



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 11 July 2022 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor W G Lewis (Chair) Presided

Representing Organisations

Moawia Bin-Sufya	Care After Combat
Lt Cdr Andy Davies	Royal Navy
CPO Rob Evans	HMS Cambria
Sqd Ldr Phil. C. Flower	Royal British Legion Swansea Branch
Steve Fry	Deputy Lieutenant
Cllr Elliott King	Swansea Council
Wayne Jenkins	Swansea Veterans Hub
Phil Jones	Swansea Veterans Hub
Paul Smith	Swansea Veterans Hub
Steve Spill	Swansea Bay University Health Board
Yasmin Todd	Regional School Liaison Officer – Service Children
Capt Huw Williams	157 Squadron
Victoria Williams	Veterans NHS Wales
Chris Ashley	
Calvin Hughes	

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
Emma Thomas	Special Events

Apologies for Absence

Alyx Baharie, David Price Deer, Louise Fleet, Christine Morrell and Adrian Rabey

1 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

None.

2 Minutes.

Agreed that the Minutes of the Panel held on 7 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3 Armed Forces Day/Air Show.

The Chair outlined that once again Armed Forces Day and the Air Show had both proved a great success.

She thanked all those involved for their help and assistance over both events.

She indicated that the Air Show will take place over the weekend of 1st and 2nd July 2023.

Armed Forces Day in 2023 will be on 24th June.

4 Armed Forces Covenant Regional Project.

Bethan Dennedy outlined that the recent Armed Forces Covenant newsletter had been distributed in June.

She indicated that is seeking to strengthen the trusts and grants available to groups and is looking forward to getting involved in the various Remembrance events.

5 Update from MOD.

Lt Cdr Andy Davies indicated that as well as being a serving officer he was linked to HMS Cambria, Tawe Division and the Swansea Sea Cadets.

He reported that HMS Scott continues on its current deployment and hoped the ship could visit the city again.

The Chair outlined she had had a recent skype call with the ships commander who indicated that there are plans for another visit.

Andy Davies then outlined that 50 of the Ospreys players and staff will be spending some of their pre-season training at the Navy facility in Portsmouth.

He indicated that the service had supported the various Falkland's Commemorations held recently and the Sea Cadets had been involved at the Air Show. He asked if possible for more space at next year's show so additional equipment and displays could be included.

They had been in attendance at the flag raising on Armed Forces Day and he had recently attended an Armed Forces event at Parc y Scarlets.

He outlined that the Sea cadets are available to attend events and promote their group and had attended the vintage car show and Swansea half marathon.

The Lord Lieutenant had attended a ceremony in April to give out awards and he indicated that she and the Lord Mayor would both attend an event in July linked to the Queens Platinum Jubilee.

The service would attend the Royal Welsh Show next week and outlined the service are keen to be involved in all aspects of Remembrance events including any event at the Brangwyn and the parade on the Sunday.

Capt Huw Williams reported that the Armed Forces signatory event at the Swansea.com stadium was well attended but there is still capacity to get more firms and organisations involved with the covenant.

He outlined that Armed Forces week had been a very busy one with events in Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot and Pembroke Dock.

He stated that in order to maximise the representation from all the services at the various ceremonies and events, he asked for the earliest notice possible as he has to submit the public military events (pme's) paperwork through to the South Wales Police at least 6 weeks prior to an event, to ensure adequate police presence and the relevant searches are carried out.

He outlined the services involvement at the Air Show and outlined that it was his first time to be involved and he thought it had been a fantastic event and a great success with lots of support and displays from various military units.

Unfortunately some of the groups had to withdraw at late notice due to covid linked to another event in Port Talbot.

He outlined that an issue had been raised with him was the £380 cost that the military charities have to pay at the event, which meant some of them were losing significantly over the weekend, and asked that these sort of organisations are in future placed in the covenant marquee.

All 3 services had been involved in both the recent Armed Forces Event in Wrexham and the Queens baton relay.

The Army would also be in attendance at the Royal Welsh Show and indicated that as a regiment they would deploy to Germany in August for a two week training exercise.

Focus is also now shifting to attendance and involvement in Remembrance events in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

In 2023 Armed Forces Welsh based celebrations will be held in Newport but in 2024 it will be based in Swansea.

He referred to the potential events that could be held within Swansea including the combining of Armed Forces Day and the Air Show potentially over the weekend of the 6th and 7th of July including several military bands in attendance.

A possible military evening event at the Brangwyn is an option.

Early discussions need to continue to be undertaken between all the agencies involved to ensure that the required level of planning is undertaken.

5 personnel have been placed in Birmingham to support the upcoming Commonwealth games.

160 Brigade are also developing links with Race Council Cymru and the African community centre, both Swansea based and are supporting Swansea Councils LGBT initiatives.

