



Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board meeting

Thursday 9 March 2023, 14:00-16:00

Location: Hybrid meeting

MS Teams or Ashbourne Room, County Hall in Hertford

Attendees:

- Richard Beazley MBE, Deputy Lieutenant
- Cllr Terry Douris, Chairman Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board
- Cllr Fiona Hill, Deputy Chairman Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board
- Ashley Lamprell, Hertfordshire County Council
- Kate Brierley, Hertfordshire County Council
- Cllr Steve McNamara, Welwyn Hatfield District Champion
- Cllr Simon Speller, Stevenage District Champion
- Cllr Paul Seeby, Broxbourne District Champion
- Cllr Julie Banks, Dacorum District Champion
- Cllr Jacqui Taylor, St Albans District Champion
- Cllr Andrew Huggins, East Herts District Champion and Herts RBL Chairman
- Cllr Sarah Hodgson-Jones, Hertsmere District Champion
- Liz Burns, Veterans Support Group Abbots Langley
- Briege Leahy, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- WO1 Barry Smith, 254 Medical Regiment
- Harper Brown, Herts and West Essex ICS
- Paul Bishop, East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadet's Association
- Barrie Griffiths, East of England Veterans Advisory Pensions Committee
- Jim McManus, Director of Public Health HCC
- Katie Millman, HCT

Apologies:

- Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Champion
- Cllr Amanda Grimston, Watford District Champion
- Leslie Billy, Viewpoint
- Kristina Carrington, MOD Regional Representative
- Col Clint Read, Northwood HQ
- Lt Cdr Ian Dorward, HMS Wildfire
- Angela Fox, Citizens Advice Dacorum
- Gail Jones, Military Civilian Integration
- John Phillips, Project Nova
- Pete Frost, Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Patricia Chadwick, Royal British Legion
- Hugh Ottewell, SAAFA Herts
- Louise Briggs, Veterans UK
- Susan Jones, DWP

Minutes:

1	Welcome and announcements from the Chairman	Action
	<p>Chairman, Cllr Terry Douris, welcomed attendees to the meeting, extending a specific welcome to the Deputy Lieutenant Richard Beazley. The Deputy Lieutenant thanked the Chairman and then shared background information about the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire and of the Lieutenancy Military Committee in Hertfordshire. As His Majesty’s representative in the county, the Lord Lieutenant is deeply interested and supportive of the Armed Forces and would like to thank all those who contribute to the Armed Forces and their families in the county.</p> <p>Cllr Terry Douris extended his congratulations to East Herts District Council who have been awarded bronze award for the MOD’s employer recognition scheme.</p> <p>Cllr Douris also congratulated Hertford Town Council who signed the Armed Forces Covenant. At the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board meeting held 6th October 2022, the Chairman encouraged Council’s to sign the Covenant and is very pleased to see that Hertford Town Council has done so.</p>	
2	Apologies and substitutions	
	<p>The Chairman noted that Deputy Lieutenant Richard Beazley is attending on behalf of His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant Robert Voss.</p> <p>Ashley Lamprell noted the following apologies received prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonel Clint Read, Northwood HQ • Leslie Billy, Viewpoint • Pete Frost, Hertfordshire Constabulary • Kristina Carrington, East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association • Louise Briggs, Veterans UK • John Phillips, Project Nova • Gail Jones, MOD – Military and Civilian Integration 	
3	Minutes and actions from the previous meeting held 6 October 2022	
	<p>The Chairman mentioned the following requests of edits to the minutes of 6th October 2022 meeting have been received:</p> <p>Under item 4 it was requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The phrase “with the respective Headquarters” to the first bullet point so that it reads: Northwood HQ site continues to be busy with the respective Headquarters commanding all UK joint operations, for example the support that the UK is providing to Ukraine, and the HQ providing niche capabilities in support of Operation London Bridge • Under the 3rd bullet point, to read “welfare capacity”. 	

