

CAERPHILLY ARMED FORCES FORUM

Meeting

At 10.30 am on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016

in the Ebbw Room

Caerphilly County Borough Council Offices

Ty Penallta

1. Attendance, Apologies & Introductions:

Attendance: Kathryn Peters (CCBC Armed Forces Lead Officer & Chair), Cllr. Alan Higgs (CCBC Armed Forces Champion), Keith Sutcliffe (SSAFA - Gwent Area), Mandy Sprague, Corporate Policy, CCBC, Mike Jones (JCP – DWP), Julia Ferguson & Phil Hawkins (Change Step), Peter Wilson, Ken Terry, Elaine Thomas (Royal British Legion), Jennifer Lilley (Hire A Hero), Paul Harding (Muni Project), Jim Whitworth (Muni Project) Lisa Rawlings (Remploy), Suzanne Ledsham (Poppy Factory), Hayley Lancaster (CCBC Corporate Communications), Abi Wrigley (AFF Wales Co-ordinator), Bridie Biddle, CCBC

Apologies: Peter Evans (Royal British Legion), Stephen Hughes (Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for Wales), Brian Mawby (ABUHB Armed Forces Champion), Annabel Ingram (Army Families Federation), Donna Lloyd-Williams (First Choice Housing Association), Roy Fitzgerald (104 Rgt., R A), Sinead Lewis (Wales Probation Service) Ch/Insp. Nick McLain (Gwent Police), Capt. Phil Carter (203 (Welsh) Field Hospital), Phil Williams (DMWS), Steve Perham (614 Sqn., R. Aux. A F), (St. Loyes Foundation), Mike Bailey (Veterans Welfare Service – Veterans UK), Steve Keenan (GAVO), Michelle Allford (Community Rehabilitation Company), Julian Wilde-Davies (Coleg Y Cymoedd –Inspire2Work), Ceri Pritchard (JCP),

Introductions: Cllr Alan Higgs thanked everyone for their attendance and extended a warm welcome to the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum (CAFF), especially to the new members. He then handed over to Kathryn Peters (KP), who introduced herself as Corporate Policy Manager, CCBC. She explained that she had taken on responsibility as Chair of CAFF following Howard Rees' retirement and went on to note the sterling work and dedication both Howard and John Elliott (who has also retired) have put into CAFF. She also informed the Forum that although Howard had volunteered to continue as Chair on a voluntary, unpaid basis, the advice from CCBC Human Resources was that continuing in this role would not be appropriate as he was retiring from the organisation.

Mandy Sprague (MS) introduced herself as a Corporate Policy Officer, CCBC. She expressed her pleasure at being involved in CAFF. She thanked everyone who agreed to take part in the filming that took place before the meeting. The footage will be used on CCBC social media sites, as a way of spreading the word about the work of CAFF and highlight the upcoming Armed Forces Day event on 25th June. If you want to see if your clip is on there yet go to <https://www.facebook.com/yourcaerphilly/> and scroll through the posts.

2. New Chair:

KP confirmed that she would be happy to continue in the role of Chair for CAFF, but asked the Forum if anyone else wished to take on the role. With no other nominations Cllr AH proposed that KP be appointed Chair to CAFF, the motion was seconded by Ken Terry.

3. Notes and matters arising from the meeting of 3rd March 2016:

KP reiterated that if members of the Forum were dealing with individual cases of veterans, reservists or serving personnel, or families who have issues/problems, which could be addressed by particular agencies represented on the Forum, then anonymised information should be used, with a view to obtaining advice and support outside of the meeting.

Page 2. Inspire 2 Work Project, still awaiting approval from the Welsh Government for the grant money to extend to the 24+ age group.

ACTION: KP will inform the Forum of any updates

Page 6, Agenda item 10(c). Corporate Management Team today, 2nd June, 2016 in relation to the Royal British Legion 'Count Them In' campaign to include ex forces personnel as a specific section on the Census questionnaire. Expected that support would be considered and should that be the case the local authority Communications Team would work with the RBL on the suggested activities.

The notes were approved as a true record.

4. Update from Welsh Government Armed Forces Team:

KP reported Carl Sergeant AM now has responsibility for Armed Forces in his role as Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children and Rebecca Evans AM has Armed Forces Veterans health within her role as Minister for Social Services and Health. No further update from the Welsh Government Team.

5. Feedback from Gwent Armed Forces Forum, 18th February 2015:

Keith Sutcliffe (KS) reported that GAFF has not met since 18th February. The next meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 29th June at Monmouthshire

County Council Offices, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA. The date has been pushed back until after the South Wales Armed Forces day on the 25th June KS noted that the minutes of the last meeting were not available, but agreed to circulate to the Forum once he had received them.

