

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

Meeting 17 Jan 2018

Minutes

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convenor welcomed the Group and thanked everyone for attending; in particular he welcomed the Armed Forces and Veterans Champions from local authorities and hoped that more could be in attendance at future meetings. He felt that significant progress had been made by extending the focus of the Group to include the wider Armed Forces Community. This was endorsed by the members present.

2. **Attendance:**

MSPs	
Maurice	Corry MSP (Convenor)
Alexander	Stewart MSP
Members	
Alex Leith	SPS
Sarah Stone	Recruit for Spouses
Carolyn MacLeod	ADES - NTO
Barry Henderson	SACRO
Stephen Elliot	Legion Scotland
Trish Mullen	CTP
Steven Williams	LVC
Keith Paterson	LVC
Lt Col Gordon Mackenzie	HQ 51 Inf Bde
Amelia Morgan	Venture Trust
Kirstie Campbell	Sadaya
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland & Secretary
Karen Elliot	Association of Wrens & Royal Naval Association
Sharon Fegan	V1P
Steve Burton	BLESMA
Maurice Walsh	RASC-RCT Association
Tony Carruthers	Housing Options Scotland
Richard Baker	SWB
Stephen Baird	Legion Scotland
Mark Harris	Naval Families Federation
Annabel Ingram	AFF

Apologies had been received from the MSPs Richard Lohead, Jackson Carlaw, Bill Bowman and Willie Rennie. Other members had intimated their apologies.

3. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, which had taken place on 13 Sep 2017, were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting.
4. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
5. **Briefings:** There were two topics presented,
 - Legion Scotland's Veterans Community Support: Stephen Baird from Legion Scotland presented a report on the Veterans Community Support programme which has developed from their befriending service. This sparked a discussion on how providing comradeship and befriending services can reduce social isolation.
 - Meeting the Obligations to the Covenant: Jim Wilson briefed the meeting on the obligations to the Covenant, and distributed copies of the Forces in Mind Trust 'Our Community – Our Covenant' report this was welcomed by the group. Veterans Scotland is seeking to promote this report in a variety of ways to improve the way in which the Covenant is met across Scotland.
6. **Other Business:**
 - The group had a discussion in relation to a former soldier who had been living on the street in Edinburgh and had died shortly before Christmas. Many members knew him and had offered support although when the question of 'How much more could have been done for him?' it was felt that there was not a lot more that could have been done.
7. **AOB:** No additional business had been suggested
8. **Dates of Next Meetings:**
 - 17 April – An Armed Forces Update
 - 26 June
 - 19 September