



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre, Swansea

Monday, 29 July 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Councillors

June Burtonshaw and Wendy Lewis

Representing Organisations

Alyx Baharie	SCVS
Tania Davies	UWTSD
Capt Chris Evans MBE	Welsh Transport Regiment
Slt Matthew Hendery	Tawe Division, HMS Cambria
Anna Looker	Royal British Legion
Natalie McCombe	The Poppy Factory
Charis Moon	Action on Hearing Loss
Kath Jennings	Veterans Club
Kath Morgans	Veterans Club
Sandy Shaw	Veterans Club
Adrian Rabey	British Training Board
David Singletary	SSAFA
Paul Thomas	Citizens Advice Bureau

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Dan Garner	Local Area Coordinator
Pete Russell	Local Area Coordinator
Maria Muldoon	Housing Options Manager
Grace Halfpenny	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Spencer Martin	Third Sector & Trust Fund Commissioning Co-ordinator
Emma Thomas	Special Events

Apologies for Absence

Lt Cdr Ruth Fleming, Mark Hurry, Peter Neville, David Price Deer & Janine Nicholas

53 Outgoing Chair.

Councillor June Burtonshaw outlined that she had recently resigned from her role as the Armed Forces Champion. She had been replaced by Councillor Wendy Lewis, who she wished well in her new role.

She thanked Officers of the Council and her fellow Members of the Panel for their help and support over the last few years, and indicated she had been proud to have carried out the role.

Capt Chris Evans paid tribute to Councillor Burtonshaw for her dedication and support during her time as Armed Forces Champion, during which time Swansea Council had achieved the Gold employer award status.

All present thanked Councillor Burtonshaw for her dedication and wished her well for the future.

53 Outgoing Chair.

Councillor June Burtonshaw outlined that she had recently resigned from her role as the Armed Forces Champion. She had been replaced by Councillor Wendy Lewis, who she wished well in her new role.

She thanked Officers of the Council and her fellow Members of the Panel for their help and support over the last few years, and indicated she had been proud to have carried out the role.

Capt Chris Evans paid tribute to Councillor Burtonshaw for her dedication and support during her time as Armed Forces Champion, during which time Swansea Council had achieved the Gold employer award status.

All present thanked Councillor Burtonshaw for her dedication and wished her well for the future.

54 Election of Chair for the Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel.

Resolved that Councillor Wendy Lewis be elected Chair of the Armed Forces Covenant Panel.

Councillor Wendy Lewis (Chair) presided.

55 Election of Vice Chair for the Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel.

Resolved that Capt Chris Evans be re-elected Vice Chair of the Armed Forces Covenant Panel.

56 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

None.

57 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Panel held on 25 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

(Note: Councillor June Burtonshaw repeated her offer from the previous meeting to assist with any costs incurred by Panel Members relating to the stalls/marquee at the Airshow from her Community Budget.

Capt Chris Evans indicated that he had provided the marquee at no cost.

Councillor June Burtonshaw indicated she would now make a grant to the Covenant.)

58 Swansea Council Housing Department.

Maria Muldoon, Housing Options Manager, Swansea Council, outlined and referred to the Councils Homelessness Strategy which had been introduced in December 2018.

She outlined the strategy was an ambitious one and detailed the main aims and objectives of the new scheme which had been introduced following a review of the old policy and feedback from stakeholders.

She outlined the measures in place to try and identify veterans/serving personnel as part of the interview and application process. She indicated that historically numbers were low in Swansea.

She outlined the well-established links with Swansea Prison.

Members of the Panel asked various question to which the Officer responded.

A web link via the Covenant page to the relevant Housing pages was suggested as a good way forward, and a key issue particularly with serving personnel was the managing of expectations for any Housing they would be moving into after leaving the forces, particularly if they were used to living on base.

The good links with the various charities/voluntary groups etc already in place was outlined with regard to assistance with furniture, white goods etc, and a possible development of a "welcome pack" of information and useful contacts for new tenants to get assistance could be of benefit to new tenants.

59 Local Area Coordination Team - Swansea Council.

Dan Garner & Peter Russell, Members of the Local Area Coordination Team in Swansea Council outlined their and their colleagues roles in their respective communities across the City.

They indicated their aim was to provide information, advice and support to anyone in their communities and help to build relationships. The team covers around half the City currently.

They outlined that their approach which was a different one to Social Services, and based on a focus of a positive approach and looking to build on peoples skills, strengths and abilities.

They indicated that they were less data and more people focused in their day to day dealings with the community. They detailed instances of experiences they had been involved in with veterans in their communities.

60 Update from MOD.

Capt Chris Evans reported on the reintroduction of the "Crucial Crew" initiative in conjunction with the High Sheriff. An event had been held at the Grange in June with over 1000 young people attending.

