



VIC Newsletter

VIC lands key role

WE ARE delighted to announce that VIC has been selected to be part of the delivery of an exciting new Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust programme.

Nationally, £9million has been awarded to the Veterans' Places, Pathways and People Programme which will be delivered by four national strategic projects and a further 10 regional projects, one apiece in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and seven in England in the Op Courage areas.

In the North West, Broughton House in Trafford is the portfolio lead, with the Armed Forces HQ at Wigan partnering to manage the programme.

Sub-groups will be delivering the different aspects of the programme and VIC will be advising

VIC was visited by Retired Colonel David Richmond, CBE, an Independent Veterans Advisor to the UK Government to learn more about the work of our charity and speak to veterans about how the transition between military and civilian life can be improved.

Full story in next newsletter



and supporting veteran organisations in Lancashire and South Cumbria areas about social prescribing – the 'Places' aspect of the programme.

VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "VIC has been recognised as being an exemplar place for veterans to come to and receive support.

"It is an honour that our charity has been chosen to be a key player in the

delivery of such a prestigious project.

"Our task will be to develop a social prescribing toolkit and to develop a toolkit to support pop-up safe places for veterans in remote locations so that they can engage and connect with other sub-groups.

"We will be offering guidance and support to other organisations across Lancashire and South Cumbria

"We have benefited from having support from the East Lancashire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group right from the start of VIC, because we have been able to prove the worth of what we do, we are properly governed and accountable."

VIC has been awarded £35k over two years from the programme and a further member of staff will be employed.



New Year ramble

OUR hardy walkers enjoyed their first trek of the New Year from Clough Head in Haslingden.

It was a bit murky on the tops, but not too muddy.

For more information about the walks call the VIC Office on 01706 833180.

Breakfast club opens

WE ARE supporting Accrington Stanley Community Trust with its new Veterans' Programme which was launched on January 26.

On the last Wednesday of every month, the Trust will be holding a coffee morning from 9.30am to 11am at Carers Link, 54-56 Blackburn Road, Accrington, BB5 1LE. A bacon butty and a brew costs £3; the banter is free.

VIC will be assisting by providing outreach and our extensive knowledge of veteran specific issues.

For more details contact Lee Walsh on 01254 475013 or 0794085192.

Help when you need it

OP Courage can be accessed by veterans directly or families of former armed forces personnel.

Op Courage – The Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Service – is available to help those who are due to leave the services and those who left many years ago.

The veteran will speak to someone who understands the Armed Forces and military life and they will work with the veteran to make sure they get the right type of specialist care, support and treatment.

For more information contact 0800 652 2867 email VTILS@cntw.nhs.uk or ask to be referred by a health care professional.



Christmas cheer

Adventure

A FANTASTIC opportunity is on offer to Military Veterans that are keyworkers: including members of the police, NHS, ambulance, fire and prison services.

Outdoor activities company Positive Adventure is offering a chance for veterans to sign up for a two-day all expenses paid activity break in May, June or July.

The adventure retreat includes trekking, climbing, scrambling, yoga, rafting and more

Anyone wanting to book should contact Dan Searson by emailing dan@positive-adventure.org



Table top sale

IN JUST a couple of hours a bespoke pyrography table designed by veteran Brian McEvoy, was sold.

Brian travelled extensively across Africa when he left the army and he hand drew the African scene and then burnt it into the table top, before varnishing.

Award for Pat

VIC member Pat McEvoy is out in her second home in Florida and received a certificate for her leadership and contributions to the Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club.

MORE than 60 hampers were distributed across the VIC areas of East Lancashire, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

VIC received some very generous donations from Asda, Tesco Superstore, the Co-op Community stores in Haslingden, Waterfoot and Whitworth, six hampers from Bury firm Alpine Fire, Park Cakes, Positive Start Food Group and many personal donations.

An army of volunteers piled high their cars and travelled all over the area to distribute the boxes of love to members.

A special Harvey Nichols hamper was donated by Alpine Fire and was given to 99-year-old Second World War D-Day veteran Lewis Banham.

Second World War veteran Jack Riley from Haslingden, at last got the chance to meet the donor of his hamper for the



last two years.

Gemma Hebden and her family, from Haslingden, have put together a special hamper for Jack since 2020.

She said: "My children are home educated and they were learning about the Second World War. I have always wanted to do something for the community and we moved to Haslingden before the lockdown. Project Worker Ray



Sharkey linked us to Jack and this year we were able to meet."

