

**Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on  
The Armed Forces and Veterans Community**

**Meeting 19 Sep 2018**

**Minutes**

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convenor welcomed the Group and thanked everyone for attending; he noted that there was a busy agenda and thanked those who had travelled a considerable distance in order to brief the Group. He noted that this was also the AGM of the Group and that the AGM Report would be presented later in the meeting.

2. **Attendance:**

<b>MSP's</b>	<b>Name</b>	
	Jackie Baillie	MSP
	Edward Mountain	MSP
	Bill Bowman	MSP
	Gordon Lindhurst	MSP
	Maurice Corry	MSP
	Michelle Ballantyne	MSP

**6 MSPs Attending**

**Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alistair Ferrier	SDS
Amelia Morgan	Venture Trust
Annabel Ingram	AFF
Barry Henderson	SCQF Partnership
Bruce Smith	LVC
Charles Crookenden	FiMT
Charles Denny	Denny & Co
Claire Biggar	ENU
Colin Flinn	RCET
Gary Gray	Poppyscotland
Jim Castle	GCU
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland
Kate McCullough	AFF
Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick	V1P
Lucy Heaver	NFF
Maggie Brown	Falkirk Veterans
Maj Laura Cox	51 Inf Bde & HQ Scotland
Mary-Clare MacFarlane	OAS
Michael Sim	DPU
Nigel Scott	Legal Services Agency
Peter Smaill	Provost, Midlothian
Ray Lock	FiMT

Sarah Rogers  
Stephen Elliot  
Tony Carruthers  
Usman Ali

RCET  
RBLS  
HOS  
Poppyscotland

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**Members Attending**

3. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, which had taken place on 26 June, were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and approved by the members.
4. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
5. **Briefings:** Two presentations were provided, copies of which are attached.
  - **Forces in Mind Trust:** Ray Lock, Chief Executive of FiMT, provided an overview on the work of his organisation, in particular referring to the research carried out into how the obligations to the Armed Forces Covenant are being met. He cited the importance of ensuring a successful transition from Service to Civilian life, particular examples of research in Scotland, including the DSC study into the Service Charity sector in Scotland, research into PTSD and mental health, and described the way that FiMT is supporting a number of initiatives in Scotland such as support to the Venture Trust, research into homelessness and rough sleeping and supporting the Informing Scotland briefings.
  - **Families Federations:** The team from the FiMT funded Families Federations Transition Project, who had previously briefed the Group on their work, provided an update on their findings – this project was nearing completion and the team was confident that their findings were valid. Key findings are contained in the presentation attached.
  - The Convenor thanked those presenting for their input and opened the floor for discussion. Discussion that followed included:
    - Involving families at an early stage in Transition.
    - Improving communication between those leaving and statutory organisations – such as Education and Health – in order to understand particular circumstances.
    - Families Transition will form an element of the Strategy for Our Veterans.
    - More research should be carried out into the impact of transition on school age children.
    - Matters relating to separation and divorce in Service families both during Service and on Transition.
6. **AGM:** Jim Wilson, secretary to the Group, presented the annual report on the Groups activity during the year Sep 2017 – Sep 2018. Copies have been submitted to the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group staff for their retention.

7. **Open Forum:** The Convenor asked if there were any further matters they wished raised:

- Maggie Brown from Falkirk Veterans gave an overview of their work.
- It was noted that there are increasing numbers of veterans' breakfast clubs opening across Scotland.
- Discussion on the WW1 Centenary events that have taken place during the year and into early 2019.
- Poppyscotland will be holding an exhibition stand within the Scottish Parliament building during the week of Remembrance; they will also be promoting the Count them in Campaign.
- Veterans 1st Point Scotland will be hosting an event on 15<sup>th</sup> November.
- The Venture Trust will be publishing their report and research findings on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

The Convenor thanked all those attending for their valuable contributions which informed and updated both MSP members of the Group and all others. In finishing, he noted the passing of Alex Fergusson, after a short illness over the Summer, who had previously been Convenor of the Group.

8. **Dates of Next Meetings:**

- TBC (*subsequently agreed 9 Jan 2019*)