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Veterans Information Network Nottinghamshire

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2017**

**Present:**

Neil Bettison – Nottinghamshire County Council

Maria Cooke – Age UK Notts

Simon Worsley – RFCA

Rick Harrington – Forces in the Community

Digby Bown – Royal British Legion

Andy Gregory – Royal British Legion

Darren Maltby – Royal British Legion

Ken Scott – SSAFA

Nick Bodian – ABF

Nicky Bradley – Combat Stress

**Apologies:**

Sue French – Remploy

**Minutes of the last meeting:**

Nicky should have been recorded as Nicky Bradley in the minutes from the previous meeting.

**Update from Neil:**

The Civil and Miliatry Partnership Board had met the previous day. This group is aimed at local authorities and includes local Fire and Rescue Services, the Police and NHS representatives. It mirrors a similar group in Northamptonshire. The Independent Chair is Colonel Tom Richmond (Vice Lord Lieutenant). Neil will offer his support to try to standardise policies and procedures across the county to ensure veterans and service personnel are best supported. Councillors in attendance should be the Armed Forces Champions. The group will meet 3 times per year in January, May and September.

The Group emerged from local activities such as the Ashfield Partnership Board which supported Covenant activities. Other areas such as Broxtowe held regular, periodic meetings as well.

There is much work going on in the districts and boroughs so it makes sense to collate the effort especially where funding is involved. It makes sense to consolidate effort and time across the county.

Digby suggested a covenant audit to establish a baseline of activity in each area. Simon queried whether available funding was meeting local need or is it a case of ‘he who shouts loudest’ gets the funding? Simon gave a brief outline of the situation within Northamptonshire. He stressed the importance of having a ‘joint’ voice that can speak for veterans collectively.

Rick highlighted there was still an issue around knowing where veterans are within the county; establishing that more effectively will help build sustainable outcomes.

The Group was advised that contact details for the Covenant were Gail or Lorna in the Military and Civilian Integration section of 7th Brigade.

Neil advised that Priority 3 Covenant Grants required local authorities to find partners from the community to work with in order to access funding. There was still some money available.

**VINN – Honouring the Covenant event – 2nd March:**

The group then moved on to discussing the forthcoming event.

The table facilitators were assigned for the ‘speed-dating’ tables. The layout of the room (including market place area) was discussed.

Up to 20 marketplace sessions were identified.

Benefits of VINN membership were reiterated:

* Newsletter
* Event invitations
* Awareness raising through steering group presentations
* Opportunities for networking

All Steering Group members should promote membership to their contacts whenever possible to raise awareness.

**Format of the event:**

Venue: B&Q Distribution warehouse in Manton Wood

Facilitators should arrive by 8.45am at the latest.

Simon agreed to source 2 volunteers who would speak at the event. Rick agreed to deliver a ‘debunking the myth’ segment.

Neil identified that Corporate Comms would support the event with press releases, media coverage etc. The County Council would also facilitate bookings but members and guests should all book through Eventbrite.

Neil agreed to forward the publicity poster for distribution amongst individual networks.

Andy Gregory agreed to compere the event and manage the opening and closing segments.

Maria agreed to design the facilitated workshop template. She also agreed to deliver the closing speech on why Age UK Notts has a practical role within VINN.

Neil agreed to collate invitations and design the seating plan.

**Any Other Business:**

Nick identified that ABF is considering a similar project to VINN to create a HUB connection to allow veterans to find help, organisations to promote support etc. He queried if anything similar to VINN was available within Derby and Derbyshire but no-one was sure.

**Soldiering On Awards:** Both VINN and Forces Friends had been shortlisted for awards and the finalists would attend a reception at the House of Lords on 9th February and the Award Ceremony itself on 24th March. Neil agreed to co-ordinate press releases for VINN and Maria advised Age UK Notts would issue their own.

Simon advised that the **Nottingham Veterans Association** meeting would meet on 17th Feb at 10.30am at County Hall. He advised that Skills Force would give a presentation, Councillor Grocock plus the Newark Armed Forces Day team would briefings.

**Dates of next meetings:**

4th April @ Portland College (10 am start)

4th July (10am start) – Venue TBA (RFCA?)