Jack said: "It was a really nice surprise to be given a hamper last year, especially as I was so ill with Covid so it came at the right time. It was lovely to meet Gemma too."



Veteran's gift aids many others

FURNITURE and household goods belonging to a veteran of the Lancashire Fusiliers Territorial Army, who recently passed away, helped a veteran to furnish his new home.

A works party from VIC in the Crew Van, along with VIC

member Robert who provided his own van, removed the furniture from Bury, including chairs, a table, sofa and beds, and took it to the Royal Irish Ranger veteran's new home in Rochdale.

The veteran had been rehomed, but had no furniture of his own for the property.

We were also given a riser/reclining

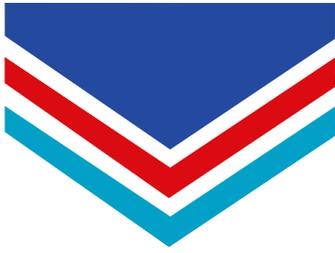
armchair which was passed on to VIC member Keith Shepherd, who was very grateful.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We are very grateful to Lesley Holden and her husband Howard and brother-in-law Austin for offering the items to VIC that belonged to Howard's father. The

veteran was very grateful for the furniture.

"We were also given two stairlifts which have been dismantled and stored, an electric wheelchair that has gone to Burnley and a collection of walking sticks.

"The family wanted the items to go to someone who would be able to use them."



2021 review

HERE are the main highlights of our activities and news from 2021.

As a result of the global pandemic, our usual activities and events were impacted considerably.

However, we never stopped working and VIC was just as busy and continued to develop and grow.

MARSHALLING

For the first five months of 2021, VIC provided Covid marshals for the Rawtenstall and Acorn Centre Vaccination Hubs. We had more than 40 volunteers covering more than 50 days on split shifts in all weather conditions.

A conservative estimate is that our volunteer members gave more than 4,000 hours of their own time to ensure the rollout of the vaccine was successful.

TABLETS

Using the funding from the *Veterans Should Be Forgotten Project* we loaned out a number of tablets to our members and some with internet access, so that they could keep in contact with families and friends and take part in our virtual groups including *The Sandbag Café*, *The*

Mess Tin, *Art Groups*, *Choir*, and *Bob Ross art classes*.

DROP IN

At the end of April, the VIC Centre and the Accrington veteran's drop-in were able to open again for some group activities and for other organisations to see their clients.

SHORTLISTED

During 2021 we were shortlisted in The Pathfinder International Armed Forces Community Lockdown Awards, and also finalists in the Rossendale Business Awards.

CELEBRATION

We celebrated our volunteers during the Small Charity Week and Volunteers' Week in June for their support during the Covid crisis and their support during 2020. Our volunteers and members are the key to our continued growth and to running our activities.

ARMED FORCES WEEK

During Armed Forces Week in June, we took our van on a Road Show to Heywood, Haslingden and Clitheroe. We launched

the Ribble Valley drop-in at the same time and at Accrington we decorated the drop-in. Unfortunately restrictions meant we couldn't attend an event in Burnley.

On one of the free days, we invited our core volunteers to a BBQ at the centre in Haslingden.

BREAKFAST

In addition to Heywood's *The Sandbag Café*, Middleton's *The Mess Tin* and Burnley FC in the Community Breakfast Club, we started supporting Blackburn Rovers with their new Veterans' Breakfast Club in September.

PROJECTS

Our members helped with some Community Projects in 2021; Whitaker Park, The Sabre Challenge, Mulberry Roots and Haslingden Community Link.

RECYCLING

Veterans In Production made bespoke garden furniture using pallets donated by JJO.

TRIPS AWAY

Our members took part in some social trips: Harrogate Army

College, Bolton Abbey and to the National Arboretum.

OP RETURN

In October we opened the centre and 'Operation Return' was a great success with around 100 members, volunteers and people from the community dropping in throughout the afternoon and evening.

VIC CHOIR

Unfortunately, our Choir was unable to perform live during 2021 due to Covid, apart from a performance at Asda in Rawtenstall for Christmas.

SILHOUETTES

Veterans In Production produced a new silhouette for Remembrance, it was a 'We Salute You' soldier. In 2022 we will produce a different figure.

REMEMBRANCE

Our members and volunteers attended many Remembrance services and parades in 2021.

