

Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Armed Forces Veterans Meeting

19th November 2013 at the Scottish Parliament

Minutes

Attending	
Alex Fergusson MSP	Scottish Parliament
Annabelle Ewing MSP	Scottish Parliament
Nanette Milne MSP	Scottish Parliament
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland
Maj Gene Maxwell	HQ 51 (Scottish) Brigade
Gary Gray	PoppyScotland
Neil Robinson	RBLS
James Trolland	Veteran
Lucy Abraham	Veterans First Point
Andy Bowman	Veterans First Point
Pat MacKinnon	The Thistle Foundation
Rob Whealing	SACRO
Kenny Gibson	SACRO
Dave McGrath	ES VAPC
David McAllister	SSAFA
Watty Logan	SPS / Veterans in Custody
Stewart Murray	SPS
Neil Morrison JP	Veterans Scotland
Margaret Barton	Remploy Ltd
Ally Gemmell	ASAP
Margaret Millar	The Mark Wright Project
Inspector Craig Smith	Police Scotland
PC Lynn Edwards	Police Scotland
Gill Martin	Poppy Scotland
Chris Wilson	Veteran
Tony Huggins-Haig	
Ross Swinton	Veteran
Apologies	
Jackie Baillie MSP	Scottish Parliament
Stewart Maxwell MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ian Ballantyne	SVR
Steve Conway	Erskine
Archie Dryburgh	Dumfries & Galloway Council

1. **Introduction:** Mr Alex Fergusson MSP, Convenor AFV Cross Party Group, welcomed those attending and indicated that the main focus for consideration at this meeting was to be on Veterans in Custody and in the wider justice system.

2. **Minutes of Previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous Cross Party Group meeting, held on 3rd September 2013, were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.
4. **Topics for Consideration:** The Convenor welcomed the speakers who came from a variety of organisations bringing with them a range of experience and knowledge. Each speaker was given the opportunity to provide the group with an overview of their work and their experience. Speakers and topics on which they focussed included:
 - a. Prison In Reach and support to Mental Health – Veterans First Point (Dr Lucy Abrahams).
 - b. A Veteran's Perspective – The Thistle Foundation (Ms Pat MacKinnon and Mr Chris Wilson)
 - c. Wider Support - SSAFA (Mr David McAllister)
 - d. A Scotland Wide Perspective – Poppy Scotland (Mr Gary Gray)
 - e. Scottish Prison Service (Mr Watty Logan)

Following each speaker there was an opportunity to discuss the matters raised and to quiz them on the issue. The broad range of experience of the speakers, both through their personal experience and through working with others, as well as their suggestions regarding how aspects of their experience might be improved was explored in an open and frank discussion.

5. **AOB:** No further business was identified or raised.

The Convenor thanked all of the speakers for their contributions in particular where personal experiences had been shared with the group. The subsequent discussions had been stimulating and relevant, demonstrating the nature and range of effects that custodial and other sentences might have on individuals and their families.

6. **Dates of future meetings:** Future meeting dates were agreed as shown below, the main topic for discussion is shown in brackets:

5 th February 2014	(Housing)
23 rd April 2014	(Mental Health)
11 th June	(Our Commitments)

Before the Convenor closed the meeting, at approximately 8:00pm, he thanked those attending and contributing to the discussions, he also thanked Gillian Gillies for drawing together the administrative arrangements for the meeting.