
Neil Kitchiner	Veterans' NHS Wales
Mike Hedges MS	Member of the Senedd for Swansea East

Summary of Meeting:

<p>1. Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Darren Millar MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>2. Updates from last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The First Minister has confirmed that funding for Armed Forces Liaison Officer posts has been extended to March 2023. •A response from the Secretary of State for Defence and Secretary of State for Wales regarding the size of the Armed Forces footprint in Wales. •An update from Veterans NHS Wales to confirm receipt of additional funding. •Response from the Minister for Education regarding the definition of a service child to confirm that the definition has been extended. •The Chair had made a statement in the Senedd to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. <p>3. Annual General Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Darren Millar MS was elected Chair. •Alun Davies MS was elected Deputy Chair. •Curtis Shea was elected Secretary.
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4. Briefing from the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force

- Brigadier Andrew Dawes, Brigadier Jock Fraser, and Air Cdre Dai Williams each briefed the group on the work that the military had been doing in the fight against COVID.
- Work has been coordinated from 106th Infantry Brigade and had worked well.
- The First Minister and Welsh Government had welcomed the support and noted that it was the closest the Armed Forces and Wales had worked together.
- The Military operated from 60 sites across Wales and had an important impact in fighting COVID. Military bases, reserve bases and cadet facilities were all used.
- Brigadier Andrew Dawes noted that a key part of the support they had offered was to the Welsh Ambulance Service.
- Air Cdre Dai Williams told the group about the online syllabus the Air Cadets had adopted under the new conditions.
- Brigadier Jock Fraser noted that the Royal Navy had Welsh servicemen and servicewomen who had helped in the pandemic efforts abroad and mentioned HMS Dragon and HMS Queen Elizabeth as notable examples.
- Peter Evans noted that the Welsh Government had noticed the Armed Forces' effort on the ground.
- The Chair thanked and congratulated the three service commanders.

ACTIONS

- The Members of the Senedd will look to table a debate to allow Members to express their thanks and support for the contribution of the Armed Forces during the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- It was agreed that the Group would visit the Navy's Tal Y Bont training facility as part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme when possible.
- The Group will write to the Welsh Government to request that research be commissioned into the economic impact of the Armed Forces in Wales.
- The Group will write to the Welsh Government regarding support offered by the Royal Air Force by the Covid Air Unit.

5. AOB

- Mille Taylor from SSCE Cymru provided an update on the work the Service Families Federation had been undertaking including introducing regional officers across Wales. This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- John Williams from the Royal British Legion briefed the group on the work being done by the RBL surrounding Remembrance Day 2020.