	<p>Under item 6 it was requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Veterans UK is part of Defence Transition Service” is changed to “Defence Transition Service (DTS) is run by the MOD’s Veterans UK” rather than as stated <p>Board members agreed the notes with those changes.</p>	
4	Standing item: The Military Perspective	
	<p>The Chairman invited WO1 Barry Smith from 254 Medical Regiment to give an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently reforming to a squadron in September and as such working on a heavy recruitment drive. • Preparing for the County Show at the end of May where they will have a stall in the military village. If RBL, SAAFA or Northwood would like to join their stall they would be welcome. • Hitchin site is having a grand opening on 23 September. Captain Perks in touch with Ashley Lamprell regarding invitations. <p>The Chairman invited Paul Bishop from East Anglia Reserve Forces’ and Cadet’s Association to give an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul has observed a shift in narrative from MOD about the primary purpose of the Reserves to warfighting and that they are to be resourced, configured, trained and enabled to do so. Reserves still have an important part to play in UK Resilience, but it is tertiary to warfighting and then homeland defence. • The Maritime Reserves will address recruitment challenges with a recruitment campaign along with accelerated training programmes for both Officers and Ratings to significantly improve trained strength. • The Army is conducting an end to end review of attract, recruit, train and retain activities withing the Armed Reserve in order to improve inflow and reduce outflow. • The RAF has authorised the national roll out of Reserve Support Wings (RSW) to provide optimum support for the Squadrons within their regions to enable expansion of the RAF Reserves as well as provide career opportunities beyond Group Captain. • Reservists continue to serve in support of operations worldwide including to support the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in the eastern part of the Alliance. • Numbers - as of 1 October 2022, the trained strength of the Volunteer Reserves was 31,030 which is a decrease of 3.2% on the previous year. The total strength figures show a decrease too of 6.2%. This reflects the decreasing 	<p>RBL, SAAFA and Northwood HQ to be in touch with Barry Smith if you’d like space at the Hertfordshire County Show</p>

	<p>number of people joining the Volunteer Reserves (34.8% in the year).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of cadets in the community Cadet Forces decreased by 3%. However, the drop in numbers has slowed significantly. • Nationally the number of AFC signings stands at 9,597 and is forecast to reach 10,000 by the end of March. • The BMI requirements for joining the reserves was mentioned by a Board member as a challenge. Paul Bishop said he would talk to the Chief Executive as this is something that has been raised before. <p>The Chairman invited the Deputy Lieutenant to give any further information than he did at the start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deputy Lieutenant mentioned that he stood down as the Vice Lord Lieutenant a few months ago and the Lord Lieutenant has appointed Ant Chapman. He is a Captain in the Royal Naval Reserve and former Commanding Officer of HMS Wildfire. <hr/> <p>Post meeting note</p> <hr/> <p>Colonel Clint Read, Commanding Officer of Northwood HQ sent this a note via email after the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwood HQ has recently supported the award giving assemblies for the Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas art competition and are preparing to host the winners for the day of adventure. • Limited personnel and niche capabilities from Northwood HQ will be involved in His Majesty's Coronation. 	
5	Health subgroup progress	
	<p>The Chairman invited Harper Brown to give his update on the health subgroup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an improved awareness and increased access to socially prescribed services for veterans across Hertfordshire. 100 link workers and social prescribers have been trained by the Veteran Lead at Hertfordshire's Hospital and Community Navigation Service. The assessment process for referrals has been changed so that they ask if someone has served in the Armed Forces. So far 80 veterans have been referred over the past year. • Over 200 services relevant for veterans has been mapped and connected to updated Veterans Gateway. • There are 27 (up from 17) GP practices in Hertfordshire accredited as veteran friendly. 13 of 26 PCNs now have an accredited practice. The target remains 1 per PCN. 	

