



**WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB
SATURDAY 16TH MARCH 2024, 14:00**

Trustees Present:

Fiona Gardner CBE (FG) Chair and Vice-President
Monica Jones (MJ) Chair of Benevolent Fund Major Grants Committee
Timothy Savage (TS) Treasurer
Barbara Johnson
Dawn Munday
Helen Merrington-Rust MBE
Shân Veillard-Thomas
Shelley Whitehead

Area Coords Present:

Janette Deans
Lyn Hatch
Dawn Hawker
Lesley Roberts
Nina Smith
Ann Stack

Online:

Rowena Naile MBE (RN) Chair of Membership Council
Cathy Munro MBE

Apologies:

Amanda Hassell
Sue MacKenzie
Isabel McCord
Amanda Foster

In Attendance:

Paula Rogers (PR / CEO) Chief Executive Officer
Jane Winfield (JW) Finance & Governance Officer (minutes)
Liza Jarvis, (LJ) Female Veteran's Transformation Project (FVTP) – Guest Speaker
Hannah West, Female Veteran's Transformation Project

Item	Notes	Action
1	Chair's Opening Remarks - FG. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting in The Victory Services Club, a venue that had been booked pre-Covid. Zoom attendees reminded that they could vote whereas Facebook attendees cannot. Guest speaker Liza Jarvis of the FVTP was welcomed. The format for the meeting was explained with questions at the end of each major section.	
2	Apologies for Absence – FG. Apologies received from Amanda Hassell, Sue MacKenzie, Isabel McCord and Amanda Foster.	

	To inform future expenditure now funds have been amalgamated Trustees have agreed the following Principles for funding: Grant giving remains aligned to military charity sector norms. Association funding to be aligned to our strategy. Association funding to be frugal on administration and operating costs; spending what is required to deliver our outputs in a reasonable and efficient manner. Association funding is to be for the benefit of our members in accordance with our objects. Association funding in support of camaraderie and support is to be localised (within branch areas) and must not veer into activities that could be deemed a luxury. Members are expected to make a contribution to specific events. The Guidance for Funding is: Expanding Membership Supporting Branch activities These areas are not exclusive, and we have an opportunity to increase support for our membership. Questions Shân Veillard-Thomas – Are the funds still going to be managed by Brewin Dolphin? TS – Yes Shân Veillard-Thomas – Is there more money for Benevolence? Tim Savage – There is always enough money for Benevolence. A budget is set for Benevolence and we try to reach it. We will always provide Benevolence. Gina Spacey (online) – What are we doing to support LGBT WRAC veterans while we are waiting for the final reparations of The Lord Etherton report? FG – We do not know what the Government response will be particularly on the financial issue. But irrespective of Etherton, even if you are not a member of the Association, Benevolence is available to anyone who served in the ATS or WRAC. If they meet the criteria, aligned with charity sector norms, we are there to support them. If anybody affected by the ban is not a member and wishes to join we would be delighted to welcome them. We would be delighted for them to join their local branch and enjoy the support and comradeship that comes with a membership of a veteran's organisation. A letter, led by Fighting with Pride, signed by many charities including us was sent asking the Government to relook at the cap. There has been discussion with the Army with regards to meeting some of the reparation recommendations. For example, some people want to be presented with their berets and cap badges. The WRAC no longer exists, and we do not have a current corps, but we have offered to facilitate those presentations and will build it into events we hold this year. The Army have said they will provide a senior serving person to assist with these presentations. Sharon Bingham – When looking for new members we cannot access the data of who served via the MOD so how do we propose looking for new members? We have tried lots of methods which do not work. FG – There is no easy answer, we need to make ourselves more visible, often it is by word of mouth. In hiring a Communications & Engagement officer we want somebody who works in that area and knows how to connect with communities and the means of outreach that work.	
6	Membership Council Report – RN (via Zoom) Helen Jephcote has stood as Area Coordinator for Scotland and NI and Janette Deans has filled this position. Cathy Munro is returning as the new Area Coord for the Central Area. Events over the past year included: “We will remember Her” campaign, held in 26 locations simultaneously. Royal Hospital Chelsea - presentation of a silver statuette. Summer Event held in Worthy Down.	

	The third phase is to develop a toolkit or resource for charity, statutory and commercial sector. They need to understand what they need to put in place to support female veterans. GP's need to ask the question of whether you have served of females as well as males as this is currently not happening. The last phase is education and launch where the toolkit is there for everyone to access. A team has been recruited, the evidence review is completed, a branding and logo has been done. A lot of females don't want to connect with their military history, so the logo hopefully says come and join us. The website has been set up. Co-production is about to start with a survey and a roadshow of focus groups of what is needed. Known issues are identity, access to services, distrust, moral injury, bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexually inappropriate behaviours, transition employment, finance and physical and mental health. There are also some areas where no research has been done. We want to raise awareness that women also served. Questions Dawn Munday – Are there any crossover results from your research as to why female veterans are not identifying as members that the WRAC Association can take home? LJ – We are looking at the invisible veterans and reaching out via Mumsnet, Faith groups and sporting organisations. There is also an issue for some people with the term veteran so how do we ask the question “have you served”? There will be a lot we can share along the way. Deserie Mansfield - I have worked for over 20 years with hard-to-reach women. We look at Veteran's hubs and breakfast clubs and I'm pleased to see it is being supported through the WRACA.	
12	Any other business – FG No other business tabled or raised. Reminder: 7th August - Summer Event at Three Sisters Racecourse in Wigan. 5th – 6th October – Guildford pub bombing anniversary, church service, plaque unveiling. 6th June - Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day. Please email office next week to be considered for this event. Additional Questions Patricia Little - Radio is a media everyone listens to, could someone go on Women's hour and ask people to come forward? PR – The slight problem is that media does love a negative story. Ali Brown has been on and we do look for media opportunities and we want people to come forward from branches with stories. Online question – Can veterans identify with NHS Scotland at their GP practice or is it only applicable to NHS England? AB – It is currently only for NHS England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are developing their own version.	
13	Dates of Next Meeting – FG AGM is on Saturday 22nd March 2025 This is part of the Grand Reunion weekend of 21st – 23rd March 2025. Venue TBC. FG - Thanked attendees. The meeting closed at 15:30	