



**VETERANS FOR PEACE UK**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT**  
**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2017**

<b>Members on 16/11/2017</b>	560 on record 484 active subscriptions
<b>Money on 16/11/2017</b>	Paypal: £1003.98 Bank: £1455.90 <b>Total: £2459.88</b>

### **Vital Information**

**Handbook 2018:** The new version of our Handbook was agreed at the AGM. It will be available soon on our website [vfpuk.org/handbook](http://vfpuk.org/handbook), a printed version will be available in 2018.

**Priority Campaign:** It was agreed at the AGM that VFP UK will develop a campaign for the UK to become a permanently neutral country. A working group will be formed to develop this campaign for launch in November 2018. To keep up to date with developments and to sign people up please visit [neutralcountry.uk](http://neutralcountry.uk)

**Proof of Service:** Our organisation is dependent on the veteran status of our members. There are still a number of members who have not provided proof of service. Members are asked to send this in as soon as possible to the email address [data@vfpuk.org](mailto:data@vfpuk.org)

**Donations:** Veterans for Peace UK survives on donations from members and supporters. It cost a considerable percentage of our annual income to pay for the Annual Gathering. Please consider making a small, regular donation via Paypal or a standing order. For more information go to [vfpuk.org/donate/](http://vfpuk.org/donate/)

Account name: Veterans For Peace UK  
Account Number: 65632099  
Sort Code: 08-92-99

## **Attendees**

Policy Group: John Bourton, Ben Griffin, Kathryn Piquette

Policy Group apologies: Joe Glenton, Daniel Taylor

## **Statement of Purpose**

Read by Kathryn Piquette.

## **Agenda:**

1. Welcome address.
2. Summary of achievements in 2017.
3. Financial report.
4. Handbook amendments.
5. Priority campaign.
6. Presentation of awards.
7. Open mic session.
8. Policy Group election.
9. Cenotaph briefing.
10. Regional groupings.
11. War School film.
12. Closing address.

### **1. Welcome address.**

VFP UK Chair John Bourton gave the opening address.

### **2. Summary of achievements in 2017.**

1. Commissioning and publishing David Gee's report "The First Ambush".
2. Armed Forces Day VFP rally in York.
3. VFP USA Convention in Chicago attended by 7 members of VFP UK.
4. Summer camp at Scott Albrecht's farm.
5. DSEI Arms Fair action. VFP UK established a Vehicle Check Point (VCP) to search for banned weapons being delivered to the fair.
6. Putney Debates organised and led by VFP UK.
7. Plus many more local group and individual actions throughout the year.

### **3. Financial report.**

VFP UK Bookkeeper Norman Lynch presented an overview of the VFP UK accounts for the Financial Year 2015-2016. A summary table can be viewed on our website: <http://vfpuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2016-2017-accounts.pdf>.

### **4. Handbook amendments.**

The Handbook is the governing document of VFP UK.

Our 2016 Handbook had been substantially revised during the year by the Policy Group. Drafts showing the proposed deletions from the 2016 handbook (in red) and the revised inclusions (in green) in the proposed 2018 handbook had been circulated for consideration by members in advance of the AGM. A large number of those present had read these documents in advance.

The 2018 handbook is simplified and many appendices have been removed as they were simply advice and guidelines. These will be posted on our website in Info for members.

Principal changes to the 2018 Handbook include reverting to the original 1985 Statement of Purpose, changing the group structure from cities to Regions and publishing it in a pocket size (A6) in larger print.

In discussion it was explained that it was not practical to go through all the changes line by line as this would take all day. Members were invited to comment on the proposed changes and either accept or reject the whole changes. Members were reminded that proposals to make amendments to the handbook can be submitted by completing the form online. The closing date for proposed amendments is 15th September 2018 preceding the next AGM on 10th November 2018.

The motion to adopt the new 2018 Handbook was proposed by Michael Elstub and seconded by David Lawrence and carried unanimously.

The handbook will be available soon as a pdf on our website [vfpuk.org/handbook/](http://vfpuk.org/handbook/)

### **5. Priority campaign.**

Ben Griffin outlined the Policy Group proposal that our priority campaign for 2018 should be to initiate the development of a campaign for the UK to become a permanently neutral country (official name still to be decided). This should be ready for launch by November 2018.

This campaign will be open to the public and shaped to appeal across the political spectrum. The key to success will be to reach outside of the "peace movement" and "the left" to ordinary people up and down the country.

The campaign will be a separate entity from VFP UK because it will involve people outside of our organisation and it could easily outgrow our capacity.

At the 2018 AGM members can debate and vote on whether VFP UK should continue to make the campaign our priority.

The motion to adopt the development of a campaign for the UK to become a neutral country as our priority campaign was proposed by Phillip Clarke and seconded by Neil Harvey. The AGM voted 32 in favour 0 against and 2 abstentions.

A working group will be put together over the coming weeks. In the meantime members can read and share the limited information currently available on our development website [neutralcountry.uk](http://neutralcountry.uk)

## **6. Presentation of awards.**

Gene Marks and Adrienne Kinne from VFP USA were each presented with a gold VFP badge in recognition of their considerable help and support in getting VFP UK accepted in the US as part of the international widening. They are valued friends and we are pleased to be able to recognise their contributions in a formal way.

## **7. Open mic session.**

A number of members used the open mic session to put forward ideas or share items of interest.

## **8. Policy Group election.**

Policy Group Members are elected for a one year term. Seven candidates had submitted applications in advance for the five places and each were given an opportunity to speak to the meeting prior to a secret ballot which resulted in the following being elected:

Danny Beever  
John Bourton  
Phillip Clarke  
Ben Griffin  
Kathryn Piquette

Danny and Phillip joined the PG for the 1st time joining John, Ben and Kathryn who were re-elected.

Thanks were offered to the two unsuccessful candidates and to the two outgoing PG members who had not stood for re-election; Joe Glenton and Daniel Taylor.

## **9. Cenotaph briefing.**

Ben Griffin briefed us on the procedure for Sunday at the Cenotaph. This year we had a private function room booked at The Marquis to stow bags beforehand and a buffet was provided there after the event. A separate report on the Cenotaph event will follow shortly.

## **10. Regional groupings**

Members split off into regional groupings for this afternoon session. Each group discussed building activity in their regions and a volunteer to coordinate each region was found.

## **11. War School film.**

The AGM concluded with the showing of an 18 minute extract from Mic Dixon's documentary film which is due out before the 2018 AGM and which features VFP actions and individual interviews. The Policy Group will see the rough cut before the final version is made.

## **12. Closing address.**

The Chair John Bourton thanked Joanna, Ruth and Rachel who worked the registration desk and staffed the shop throughout the day. He also thanked the Quakers and particularly Sam Walton for once again hosting us at such a great venue. He thanked the organising group which planned the AGM: Danny, Steve, Kathryn and Ben, and he thanked Batang Kali, Fenya, Jim Radford and Deux Furieuses for their performances at the Water Rats gig on Friday night. And last and not least he thanked all those who attended and all our supporters.

## **Next Policy Group Meeting**

Tuesday 5 December in London Bridge.