	<p>Now that census data is available, the number of veterans per District can be used to align NHS services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE has recommissioned Op COURAGE, the mental health and well-being service. The integrated service for East of England will be launched in April. • There will be an enhanced service for veterans in the criminal justice system which will be run by Project Nova as a regional service. <p>The Chairman asked how much capacity it takes for a GP practice to become accredited. While some practices can elect to do more, an accredited practice needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be registered with CQC as good or better • Sign the Covenant • Nominate a Champion within the practice • Agree to code veterans <p>Harper Brown mentioned that GP practices should be made aware of the resources available through accreditation to help relieve pressures (referrals to charities for example). The Chairman offered to put a note out to the County Councillors in Hertfordshire to ask if they would make contact with one of the GP practices in their area.</p> <p>It was mentioned that the Single Point of Contact service is working well in Abbots Langley. The outreach and support provided has seen results and has been beneficial.</p> <p>The list of veteran accredited GP practices can be viewed here and information about the scheme is here.</p>	<p>Letter to be drafted from the Chairman to all County Councillors about making contact with one GP practice in their area to sign up to the scheme.</p>
6	Hertfordshire Insight – Census 2021 data	
	<p>The Chairman welcomed Melanie Parker, Community Intelligence Team Manager at Hertfordshire County Council to the meeting.</p> <p>Melanie presented information relating to Census 2021 data on veterans which is posted on Herts Insight.</p> <p>During the presentation, the following links were added to the MS Teams chat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (which is a statutory assessment of the health and wellbeing needs of the public led by Public Health on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board) • Armed Forces community JSNA published in 2022 • There are nineteen other JSNA documents which advise commissioners on veterans including the housing support JSNA and the drug misuse JSNA 	

	<p>Cllr Terry Douris asked where Hertfordshire falls in terms of highest level of education compared to the rest of England.</p> <p>There was a discussion about understanding economic activity of veterans and local skills strategies. Melanie mentioned that once a matching tool is available for census data it will be possible to look at the data in this way.</p> <p>Briege Leahy said she will speak with Kristina Carrington about promoting jobs to the Armed Forces Community.</p> <p>There was a comment about the age profile, particularly 55-75 who are at risk of lung cancer. The health subgroup hopes to identify veterans of that age for targeted lung checks and this data helps target local level action such as this.</p> <p>There was a comment about the high level of education having knock on effects for the cost of housing in Hertfordshire.</p> <hr/> <p>Post meeting note</p> <hr/> <p>During the meeting a question was raised about the proportion of residents with a level of education of Degree or higher and how this compares with other areas. Following the meeting, Melanie Parker provided this data:</p> <p>Hertfordshire 39.4% East of England 31.6% England 33.9%</p>	<p>Briege Leahy to speak with Kristina Carrington about how the Chamber can promote jobs to Armed Forces Community</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Website dedicated to the history and people of The Hertfordshire Regiment</p>	
	<p>The Chairman welcomed Sara Taylor, Curator of Hertford Museum who shared a presentation about a project underway to create a website dedicated to the history and people of The Hertfordshire Regiment.</p> <p>Sara shared stories about the men of the Hertfordshire Regiment which was formed in 1908 that they hope to share on the new website. They also do workshops for schools about the Regiment.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Update: Housing Subgroup</p>	
	<p>The Chairman invited Cllr Jacqui Taylor, Chair of the Housing Subgroup to share an update.</p> <p>The group has only recently formed and comprises of a SAAFA and Northwood HQ representative. Two strands of work currently being undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council housing policies and • finding lived examples of veterans in Hertfordshire trying to access housing 	

