

CAERPHILLY ARMED FORCES FORUM (CAFF)

13th September 2018
Penallta House (Ebbw Room)

PRESENT

Lisa Rawlings (Interim Chair)	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Anthony Metcalfe	Royal British Legion Area Manager
Hayley Lancaster	CCBC (Senior Communications Officer)
Keith Sutcliffe	SSAFA (Gwent Area)
Brian Tansley	SSAFA (Gwent Area)
Ken Terry	Royal British Legion
Michelle Williams	Veterans UK - VWS
Abi Wrigley	Army Families Federation Association
Kirsty Gronow	Poppy Factory
Andy Jones	SToMP
Alison Griffiths	Help for Heroes
Jason Suller	Blesma
Roger Lees	Change Step
Liam Spillane	Change Step
Damon Rees	Change Step

APOLOGIES

Kathryn Peters (Chair)	CCBC (Armed Forces Lead)
Cllr. Andrew Whitcombe	CCBC (Armed Forces Champion)
Shelley Elgin	Help For Heroes
Axel Rees	Hire a Hero
Julianne Newsham	RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity

LR 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.

2.0 UPDATES OF ACTIONS

- LR and KS will meet new ABUHB representative 9th October.
- Presentations sent to CAFF members
- Awaiting JCP leads to distribute
- RAFCLO met with H4H – advised that Caerphilly housing will be at the next CAFF meeting

3.0 UPDATE FROM WLGA

LR advised the forum of the following:

- Still waiting for the training modules to be hosted on the WLGA website however best practice videos are on the microsite
- Armed Forces Conference 17th October
- All Wales Network meeting has been postponed until 14th November
- New AFCLO covering Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea now in post. West Wales has nominated and will start shortly

4.0 UPDATE – ARMED FORCES LIAISON OFFICER

LR advised the forum of the following:

- Congratulations to Caerphilly County Borough Council who have earned a Silver Award on the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme
- Housing – Met with WLGA to discuss housing policy. They have agreed to share Caerphilly and Torfaen Armed Forces policy as best practice throughout the rest of the LA's in Wales. As most of the queries are around housing issues the CCBC housing team have agreed to present and conduct a question and answer session at the next CAFF meeting
- Education –Letters now prepared to send out to all schools and parents to try and identify where service children are in the community. Two schools in the Caerphilly Borough have been successful in their application for grant funds from the latest Welsh Government round.
- The Little Troopers Charity books for service children are now in all libraries in the County Borough
- All Wales Awards nominations are still open. The panel will be sitting on 25th September
- Still awaiting results of several Armed Forces Covenant bids throughout the borough – results due at the end of September
- There not there –silhouettes campaign applications close 30th September
<http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/>
- There is now a Twitter and Facebook account for the Gwent Armed Forces Community
- The unveiling of the plaque at CCBC will take place on 25th October in Ty Penalta
- Cardiff City Football Club in collaboration with the Royal British Legion now runs a Veteran Project that meets weekly at the stadium. They are holding a stakeholder day on 27th November
- Change Step now has monthly meetings in Caerphilly Library the first Tuesday of the Month 10-12.

5.0 UPDATE FROM GWENT (ABUHB) ARMED FORCES FORUM

LR advised the forum that herself and KS now have a meeting arranged for 9th October with a representative from ABUHB.

6.0 PRESENTATION FROM CCBC COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Hayley Lancaster gave a brief presentation outlining the CCB Remembers

CCBC were successful in obtaining a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Grant. There are three key elements to the project:

- Installation of a commemorative plaque (and memorial garden) – To remember all the members of the Caerphilly borough community who represented and worked for local government who fought and made the ultimate sacrifice during conflicts. Memorial bench, Poppy beds and a Tommy Soldier Statue
- A schools project – children are encouraged to find a name on their local memorial and research their history
- An event to bring these two elements together – 25th October

Action: A copy of the presentation to be sent to members

7.0 GUEST SPEAKER – VETERANS UK – VWS

Michelle Williams briefed the members on Military pensions

- Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) is committed to enhancing the quality of life for veterans and beneficiaries of Veterans UK pensions and compensations schemes, and all their dependents
- Key issues include War Pensions/Armed Forces Pension where there is a gap of people missing out on entitlements

