



Barnsley Armed Forces Covenant Board
Wednesday 22nd October 2025 2-4pm
Microsoft Teams Meeting

MINUTES

Attendees

Name	Position	Organisation
Clr Joe Hayward (Chair) (JH)	Armed Forces Champion and Elected Council Member	BMBC
Anne Asquith (AA) <i>Partial attendance</i>	Service Manager, Resilient Communities, and Armed Forces Lead	BMBC
Helen Ibbotson (HI)	Projects and Contracts Officer, Resilient Communities	BMBC
Harry Gee (HG)	Projects and Contracts Officer, Resilient Communities	BMBC
Stevie White (SW)	Communications and Marketing Officer	BMBC
Kristian Jowett (KJ)	Team Leader, Prevention and Support, Resilient Communities	BMBC
Lucy Naylor (LN)	Group Leader, Commercial Services	BMBC
Susan Smith (SS)	Economic Policy Officer, Employment and Skills	BMBC
Chloe Allott (CA)	Lettings Manager	Berneslai Homes
Jamie Wike (JW)	Deputy Place Director	NHS South Yorkshire ICB
Paul Carpenter (PC)	Armed Forces Community Covenant SPOC	SYP
Major Adrian Hunt DL (AH)	Branch Secretary	SSAFA
Neil Halsey (NH)	Armed Forces Champion, South Yorkshire	DWP
Pauline King (PK)	Regional Employer Engagement Director	RFCA Yorkshire and The Humber
Jane Townsend (JT)	Veterans Employment Consultant	Forces Employment Charity
Zarah Khan (ZK)	Senior Employment Advisor	NHS Talking Therapies
Abbie Lister (AL)	Senior Mental Health Practitioner	Op Courage

Name	Position	Organisation
Elaine Mason (EM)	Op Nova Case Worker	Op Nova
Megan Coupland (MC) <i>Notes</i>	Business Support and Governance, Resilient Communities	BMBC
Maddison Brown (MB) <i>Presenting</i>	Project Manager Community Enhancement, Love Where You Live, Resilient Communities	BMBC

Apologies

Name	Position / Organisation	Deputy
Terri Milligan (TM)	Patient Experience and Engagement Manager, NHS	
Karen Hallam (KH)	Senior HR Business Partner, BMBC	
Paul Buttery (PB)	Barnsley District Commander, Group Manager, SYFR Service	
Roya Pourali (RP)	Inclusion and Wellbeing Lead, BHNFT	
Luke Lancaster (LL)	Public Affairs and Campaign Officer (North), British Legion	
Ian Bailey (IB)	Case Management Officer, Safer Communities, BMBC	

Agreed Meeting Actions

2.1	Roya Pourali to make contact with Anne Asquith to begin working together to share best practice and include Barnsley Hospital in future events, therefore supporting Barnsley Hospital in seeking their bronze award. <i>(Action rolled over from 31.07.25 meeting)</i>	Roya Pourali / Anne Asquith
3.1	A more detailed update on Valour to be brought to the 19.01.26 meeting, following meetings at the end of 2025 which Valour features on the agendas.	Anne Asquith
6.1	Roya Pourali / Paul Haytree to bring an update to the 19.01.26 meeting on Barnsley Hospitals progress in seeking an ERS Bronze award – this item was deferred from the 22.10.25 meeting due to nonattendance of presenters.	Roya Pourali / Paul Haytree
8.1	A debrief on the Cadet's Together event planned for 30.10.2025 to be brought to the 19.01.26 meeting.	Helen Ibbotson
9.1	Any members who would like more information on the Town Hall Takeover and how to get involved, contact Maddison Brown on maddisonbrown@barnsley.gov.uk	All members
10.1	Megan Coupland to ensure the Forcer Protocol promotional posters are sent out to the AFCB membership list and the Armed Forces Breakfast Clubs to support the initiative.	Megan Coupland
10.2	Any members who would like to attend the Forcer Protocol South Yorkshire launch event on 11 th November 2025 to contact Paul Carpenter on paul.carpenter@southyorkshire.police.uk	All members

Minutes

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies – Chair
	<p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, introductions and apologies noted as above. All members were made aware of the meeting being recorded to support the minute taking.</p>
2	Outstanding actions from previous meeting held on 31.07.2025 – Megan Coupland
	<p>The previous minutes were accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p>Action 5.1: Roya Pourali to make contact with Anne Asquith to begin working together to share best practice and include Barnsley Hospital in future events, therefore supporting Barnsley Hospital in seeking their bronze award.</p> <p>UPDATE: Roya Pourali was not present in the meeting to update on this action. AA stated that she had received no contact from RP since the last meeting, but is available and happy to provide support to RP and her Barnsley Hospital colleagues moving forwards. Action to stay ongoing for update at the next meeting 19.01.26.</p>
3	Valour Update – Anne Asquith
	<p>AA updated members on two upcoming events on 23.10.25 and 10.12.25, in which Valour features on the agendas and any specific updates from these events will be shared with the AFCB membership. The Minister of Defence and South Yorkshire Mayor will be attending the 10.12.25 meeting, indicating momentum around the initiative.</p> <p>Next stage will be to recruit the regional field officers who will coordinate the Valour initiative, which will be followed by the release of the £50 million funding for different services.</p> <p>A more in depth update will be presented at the 19.01.26 AFCB meeting.</p>
4	Berneslai Homes AFC/Veteran waiting list update – Chloe Allott
	<p>CA provided an update on the Barnsley Council lettings policy, how that applies to/effects veterans, and the Berneslai Homes housing register waiting lists in relation to service personnel and veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Berneslai Homes offers reasonable preference to former and currently serving Armed Forces personnel with a housing need, who qualify for band 2 priority, and current service personnel leaving the Armed Forces with nowhere to occupy, band 1 priority. This is enhanced to include divorced/separated partners who had to leave MOD accommodation, following statutory guidance in early 2025, and includes the removal of the local connection criteria.• CA clarified that the only 'notice' Berneslai Homes require from a currently serving Armed Forces member leaving service is their discharge information, and that they would still qualify for band 2 priority whilst waiting for this.• Statistics were shared with members in the meeting showing numbers of individuals who answered 'yes', to if themselves or a member of their household is a current serving Armed Forces member/veteran when applying to the housing register. Statistics showing those currently on the housing register that answered yes to the same question showed a large discrepancy. CA clarified that when requesting

