

CAERPHILLY ARMED FORCES FORUM (CAFF)

12th March 2020
Penallta House (Ebbw Room)



PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Whitcombe	CCBC Armed Forces Champion
Kathryn Peters (Chair)	CCBC (Armed Forces Lead)
Lisa Rawlings	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Jade Sallis	CCBC - Policy Officer
Emma Ashmead	HMF Education Officer
Ceri Pritchard	Partnership Manager - DWP
Andy Jones	SToMP
Michael Allen	Veteran – Endex Project
Gordon Hill	Gwent RBL Secretary
Ant Metcalfe	Head of RBL Wales
Kelly Osadare	Royal British Legion – Debt, Money Advice
Jinty Morgan	Hire a Hero
Danielle Welsh	Age Cymru – Project 360
Jade Carpenter	Jobcentreplus
Robert Aitkin CBE	Joining Forces Development Officer

APOLOGIES

Axel Rees	Hire a Hero
Shelley Elgin	Help for Heroes
Michelle Williams	Veterans UK
Kirsty Gronow	The Poppy Factory
Nigel Lewis	Gwent Police
Lily Amplett	RBL – Community Fundraiser
Peter Wilson	RBL
Ken Terry	RBL
Andrew Mansfield	DTS

KP welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for brief introductions.

1.0 ATTENDANCE, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

2.0 NOTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 07/06/19

- The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

UPDATE OF ACTIONS

- LR is now sits on the Caerphilly Apprenticeship working group to ensure the Armed Forces Community is considered and included
- LR distributed the RBL 2019 Manifesto

- LR distributed the link to the SToMP films

3.0 UPDATE FROM WLGA / Welsh Government

LR advised the forum of the following from WLGA:

- A total of 6 local authorities submitted Expressions of Interest to host the National Armed Forces Day celebrations which will commit to a 5 year cycle and rotate between participating authorities.. Caerphilly and 2 other Gwent Authorities are among the 6.

LR advised the forum of the following from WG:

- The results of the recent WG Veterans scoping exercise were highlighted. The brief is not for wider distribution however key points were discussed.

4.0 GUEST SPEAKER – Michael Allen – Veteran Project Endex

An update was delivered by Michael Allen on the Veteran project called Endex:

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- Michael discussed his journey, and how he has used different coping mechanisms. One of which was building a cabin on the side of the mountain in Caerphilly.
- The project aims to help a variety of support to individuals who are in need of help, this may be (as an example) due to mental health issues, physical issues and or isolation.
- There will be a variety of activities including drystone walling, tree planting and an on site gym next to the cabin for veterans to use. This is also intended to provide a 6 week work experience programme in 2021.
- Over the next year to 18 months the project is aiming to partake in mental health training (MHFA) to Endex staff to enable them to train participants.
- The website is hoping to go live on May the 21st, there has also been national media enquiries which are planning to be responded to once the website is live.
- There will be a series of qualifications for veteran's available including mental health and dry stone walling.

For more information please contact Michael Allen mikeyjallen27@gmail.com

Action: LR to distribute contact details for Endex/Michael

5.0 GUEST SPEAKER – ROBERT AITKIN CBE – HAFAL - JOINING FORCES

An update was delivered by Robert Aitkin on the Joining Forces Project, Hafal:

- RA advised the forum that the project is able to provide guidance and advice for grant applications. Recently through the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Positive Pathways programme. He has a great success with bid writing and will additionally support through the project.
- He advised the group of an upcoming Ex- Forces Information and Advice Fair for South and West Wales. It is aimed to find out what organisations, groups, activities etc are available to the armed forces community. This will held on Friday 24th April at Cardiff City Stadium – 11.00-16.00 hrs. (At the time of writing the minutes this event has since postponed due to Covid 19 outbreak)

For more information contact robert.aitken@hafal.org and/or Finola.pickwell@hafal.org

Action: LR to distribute details of event to members

6.0 GUEST SPEAKER – SADIE BALDWIN – AFF WALES

An update was delivered by Sadie Baldwin on Army Families Federation in Wales

- Sadie discussed her personal experience and support received from AFF (Armed Forces Families).

- Sadie informed the group that she covers the area that have an Army footprint in Wales and Borders. Annabel Ingram is the Regional Manager that also covers Scotland and Northern Ireland
- She engages with families to assist with enquiries/issues & concerns. Engages with chain of command, service providers & other agencies
- Her role is also to help families to access the right services and support
- The service is flexible and can support spouses and single people.
- The role also gathers information which is relayed to the regional officer and shared at a higher level; this is sometimes evidence or even questions.
- An AFF magazine is circulated to military families and advertisement from services etc is welcome. It is a free magazine and anyone can request a copy.