	<p>Cllr Taylor noted that it was difficult to find examples of lived experience. It was noted that Cllr Simon Speller and Liz Burns were aware of lived experience examples and offered to be in touch with Cllr Taylor.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor found that largely all District Councils have incorporated Covenant obligations in their housing allocation policies. The group plans to now investigate whether housing allocation forms include a question about having served in the Armed Forces.</p> <p>Another area of investigation is looking at council's section 106 agreements.</p> <p>It was suggested that District Champions investigate their own housing applications to see if the forms ask the direct question about serving in the Armed Forces. E.g., "Have you served or left the Armed Forces in the last 5 years?" Cllr Taylor to draft the question and District Champions to check housing application forms at their councils.</p> <p>Councillor Speller offered his advice on the subject and offered to join the subgroup. Liz Burns also offered to join the group.</p>	<p>Cllr Taylor to share wording with District Champions so that they can investigate whether housing application forms within their council ask the question about having served in the Armed Forces.</p> <p>Ashley Lamprell to include Cllr Speller and Liz Burns on Housing subgroup</p>
9	Update: Education subgroup	
	<p>Cllr Douris invited Cllr Huggins, Chair of the Education subgroup to give an update.</p> <p>Cllr Huggins said there was no specific update for the Board as the group hasn't met since the last meeting of the Board. The group has been discussing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In year admissions • Service Pupil Premium • Admissions around the 11+ and timing of the exam <p>The group also looked at Home to school transport Hertfordshire County Council and tried to make progress on adult learning for people who are serving, families or service leavers.</p> <p>Policies for education for children are in place and it isn't clear how the group should take that forward and scrutinise the strength of those policies. Cllr Douris asked Cllr Huggins to direct him to the policies and he can help to take that forward as portfolio for Education within Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>Cllr Huggins made a request to the Board for people to join this group who have interest or experience on the adult learning and service leaver side of the work.</p> <p>It was suggested that Cllr Huggins get in touch with Step2Skills to link with welfare officers within local military bases. Kate Brierley can send the contact details on to Cllr Huggins.</p>	<p>Cllr Huggins to direct Cllr Douris to education policies which need scrutiny regarding Armed Forces</p> <p>Board members with adult learning or service leaver interest or perspective are asked to join the Education subgroup. Contact Ashley Lamprell</p> <p>Kate Brierley to send contact details for colleagues at</p>

		Step2Skills to Cllr Huggins
10	Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Action Plan 2023/24	
	<p>The Chairman invited Kate Brierley to share the action plan with Board members.</p> <p>This is the annual plan for the Board which is similar to plans in previous years and is informed by the Covenant which was reviewed in 2021.</p> <p>Kate thanked those who contributed to the plan and reminded Board members that the success of the action plan is reported annually in October.</p> <p>The action plan was agreed.</p>	Ashley Lamprell to add the 2023-24 action plan to Hertfordshire Heroes website
11	Close	
	<p>Cllr Terry Douris asked if anyone had anything else to share and the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran’s gateway is a helpful and informative site. Thanks to colleagues working on the NHS single point of contact service who are working on getting organisations on there. • Cllr Huggins mentioned the survey being conducted to identify the top 10 priorities for research that would improve the quality of life for veterans and their families and supporters. Please share with veterans, families/carers and healthcare professionals who work with veterans and their families. The survey is open until the end of March 2023. <a href="https://jla.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/veterans-health-
psp-survey">https://jla.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/veterans-health- psp-survey • Cllr Huggins asked for volunteers to join the Education subcommittee. • Cllr Huggins shared that a new veteran breakfast club has been launched in Buntingford and hoping to start one in Letchworth/Baldock • Cllr Douris said that he and Cllr Hill were pleased to attend the RBL service in Buntingford. It was mentioned that Hertford RBL branch will come up to its centenary this year which would tie in nicely with Hertford Museum project. • Cllr Douris mentioned that the award assemblies for the Christmas art competition had taken place and all the children were pleased. He expressed his thanks to Northwood HQ and to HCC Officers for working to organise the competition. • Cllr Douris mentioned the following “for action” items included in the agenda and key commemorative dates: <p>For Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas Art Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please send any suggestions for a Christmas art competition theme for 2023 to Ashley Lamprell • Armed Forces Day – 24 June 2023 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Please ensure any Armed Forces Day events that your organisation is hosting are registered on the website.● Veterans' Gateway<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Please be in touch with Ashley Lamprell if your organisation should be registered on the Veterans' Gateway. <p>Commemorative events 2022/23– for information only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Start of Armed Forces week Monday 19 June 2023● Reserves Day is Wednesday 21 June 2023● Armed Forces Day is Saturday 24 June 2023● Armistice Day is Saturday 11 November 2023● Remembrance Sunday 12 November 2023 <p>Cllr Douris mentioned he would consider how the next meeting would be held. It will be held on 28 September 2023 from 14:00-16:00.</p> <p>Cllr Douris thanked Deputy Lieutenant Richard Beazley for attending the meeting today on behalf of His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant.</p> <p>The Chairman concluded the meeting.</p>	
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