The event has been booked in again for 2020.

He referred to the excellent success of the Airshow/Armed Forces Day and indicated he hoped it and the flag raising ceremony could be repeated next year.

He indicated that the marquee would be available again next year, and he hoped to boost the numbers of young people/cadets involved on the day.

61 Regional Armed Forces Covenant Project.

Grace Halfpenny reported that she had attended the recent jobs fair and discussed the employment of veterans with over 30 employers, all of which seem keen to take on veterans. She outlined the positive feedback she had received from employers who had previously taken on veterans, and welcomed things like their positive attitude, punctuality, appearance and attention to detail.

She referred to the Forces Children In Education funding that schools can apply for. She indicated that she would be meeting with Councillors and Headteachers in November to raise awareness of this funding opportunity.

She outlined her recent visit to HMS Cambria with the Lord Mayor of Swansea and Councillor Wendy Lewis, the new Armed Forces Champion.

She outlined the need to further develop links with both Housing and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

She outlined that the Welsh Government had recently carried out a scoping survey, which many would have taken part in. Peter Evans from the Welsh Government held a workshop in the Bulldogs Centre in Baglan on 22 July, to look at the outcomes and consider where and how any identified gaps could be supported. The workshop was attended by several members of this Panel.

She and Spencer Martin detailed that included in the funding that Neath Port Talbot Council obtained for the Regional Liaison Officer's post, was an allowance for promotion/marketing and events. Suggestions on how this allowance could be used were discussed.

62 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.

Grace Halfpenny reported that she had attended a recent meeting with Kath Morgans from the Veterans Club, who works for the Health Board. She outlined that there had been a disappointing attendance from representatives from the Health Board.

She outlined that the Health Board had recently appointed new armed forces champion in Jackie Davies. She asked Members of the Panel if they had any health board issues to forward to them to her, and she could raise them at future meetings.

Kath Morgans suggested an idea for armed forces/military champions on each ward in hospitals. She would raise the idea at work.

Panel Members also raised the matter the fact that they understood that the Health Board had ceased their arrangement with the Red Cross and their Home from Hospital scheme. This had noted to have an impact upon veteran patients and the organisations that support them.

Grace Halfpenny said that she would raise the issues of Ward Champions, along with the future arrangements for supporting patients being discharged from hospital, at the next SBU Health Board Forum in September.

63 Update from Panel Members.

Panel Members provided verbal updates relating to the current and proposed activities, events and workloads of the respective groups and organisations.

Swansea Council

Spencer Martin indicated that the signing event for new Members of the Panel held in May had proved a great success.

The 2019 Airshow/Armed Forces Day had also proved to be a tremendous event.

Emma Thomas confirmed that the Airshow had been confirmed for 4 & 5 July 2020.

She indicated that no specific plans had been confirmed yet for any VE Day commemorations in May 2020.

British Training Board

Adrian Rabey indicated that the company currently has 20 training vacancies for positions in Cardiff.

He indicated that 10 safeguarding places had been given to the Veterans Club, and his company was in discussion with Welsh Government and Swansea Council about sourcing a suitable disabled friendly facility/hub for veterans within the City Centre.

Action on Hearing Loss

Charis Moon outlined her organisation can assist with any hearing issues that Panel Members can refer to her.

Poppy Factory

Natalie McCombe referred to the recent event held at Liberty Stadium, from which she had received 7 referrals.

She indicated she had 35 active cases currently on her caseload.

Veterans Club

Kath Jennings, Kat Morgans and Sandy Shaw outlined that the Airshow and recent Veterans Network event had expanded their client base. Their workload and referrals continue to rise, and she outlined the groups good links with the Prison.

They indicated they continue to build links and a develop their relationship with Veterans UK, particularly on pension issues.

A new weekly drop in centre had been established at Neath YMCA, this means there are now 10 drop in sessions a week now, with another 2 or 3 to be hopefully added shortly.

Links with Hugh James Solicitors continue to be grown and develop, and an element of mutual referral and assistance is being developed with the firm on legal matters.

The group is due to hold a community event at the Commercial in Gowerton on Saturday 3 August. It should have various stands/stalls etc including the RAF flight simulator. All were welcome to attend.

Navy

SLT Matthew Hendery indicated that the Airshow/Armed Forces Day had gone very well, but his service would prefer a more central location in future.

He referred to the upcoming 25th anniversary celebrations of HMS Dragon.

Royal British Legion

Anna Looker referred to the community support grants that the RBL is able to award for things such as bereavement support, health issues etc. Members of the Panel were welcome to contact her for advice and assistance.

She outlined the RBL is currently working on a UK wide issue relating to benefit reform and the problems associated with them.

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm

Chair