



# Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 March 2018,  
Halsey House (RBL Care Home), Cromer, Norfolk.

## Present:

Tony Tomkinson (TT)	Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner
Wg Cdr Stewart Geary (SG)	RAF Marham
Kevin Pellatt (KP)	SSAFA
Lisa Thipthorp (LT)	RAF Families' Federation
Jamie Athill (JA)	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
Cdr Richard Pethybridge (RP)	Royal Navy
Ivor Bartrum (IB)	East Anglia Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association
John Boisson (JB)	Royal British Legion
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SCA)	Breckland Council
Nathan Johnson (NJ)	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council (representing Cllr Nockolds)
Sarah Rhoden (SR)	Norfolk County Council (representing David Ashworth)
Merry Halliday (MH)	Norfolk County Council
Bev Herron (BH)	Norfolk County Council

## Guests:

Naji Malak (NM)	Stand Easy
Ed Fraser (EF)	Healthwatch Norfolk

## Apologies:

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds (EN)	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Jan Feeney (JF)	Norfolk County Council
David Ashworth (DA)	Norfolk County Council
Maj Tom McIlwaine (TM)	1 <sup>st</sup> The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Maj Gavin Rushmere (GR)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Royal Anglian (3ANG)
Cllr Keith Kiddie (KK)	Norfolk County Council
Simon Davis (SD)	Norfolk County Council
Mark Goldsmith (MG)	DWP Job Centre Plus
Derek Holesworth (DH)	NHS
Chris Haystead (CH)	Norfolk City Council
Ann Berry (AB)	NHS

	<b>Tour of Halsey House</b>	<b>Actions</b>
	The meeting began with a tour of Halsey House, RBL Care Home and Dementia Wing.	
	On behalf of the group, TT thanked John Boisson and Sally Mills (Matron) for their hospitality and commented on the enlightened practice and great facilities at the home.	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome introductions, apologies and minutes from October 2017</b>	
1.1	Board members and substitutes introduced themselves and apologies received (see above).	

1.2	The Board agreed minutes from October 2017.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>The Use of Acupuncture in Norfolk to treat PTSD</b>	
	<b>Presentation by Stand Easy – Naji Malak</b>	
2.1	Naji Malak from Stand Easy thanked Board for the opportunity to talk about his work with acupuncture treating veterans suffering from PTSD.	
2.2	Naji was born in Beirut and undertook national service during which time he described his personal experiences of colleagues who had suffered with PTSD. Following his service, Naji trained as an acupuncturist and between 1986 and 1989 went back to Beirut, to treat individuals with PTSD on a regular basis.	
2.3	NAFC Board were shown ' <a href="#">Stories of Hope</a> ' – a film about Stand Easy's work with veterans.	
	Sarah Rhoden / Sam Chapman-Allen arrived.	
2.4	To date, Naji has treated 100 veterans from all over the UK. Naji felt the treatment is effective because of the difficulties that some veterans experience when trying to access more traditional 'mental trauma' treatment (which tends to involve talking therapy), this can be particularly difficult for veterans. The acupuncture technique not only helps with mental but physical issues. Once the 'trauma is taken out' with acupuncture, individuals can still access other forms of support.	
2.5	The Stand Easy clinic is based in Norwich and it is working with other charities such as SSAFA / RBL and Project Nova. Referrals can be direct, through a charity or via a GP (some GP's recognise acupuncture as a valid form of treatment but this is a mixed picture). The service is open to all veterans and some will travel and stay in Norwich while they receive treatment.	
2.6	Stand Easy fund raise through various means including the National Lottery, events held by veterans and the charity has obtained funding from community funds such as that run by Jarrolds. Unfortunately, acupuncture is not recognised as a mainstream treatment for PTSD so this does restrict some opportunities.	
2.7	Currently Naji is the sole practitioner at Stand Easy however, the British Acupuncture Council has authorised him to train others and he is also writing a protocol manual to help others deliver the treatment effectively for veterans.	
2.8	Naji thanked the Board for the opportunity to talk about his practice and said he would be submitting a request for funding to the Board before the end of March.	
	<b>Presentation by Healthwatch Norfolk - Ed Fraser</b>	
2.9	Healthwatch Norfolk, in partnership with the University of Huddersfield is carrying out a research project based upon Stand Easy's work to establish whether acupuncture is a potentially valid form of treatment for veterans with PTSD.	
2.10	Ed explained that PTSD is fairly rare and is costly and difficult to treat. The usual route of trauma focused psychotherapy recommended for PTSD appears to be less effective for veterans, partly because there is a reliance upon being able to talk about experiences, something veterans find difficult.	

