

Cross-Party Group on The Armed Forces and Veterans Community

22 June 2022 at 6:00pm

The meeting was held on line.

Minute

Present

A list of those attending is at Annex A

Agenda item 1

Introductions and Opening Remarks Maurice Golden MSP (Convenor) and Maurice Corry (Chair). The Convenor noted that Parliamentary voting was due to take place at 6:40pm, and therefore a number of MSP's, including himself, would be unavailable for parts of the meeting. He then handed over to the Chair who thanked everyone for their attendance. He noted that it was a busy agenda and that it focussed on matters relating to Female Veterans.

It was noted that this meeting was also the AGM, the Cross Party Group having reformed following the Scottish Parliamentary election, on 30 June 2021.

Agenda item 2

Confirmation of attendance. The following MSP's attended: Maurice Golden MSP; Stephen Kerr MSP; Edward Mountain MSP and Paul Sweeney MSP.

A list of those attending is at Annex A.

Agenda item 3

Minutes of the previous meeting, 16 March 2022, were reviewed. One minor amendment, ie the role of Malcolm Farrow from ASDIC, was identified and, subject to this being amended in the final version, the minute was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minute that would not be dealt with in the agenda.

Agenda item 4

Deidre Mills, CEO of The Poppy Factory and Chair of the COBSEO Female Veterans Cluster group introduced herself and described the work of that group. A copy of the presentation is attached to this minute. She identified a range of issues that Female Veterans face and described the research that had been carried out since 2009.

Many organisations have been involved in the research, and various bodies have been briefed on the findings.

Female veterans have been under represented in the design, development and provision of veteran services over many years and consequently their needs are not being adequately met by the military charity sector. Growing body of comprehensive research which shows that women have been physically and mentally damaged by their service and that this damage is carried into their civilian lives, reducing their ability to be productive citizens.

It is important to recognise that Female Veterans are not a homogenous group, and that all will have had different experiences. Common themes however, are the impact of historic discriminatory Terms and Conditions of service, in particular those around marriage, pregnancy and the ban on homosexuality.

Deirdre described the work that is progressing, and the importance of inclusive support.

Agenda item 5

Female Veterans Health Issues. Deirdre handed over the presentation to Ali Brown who focussed on the Health Issues that may be faced by female veterans. She informed the Group on the work of the Service and Ex-Service Women's Health Improvement Steering Group (SESWHISG), in particular providing details on work that is being carried out across the UK, as well as future work. Details are contained in the attached presentation, at Annex B.

Agenda item 6

Female veterans' issues and Military Sexual Trauma. Helen Bolland, a former member of the Royal Air Force, gave a detailed and harrowing presentation on the assault she had experienced and the treatment that she had subsequently been subject to during her service in the Gulf. The Group recognised the strength displayed in describing her experience, and thanked Helen for her presentation.

As a result of the three presentations delivered, it was agreed that a sub-group should be set up to consider how the matters raised during Items 4, 5 and 6 might be improved in Scotland. The sub-group would consist of the three speakers, and Beverly Bergman, Debbi McColl, Maurice Corry, Maurice Golden MSP and Jim Wilson; it should meet in the near future.

Any other business:

Agenda item 7

AGM: The Secretary briefed the Group on the Annual Return report, attached at Annex C. This confirmed the topics that had been considered during the preceding 12 months, attendance and confirmation of the office bearers. Officers for the next 12 months were discussed and Maurice Golden MSP was agreed as Convenor,

Jackie Baillie MSP, Gordon MacDonald MSP and Willie Rennie MSP were agreed as Deputy Convenors. The following MSPs had agreed to continue as members: Jackson Carlaw, Katy Clark, Mark Griffin, Stephen Kerr, Douglas Lumsden, Edward Mountain and Paul Sweeney. Maurice Corry was agreed as Chair, and Jim Wilson as Secretary and Treasurer.