ACTION:KS to forward minutes from 18/02/2016 GAFF meeting to KP/MS for circulation to CAFF.

6. Update on South Wales Armed Forces Day 2016:

Hayley Lancaster (HL) reported on two upcoming events.

The Armed Forces Day 'Raising the Flag' ceremony, is taking place at Rhymney, Monday 20th June, at 10:00am. Caerphilly County Borough Council and Rhymney Community Council are organising a special Armed Forces Day celebration on Monday 20th June in the centre of Rhymney. Representatives from the Royal British Legion will parade along the High Street to the car park next to Rhymney Library where a flag raising ceremony will be held. Children from schools across the area will be in attendance along with the Mayor, and representatives of all the branches of the armed forces. The parade will start from The Royal Arms public house at 10am followed by the flag raising ceremony at the car park. Following the formal proceedings, guests will also be invited to St David's Community Centre for refreshments.

The second event is the South Wales Armed Forces Day, Saturday, 25th June, 2016 starting at 10:00am. For the first time the ever the event has come to Caerphilly and will be situated in the shadow of Caerphilly Castle at Owain Glyndwr Playing Fields, Crescent Road. The event is being organised and coordinated by the South Wales Armed Forces Day Committee, a dedicated team of volunteers – and supported by Caerphilly County Borough Council. HL provided the Forum with flyers detailing the event and asked that they distribute as widely as possible to promote the event. Gareth Purnell and Phil Hubbard have worked hard to bring this event to Caerphilly.

KP informed the Forum that there will be a CAFF marquee on site, with representation from Cllr Alan Higgs, Armed Forces Champion, the Leader of CCBC and Caerphilly Town Council. The marquee has been funded by a contribution from the Leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

MS noted that there isn't security overnight at the site so setting up will have to take place early on the morning of the event. KT informed that there is a final site meeting taking place on 7th June.

ACTION:

MS agreed to liaise with those organisations present on the day regarding arrival time, parking etc.

7. Armed Forces Covenant Fund scheme:

KP referred to the previously distributed document listing the four main priorities for 2016/17. She gave a brief overview of each priority, noting that priority 3, Improving Local Covenant Delivery, could perhaps lend itself to a bid from the GAFF as it is made up of five local authorities as a Gwent cluster. KP reminded the Forum to please let CAFF know if you intend putting in a bid. Priority 4 will be listed as an agenda item at the September meeting of CAFF.

8. Update from Cllr Alan Higgs (Caerphilly Armed Forces Champion):

Cllr Alan Higgs said it had been a very busy year, referring to the activities and timetable handout, he noted the highlights for him were the CAFF marquee and military village at the Caerphilly Big Cheese event last year and successfully bringing South Wales Armed Forces Day celebrations to CCBC for the first time. Cllr Alan Higgs thanked everyone for their support.

9. Update from Members of the Forum:

KP informed the Forum that the list of organisations to give updates as part of the agenda will be updated to reflect new membership.

ACTION:

MS agreed to update organisations list.

(a) **203 (Welsh) Field Hospital.** Apologies

(b) **614 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Airforce.** No update

(c) **The Royal British Legion**

KT reported on the RBL's campaign "Insult to Injury", veterans injured during service can have most of their compensation taken to cover the cost of their social care. Details of the campaign have been circulated to the Forum and KT asked for support from the Forum in this. Following the Chancellor's budget announcement on 16 March 2016, injured veterans in England will no longer have to surrender most of their military compensation to pay for their social care. This now needs to be addressed by Welsh Government.

'Count Them In' Campaign: Wayne David, AM, is supporting the Campaign along with 3 local Ward councillors. KP mentioned the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act assessment has a requirement to identify specific groups as potentially vulnerable, which could be useful for us as a local authority. KP reported that CCBC Corporate Management Team (CMT) were due to hold a meeting, today 2nd June, and the hope was to formally support the campaign.

KT noted a date for diaries, 11th June 2016, to celebrate the 90th Birthday of HM The Queen, 160 Infantry Brigade will be showcasing the best of Army Music in Cardiff City Centre and Bay throughout the weekend.

KT attended the annual conference of the Royal British Legion in Eastbourne in May.

(d) **SSAFA**

KS reported that SSAFA is as busy as usual and gave example of activity including, attending funerals, prison visits and success in securing HGV driving courses for prisoners as part of their resettlement process through retraining for release.

