

Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Armed Forces Veterans

30 September 2015 Including AGM

This meeting took place in The Scottish Parliament, starting at 6:00pm.

1. Attending:

MSP Attending (3)

First Name	Surname	Organisation
Alex	Fergusson	MSP (Convenor and Chair)
Stewart	Maxwell	MSP
Willie	Rennie	MSP

Others Attending (23)

First Name	Surname	Organisation
Adrian	Murtagh	Volunteer Scotland
Ally	Gemmell	ASAP
Anita	Popplestone	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Office
Eric	Fraser	Scottish Veterans Commissioner
Gene	Maxwell	51 Bde
Graeme	Dalgliesh	SACRO
Ian	McGregor	Poppyscotland
James	Taylor	University of Stirling
Jim	Wilson	Veterans Scotland
John	Fotheringham	HQ 51 Bde
Louise	Richards	Division of Clinical Psychology Scotland
Mary Clare	MacFarlane	Officers Association Scotland (Speaker)
Michael-John	de la Haye	PLMR Scotland
Nathan	Hollow	
Neil	Robinson	Legion Scotland
Pat	Mackinnon	Thistle
Rob	Rowntree	Veterans Welfare Service
Ross	Swinton	A veteran
Sarah	Noble	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Office
Scott	Muir	SACRO
Sharon	Fegan	Veterans First Point Scotland
Tony	Carruthers	Housing Options Scotland
Tony	Huggins-Haig	Self

2. Mr Alex Fergusson MSP opened the meeting and explained that this would also be the AGM of the Armed Forces Veterans Cross Party Group; it was agreed that the formalities of the AGM would be completed and be followed by the business of this meeting.

- a. **Minutes of Previous AGM:** The minutes of the previous Cross Party Group AGM, held on 30 Sep 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

- b. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.
- c. **Topics for Consideration:** Mr Fergusson thanked all those attending and indicated that, as this was the AGM of the Cross Party Group it would be appropriate to consider topics for next year, although this will be restricted to two meetings due to the forthcoming parliamentary election. The matter of office bearers was discussed and a vote was taken; it was agreed by unanimous vote that office bearers should be re-elected en-block. Mr Ferguson thanked the office bearers for their support and Jim Wilson for acting as Secretary.
- d. **Annual Report:** Jim Wilson provided a brief report on activities and attendance for the year. This led to some discussion on the attendance by MSPs and it was recognised that conflicting priorities could reduce attendance, in particular when there was a late sitting in the Chamber. It was agreed that these would be discussed as part of the routine meeting.
- e. **Recap and Look Forward:** The question was raised regarding the dates for the forthcoming years meeting and the topics to be covered. It was agreed that these would be discussed as part of the routine meeting.
- f. The AGM concluded at approximately 6:20pm.

3. **Minutes of Meeting 17 June 2015:** The minutes of the meeting of 30 September 2015, which had been circulated, were considered, there were no matters arising and they were accepted as an accurate record.

4. **Summary of Year's Activity:** A summary of the year's activity was presented and discussed. Those attending the meeting indicated that the topics were relevant and that they found the discussions of benefit. The MSP's present stated that they valued the contributions made by those attending and, importantly, that matters relating to armed forces veterans were important; there was some discussion on the number of MSP's attending various meetings and it was recognised that the complexity of competing priorities meant that attendance did appear to be low. It was pointed out that a similar group in Westminster (with some five times more MPs than MSPs) still had similar numbers attending; information from the meetings is circulated widely to other MSPs and the meeting was reassured that a keen interest is taken in relevant matters.

5. **Future Topics for Consideration:** Following some discussion, it was agreed that the topic for consideration at the next meeting (2 Dec) should be the impact of Social isolation on veterans. The Convenor would invite the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities, in his capacity as Veterans Minister, to address the subsequent meeting on 23 Feb.

6. The meeting closed at approximately 8:00pm

7. Next Meetings: 2 December 2015

23 February 2016