7.0 UPDATE – ARMED FORCES LIAISON OFFICER

LR advised the forum of the following:

- SSCE Cymru and 160 Brigade were successful in applying for a grant via the Armed Forces Covenant Trust to have 4 Regional School Liaison Officers which should be able to start Sept 2020.
- LR next work stream is to introduce department Armed Forces Champions and mentors. Torfaen CBC have agreed this in principle.
- Change Step have informed LR that the Caerphilly drop in has a low uptake. Measures must be taken not to lose this facility however there will be a need to amend frequency and location if this will help.
- VE Day celebrations for CCBC will consist of – A memory wall will be on display in the Atrium, Mayor’s lunch with WW2 veterans, a commemorative service (7th May and forum members are welcome to have a small display/information stand if required). CCBC will be working with Caerphilly RBL on a 1940s themed weekend at the visitors centre. Additionally pubs will be encouraged to join in on the Nations Toast.
- Covenant Local Grants has now closed. Wales faired well again. Torfaen CBC were successful for £10,500 and HQ 160th Brigade for Veterans’ stories Video Project and VE Day 75 celebration event
- LR has asked ABUHB to consider rolling out the GP Accreditation Scheme

Action: LR to distribute details of the VE 75 celebrations to the forum

7.0 FEEDBACK FROM GWENT (ABUHB) ARMED FORCES FORUM

LR informed the meeting that she has now been invited to sit on their Stakeholders Reference Group

Action: LR to Distribute Gwent ABUHB meeting minutes to members

9.0 CAFF Activity Programme

LR advised the group of events/meetings that have been attended by the Armed Forces Champion and/or RAFCLO

05/12/19	Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum
06/12/19	Monmouthshire Armed Forces Forum
19/12/19	Newport Armed Forces Forum
08/01/20	Muslim Council for Wales – Armed Forces Covenant
20/01/20	WLGAs Armed Forces Network meeting
24/01/20	Holocaust Memorial (Torfaen)
30/01/20	Holocaust Memorial (Caerphilly)
09/02/20	RBL Band of Wales inaugural event – Monmouth
13/02/20	The Army Engagement Event – Ebbw Vale
20/02/20	Mental Health and Substance misuse project – Gwent
03/03/20	Caerphilly Full Council – Invictus Games acknowledgement
09/03/20	RFCA - Business Club – Chief Exec Defence Equipment and Support - Swalec Stadium
11/03/20	Cross Party Group Meeting
12/03/20	RFCA – Lord Lieutenant of Gwent Awards

10.0 UPDATE FROM CAFF MEMBERS

10.1 Armed Forces Champion

- Asked the forum about any celebrations/events planned for Battle of Britain. RBL indicated there are some planned by the RAF and will pass on the details

10.2 Hire a Hero

- Unfortunately their annual Charity Boxing Match in Wellington Barracks had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus

10.3 Age Cymru – Project 360

- Project coming to end of original funding. There is however access to a small grant of up to £1000. Details will be circulated via the AFLO

Action: LR to distribute details once received

10.4 Royal British Legion

- Gearing up for the VE 75 celebrations in London where 750 Second World War generations from the UK, each accompanied by a nominated companion will attend a programme of events over the period 8-9 May 2020.
- Supporting the work of the Veterans' Stories Video Project (Wales) which will source and record witness accounts of tri-service veterans from all over Wales, with focus on their recollection of VE/VJ Day and what it meant to them. This will hopefully be available to schools in the near future.

10.5 RBL – Gwent Secretary

- Discussed the press around the closure of the holiday homes and discontinuing the handy man vans. It was highlighted that the research suggested that the money was better spent on other projects.

10.6 RBL – Benefits, Money and Debt Advice Service

- This service for Wales started January 2020. Already a busy post but please circulate details for any further support required.

For more information contact: Kelly Osadare KOsadare@britishlegion.org.uk

10.7 SToMP

- AJ informed the group that the project will be finishing Dec 2020 and unsure if this will change
- Usk and Prescoed (within Gwent) give regular referrals and have a successful pathway.
- AJ suggested that the Endex may want to utilise the veteran inmates who are available for community service to help with his project if required

10.8 HMF Education Support

- EA informed the forum that she will be covering the additional 3 local authorities of Gwent from 1st April. This will be in place until July. Her post to encompass Gwent plus Powys will be re-advertised in due course.
- EA stated there is still issues gathering the information on service children from the schools and this will be addressed again and the schools will be chased.

10.9 DWP

- DWP have received £5 million from UK government to have dedicated Armed Forces Champions in each area. Although the person covering Gwent was supposed to start in April there is a delay at present
- No planned changes to Universal Credit, however this time next year old benefits will start to migrate over.
- What would be helpful is if there is support workers with users that their name and details are annotated on the work journal in the job centre

11.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A reminder that the deadline of the Gwent Armed Forces Community newsletters 30th April

12.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING: 10am, 11th June 2020, Tredomen CF82 7PG