Date of next meetings:

Future meetings are scheduled for:

- Tuesday 20 Sep 22

Annex A to CPG Minutes
22 June 2022

Attendance 22 June 2022

MSP's

Golden M (Maurice), MSP
Kerr S (Stephen), MSP
Mountain E (Edward), MSP
Sweeney P (Paul), MSP

Others

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| Aileen Grant | WWTW |
| Ali Brown | Presenter |
| Alison Howard | SVC Office |
| Alistair Halliday | Forces Employment Charity |
| Beverly Bergman | University of Glasgow |
| Bill Bowman | Member |
| Claire Biggar | Edinburgh Napier University |
| David Ross | Serving Community |
| Debbi McColl | Midlothian Council |
| Deirdre Mills | Presenter |
| Dorinda Wolfe Murray | FirstLight Trust |
| Emma Perrin | AFF |
| Eric Fraser | RNRMC |
| Fiona MacDonald | Bravehound |
| Fiona Maxwell | Reading Force |
| Frank Gribben | Age Scotland |
| Gene Maxwell | Stirling Council |
| Helen Bolland | Presenter |
| Jim Castle | Glasgow Caledonian University |
| Jim Wilson | Secretary |
| Kari Magee | NHS Highland |
| Malcolm Farrow | ASDIC |
| Maria Lyle | RAFA |

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| Mark Horsham | South Lanarkshire Council |
| Mary Kenyon | SSAFA |
| Maurice Corry | Chair |
| Moira Bailey | Robert Gordon University |
| Nicoletta Primo | Sight Scotland |
| Paul Barrett | RMA |
| Ryan Macdonald | GHH |
| Sandra Cheyne | SDS |
| Susie Hamilton | SVR |
| Thomas McBarnet | FiMT |
| Tony Carruthers | HOS |
| Tony Phillips | DComd 51 Bde |

Annex B to CPG Minutes
22 June 2022

Presentation on Female Veterans' Issues – attached

Annex C to CPG Minutes
22 June 2022

Cross-Party Group Annual Return

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| Name of Cross-Party Group |
| Cross-Party Group on The Armed Forces and Veterans Community |
| Date Group Established |
| 30 June 2021 |
| Date of Most Recent Annual General Meeting (AGM) |
| 22 June 2022 |
| Date Annual Return Submitted |

24 June 2022

Date of Preceding AGM [this date is required to aid clerks in verifying that the most recent AGM has taken place within 11 to 13 months of the previous AGM]

22 June 2022 is the first AGM of this Group in the current Parliamentary Session.

Group Meetings and Activities

Please provide details of each meeting of the Group including the date of the meeting, a brief description of the main subjects discussed and the MSP and non-MSP attendance figures.

Details of any other activities, such as visits undertaken by the Group or papers/report published by the Group should also be provided.

30 June 2021: An inaugural meeting; the main purpose of the meeting was to reconvene the Group for the duration of the new Parliamentary session. This included the election of Office Bearers and confirmation of membership of the Group. Future topics for discussion were identified and the Group received an update on the Covid Pandemic and the affect it has had on veterans and veterans' charities.

10 MSP's attended and 30 other members.

22 Sep 2021: Topics included: a Covid update; discussion around the Impact of the withdrawal from Afghanistan; and Housing.

2 MSP's attended and 37 other members.

25 Jan 2022: Topics included: An update on the Strategy for our Veterans by Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans; a Covid update; Veterans Homelessness prevention Pathway; other business included information about The Scottish Men's Sheds Association; the role of VAPC's; the potential benefits of

SPARKO TV and Solicitors for the Armed Forces Community (Scotland).

5 MSP's attended and 47 other members.

16 March 2022: Topics included: A Local Authority Perspective; The Deliverables of the Cross party Group and the work of the association of Service Drop in Centres (ASDIC).

