

Cross-Party Group on the Armed Forces and Veterans Community

04 August 2026 at 4:00pm online

Re-registration meeting

Minute

Attendees:

Stephen Kerr MSP (Convener)
Lloyd Melville MSP
David Smith MSP
Cllr Maurice Corry (Chair)
Prof Gerri Matthews Smith
Dr Linda Irvine-Fitzpatrick
Jim Wilson (Secretary)

Agenda item 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks

- The Convener, Stephen Kerr MSP, welcomed everyone to this initial meeting and thanked them for attending. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to confirm the intention to re-register the Cross-Party Group on the Armed Forces and Veterans Community (the Group).
- The Convener recognised that the requirement to have at least 2 MSPs in attendance at an initial meeting had been exceeded; he also noted that a total of 13 MSPs had indicated they wish to be members of the Group, although 10 were unavailable to attend this meeting. The 13 MSPs represent 5 separate parties from the parliamentary bureau.
- Once the details required for re-registration have been endorsed, the completed re-registration form will be forwarded to the Parliament's Standards Clerks to complete the process.

Agenda Item 2: Re-registration

- The Convener then went through the draft re-registration form, highlighting the purpose of the Group and how its work is in the public's interest.
- A number of new rules relating to Cross-Party Groups had been introduced since the previous parliamentary session, these were noted.

- All those attending had the opportunity to introduce themselves, and to talk briefly about their interest in the Armed Forces and motivation for becoming members of the Group.

Agenda item 3: Membership and Office Bearers

- The Convener confirmed the three MSPs present were members of the Group, a further 10 MSPs had indicated they wished to be members. The full list of MSP members is shown in the table below.

James Adams MSP	Conservative
Jackie Baillie MSP	Labour
Tim Eagle MSP	Conservative
Meghan Gallacher MSP	Conservative
Rachael Hamilton MSP	Conservative
Stephen Kerr MSP	Conservative
Thomas Kerr MSP	Reform
Lloyd Melville MSP	SNP
Laura Mitchell MSP	SNP
Willie Rennie MSP	Lib Dem
Mark Simpson MSP	Reform
David Smith MSP	Reform
Paul Sweeney MSP	Labour

- There was some discussion around the nomination and function of Office Bearers for the Group. Following this, Office Bearers were agreed as:
 - Convener: Stephen Kerr MSP (Conservative)
 - Deputy Conveners: David Smith MSP (Reform)
 - Lloyd Melville MSP (SNP)
 - Laura Mitchell MSP (SNP)
 - Jackie Baillie MSP (Labour)
- Chair: Maurice Corry (Councillor Argyll & Bute)
- Secretary: Jim Wilson (Edinburgh Napier University,
Supported by Prof Gerri Matthews-Smith and Dr Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick)
- Following the re-registration of the Group, non-MSP members of the Group will be identified and invited to join/re-join. Such membership will include representatives from:

- the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force including Reserve Forces and Cadet organisations
- veterans' organisations and Armed Forces charities
- local Authority Armed Forces Champions
- military families' organisations
- employers supporting veterans and reservists
- universities and colleges
- the defence, aerospace, maritime and security industries
- skills and apprenticeship organisations
- organisations with responsibilities relating to national resilience and civil preparedness.

Agenda Item 4: Dates and topics for discussion at future meetings:

- The date of the next and subsequent meetings of the Group will be identified following confirmation of re-registration.
- Topics for discussion at meetings during the next 12 months will include:
 - serving Regular Armed Forces personnel stationed in Scotland*
 - Reserve Forces*
 - veterans and successful transition into civilian employment and public life
 - military families, including housing, education, healthcare and welfare
 - Cadet Forces and youth development*
 - the Armed Forces Covenant
 - Defence industries, advanced manufacturing, research and innovation
 - skills, apprenticeships and employment opportunities arising from the defence sector
 - employers supporting members of the Armed Forces community*
 - veterans' charities and third sector organisations
 - national resilience, civil preparedness and emergency response
 - recruitment, retention and public understanding of military service
 - Scottish Government and UK Government updates
 - any other issues identified by members of the Group.

* it is noted that those topics marked with an asterisk will be covered in part at the Armed Forces Open Day taking place at the Parliament to which MSPs will be invited

Agenda Item 5: Any other business

- The Group was informed about plans for an Armed Forces Open Day that will take place close to the Parliament on 23 Sep 26, to which MSPs will be invited. Initial details will be circulated to MSP members of the Group.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4:35pm.