

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes:

Cross Party Group Title:	Cross Party Group on Armed Forces and Cadets
Date of Meeting:	9 th December 2021
Location:	Virtual Meeting

In attendance:

Name:	Title:
Darren Millar MS	Chair & Member for Clwyd West
Natasha Asghar MS	Member for South Wales East
James Evans MS	Member for Brecon and Radnorshire
Altaf Hussain	Member for South Wales West
Sam Rowlands MS	Member for North Wales
Mike Hedges MS	Member for Swansea East
Joel James MS	Member for South Wales Central
Peter Fox MS	Member for Monmouthshire
Millie Taylor	SSCE Cymru
James Dunn	Office for Veterans' Affairs (Cabinet Office)
Brigadier Jock Fraser	Royal Navy
Air Cdre Dai Williams	Royal Air Force
Neil Kitchiner	Veterans' NHS Wales
Stephen Townley	Regional Armed Forces Liaison Officer
Dominic Morgan	RFCA
Lee Gonzalez	Office of Joel James MS
Lisa Rawlings	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Cerys Gage	Welsh Government
Peter Evans	Welsh Government
James Wallice	Office of Samuel Kurtz MS
Ryland Doyle	Office of Mike Hedges MS
Colonel Sion Walker	Deputy Commander 160 th Brigade
Curtis Shea	Secretariat

Apologies:

Name:	Title:
Alun Davies MS	Vice Chair
Samuel Kurtz MS	Member for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Megan Greatrex	Armed Forces Covenant Fund
Llyr Gruffydd	Member for North Wales
Paul Davies MS	Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire

Summary of Meeting:

1. Introductions and Apologies.
2. Update since previous meeting.
 - a. The group wrote to the Welsh Government, Bishop of Llandaff and Cardiff City Council to promote commemoration events for the 40th Anniversary of the Falkland's War in 2022. A national event is now being arranged along with a reception for veterans in the Senedd.
 - b. The group was updated on the impact the UK Government's defence review had on Wales. This included Brecon Barracks being saved, Wrexham Hightown Barracks becoming the home of the Royal Welsh Reserves, the Welsh Cavalry being repatriated to Wales and the introduction of Veterans' Commissioner for Wales.
 - c. Members of the Senedd attended the 2021 Cambrian Patrol in October as part of the Senedd Armed Forces Scheme.
3. Update from Millie Taylor, SSCE Cymru.
 - a. Millie Taylor updated the group on the work and general development of SSCE Cymru since last addressing the group in the fifth Senedd.
 - b. SSCE Cymru has grown to a team of five with four regional officers being introduced in each region of Wales. Regional officers will work with schools with service children.
 - c. Training packages have been developed for schools and organisations who work with young people.
 - d. Tools, and resources to support schools are available online.

- e. The regional officers have been collecting data, developing local authority funding and action plans to ensure service children are being engaged with.
 - f. SSCE are introducing an Armed Forces Friendly School strategy which includes three levels of rewards to recognise service friendly schools.
 - g. Dominic Morgan from the RFCA suggested that award events to celebrate schools reaching milestones would be positive.
 - h. The Chair thanked Millie Taylor for addressing the group.
4. Presentation from James Dunn, Cabinet Office on the Welsh Veterans Commissioner.
- a. James Dunn noted welcomed the collaborative approach between the UK and Welsh Government.
 - b. The Office of Veterans Affairs sits within the Cabinet Office under the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The introduction of the role is collaborative between the Cabinet Office and Welsh Office.
 - c. The role was introduced to bring Wales in line with similar Commissioners in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland.
 - d. It is anticipated that the Commissioner is expected to report to both the Veterans Minister and Office of the Secretary of State of Wales. There is an expectation that the Commissioner would work with Welsh Government Ministers.
 - e. The current plan is for a Commissioner to be in place by April 2022.
 - f. Cerys Gage and Peter Evans from the Welsh Government echoed James Dunn's comments regarding positive collaboration.
 - g. The Chair welcomed the positive working between UK and Welsh Government.
 - h. The Chair thanked James Dunn for addressing the group.
5. Action Points
- a. The Group will write to the Minister for Education to request that data collection surrounding service children in Wales is improved. In addition the group will seek reassurances that the Welsh Government would provide long term funding for SSCE Cymru to continue its work.
6. AOB
- a. Air Cdre Dai Lloyd informed the group that a Parliamentary Visit would be arranged at RAF Valley.
 - b. Brigadier Jock Fraser offered HMS Cambria as the venue for the next meeting of the group. In addition a visit will be arranged for Members to visit the Royal Navy's outdoor training centre in Tal-y-Bont.

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