- VWS caseworkers offer one to one professional help and guidance by telephone, or if needed, during a home visit (Michelle operates from Beechley, Chepstow)
- War Pension (WPS) Your claim can be considered under the WPS if you are no longer serving and your disablement was caused as a result of service in the armed forces before 6 April 2005. No expiration and you are able to appeal if your condition becomes worse.
- The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) You can claim under the AFCS where the illness or injury was caused as a result of service on or after 6 April 2005. You do not need to have left the armed forces before claiming. You only have 7 years after to claim this pension. The AFCS Tariff has 15 levels from 1 (most severe) to 15 (least severe). Each tariff level has a corresponding level of lump sum payment
- Where a service person has entitlement to preserved pension benefits under AFPS 75, AFPS 05 or RFPS, the GIP is not adjusted until that pension comes into payment. When the preserved pension comes into payment at either age 60 or 65, the GIP is adjusted by 75% of the value of the preserved pension. This is because the preserved pension is taxable.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-compensation/armed-forces-compensation-what-you-need-to-know#payment-arrangements>
- YOU have to claim your pension – it will not be automatically sent to you at 60
- Advice to obtain a pension review every 5 years

Action: LR to circulate the pension forecast request link

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/726170/AFPS_Form_12.pdf

<https://forcespensionsociety.org/>

8.0 UPDATE FROM CAFF MEMBERS

8.1 SSAFA

- Remains busy especially with 100th anniversary
- All caseworkers are completing GDPR and safeguarding training
- Staff are being issued with their own Office 365 email address
- Current case for a sensory room for a local teenager
- Continues to have many requests to help pay for funerals and arrears
- Work in prisons continues to be in demand
- Collating minute books from 1914 - 1918

8.2 RBL - Risca

- Creating a Poppy display.
- Memorial Service to be held 10th November
- Donated £25000

8.3 RBL - Caerphilly

- News from RBL HQ – Peter Evans has been seconded to Welsh Government to advise on the Armed Forces
- Some misconception around Priority Service within the NHS
- Report due on Social Isolation
- Reminded the members of the different support available to veterans such as Admiral Nurse Service, Handyman etc
- Attended GP90 – Fantastic event that was attended by 1200 standards
- Dates for diaries – Remembrance Concert St David's Hall Sat 3rd November, Opening of Cardiff Castle poppy garden 7th Nov, Children Service Caerphilly Cenotaph 9th November

8.4 Change Step

- Peer Mentors who work to help veterans confront challenges in their lives, and to navigate and engage with vital support services.
- Aged Veterans – dedicated support for veterans aged 65 or over
- Has a current case for an American War Veteran – liaised with Wounded Warriors and David Lynch Foundation
- New drop in in Caerphilly library first Tuesday of every month – 10-12 Caerphilly Library

- Able to refer to the Mental Health nurses based at MOD St Athan

8.5 Blesma

- Mentoring for 7 Outreach Workers
- Training digital mentors for the community
- Trying to raise awareness in the community that you can be a member of BLESMA dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered life-changing limbloss or the use of a limb, an eye or sight.
- Happy to brief other 3rd sector organisations and attend any events

8.6 SToMP

- Has full contact with prisons in South Wales – there are two in Gwent (HMP Usk and Prescoed)
- Offers support at monthly meetings
- AJ has moved to probation services in order to train Armed Forces Champions
- Sits on a Police sub-group – discussions around a diversion programme for veterans
- Commissioned research by Swansea University
- Inside prison there is a Veterans Care team/Pathway/Spoc
- Poppy Factory and Hire a Hero attends Prison Sessions– would like to invite Change Step in

8.7 Poppy Factory

- Quiet through July and August
- Continues to Network to promote the work of the Poppy Factory
- Lower Caseload however there has been a great campaign around 1000 veterans in to work
- Currently Jubilee Sailing Challenge
- Visited and briefed local housing association
- Attend Powys Forum

Action: Distribute details of Powys contact to forum

8.8 Help for Heroes

- The Discovery day held in their new premises in Treforest was a great success and attend by many partners
- Number of members increasing particularly for support for Mental Health issues, Housing and Family support
- Conduct Pathfinder experience week – 2 days in November. Next one in January.

8.9 Army Family Federation

- The Army Families Federation (AFF) is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world – on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle
- Relatively quiet few months
- October theme – Money Matters
- Personnel are preparing to return from Germany
- Steady influx of housing issues

9.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NIL

11.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING: 10 am 6th December 2018, Ty Penalta.