



Monmouthshire Armed Forces Forum Minutes

Tuesday, 23rd October 2018 – RMONRE(M) HQ, The Castle, Monmouth, NP25 3BS

Present	Joe Skidmore – MCC, Connor Leacock – MCC, Capt. David Bell – RMONRE(M), Will Kay – Army Welfare Service, Kirsty Gronow – The Poppy Factory, Millie Taylor – SSCE Cymru, Angela Smith – MCC, Dewi Jones – MCC, Chris Wilson – SSAFA, Annabel Ingram – AFF, Antony Metcalfe – RBL, Sarah Stafford – Career Transition Partnership, Julianne Newsham – RFEA, Cllr. Laura Jones – MCC, Jackie Steven – Veterans Gateway, Jason Suller – Blesma, Andy Jones - SToMP
1. Welcome & Introductions	JS introduced himself to the group and all partners went around the room to introduce themselves and their area of work.
2. Apologies	Helen Shaw – Age Cymru, Ian Bakewell – MCC, Lisa Rawlings – Gwent AFCLO, Chris Robinson – MCC, Alison Griffiths – Help for Heroes
3. Minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of events.
4. Update – Armed Forces Liaison Officer	<p>A written update was provided by Lisa on this item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing – Met with WLGA to promote Torfaen CBC housing policy as best practice; Torfaen and Caerphilly both have this policy and the model will hopefully be rolled out throughout the other LA’s. From Monmouthshire’s perspective, the Housing Register policy is currently being reviewed. Invites have been sent out to agencies to comment on the existing policy or requesting ideas/suggestions. All feedback will be considered in amending the current policy and a consultation will be held in due course on a revised policy which will include the forces element ▪ Education – Letters have been sent to all MCC schools to try and identify service children; LR will be chasing up responses over the coming weeks ▪ The Covenant grant bids are open for the final round this year. Unfortunately the bids for the films were unsuccessful. However, the bid for funds to

	<p>produce a directory was successful and LR will be working on this over the coming months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deadline for the next Newsletter is 15th December. Please, let LR know if you have any stories or updates. <p>Twitter @GwentAFC and Facebook Gwent Armed Forces Community – Please, follow for up to date information</p>
5. Update – Cross Party Group Meeting	<p>The following updates were given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sir Deian Hopkin – Cymru’n Cofio – Wales Remembers ▪ Help for Heroes Wales (Shelly Elgin) ▪ All Wales Project for Service Children in Education ▪ Royal British Legion – Loneliness and Social Isolation in the Armed Forces Community
6. Update – Welsh Government Armed Forces Team	<p>LR met with the Executive Director at ABUHB. They will be reinstating the Gwent Armed Forces Health Board meeting in December and will highlight the best practices within the area of Gwent.</p> <p>This meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 20th December 2018.</p>
7. Guest Speaker – Joe Skidmore – Monmouthshire PSB Loneliness & Social Isolation Plan	<p>JS updated the group on the work that the PSB has taken towards developing a Loneliness & Social Isolation Plan which will sit underneath the MCC Social Justice Strategy.</p> <p>The Social Justice Strategy will underpin the work the Monmouthshire PSB develops, ensuring that loneliness and social isolation is a cross-cutting consideration, similar to that of mental health & well-being, transport and poverty. The Plan has been published and can be found on the MCC website: https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/a-connected-monmouthshire</p> <p>A data gathering exercise has started which has two elements; 1) organisational mapping of projects or activities delivered formally 2) informal community responses.</p> <p>ACTION: Please, could all colleagues disseminate the survey amongst colleagues, service users, or other networks you are aware of within Monmouthshire to help inform the relevant PSB forward work plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English: http://bit.ly/MonLoneliness ▪ Welsh: http://bit.ly/MonLonelinessCY <p>Discussion ensued within the group and the general consensus is that the issues surrounding Monmouthshire’s large geographic makeup, with many rural areas and minimal options for transport, loneliness and social isolation is increasing in our population and can create barriers to individuals accessing services/social groups etc.</p>
8. WW1 Commemoration	<p>This year will mark the Centenary since the end of WW1 and there are many commemoration events/activities taking place across the county.</p> <p>Monmouth, for example, have a week long programme of events scheduled, which involves many groups within the local community (public, third-sector, voluntary) and pulls together individual efforts into a larger scale community involvement.</p>

	<p>Following on from these events, there will be an ideal backdrop for community engagement, further identification of AFC, Veterans, Service Children etc. and building upon the good work of communities coming together.</p> <p>Different events around the county were discussed and dates shared. Raglan Castle is the venue for Gwent Scouting's remembrance event.</p>
<p>9. Update – Partner Organisations</p>	<p>Kirsty Gronnow – The Poppy Factory (https://www.poppyfactory.org/) KG informed the group that while her caseload is high, Monmouthshire numbers are low with only one client currently.</p> <p>Millie Taylor – SSCE Cymru (https://www.sscecymru.co.uk/) MT updated the group on her activities within Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) and the early stages of a project with the Army Welfare Service (AWS).</p> <p>The 'Skills Development for Service Children' scheme would be an opportunity for the AWS to work directly with Service children in secondary schools who identify what needs their Service children community have and develop ways to overcome this need. The AWS team would help these children build skills in communication, team work and organisation. SSCE would support the group develop their ideas and support a potential bid for the Armed Forces Covenant if relevant. The scheme could be accredited.</p> <p>All Local Authorities, with the support of the AFCLO, are in the process of further identifying Service Children in schools.</p> <p>Angela Smith – MCC Housing Support Very few individuals identifying themselves as veterans or serving personnel.</p> <p>Chris Wilson – SSAFA (https://www.ssafa.org.uk/) SSAFA have contacts with many charities and groups who can support veterans and service families and would like to ensure that SSAFA are kept updated with any new local or regional groups.</p> <p>Annabel Ingram – Army Families Federation (https://aff.org.uk/) The AFF are working with families where spouses have feelings on loneliness and marital difficulties.</p> <p>Antony Metcalfe – Royal British Legion (https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/) The Legion are managing expectations on what services veterans can receive. The average age for the RBL is now around mid-40, so is decreasing over previous years.</p> <p>Sarah Stafford – Career Transition Programme (https://www.ctp.org.uk/) CTP is based in Maindy Barracks. They look into employment opportunities for service leavers and looks to expand their confidence and push them into non-traditional routes (i.e. HGV driver). CTP is looking for any links with regards to job placements and would be happy to meet up with anyone to discuss further.</p> <p>Julianne Newsham – RFEA (https://www.rfea.org.uk/)</p>

	<p>RFEA works with veterans and looks to find them sustainable employment – they have strong links with employers and currently have 137 live opportunities; this also encompasses volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Jason Suller – Blesma (https://blesma.org/) Blesma cover the whole of Wales but find Monmouthshire particularly difficult for service users due to the rurality and difficulties with public transport. Currently engaged in working with older service leavers on digital training.</p> <p>Andy Jones – SToMP Veterans Diversionary Pathway is a newly implemented scheme with Gwent Police working with veterans within custody suites to understand the reasons behind criminal activity and look to reduce reoffending. There are still veterans in prisons not identifying themselves due to the potential risk of harm.</p>
10. AOB	The group were in agreement to openly share contact details with each other to allow partners the option to contact each other individually.
11. Date of Next Meeting	<p>The date of the next meeting will take place during April 2019.</p> <p>Suggestions for venues would be welcomed – alternatively, a room at County Hall, Usk can be used.</p>