



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 15 March 2021 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor W G Lewis (Chair) Presided

Representing Organisations

Seamus Brennan	Royal British Legion
Cllr June Burtonshaw	Swansea Council
Capt Chris Evans MBE	Welsh Transport Regiment
Sqd Ldr Phil. C. Flower	Royal British Legion Swansea Branch
Steve Fry	Deputy Lieutenant
Grace Halfpenny	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Thomas Hall	Blesma
Jeremy Jenkins	DWP
Paul Jones	STOMP
Natalie McCombe	The Poppy Factory
Finola Pickwell	Hafal
Adrian Rabey	British Training Board
Tom Sloan	Ospreys Rugby
Yasmin Todd	Supporting Pupils from Service Families
Neil Tomlin	Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
Officer(s)	
Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Rhodri Jones	Head of Performance Team - Education Dept
Spencer Martin	Third Sector & Trust Fund Commissioning Co-ordinator
Ronan Ruddy	Local Area Coordination Assistant Manager

Apologies for Absence

Alyx Baharie, Louise Fleet and Peter Neville and David Price Deer

98 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests from Members.

None.

99 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Panel held on 18 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

100 Supporting Pupils from Service Families.

Yasmin Todd and Rhodri Jones reported further to the circulated report which outlined the background details and information relating to the introduction of the SSCE scheme and outlined that 96 children have now been identified by the education department in Swansea.

They outlined that this years Welsh Government grant will be used to hold a staff training/awareness raising exercise for a member of staff from each of the 30 schools identified as having service children with the remainder being targeted at students themselves.

Regular updates on the scheme will be provided to the Panel at future meetings.

101 Armed Forces Covenant Regional Project.

Grace Halfpenny reported that Welsh Government had announced that Armed Forces Day in June would again be online this year.

She indicated that the latest tranche of armed forces covenant funding had just been released. Finola Pickwell indicated she was able to offer informal assistance with applications if needed.

Grace then referred to the recent UK Government announcement regarding the establishing of a Veterans Commissioner in Wales. She indicated that Welsh Government are likely to announce legislation on this later in the year.

She indicated that Welsh Government have carried out a scoping exercise following input and information submitted from the covenant officers across Wales. 2 new sub groups have been established and information will be circulated via a newsletter shortly.

Discussion took place around the issue of managing and monitoring referrals between organisations, and the potential need for the development of a protocol to ensure veterans are properly monitored and not "lost" in the system.

102 Update from MOD.

Capt Chris Evans outlined that the reserves continue with virtual training in line with the Welsh Government protocols and guidelines, and recruitment remains also online.

He indicated that 157 Regt currently has 5 officers deployed at the moment supporting health boards around Wales, and all the Services continue to support Welsh Government in the efforts to tackle the ongoing pandemic.

He outlined that 157 Regt had recently undertaken an online presentation to the Lord Lieutenant and her 6 deputies.

He then announced that this would be his final meeting of the panel as he was retiring from the Army in May after 41 years' service. He thanked the panel members for their help and support over the years.

Councillors Wendy Lewis and June Burtonshaw, Phil Flower, Grace Halfpenny along with all other members of the panel thanked and paid tribute to Capt Chris for his hard work, dedication and support over the years to the panel, cadets and reserve forces, and wished him well for a long and health retirement.

103 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.

No representatives from the Health Board were present at the meeting.

104 Update from Panel Members.

Lord Lieutenant

Steve Fry, Deputy Lieutenant outlined that the Lord Lieutenant was very keen to get involved with and support local veteran charity groups and organisations in whatever way she can, he asked groups to contact him to discuss any potential attendance at events and support etc.

Ospreys/Swans

Tom Sloan indicated that the online sessions "in the squad – stand easy" for veterans continue online currently and indicated he would circulate the relevant information after the meeting.

Hafal

Fiona Pickwell outlined that there are 2 new projects being developed by her organisation for veterans relating to Digital Skills & Navigating Out of Loneliness and Social Isolation.

She indicated that she would circulate the relevant information following the meeting.

Tom Hall and Adrian Rabey indicated they were keen to assist the projects through their volunteer networks and via Veterans TV if required.

Royal British Legion

Sqd Ldr Phil Flower outlined that the Lord Mayors and Mayors cadet nominations had been shortlisted and would be passed through to the relevant offices shortly for consideration.

All activities with cadets currently remains online, pending the lifting of restrictions by Welsh Government.

He indicated that the RBL had many anniversary events planned, but was working with Welsh Government on the proposals, he would update panel members when decisions had been finalised.

Swansea Council

Cllr Wendy Lewis outlined that currently no decision had been made on this year's Air Show, and the authority continues to work closely with Welsh government on the matter.

105 Election of Vice Chair.

Cllr Wendy Lewis following the resignation of the vice chair, sought nominations for his successor.

Sqd Ldr Phil Flower was nominated, supported and elected.

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Cont'd

He accepted the position of vice chair and thanked the panel for his appointment.

The meeting ended at 2.40 pm

Chair