

Cross Party Group at the Scottish Parliament on ARMED FORCES VETERANS

Minutes of the inaugural meeting held at the Scottish Parliament on 5th October 2011

PRESENT

Alex Fergusson MSP (AF)

Willie Rennie MSP (WR)

Hugh Henry MSP (HH)

Stuart Maxwell MSP (SM)

Nanette Milne MSP (NM)

Jackson Carlaw MSP (JC)

Paul Wheelhouse MSP (PW)

Sir Jamie McGrigor MSP (JM)

Colonel Martin Gibson OBE DL – Veterans Scotland (MG)

Lt Colonel Ian Ballantyne – CEO Scottish Veterans Residencies (IB)

Robert McFarlane – Secretary to the Cross Party Group.

BUSINESS.

1. The title of the group was discussed and confirmed as the Cross Party Group at the Scottish Parliament on ARMED FORCES VETERANS
2. The following office bearers were elected
 - a. Convenor
 - i. Alex Fergusson MSP
 - b. Vice Convenors
 - i. Willie Rennie MSP
 - ii. Hugh Henry MSP
 - iii. Stuart Maxwell MSP
 - c. Secretary/Treasurer
 - i. Robert McFarlane - Veterans Scotland
3. The following individuals would be external members of the group
 - a. Colonel Martin Gibson OBE DL – Executive Chairman Veterans Scotland

- b. Lt Colonel Ian Ballantyne – CEO Scottish Veterans Residencies
 - c. Ian McGregor – CEO Poppyscotland
 - d. Richard Hellewell –The Scottish War Blinded
4. The following organisations would be external members of the group
 - a. Erskine
 - b. Royal British Legion Scotland
 - c. Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)
5. MG gave a brief overview of some of the issues affecting Veterans in Scotland. It was agreed that a more detailed briefing would be of benefit to the group and MG agreed to deliver this at the next meeting. The group would then decide on those matters they wished to focus their attention.
6. SM stressed the need to involve newly elected MSP's in the group. AF encouraged all group MSP's to encourage new members to join the group.
7. PW raised the subject of employability of veterans when they leave the service. MG indicated that this was one of the main areas of concern to the Veterans community and would brief further at the next meeting.
8. Dates for subsequent meetings are:
 - a. **30th November** – Briefing by Veterans organisations on issues affecting the community
 - b. **29th February** – group members to inform Secretary on any matters they would like to be briefed on.
 - c. **13th June** – Keith Brown SG Minister with responsibility for Veterans Affairs would be invited to attend.
 - d. **26th September** – normal business meeting and AGM
9. The meeting closed at 1900hrs.