

**Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on  
The Armed Forces and Veterans Community**

**Meeting 24 April 2019**

**Minutes**

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convenor thanked all those attending, in particular those that had travelled some distance. He provided a resume of the Armed Forces and Veterans Community activities that he had been involved in since the previous meeting and described

2. **Attendance:**

<b>MSP's</b>	<b>Name</b>	
	Jackie Baillie	MSP
	Bill Bowman	MSP
	Gordon Lindhurst	MSP
	Maurice Corry	MSP

**4 MSPs Attending**

**Members:**

1	Aileen Hill	LAFVP
2	Alan Dalziel	Action on Hearing loss Scotland
3	Alison Howard	SVC Office
4	Andrew Jackson	Salute My Job
5	Andrew McCormack	SVGCA
6	Ann Moodie	Garelohead Station Trust
7	Annabel Ingram	AFF
8	Annette Berry	RFEA
9	Barry Henderson	SACRO
10	Brian Sherrington	RFEA
11	Caroline Cook	FiMT
12	Charles Dunphie	ABF The Soldiers Charity
13	Colin Flinn	RCET
14	Colin Vooght	Lowland RFCA
15	David Archard	Garelohead Station Trust
16	Eck Stewart	ABF The Soldiers Charity
17	Elaine Middleton	CTP
18	Fiona Davidson	Sue Brewis Centre
19	Fiona Forrerst-Anderson	Edinburgh Napier University
20	Fiona Maxwell	Reading Force
21	Frankie Caldwell	DTS
22	Jack White	MSP Staff
23	Jim Castle	GCU

24	John Mooney	Scottish Government DPU
25	Maj Laura Cox	HQ 51 Inf Bde & Army HQ Scotland
26	Maria Lyle	RAFFF
27	Marianne Shand	Sue Brewis Centre
28	Mark Bibbey	Poppyscotland
29	Martin Nadin	SVR
30	Mary-Clare Macfarlane	OAS
31	Maurice Walsh	RASC & RCT Association
32	Michelle Ferguson	SBMC
33	Morvain Martin	Garelohead Station Trust
34	Natalie Cutler	LAFVP
35	Neil Murray	NHS Lothian
36	Ray Lock	FiMT
37	Rhona Duberry	SVC Office
38	Rob Brewis	Sue Brewis Centre
39	Robbie Gibson	Lowland RFCA
40	Rupert Forrest	Give Us Time
41	Sandra Cheyne	SDS
42	Sarah Rogers	RCET
43	Sarah Stone	Coworking Network
44	Shaun Cauvin	Veterans Scotland
45	Sue Brewis	Horsetime
46	Tony Carruthers	Housing Options Scotland
47	Trish Mullen	CTP
48	Usman Ali	Poppyscotland
49	Wendy Quinn	NFF
50	Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland (Secretary)

3. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, which had taken place on 9 Jan, were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and approved by the members.
4. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
5. **Briefings:** The focus for the evening's briefings were on various aspects of employment and the employability of members of the Armed Forces and Veterans Community:
  - Mark Bibbey, CEO Poppyscotland: Provided an overview on the work of the Scottish Government's Veterans Employment Strategy Group, which he chairs. His brief covered:
    - The Scottish Veterans Commissioner had recommended the establishment of a Veterans Employability Strategic Working Group of key partners.

- That the Group seeks to provide strategic leadership in order to realise ambitions of more, and better, employment opportunities for veterans, (as identified in Renewing Our Commitments).
  - Membership of the Group includes: Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Ministry of Defence (MOD), Career Transition Partnership (CTP), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and Veterans Scotland.
  - As a result of the Group's activities, a Concordat was drawn up on Sep 2018, providing a single and unambiguous statement on: Quality careers and availability of support; Continued skill development and recognition of qualifications; and access to high quality guidance and advice.
  - Partnership Working across members has developed, including closer liaison between SDS and CTP; this includes a veterans landing page of the SDS website; a pilot project in the North East of Scotland; and the promotion of modern apprenticeships.
  - SCQF have developed a framework identifying transferrable qualifications, in particular for the non-technical Arms and Services.
  - Other work that is being progressed includes:
    1. Encouraging the development of an employers' network for veterans;
    2. Encouraging the development of more work placements.
    3. Research and Evaluation.
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- Trish Mullen from the Career Transition partnership, provided a brief to the Group on the work of CTP, preparing Servicemen and women for transition to civilian life and the support that is available following discharge from the Services. She described the workshops that are available, as well as the resources that can be used which include Career Consultant Support, a range of Resettlement Guides and Industry Guides, monthly Employment Bulletins by region, and a range of further support that is available online.
  - Sarah Stone, from the Leuchars Military co-working Hub provided a brief on the facilities at Leuchars Station, and plans to develop a network of similar hubs across the UK, that seeks to enable spouses of Servicemen and women in self-employment by providing facilities and services. The positive outcome of this scheme is that it enables spouses to continue to make an economic contribution as they are posted, thus achieving greater spousal employment, supporting the Services by reducing early transition, and strengthening the military community.
  - Aileen Hill, from the Lothians Armed Forces and Veterans Project provided an update on what the local authorities in the Lothians are doing to encourage recruitment of members of the Armed Forces and Veterans Community, to encourage other employers in their areas to recruit Service leavers and veterans and to encourage work experience programmes in their areas.
  - Neil Murray, Head of Recruitment Services with NHS Lothian, briefed the group on what NHS Lothian is doing to encourage the recruitment of Service Leavers and veterans, as well as Reservists. He discussed a range of

initiatives that NHS Lothian are developing, including recruitment through the CTP, guaranteed interview schemes, work experience programmes and networks of veterans within NHS Lothian.

- Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive of Salute my Job, provided an update from a conference that had taken place earlier that day, in Edinburgh, at which a range of employers had considered the benefits of employing veterans and how this might be developed further. The positive benefits that veterans can bring to employers should be promoted better and that the image presented by the media is not representative of the vast majority of veterans.

The Convenor thanked all who had provided presentations and opened the floor for discussion.

6. Sue Brewis, from Horse Time, provided a brief on their work that takes place close to Coldstream and provides equine therapy. She explained how this therapy works, the underlying principles behind it, and the benefits that it brings to those taking part.
7. **Open Forum:** The Convenor asked if there were any further matters they wished raised.

The Convenor thanked all those attending for their valuable contributions which informed and updated both MSP members of the Group and all others. In finishing, he noted the passing of Alex Fergusson, after a short illness over the Summer, who had previously been Convenor of the Group.

8. **Dates of Next Meetings:**
  - 10 Sep 2019 (includes AGM)