2.11	A final report on the findings of the research project will be published sometime in May. Findings to date show some really positive improvements in using acupuncture compared to other treatments, however it is unclear whether this is acupuncture in general or whether there are specific attributes to Naji's method that have created the improvement.	
2.12	Once the final research report is produced by Healthwatch Norfolk / University of Huddersfield, the British Acupuncture Council will progress the findings. The research will be published in official research journals and individuals such as Hugh McPhearson at British Acupuncture Association will be asked to champion further work. Ed stressed that this is only the start and that further work needs to be done through a much larger trial to fully understand the possibilities for this form of treatment.	
2.13	NAFC Board members felt that the initial findings were encouraging and further work should be undertaken. They were keen that once the findings from the research project are published that this be brought to the attention of MOD medical services to ensure they are aware of the potential.	
2.14	SG requested that information from today's presentation be shared with the SMO at RAF Marham.	MH/BH
2.15	EF will share the report findings at the end of May as well as the presentation from today's meeting with NAFC Board for them to agree further action.	EF
2.16	NAFC Board will be receiving a bid for funding from Stand Easy to take their work with acupuncture and veterans suffering from PTSD further.	MH
2.17	TT thanked Naji and Ed for highlighting this important work to NAFC Board.	
	Board took a short break	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Planning for the Conference</b>	
3.1	BVH presented the proposed agenda for the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Conference in June and asked for comments.	
3.2	NAFC Board agreed that overall the conference should raise awareness of the Covenant in Norfolk. This will be done by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting the context of the military community in Norfolk;</li> <li>• Covering the activity and identifying the gaps in delivering the four 'pillars' of the Covenant;</li> <li>• Identifying challenges and opportunities in the future;</li> </ul> Together the output from the conference will form the basis of NAFC's future programme of work.	
3.3	An important element of the conference should be about getting better, more consistent engagement from all levels of Local Authority in Norfolk. SCA agreed to speak to the next Norfolk Leaders' meeting to highlight this	SCA / MH
3.4	NAFC Board agreed it was important that the day reflected what the Covenant brings to the local charity sector and what it brings to families of current and ex-service personnel.	
3.5	NAFC Board felt that there should be an additional item that sets out clearly what NCC is doing for the military as lead partner for the Covenant.	
3.6	NAFC Board agreed that the overall proposed format was the right balance and that it was important that the conference establishes a clear way forward without	MH/BH

	becoming too broad in scope. A list of objectives will be published ahead of the event.	
3.7	SG / representative from Marham or RP volunteered to compare the conference.	
3.8	MH/BH to distribute a proposed guest list to Board to ensure key individuals have been included.	<b>MH / BH</b>
3.9	It was emphasised that all NAFC Board members will need to play an active part in the conference.	<b>All</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Update from NSFT / Walnut Tree</b>	
4.1	NAFC Board received a progress report from the Walnut Tree CIC / NSFT partnership which received a grant of £10k in 2017/18 from the Board.	
4.2	NAFC Board felt that overall the investment was not showing the level of progress Board might have wished and that there was some question about the sustainability of the project.	
4.3	A visit will be organised to the Walnut Tree CIC offices in Bowthorpe to establish a clearer picture of progress and report back to NAFC Board at the September meeting.	<b>JA/MH</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Review of Norfolk's Action Plan</b>	
5.1	Progress against the existing action plan was last reported to Board in October. Current progress against the action plan is generally on track. Following the NAFC conference in June the plan will be updated to reflect the key outputs from the event.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Budget</b>	
6.1	BH reported on the current NAFC budget position including funding bids to the MOD Covenant Fund.	
6.2	NAFC Board wished to thank NCC for their ongoing support and the level of financial assistance it allowed Board to give to the various charities and organisations that are supporting the armed forces community in Norfolk.	
6.3	NAFC Board members discussed changes to the MOD Covenant Fund and potential implications for future bids.	
	<b>NAFC World War One Fund</b>	
6.4	The fund was set up by NAFC 4 years ago to support projects in the County as part of the centenary of WW1. The fund will close at the end of May 2018. A number of marketing promotions have been carried out which has attracted further bids.	
6.5	Currently the fund has a total of £6700 unallocated. Any funding left at the end of May 2018 will be returned to NAFC Board.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appointment of the new Armed Forces Commissioner</b>	
7.1	In recognition that TT will step down from his role as Armed Forces Commissioner in March 2019, NAFC Board members thanked him for his hard work and reflected that the success of Norfolk's Covenant was very much dependent upon the Commissioner and the support given by NCC officers.	
7.1	The existing process (set up in 2011/12) for appointing to the Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner role states that it is 'the sole responsibility of the Leader of	

	NCC'. As a result of constitutional changes at NCC and the reintroduction of the Committee System this can no longer apply. Therefore, there is an opportunity to revisit the appointment process and build upon the knowledge that NAFC Board now have about the demands of the role.	
7.2	<p>NAFC Board felt that it would be important for the new Commissioner to have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience / knowledge of civic matters;</li> <li>• Experience / knowledge of the military world (desirable but potentially not essential as members of the NAFC Board could supply this if the candidate was otherwise suitable);</li> <li>• Availability i.e. not overly committed elsewhere preventing them from carrying out duties of the role effectively as well as being available in addition to formal Board meetings; and</li> <li>• Ability to communicate and work with a wide range of individuals and organisations linked to the military community to champion Norfolk's Covenant.</li> </ul>	
7.3	<p>NAFC Board agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal interview process should be put in place for the appointment of the new Armed Forces Commissioner following Suffolk's example;</li> <li>• Input from the Head of Democratic Services and HR will be sought to ensure the process is fair and transparent;</li> <li>• A list of key attributes for the position of Armed Forces Commissioner to be established using the existing Commissioner's knowledge of the demands of the role and circulated to NAFC Board members to agree; and</li> <li>• Along with a representative of NCC (Leader / Committee Chair) 2 to 3 Board members to form the interview panel to identify a suitable candidate to recommend to the relevant NCC Committee.</li> </ul>	MH/BH/ TT
8.0	<b>AOB</b>	
	None	
9.0	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	Wednesday 26 September 1000-1300 at RAF Marham	SG