KS informed that Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) is preparing its new befriending service to combat loneliness designed to act as a prescription to loneliness. A meeting held at Pontypool College to promote the service was well attended. Over 120 people from the Health Service applied to become volunteer mentors to go and talk to people.

370 cases ongoing in Greater Gwent, £162k raised in grants, £20k of which came into Caerphilly.

KS thanked Cllr Higgs for all his help and support.

(e) **ABUHB**

KS reported in Vanessa Baily's absence. People are advised to make referrals through SAFFA for PTSD as when referrals come through them there is a minimal waiting list, whereas if a referral goes through GP it can take a significant period of time.

(f) **Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Wales**

Mike Jones reported. Newbridge still looking for new premises. 300 school children going on a two week annual camp the week before the school summer term ends. Grateful to Caerphilly Education Service for sanctioning this and allowing the children to finish school a week early, only one school refused. Informed that Cadet Flight Sgt Aran Rigby from Caerphilly won Cadet of the year. MJ agreed to liaise with HL around an item in NewsLine.

ACTION: MJ to send details through to HL

(g) **Royal Airforce Association.** No update

(h) **Gwent Police.** No update

(i) **Probation Service/Community Rehabilitation Company, Wales.** No update

(j) **Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO).** Apologies

(k) **Caerphilly Business Forum & Federation of Small Businesses.** Apologies

- (l) **Caerphilly & Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice Bureau.** Apologies
- (m) **Job Centre Plus.**
MJ reported Universal Credit has gone live in some areas of England, in Wales it will go live in 2017. There has been a delay due to Welsh Language Act requirements for translation.
- (n) **Veterans UK**
25% of war pensions are currently taken into account re Social Care costs. – they are also supporting the Insult to Injury campaign.
- (o) **Defence Medical Welfare Service** No update
- (p) **Army Families Federation**
AW reported. There have been improvements with spousal employment. Some Brecon parents have become childminders which has provided support to them also. The Vale is working closely with housing/education future accommodation model, to assist with enabling them to live in their own accommodation as opposed to Forces accommodation. There is now a Buddy scheme for new military children in local schools. Some secondary pupils were being refused Welsh language education as they were too far behind. Pilot project in RCT where two ex-service personnel were working with English speaking children to help them attend Welsh language lessons, has now been given another two years funding
- (q) **First Choice Housing Association.** No update
- (r) **St Loyes Foundation.** No update
- (s) **Caerphilly County Borough Council**
MS reported that she, Cllr Higgs and KP will be in attendance in the CAFF marquee at the Armed Forces Day celebrations on 25th June, 2016. There will also be a smaller marquee at the Big Cheese on 30th & 31st July All welcome provide leaflets and if available to spend some time at the stand it would be appreciated, but could also prove to be a useful networking exercise with other charities and agencies in the Caerphilly area.
- (t) **Hire a Hero**
JL reported they have lost a member of staff but have two new members. A Development Officer and a Military Liaison Officer. She added that Farm Foods have taken on ex–military personnel to train in a management role, three people trained and by next year managing a store.
- (u) **Change Step.** No update
- (v) **Poppy Factory**
SL reported that they are busier as referrals are up. They are developing a plan for Wales to help raise their profile.

(w) **Remploy**

LR reported on the Work Choice Programme. They mentioned that they do have capacity for more referrals.

Action: LR to send through referral form to MS for distribution to the CAFF

(x) **Muni Project**

JW reported that they have moved premises and are now located in the old Court House building, Pontypridd and are in the process of setting up. The hope is to link up with organisations and create a one stop shop, drop in centre not just for veterans but also for their families. This should alleviate the pressure on other charities. At present the hours are Monday & Tuesday 10:00 -16:00.

ACTION:

MS. Take a look at the Armed Forces website Run by Veterans for Veterans and share the link with CAFF members

10. **Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum Activity Programme.**

MS requested that if the Forum members had any events/ activities coming up to let her know, to make sure they can be added to the spreadsheet and therefore keep the website up to date.

ACTION: All to send updates to MS & MS to update and put on website

11. **AOB:**

Cllr Higgs asked CAFF to please come along Rhymney on 20th June but especially the Armed Forces Day on the 25th June.

Event in Cardiff City Hall, Transition Fair, 10:00 – 15:00, 23rd June, 2016.

ACTION:

Army 160 Brigade circulate a flyer to MS

12. **Date of next meeting:**

At 10.30 am on Thursday, 1st September, 2016 in the Ebbw Room, Ty Penallta.