3 MSP's attended, 1 was represented, and 41 other members, of whom 10 were Local Authority Champions.

22 June 2022: Topics included: Issues relating to Female Veterans; Female Veterans' Health; and Military Sexual Trauma. This was also the AGM of the Cross Party Group, all office bearers were re-elected and Willie Rennie MSP agreed to join the Group and be a Deputy Convenor.

4 MSP's attended and 36 other members.

All meetings held in the year were on MS Teams.

MSP Members of The Group

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group.

Jackie Baillie; Scottish Labour

Jackson Carlaw; Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Katy Clark; Scottish Labour

Maurice Golden; Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Mark Griffin; Scottish Labour

Stephen Kerr; Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Douglas Lumsden; Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Gordon MacDonald; Scottish National Party

Edward Mountain; Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Willie Rennie MSP; Scottish Liberal Democrats (from 22 June 2022)

Paul Sweeney; Scottish Labour

Non-MSP Members of The Group

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

Individuals

Mr Maurice Corry TD MBA

Organisations

51 Infantry Brigade; Action on Hearing Loss Scotland; ADES National Transitions Officer; Age Scotland; Armed Services Advice Project; Army; Army Families Federation; Association of Wrens and Women of the Royal Naval Services; BFBS The Forces Station; BLESMA; Business in the Community Scotland; Career Transition Partnership; Defence Transition Services; Scotland Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee; Edinburgh Napier University; Erskine; FirstLight Trust; Forces in Mind Trust; Garelochhead Station Trust; Give Us Time; Glasgow Caledonian University; Glasgow's Helping Heroes; Help for Heroes; Housing Options Scotland; Local Authority Armed Forces and Veterans Champions; Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project; Lothian Veterans Centre; Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association; Naval Families Federation; NHS Scotland; Officers Association Scotland; Poppyscotland; RAF; RAF Association; RAF Benevolent Fund; RASC and RCT Association; Reading Force; Recruit for Spouses; RFEA The Forces Employment Charity; Royal Air Force Families Federation; Royal British Legion Scotland; Royal Caledonian Education Trust; Royal Naval Association; Royal Navy; SACRO - Veterans Mentoring Service; Salute My Jobs; SAMH; Scotland & NI RAF Association; Scotlands Bravest Manufacturing Company (RBLI); Scottish Prison Service; Veterans Housing Scotland (Scottish Veterans Garden City Association); Scottish

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| | <p>Veterans Residences; Sight Scotland Veterans (Scottish War Blinded); Seafarers UK; Skills Development Scotland; Soldiers off the Streets; SSAFA; Stand Easy Productions; The Coming Home Centre/Community Veterans Support; The Officer's Association Scotland; The Royal Regiment of Scotland; The Scottish Veterans Commissioner; The Veterans Foundation; Thistle Foundation; University of Edinburgh; University of Glasgow; Venture Trust; Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees; Veterans Community Café; Veterans First Point Highland; Veterans First Point Scotland; Veterans for Independence; Veterans Housing Scotland; Veterans Scotland; Veterans Welfare Services; Walking with the Wounded; War Widows Association. Other organisations have attended from time to time</p> |
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Group Office Bearers

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

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| Convener | Maurice Golden MSP |
| Deputy Convener | <p>Jackie Baillie MSP</p> <p>Gordon MacDonald MSP</p> <p>Willie Rennie MSP (from 22 June 2022)</p> |
| Secretary | Jim Wilson; Veterans Scotland |
| Treasurer | Jim Wilson; Veterans Scotland |

If the Group is not disclosing any financial information please tick the box to confirm that the Group has considered the

support received, but concluded it totalled under the threshold for disclosure (£500).

Subscription Charged by the Group

Please provide details of the amount charged and the purpose for which the subscription is intended to be used.

Nil

Convener Contact Details

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| Name | Maurice Golden MSP |
| Parliamentary address | The Scottish Parliament Edinburgh EH99 1SP |
| Telephone number | 0131 348 6148 |