In 2020 they had to be cancelled, but in 2021 many were able to go ahead as planned. Our main reception has been changed thanks to a donation of a large

Poppy and Book of Remembrance.

It has become a Remembrance focal point for those entering the VIC Centre.

GREGGS RV

We launched a new social group in November 'Greggs RV' with a quiz at the VIC Centre in Haslingden. It was a great success and numbers continue to grow. Members can drop-in for a brew and one of the surplus donuts we collect from Greggs in Haslingden.

FESTIVE MEAL

We had over 50 members attend our Christmas meal at the Rose and Bowl and made up and distributed over 60 Christmas hampers. We were only able to do this with the support and donations from Tesco, Asda, Co-op, Alpine Fire and many food donations from our supporters.

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly we lost eight members in 2021: Brian Whitlow, Mick Armstrong, WW2 veterans Harvey 'Paddy' O'Hara and Jack Cunnane, Jack Gregory, Tony Stubbs, Duncan Johnstone and Miles McEvoy. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

Thanks for the latest donation to the 'Old Contemptibles Railroad' being created in the cellar of the Accrington VIC Drop In and shop in the Arndale.



Keep fire safe during the cold Winter

FIRE and heating safety warnings have been issued by Lancashire Fire and Safety.

Make sure candles are in a proper holder and not left unattended.

Rooms with gas heaters

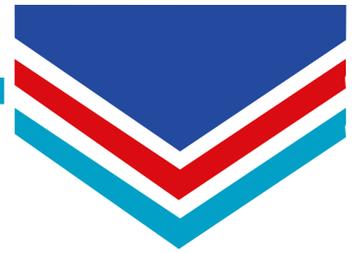
and fires should be well ventilated and maintained and look at having a carbon monoxide alarm fitted.

Use fire guards with open fires and log burners, have the chimney swept regularly and don't sit or

stand too close.

Ensure electric heaters are in good working order and away from flammable material.

Call 0800 169 11 25 and quote code: WS01 for a free fire safety check.



ROSSENDALE

Activities are held at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, unless otherwise stated.

Outreach Service

MONDAY-FRIDAY

9am-4.30pm

For a home appointment call 01706 833180

MONDAY

Crafty Chatters

10am-12 noon

TUESDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

WEDNESDAY

Allotment

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180

THURSDAY

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

Haslingden Community Link Cafe, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

Limited numbers book in advance

EVERY MONTH

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180

Walking Group see Facebook or website for details

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row, Parson Lane Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

MONDAY

Breakfast Club at Burnley Miners Social Club, 27a Plumbe Street, Burnley, BB11 3AA. 10am-noon

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at Burnley FC in the Community, the Pendle Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield Mill, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, at Morrisons in Nelson and Asda in Colne.

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

VIC Outreach

TUESDAY

The Mess Tin - cafe and drop in

1pm-2.30pm

The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

THURSDAY

Rochdale Veterans' Breakfast Club and VIC Outreach

9am-10.30am Touchstones Cafe, The Esplanade OL16 1AQ.

RIBBLE VALLEY

Coffee Morning and Outreach

TUESDAYS

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton
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Project Worker Ray Sharkey
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Transformational Coach Gill Hughes
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Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald
melfitzgerald@vic.org.uk

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell
darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

Veterans Mental Health Caseworker Cath Mitton
cathmitton@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde
barryhyde@vic.org.uk

Contacts

Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

NHS Military Veterans Psychological Therapies Service (NW)

0300 323 0707

The Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080 7 days a week 8am-8pm

SSAFA

email Lancashire@ssafo.org.uk

01772 260 462

Citizens' Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn

0808 278 7975 freephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

The Samaritans

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

Freephone 116 123

Op Courage

0800 652 2867 seek a referral through a GP or health professional

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

Armed Forces Support Group

01282 613132

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop In/ Model Railway Club

FRIDAY

10am-3pm

VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

Accrington Stanley Breakfast Club/ Drop In

LAST WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH

9.30am-11am

Lancashire Carers Link, 54-56 Blackburn Road, Accrington, BB5 1LE.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Outreach Service

TUESDAY

Rovers Breakfast Hub, Legends Lounge, Darwen End, Blackburn Rovers FC, Ewood Park, Blackburn, BB2 4JF.

10.30am-noon

Want to help?

To donate to support the work of VIC please visit our website

www.veteransincommunities.org

Veterans In Communities Charity Number 1151194

VIC supported by:

East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group



Rossendalealive BOROUGH COUNCIL



ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



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