



Monmouthshire Armed Forces Forum Minutes

Tuesday, 15th June 2021 – Online via Microsoft Teams

Present	Joe Skidmore – MCC, Connor Leacock – MCC, Lisa Rawlings – AFCLO, Capt. David Bell – RMRE(Militia), Robert Aitkin – Hafal, Amele Tukandra – MCC, Sean Molino – Forces Fitness, John Williams – RBL, Andrew Evans – Game Change Project, Charlotte McGuin – RAFA, Caitlin Williams – RSLO, Stephen Griffiths – MCC, Catrin Cribb – MCC, Paige Baber – MCC, Cllr. Lisa Dymock – MCC, Sadie Baldwin – AFF
1. Welcome & Introductions	<p>JS took on the Chairing role, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time in attending.</p> <p>JS updated the group that at the MCC AGM in May, a new Armed Forces Champion was appointed – Cllr Lisa Dymock. He thanked the previous Champion for her time in the role.</p>
2. Apologies	Damon Rees – Veterans NHS Wales, Kirsty Gronnow – Poppy Factory, Trevor Scott – SSAFA
3. Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of events.
4. Update – Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer	<p>LR advised the group of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated on progress of the Armed Forces Covenant training, which has been offered to LA staff, Health Board, DWP, and other organisations – over 400 trained since October 2020. This has been more challenging due to sessions being virtual and not as interactive as previously ▪ Mental Health First Aid courses are booked and spaces are currently available ▪ Armed Forces Week will be mainly virtual with a small flag raising ceremony at County Hall ▪ Gwent RBL 100 (plus 1) event is scheduled for May 2022 ▪ The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend with Beacons on 2nd June 2022 – further details to be shared when known

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Armed Forces in Wales awards will take place in November, If anyone would like a nomination pack for the awards, please contact LR ▪ The armed forces newsletter is now available following a short delay in translation
5. Update – Current Grant Applications	<p>LR advised that Round 1 of the Force for Change programme funding will be revealed by the end of this month. An application has been made jointly with MCC, LR and Veterans NHS Wales for the garden of remembrance at Maindiff Court, Abergavenny.</p> <p>There are a lot of applications to apply to currently and LR encouraged everyone to have a look at what is available: https://covenantfund.org.uk/</p> <p>JS noted that at County Hall, Usk, there is an Incredible Edible garden and he was successful in a bid for £1k to further develop the garden area. If anyone in this group has any clients, or colleagues who live in the area and are interested in joining or getting involved in the group to get in touch with JS.</p>
6. Presentation – Army Families Federation	<p>Sadie Baldwin introduced herself to the group and provided a presentation on the Army Families Federation offer.</p> <p>The video explained that the team helps army families in multiple ways, like helping to get in touch with specialists, engage in chain of command and more. SB covers areas that have army footprint in Wales and borders.</p> <p>Some of the team’s biggest issues and concerns they tackle are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education ▪ Childcare ▪ Healthcare
7. Presentation – Forces Fitness	<p>Sean attended the meeting to provide an update on the Health, Well-being and Resilience sessions currently being offered to all schools in Monmouthshire. A short video to show the benefit of these sessions is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33AQsKmC5Y8</p> <p>Forces Fitness is engaging with service children in schools and building their resilience through fitness challenges and team building. All schools are being offered these sessions whether they have identified service children within them or not as a way in to building future relationships with all schools.</p> <p>SM invited anyone with further questions or to provide any additional support to get in touch with him. SM provided some statistics following the meeting on feedback provided by the young people as of Sunday 14th.</p> <p>Schools : Delivered to 36 Schools completed (Additional 25 Booked)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners: 1258 ▪ Service Children : 102 ▪ Children that want to do similar activities again : 1215 (96.58%) ▪ Avg Score (1 = Poor, 2 =OK, 3 =Good, 4 = V Good, 5 = Excellent) = 4.82 <p>Improvement areas :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health: 1164 (92.53%) ▪ Team Work:1194 (94.91%)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication: 1112 (88.39%) ▪ Resilience: 1128 (89.67%) ▪ Overcoming Problems: 1083 (86.09%) ▪ Being Solution Focused: 1099 (87.36%) ▪ Well-being: 1182 (93.96%) ▪ Having Fun: 1230 (97.77%) ▪ Confidence: 1113 (88.47%) ▪ Diet and Nutrition: 999 (79.41%) <p>JS added that he'd been successful in securing additional funding internally to extend the provision that Forces Fitness is providing.</p>
<p>8. Update – Monmouthshire County Council</p>	<p>RBL Freedom of the Borough At the AGM of the Council on Thursday, 13th May, it was unanimously agreed to award the Royal British Legion the Freedom of the Borough and take part in a joint Gwent-wide celebration in 2022.</p> <p>The success of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme Going from strength to strength with policies and support that we provide the Armed Forces Community. New HR Business Partner ex-Army and passionate about ensuring we promote employment opportunities throughout the range of agencies in this space.</p> <p>Veterans Hub – Abergavenny Pre-pandemic, Lisa and I explored the possibility of establishing a Veterans Hub in Abergavenny as there was an expressed desire in this area.</p> <p>LR explained there are veterans' hubs in place across Gwent and she and JS are exploring options to start one in Monmouthshire. The provisional location is the museum but there is also the potential for the newly refurbished Hub to be a location. LR and JS implored any organisation willing to support this effort to get in touch.</p>
<p>9. Update – Partner Organisations</p>	<p>Catrin Cribb – MCC Community & Partnership Development CC gave an overview of how she came into her role and the work she was involved in during the pandemic. She explained that she works and looks to assist with the socially isolated with Paige Baber and a new link worker who will be in place soon. CC wants to encourage people to forward individuals towards herself that may not meet the criteria for social support but are still struggling socially. She wants to provide more options to these individuals, as she stated before this period the only real option was the likes of telephone befriender schemes.</p> <p>Andrew Evans – The Game Change Project AE and his team looks to support children who seem to get themselves in a lot of trouble / may not be getting the support needed and look to support them through different activities out of school. These activities include using machinery on a farm and more hands-on kind of activities. One main focus with helping these children is building confidence. As well as this, they provide these opportunities to veterans as well.</p> <p>Capt. David Bell – RMRE(Militia)</p>

