



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 17 January 2022 at 2.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor W G Lewis (Chair) Presided

### Representing Organisations

Alyx Baharie	SCVS
Kev Bogdan	Change Step
Pat Dunmore	Citizens Advice Bureau
Squadron Leader Phil. C. Flower	Royal British Legion Swansea Branch
Steve Fry	Deputy Lieutenant
WO1 Rob Govier	HMS Cambria
Thomas Hall	Blesma
A Holland	
Anna Looker	Royal British Legion
Rhia Molino	Forces Fitness
Julian North	Help for Heroes
Tom Sloane	Ospreys Rugby
Steve Spill	Swansea bay University Health Board
Yasmin Todd	Regional School Liaison Officer – Service Children (West Wales)
Neil Tomlin	Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
Brain Ward	Prison Service
Kelly Walter	
Melvin Watts	Boots on the Ground Project
Julian Wilde-Davies	British Training Board
Victoria Williams	Veterans NHS Wales

### Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Bethan Dennedy	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Spencer Martin	Third Sector & Trust Fund Commissioning Co-ordinator
Natalie McCombe	Local Area Coordinator

### Apologies for Absence

Bin-Sufya, Rob Denman, Louise Fleet, David Griggs, Finola Pickwell, David Price Deer and Steve Sullivan

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## 122 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

None.

**123 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Panel held on 8 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**124 Armed Forces Covenant Regional Project.**

Bethan Dennedy outlined that a new tranche of Armed Forces funding would shortly be released, she indicated she would circulate information and details following the meeting.

She asked panel members if there were any plans to commemorate both the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands war and the Queens Platinum Jubilee.

Rob Govier indicated that several events are planned for both commemorations.

Steve Fry indicated that planning for the platinum jubilee continues with the Green Canopy initiative with the Lord Lieutenant involved in many tree planting events and the Jubilee bonfire proposals, he invited panel members to get in touch should they require details of either schemes.

Phil Flower outlined there was potentially a church service and parade to be arranged, but not yet confirmed.

**125 Update from MOD.**

Capt Huw Williams reported that the service continues to assist the Health Service in its daily operations.

He indicated that with the recent announcement on covid restrictions he hoped the unit would soon move back to face to face training, and outlined that recruitment remains a priority for the unit due to current level of vacancies.

He referred to an upcoming Army/Employer event which will be now held virtually, he could circulate details to any interested parties if needed.

He stated that currently he was not sure of the units plans for the Platinum Jubilee, but if people wanted the units involvement in events they should get in touch as soon as is practicable.

**126 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.**

Steve Spill outlined that due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic, and its effects/impact on the health authority there wasn't a huge amount to report other than the next Health Board Armed forces meeting would be held on 15 February.

He indicated that the downward trend for the number of Covid infections since the New Year was to be welcomed.

Victoria Williams outlined that during the last quarter she had received 49 referrals to their service, of which 45 had opted in, which was excellent and indicated that the waiting list for services was around 7 weeks.

She outlined that a health network meeting would be held on 10 March and any panel members who wished to attend should contact her.

The self-audit of services remains ongoing with 88 of the 112 areas covered to date.

She outlined that a randomised control trial is due to start soon which will compare EMDR face to face to that done online. The research project will continue for 2 years.

## **127 Supporting Pupils from Service Families.**

Yasmin Todd reported that the SSCE Cymru data collection of young people in schools remains ongoing. In Swansea the local authority has put a system in place to monitor numbers and indicated she should be able to update the panel on numbers at the next meeting.

She outlined that there is 8.5k available to deliver sessions through Forces Fitness in Swansea, and these are currently being arranged and planned for.

She outlined that Little Troopers well-being courses are also being prepared currently with a view to delivering them in primary schools as soon as the pandemic allows.

A 'month of the military child' activities for April are looking to be arranged, with potential competitions and general awareness raising and celebrations of service children in schools.

A service children ambassador programme is also being promoted for young people to get involved with and engage with SSCE and other children across Wales and raise awareness of the issues facing service children across the country.

Tom Sloane outlined that the Ospreys are involved with up to 40 schools a term locally and he was happy to assist and support in anyway he could with the ideas outlined above.

## **128 Forces Fitness.**

Rhia Molino gave a short presentation on what her organisation are currently doing in their sessions with service children in Swansea.

They currently deliver to 34 schools in Swansea with health, well-being and activity sessions.

They also now deliver sessions to 13 other authorities and last year worked with 160 schools involving over 6000 plus young people in activities.

## 129 Update from Panel Members.

### Swansea Veterans Hub

The Chair read out a statement from Phil Jones, regarding the establishment of a new veteran's hub in Swansea. A launch day is being planned at St Helen's and details will follow in due course.

### Swansea Council

The Chair outlined that currently the plans for the Air Show over the weekend of 2/3 July.

She indicated that the arrangements for Armed Forces Day are yet to be finalised.

Spencer Martin outlined that the Swansea Veterans fund is still open for applications, with full details on the Council's website. Four applications have been submitted to date, and he and the Chair would be examining them shortly.

Natalie McCombe referred to the new Swansea Council fund for the over 50s which is called 'Winter & Well-being', although the fund is not veteran specific, it could assist groups.

### RAF Benevolent Fund

Neil Tomlin referred to the new and extended level of support services as a result of Covid that is available from his organisation relating to mental health support for children and young people of school age linked to the RAF.

Full details would be circulated after the meeting.

### Royal British Legion

Anna Looker indicated that the local group had not organised anything yet relating to the Falklands anniversary, but would update the group in due course. She did outline that nationally the RBL are looking for Falklands veterans to speak to the press with stories and memories from the conflict.

A national event will take place at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Phil Flower referred to the potential events being discussed for the Air Show/Armed Forces Day including a possible parade and an event at the Guildhall rotunda.

He indicated that despite the pandemic the poppy sellers in Swansea had done an excellent job, but takings were understandably down on previous years due to the pandemic.

The plans currently are for a full remembrance period commemoration, unlike the past few years because of Covid.

He outlined that the Air Cadets are due to receive the Freedom of Gorseinon from Gorseinon Town Council later in the year.

### British Training Board

Julian Wilde-Davies updated the panel on a number of programmes that are going live in the coming weeks funded by various sources, in particular a scheme that will put up to 20 participants through a 12 week programme potentially leading to jobs within the civil service and another one that is looking to train up people to address the shortfall in security personnel locally. He would circulate full details following the meeting.

The meeting ended at 2.44 pm

**Chair**