

CAERPHILLY ARMED FORCES FORUM (CAFF)

Tuesday 13th June 2017
Penallta House (Ebbw Room)

PRESENT

Kathryn Peters (Chair)	CCBC (Armed Forces Lead)
Cllr. Alan Higgs	CCBC (Armed Forces Champion)
Mandy Keenan	CCBC (Corporate Policy)
Darren Carless	CCBC (Corporate Policy)
Rob Cummings	Change Step
Bryan Tansley	SSAFA
Axel Rees	Hire A Hero
Lisa Rawlings	Remploy
Michelle Williams	Veterans UK
Ken Terry	Royal British Legion
Peter Wilson	Royal British Legion
Steve Keenan	GAVO
Gary Ghale	Gurkha Welfare Trust
Ant Metcalfe	Royal British Legion
Capt. Tom Doe	203 Field Hospital
Peter Bevan	Royal Welsh Veterans (Caerphilly Branch)
David Lancaster	Royal Welsh Veterans (Caerphilly Branch)
Abi Wrigley	Wales & Borders Army Families Federation

APOLOGIES

Hayley Lancaster	CCBC (Communications)
Ceri Pritchard	Job Centre Plus
Alison Griffiths	Help For Heroes
Keith Sutcliffe	SSAFA (Gwent Area)

KP welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for brief introductions.

1.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.
- KP advised the forum that information had been circulated to all members re Woody's Lodge.
- KP advised the forum that further to Major Fowler-Smith's proposal of holding a recruitment event for reservists at Penallta House; the event had taken place approximately two weeks ago. There was also an army fitness event being held at Penallta House on 15/06/2017.
- KP advised the forum that the RBL's 'Count Them In' project was to be discussed at a council meeting tonight (13/06/2017).

2.0 UPDATES OF ACTIONS

- All other actions completed.

3.0 PRESENTATION FROM GARY GHALE (GURKHA WELFARE TRUST)

Gary Ghale gave a brief presentation outlining the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

The project was started in 1969 with the initial aim of raising £1 million to provide pensions for individuals who had served and were returning to Nepal at the end of their service. The project proved so successful that the decision was made to continue the work and the trust now aims to raise £12million a year. Not only does the trust support the individuals themselves but also their spouses / widows and children. The trust helps provide residential care homes, pensions, healthcare (including mobile doctors and nurses), water and sanitation projects, and schools and homes.

4.0 UPDATE RE ARMED FORCES LIAISON OFFICER

KP advised the forum that the bid made to the MOD had been successful and that the recruitment process was underway. KP advised that the post was to last for two years; the officer would be hosted by Caerphilly CBC but their duties would encompass the whole of Gwent. KP advised that a copy of the Job Description had been circulated to members for their perusal / comments and she would keep them apprised of any updates etc.

5.0 UPDATE FROM WELSH GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES TEAM

KP advised the forum that there had been a meeting held in January 2017. The 'Employability Programme' and job descriptions for Armed Forces Champions had been discussed. A paper had also been drafted in relation to effective communications.

6.0 FEEDBACK FROM GWENT ARMED FORCES FORUM

KP advised there had been no update provided re the Gwent Armed Forces Forum.

7.0 SOUTH WALES ARMED FORCES DAY

KP advised the forum that Armed Forces Day was again being held in Caerphilly CBC on 24/06/2017 and provided an update from Hayley Lancaster:

The parade starts at St Martins School at 11am and passes along Cardiff Road (past the cenotaph) to Piccadilly traffic lights and onto Nantgarw Road before turning onto Crescent Road. The drumhead service is at 12pm.

The afternoon programme starts at 12:30pm on Owain Glyndwr Playing Fields. There will be various marquees, a full music stage programme and a full events arena programme. The highlight will be a Battle of Britain spitfire flypast at 1:50pm and weather permitting a parachute display by the Jump for Heroes display team at 3:30pm.

I would encourage as many people as possible to come along and show their support.

Park and Ride (which is free) is available at St Cenydd School from 9:30am until the end of the event and there's also a free Park and Walk from Y Gwyndy School on Pontygwindy Road.

MK confirmed that the following members had confirmed their attendance as part of the CAFF:

Veterans UK
Change Step
SSAFA
Remploy
Help For Heroes
Cadets

MK requested that if any of the members who were not attending and had promotional materials they would like to have displayed on the day should be provided to her by 22/06/2017.

KP advised that the CAFF had extended an invite to the Armed Forces Champions from all of the neighbouring local authorities.

KP also reminded the forum that Caerphilly CBC was holding its own Armed Forces event on 19/06/2017 and provided an update from Hayley Lancaster:

Caerphilly CBC Armed Forces Day celebrations begin at 10:30am at the 'Dragon Circle' next to Asda in Blackwood. All CAFF members have received an electronic invite from Sarena (some hard copy invites are available).

The event is being run in partnership with Blackwood Town Council. Ken Terry is MC-ing the event, which will feature contributions from sixth form pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni. The Lord Lieutenant is also attending, with representatives also being invited to lay a wreath (CCBC Mayor, Town Council Mayor, Alan as AF Champion, Lord Lieutenant and representative from Blackwood branch of the RBL).