	<p>Face to face training is back on within the regiment with restrictions still in place to an extent. Freedom parade was meant to take place within 25th July, but unfortunately due to COVID it has been put on hold / postponed.</p> <p>Charlotte McGuin – Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) RAFA is a welfare charity to support anyone in the RAF family. There is currently 1.5 million people they could support at this moment. ‘Connections for life’ is a telephone befriender service that they are focusing on at the moment due to COVID isolating a lot of people last year, 600 volunteers over the welfare side support with these calls. The team were also supporting with appointment taxi services and prescription pick-ups.</p> <p>Robert Aitkin – HAFAL HAFAL mentor 30 projects in Wales, these projects assist and support veterans in different aspects.</p> <p>Caitlin Woodland – SSCE Cymru CW role is to work with schools and advising them how to work with and support service children in their school. One thing that was recently worked on, is the service family guide that promotes lots of support organisations they can go to. [SSCE Cymru Newsletter attached]</p>
10. AOB	<p>Armed Forces Week JS asked whether members could send any promotional information on what you do/who you are etc., which can be shared on social media to give a greater awareness of what’s out there for the AFC.</p> <p>MAFF Action Plan The group action plan is in need of a refresh. JS will review the document and send to the group to add any new actions, comment on existing ones, or remove any that are complete.</p> <p>ACTION: JS to distribute the Action Plan for group comments and updates as necessary</p> <p>National Armed Forces Day Local Authorities have agreed with WG a 5-year timetable for the hosting of a national Armed Forces Day in Wales 2022-26. These are scheduled for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2022 – Wrexham ▪ 2023 – Newport ▪ 2024 – Swansea ▪ 2025 – Monmouthshire ▪ 2026 – Carmarthenshire <p>Armed Forces Annual Report The WG Armed Forces Annual Report 2020 is scheduled to be launched during Armed Forces week. The report outlines key achievements across the sector in Wales in delivery for the AFC.</p> <p>Since the drafting of the minutes, this has now been released and can be found here in English and in Welsh.</p>

11. Date of Next Meeting	Dates for future meetings will be during: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ December 2021▪ June 2022
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