

Minutes for the AGM meeting of the Cross Party Group for the Armed Forces and Cadets

Wednesday 21st September 2016 1200 – 1300

Conference Room C, Ty Hywel, National Assembly for Wales

Chairs welcome and apologies - Darren Millar

Apologies received from:

- John Griffiths AM
- Professor F David Rose, UNSWIS Coordinator

Those in Attendance:

Geraint Jones	CAIS – Change Step
John Skipper	Veteran
Richard Mottershead	University of Chester
Nick Beard	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Wales
Stephen John	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Wales
David Price	Welsh Veterans Partnership
Ty Harrison	The Royal British Legion
Dave Ireland	Change Step
Col Lance Patterson	HQ 160 th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales
Kieran Meredith	David Melding AM
Cdr Steve Henaghen	Naval Regional Command RN
Adrian Warner	VAPC and SAFA
Mike Mailey	Veterans Welfare Service MOD
Peter Evans	The Royal British Legion Wales
Neil Kitchiner	Veterans' NHS Wales
Sam Gould	Nathan Gill AM
Nathan Gill AM	North Wales Region, UKIP
Lee Waters AM	Llanelli, Welsh Labour
Andrew RT Davies	South Wales Central, Welsh Conservative
Darren Millar AM	Chair
Mia Rees	Secretary

AGM Business:

- Election of Chair – Nathan Gill nominated Darren Millar – no objections received - Darren Millar re-elected
- Election of Secretary – Nathan Gill nominated Mia Rees – no objections received - Mia Rees re-elected

Cadet Expansion Programme - Colonel Nick Beard, Chief Executive, and Stephen John, Schools Cadet Expansion Officer, both of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales (RFAW)
(See PowerPoint presentation for more information)

- Following Phase 2 of Libor funding Wales is now part of the scheme
- The aim is to involve 10 schools in Wales over the next 2 years
- Cadets feed into the Donaldson review

- RFCAW recognise that the program is not right for every school
- Links with the BTEC National Diploma
- Support from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and RFCAW
- Hugely important for all levels of the school to be supportive – Head teacher/ Governors / Teachers
- Looking at establishing CCFs in deprived areas – suggestions that it improves attendance
- BME targeting by the MOD
- Keen for schools to express their interest
- Final selection of schools is done by the MOD
- Currently 6 CCFs in Wales
 - 3 Private and 3 State schools
- Tri-service
- Working with a staff instructor with Armed Forces experience

Questions

Darren Millar: Targeting areas

- Areas of deprivation
- Contacting schools, AMs and MPs along with Armed Forces Champions

Lee Waters AM: Why are you targeting areas of deprivation?

- To provide opportunities
- Help with skills
- Help employment opportunities

Col Lance Patterson linked this to concerns that have been raised in the past in regards to the Armed Forces 'recruiting' in schools. The narrative needs to be clear that this is about skills and not recruitment.

Darren Millar: Is there a limited amount of schools who can be part of the scheme?

- Yes, there is a limited number of places this time round but unsuccessful schools can be entered into the second trench.

Discussion on linking CCFs with Welsh regiments.

Nathan Gill AM: 5 years of CCF but how much funding?

- Libor finding now
- There is work to get MOD funding for the future
- Starting at age 13 and working with the CCF for the next 5 years

Col Lance Patterson: What about 6th Form College's?

- Pupils who have been involved in a CCF during their schooling can often get day release from their 6th Forms to continue.

Darren Millar: Can AM's help?

- Yes, they can talk to their local schools.

ACTION: Letter to all secondary schools in Darren's constituency

Change Step's work with veterans - Geraint Jones of CAIS

(See PowerPoint presentation for more information)

- Introduction on Geraint's background

- Psychiatric Nurse with experience of working with veterans
- Short history of Change Step
 - Picked up slack from an organisation which didn't deliver
 - Focus on north Wales
 - Getting feedback from veterans
 - CAIS has worked with people reliant on alcohol and drugs – Change Step built on this knowledge
 - Libor Funding – success for 2 years
 - Working in partnership is key
 - Veterans UK
 - Veterans' NHS Wales
- Veterans didn't have just one issue – eg. Homelessness- they had multiple issues that needed addressing.
- 1037 people have been in touch with Change Step
- Most are self-referral
- Speaking to other veterans about their problems is key to the way Change Step works and its success
- Mental health is the biggest issue.
- Veterans want to be outside and doing things
- 8000 views on Facebook
- Change Step's success has been recognised by a good number of wider reviews
- Libor funding will continue for another 2/3 years

Darren Millar: Praised the continuing success of Change Step

Change Step receives no funding from Welsh Government but Change Step touches mostly devolved areas.

ACTION: Letter to the Welsh Government asking them to match finding quoting the Forces and Mind and Chester evidence.

Veterans Welfare Wales gave their support to Change Step

Update on the Assembly Armed Forces Scheme and the Armed Forces Pathway Scheme - Colonel Lance Patterson

Feedback and comments on the Armed Forces Covenant Conference

- Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children – Welsh Government Lead on policy in relation to the Armed Forces in Wales and veterans – attended and spoke
- Company PJ Rees – Paul Mathews where sighted as an example of a business working with veterans – Gold award for work with Veterans

ACTION: Letter of congratulations to PJ Rees

(NOTE: Currently waiting on confirmation of the name and business as this might be incorrect)

MOD has a cell to make sure that the MOD is involve in devolved issues in Wales

Assembly Armed Forces Visit Scheme

- Adopting a less formal model of the Westminster scheme.
- 5 AMs per year
- Gave a rundown of the scheme and how it works

- Referenced the successful past visit to RAF Valley by the AMs
- Next visit: October 20th – Cambrian Patrol
- Air Force Visit – Spring 2017 at RAF Valley
- Navy Visit - looking at inviting AMs to visit when there is a vessel docked in Cardiff Bay

Armed Forces Pathway Scheme launch

- 29th September
- 3 tier launch
- The idea is get people involved with the Armed Forces
- Age 14 to 17 Course about the Armed Forces
- Age 18 to 24 training and placement
- Up skill scheme – for those in service, veterans and reservists
- Currently the project is mostly supported by EU funding

ACTION: Remind AMs about the Assembly Armed Forces Visit Scheme

AOB

Mia Rees: Please can everyone make sure they have signed the attendance sheet and provided their e-mail address as there has been issues with a number of e-mail addresses.

Mia Rees: Feedback and Update from Professor F David Rose, UNSWIS Coordinator

1 - UNSWIS has received a further year's funding from the Royal British Legion (from 1st October).
 2 - Since David made a brief presentation to the Cross Party Group he is pleased to report that the following universities have joined the UNSWIS Network, Cardiff, Glyndwr and Trinity St Davids. Together with Aberystwyth and the University of South Wales (existing members) they now have a significant UNSWIS presence in Wales. They have invited Swansea University to join us but still await their response.

John Skipper:

Communication across the AF community in Wales.

There is a need of the forums and champions to be reviewed.

What are they doing and are they all talking to each other.

Looking at the expert group and how it is made up.

ACTION: Write to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee asking for a review.

Meeting closed at 1325

Full PowerPoints and information which was handed out at the meeting is available on request.