Guests are then invited to Blackwood Miners' Institute for light refreshments.

At 1:30pm there will be a flag raising event, led by the military, taking place on the 'hornworks' at the rear of Caerphilly Castle (where the Drumhead Service was held last year). This will launch the count down to the event. Alan Higgs and the Mayor will represent CCBC at this event.

KP advised that there were flyers for both events for CAFF members to distribute.

8.0 UPDATE FROM CLLR. ALAN HIGGS (CCBC ARMED FORCES CHAMPION)

AH acknowledged DC's involvement in the CAFF and thanked him for his work. AH thanked all those present for any invites he had received and for the hospitality at any event he had attended. AH advised that he was due to attend the commemoration of the 35th Anniversary of the end of the Falklands Conflict at the National Assembly for Wales tomorrow.

9.0 UPDATE FROM CAFF MEMBERS

9.1 Royal British Legion

- Further to the general election the RBL has a new manifesto (copy attached).
- The 'Count Them In' campaign is going very well (campaign to get the UK census altered to allow individuals to indicate that they are a veteran). It is hoped the 'School Census' may also be amended to reflect that children come from an armed forces family.
- The 'Veteran's Gateway' project is also going well (project to provide single point of contact for veterans). The project is based in Nantgarw and will be officially launched on 20/06/2017.
- Hafal (Forces for Change) event; the Legion is in a partnership across Wales with Hafal.
- Passchendaele 100 – alongside the Welsh Government 14-18 Programme Board, the Legion will be taking part in the national commemoration events at Flanders on 31/07/2017.
- The RBL will be attending Armed Forces Day 2017.

9.2 SSAFA

- Since the last meeting SSAFA had held their AGM and it was well attended.
- In Gwent last year SSAFA handled over 350 cases and raised over £150,000 in grants plus other monies that did not go through their accounts.
- SSAFA also held a general recruiting drive and had been successful in obtaining caseworkers where they were needed most in the valleys.
- There is still a growth in requests re funding for funerals as well as providing funding for people who have been made bankrupt and the clearing of arrears in relation to Council Tax and rent payments.
- As far as funding of the branch goes SSAFA have received funds from unsolicited sources which helps with running costs.
- Prison visits are still taking place and they are handling cases at Prescoed and Usk. SSAFA attended an open day at Usk Prison where various charities presented what is available to prisoners whilst incarcerated and upon their release.

9.3 Change Step

- The organisation is currently 'restructuring' so no real update.

9.4 Remploy

- The Work and Health Programme is a welfare-to-work programme which will be launched in autumn 2017. The Work and Health Programme will provide specialised support for those unemployed for over two years and, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities. The programme will be run by service providers awarded contracts by the government. The programme will target people who with specialist support are likely to be able to find work within 12 months. It takes the place of two existing welfare-to-work schemes, the Work Programme and Work Choice, although many jobseekers who would previously have been supported by the Work Programme will now receive support directly through Jobcentre Plus rather than the Work and Health Programme. Funding for the Work and Health Programme will be £130 million a year by 2019/20, including funds devolved to Scotland. Aspects of the Programme will also be devolved to local areas. The programme forms part of a wider package of employment support for people with disabilities, as outlined in the Government's Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives, published in October 2016. The Green Paper also includes proposals to increase the level of employment support provided to disabled people through the Jobcentre Plus network. There are portions allocated to the Armed Forces that the companies in the bid had to provide strategies on.

9.5 Veterans UK

- Veterans UK will be attending Armed Forces Day 2017
- Advised that currently very busy with case work.
- Carrying out lots of work with SSAFA and also attended the open day in Usk.

9.6 GAVO

- Communities First funding is changing so this will affect GAVO's service provision.
- SK advised the forum that he himself was facing redundancy but was hoping to bring along whoever would be picking up the armed forces agenda to the next meeting for continuity.
- On a personal level SK thanked the forum for allowing him to attend and he hoped it continued to thrive.

9.7 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital

- Lots of events / activities taking place shortly including Amnesty event, the 'Medical Stretcher' (employment engagement event usually involving 10 teams...CAFF members duly invited to come along and support those taking part), Exercise Tom 10 (run in conjunction with the Red Cross and University of South Wales) and annual training event involving other field hospitals.
- The hospital's 2018 deployment is also a current topic...there is a possibility it could be to Sudan.

9.8 Royal Welsh Veterans

- Thanked the forum for the invitation to attend and very much looked forward to working with forum members in the future.

9.9 Wales & Borders Army Families Federation

- Lot of work re spousal employment; been linking in with Manpower. Also been in discussions with Powys CC re setting up the project in their locality.
- Been working with Aston Martin re a resettling programme.
- Lots of units are currently on the move around wales so this is creating a lot of work re housing and education for families etc involved.

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AM advised the forum that the Education Support Fund (ESF) was due to end in 2018. AM is a member of the Small Grants Panel and they struggle for bids so strongly suggested members look into making an application. AW advised that AFF were pushing hard to make people aware that the ESF was ending as it didn't seem to be common knowledge. LR suggested organisations also make enquiries re the Employment Pathways project for additional support.

11.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING: 14/09/2017