	<p>more information/evidence to support an individuals service 'status', Berneslai Homes rarely receive this leading to the discrepancy in the data. CA stressed this warrants more investigation from Berneslai Homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since April 2024, 4 families have been housed under band 1 priority and 4 families housed under band 2 priority.
5	BMBC's ERS Gold Revalidation Update – Helen Ibbotson
	<p>HI confirmed that all the necessary evidence for BMBC's gold award revalidation was submitted to Pauline King in September, and we are awaiting the decision. PK confirmed the decision is likely to be made early December, and that she has personally recommended that the BMBC gold award should be revalidated.</p>
6	Barnsley Hospital ERS Bronze Award Progress – Paul Haytree
	<p>Item deferred - Paul Haytree was not in attendance at the meeting, therefore this agenda item will be rolled over to the 19.01.26 meeting.</p>
7	War Memorial Centenary Debrief – Helen Ibbotson
	<p>HI provided a debrief of the War Memorial Centenary event which took place 11.10.25, including a breakdown of the days individual components and a viewing of the commemorative film which formed part of the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event was overall a huge success with great attendance, HI noted that both the older and younger generations were present which was lovely to see. All secondary schools were involved in the art competition, gaining over 500 submissions, of which the Mayor selected 6 winners who were invited to the event. Primary schools also got involved through a poppy wreath making project. • The commemorative film was cast onto the side of the Town Hall during the event and shown on a loop throughout the night to reach a larger audience. The film was live streamed onto social media platforms to increase accessibility, reaching 14,000 views. The film has since been uploaded to YouTube for even more reach. • Discussions are ongoing with the Experience Barnsley Museum within the Town Hall in terms of creating a legacy of this event, and with the BMBC archives team to get elements of the event submitted into the archives.
8	Cadets Together Event Debrief – Helen Ibbotson
	<p>HI provided an update on the Cadet's Together event which was planned for 04.10.25. Due to stormy weather, the decision was taken to cancel the event on safety grounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is another Cadet's Together event now planned for 30.10.2025, which will be an activity based day without the need for cadet leads to 'run' the event. This has an official booking system in place for families to book their children on to, with the only requirement being they are connected to a cadet unit. An update on this event will be presented at the 19.01.26 meeting.
9	Town Hall Takeover Veterans Day Plans – Maddison Brown
	<p>MB provided a debrief on the plans for the Town Hall Takeover, taking place during February half term 2026.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim of the take over is to bring residents into the Town Hall with a mixture of vibrant, diverse, and engaging events/activities/sessions and services. Looking to build on the successes of Easter/Christmas in the Town Hall, where approximately 2000 people visit, and establish the Town Hall Takeover as an annual occasion on the BMBC calendar. • Exploring the possibility of a 'Military Day' within the week, to celebrate the Armed Forces as well as educate people. A further update can be brought to the 19.01.26 meeting when plans will be finalised.
10	The Forcer Protocol Briefing – Paul Carpenter
	<p>PC provided a debrief on the Forcer Protocol, explaining it's origin and importance, and ways to self-refer/refer someone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forcer Protocol is a policing veteran suicide prevention strategy, originally piloted in Greater Manchester Police in 2023, which since then has successfully located 170 veterans safe and well following them going missing. The need for the protocol is clear – of the 5175 suicides in 2021 (individuals 16 years+) 253 were UK Armed Forces veterans. • Safe and Found Online (SAFO) is an online independent recording system, established to support those with any vulnerabilities if they were to go missing. This same enterprise manages the Forcer Protocol. It is important to note that SAFO is completely independent, not linked with Police records, and managed exclusively by SAFO themselves. The system would only ever be accessed by authorised Police staff at the point someone is reported missing. For South Yorkshire Police, these authorised staff are the Force Incident Managers and the Missing Person Officers, with a 24/7 shift pattern in place. • Launch date for South Yorkshire is 11.11.25, with an event taking place at the Niagara Centre, Sheffield from 9.30am. PC extended an open invitation to this launch event to all members. • PC and HI discussed the 2026 Veterans Together events and the possibility of the Forcer Protocol being promoted here. MC confirmed that the Forcer Protocol posters will be distributed to the AFCB membership and out to Armed Forces Breakfast Clubs to support this initiative.
11	AOB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HG updated members on progress made on the Armed Forces Walkway. A new supplier is currently being commissioned for the walkway stones, and so members of the public will soon be able to purchase these again to dedicate to an individual or regiment. Expressions of interest can be submitted online via the BMBC website. • MC confirmed all 2026 AFCB meeting dates have now been sent out to members, and confirmed the attendance of Cllr Leech as Mayor of Barnsley at the 19.01.26 meeting. MC therefore stressed particular importance for attendance at this meeting.
12	Next meeting: 19th January 2026 2-4pm, Westgate Plaza Level 4 Room 2