He also gave an update from Sd Ldr Adam Davies based in St Athan who's unit had attended the Jubilee events in Cardiff Bay and London and been involved in Armed Forces Week.

They were also involved at the Air Show and the show was both a massive PR and recruitment success for them. They will also attend the Royal Welsh Show and are also due to attend a memorial event on 6th August at Carew/Cheriton and will be part of a South Asian heritage event in Cardiff on the same day.

They too are now focusing on involvement in Remembrance events for the autumn.

Sq Ldr Phil Flower then gave an update on behalf of the air cadets.

He outlined that the cadets are now, post pandemic getting back involved in as many outside activities as possible, with various activities including outdoor climbing, clay pigeon shooting, kayaking, horse riding etc.

He referred to the event held at St Madocs facility on the Gower, which had proved to be an excellent venue and provided a superb location.

The cadets had also been involved in carrying the Queens Jubilee torch and assisted with the half marathon and will be in attendance at the Gower Show, Triathlon and the Swansea bay 10k.

He indicated that he recently contacted the local Army & Sea cadet lead officers to try and get more joined up working and utilisation of activities and resources which could be beneficial to all.

The cadet numbers are now up over 150 in West Glamorgan, with 46 cadets attending this year's summer camp, but recruitment continues wherever possible.

He referred to the grant received from Swansea Council of 6.5k which was used to provide outdoor activities and promote physical activity, which had proved successful with the young people.

The cadets had raised around 1.6k during the Poppy appeal and 4k for the Wings appeal.

He detailed the cadets will be involved in the Battle of Britain Sunday service in Killay on 11th September.

Full details of all the Remembrance events are being collated and will be circulated to the group when finalised.

He also thanked Capt Huw Williams for all his work and effort in the Air Show which no doubt helped towards its success.

6 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.

Steve Spill outlined that the Health Board's Armed Forces Forum had met on 25th May with the next meeting scheduled for 8th September.

He outlined the forum had received a very engaging presentation from a staff member who has been a reservist for many years and had recently been on a 3 month mobilisation supporting the Welsh Ambulance Service.

The usual update from the artificial limbs unit unfortunately had to be deferred to the next meeting.

The health board's workforce survey which will seek data and information linked to armed forces service/reservist involvement will be distributed shortly.

Victoria Williams outlined that during the last quarter Veterans NHS Wales had received 23 referrals to their service, of which 19 had opted into the service.

She outlined that the last Clinical Network meeting was held on 2nd June and the next one will be held on 22nd September, all are welcome and the meeting is being held in person at the Bulldogs in Baglan.

She had attending a recent Armed Forces event held in conjunction with the Wave radio station which had been successful and the service had received 3 referrals as a result of the event which was to be welcomed.

She indicated that a clinical trial relating to EMDR and combat trauma comparing online with face to face therapy is about to begin.

She then played a video that the health board forum had also viewed from a local reservist who had become involved with the service following 2 tours of Afghanistan.

The video outlined his experiences of being a reservist and the issues he had to deal with after his deployments and detailed his gratitude to the support he had received from Veterans NHS Wales.

7 Supporting Pupils from Service Families.

Yasmin Todd referred to the official launch of the Armed Forces Friendly Schools Scheme. She indicated that Pontarddulais primary is likely to be the first school in Swansea to receive the award. Seven schools across Wales have so far achieved the award.

The scheme is about embedding good practice in schools and ensuring schools are using the SSE Cymru checklist to choose actions and activities that are appropriate to service children. She would be visiting the school tomorrow as they are holding a coffee afternoon for service children and families.

The scheme gives the children a chance to develop new friendships and allows families to mix and potentially build their own support networks, as at least half of Swansea schools have more than one service child. The Local Authority is looking to develop a cluster network to support the process.

She outlined that summer holidays activities are being developed with Forces Fitness and further information will follow shortly.

The SSE Cymru summer newsletter is available and panel members can input into future editions should they wish.

8 Update from Panel Members.

Swansea Veterans Hub

Phil Jones and Wayne Jenkins outlined that they had held an event at St Helen's on the Saturday of the Air Show which had attracted over 100 visitors.

The Lord Lieutenant had also attended and the event had proved a great success.

The Hub has now been officially launched and meets every Saturday at St Helen's between 10 -12.

The Hub is also planned to be open both before and after the Cenotaph Ceremony on Remembrance Sunday to enable people to gather and socialise.

He indicated that some summer health & well-being activities are being planned, details of which will be circulated soon.

He offered the groups help and services to all panel members and outlined that members of the group are keen and willing to get involved in as many events and activities as possible.

Royal British Legion

John Williams outlined that the organisation is starting to gather information around what policies and initiatives the organisation should strive towards being included in their manifesto for the next general election.

Any input will be welcomed.

Swansea Council

Emma Thomas thanked all the various services, groups and organisations for their help and assistance in making the Air Show such a success.

The meeting ended at 2.52 pm

Chair