



Largest Covenant grant to seek and help 'hidden' veterans

VIC has received its largest ever Armed Forces Covenant grant to seek out hidden veterans to make sure they are supported so they can prosper within, and as part of, their community.

The charity, which works across East Lancashire and areas of Greater Manchester, has been awarded £97,142 from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for a three-year project.

Reach, Support, Belong and Prosper responds to a need the charity identified post pandemic; this project will be a proactive service to seek veterans who



are most isolated.

During Covid, the organisation was one of the few that remained open and served the armed forces community, including delivering food parcels and support to the vulnerable who were isolating.

That was when VIC became aware of

a number of 'hidden' veterans who had never accessed support.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton, pictured, said: "We are very grateful to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for approving the grant which will enable us to identify, reach and support

those from the armed forced community across our areas of benefit.

"This will help them overcome their individual barriers so they can lead fulfilling lives, and feel a sense of belonging and be able to prosper within their local community.

"The grant will focus on the most isolated and hardest to reach and the project aims to locate veterans who were previously unknown to us and help them to access other services."

The project is also aiming to raise awareness of veterans and their issues with other organisations and to help more GPs to

become Veteran Friendly Practices.

The impact of the project will be measured through qualitative data at the end of each year alongside individual case studies.

Amanda said: "There is a perception that many veterans have mental health issues or are in prison - our project is needed so that we can change that perception, which is wrong, and promote veterans as individuals with lots to offer their communities."

The project begins in April. Anyone who knows a veteran living in their community who may benefit from some support can call 01706 833180.



Choir's Burnley call up

FOR the first time, the VIC Choir was invited to sing at the huge Tesco in Burnley.

The performance raised £362.39 for VIC and volunteer collectors Ann Barnes and Phil Chamberlain manned the buckets.

Thanks to staff and customers of Tesco and Mukhtar, Tesco Community Champion. The choir will be at Asda Rawtenstall on April 6 from 1pm-4pm.

Painting raffle ends in May

THANK you to everyone who has already bought a raffle ticket to win this stunning painting of a Rhino by volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell.

Visitors to the VIC Centre can't have missed the huge picture as it is currently on an easel in the foyer.

Tickets for the painting are £2.50 and available by calling 01706 833180.

Darren is raising money to organise free



art classes and workshops in Macrame, glass painting and clay model making.

The picture measures 47" by 31" and it took 60 hours to complete. The draw will be on May 6.



Poppies for France

BEAUTIFUL yellow poppies, created in Rossendale, have been sent to France to adorn a commemorative tapestry.

A collaboration between the Beacon Dementia and Wellbeing Group, Knits and Fitz and Veterans In Communities Crafty Chatters saw 80 bright yellow poppies being knitted and crocheted.

The 3D tapestry will be 80 metres long depicting The Longest Day - D-Day June 6



1944 in 80 1m panels and will be ready in time for the 80th anniversary.

There will also be decorations throughout the town and the display will be initially in Notre Dame Catholic

Church in Carentan, Normandy, before going on tour to the UK and the US.

People all over the world have been involved in creating the tapestry.

Crafty Chatters organiser Ivy Limbrick said: "We responded to a request from Janet O'Driscoll who asked if we wanted to get involved.

"It was a very relevant request for us to help a town that is celebrating its liberation. We also made a further 100 purple poppies for the animal hospital as they want to make a poppy cascade."

VIC members Christine Smethurst, Janet Attwell, Jane Harvey, Rhona Roundell and Ivy got involved.

The yellow poppies are on a panel that celebrates the Screaming Eagles - the US 101st Airborne Division - who parachuted into Normandy prior to the amphibious landings and one of the colours in their logo is bright yellow.

Thousands of people all over the world are knitting and crocheting and contributing to the tapestry. It is hoped that whichever Royal is visiting the commemorations will also get chance to see the tapestry.



Arctic photography talk

VETERAN and accomplished photographer Duncan Phillips held the second of two talks at the VIC Centre in Haslingden.

Duncan, who owns Knowle Top Gallery in Clitheroe is a member of our Redoubt VIC Ribble Valley group and he also

presented the illustrated talk on his trip the Arctic to the members attending the weekly Tuesday morning Clitheroe outreach at Trinity Methodist Church.

He was very knowledgeable about the environment and animals he saw while there and was happy to share his experience and give advice to members.



New outreach unites generations

OUTREACH worker Steve Butterworth has added a new venue to his regular sessions in the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale areas.

Every month, he will now be attending the Veterans' Coffee

Afternoon at Newhey and Milnrow Medical Centre.

The practice hosts a coffee afternoon for its veteran patients, and Bernard Munton attended the first session with Steve.

Steve said: "The Practice Manager has a son-in-law who is a

Corporal at the Army Apprenticeship College in Harrogate.

"He brought three of the junior soldiers to the session and one of the young soldiers sat with Bernard, who is 101, and chatted to him for the whole afternoon."

Standard on parade

VIC's Standard Bearer Jacko Pearce has had a very busy month.

He attended the relaunch of the Veterans Hub at the Agnes Hopkins Centre in Swinton.

RAF Veteran David Marriott said: "Would like to thank Jacko again for attending with Brian Livesey. An amazing launch to what we hope to be a successful future for veterans and families in and around



Salford."

He also attended two funerals, one for William Eric Lea at Burnley Crematorium and a second at Fulwood Free Methodist Church for the oldest Second World War veteran Ernie Horsfall.

He also attended the Lightbowne Hall Care Home, in Moston, Manchester, to celebrate the home achieving Veteran Friendly Framework status – the first non-military care home in the country to achieve it.



Visit to Support Centre



A VISIT was made by Chief Executive Amanda Walton and Operations Manager Bob Elliott to the Veterans' Support Centre in Warrington.

The centre is in the middle of a park and offers lots to local veterans and the wider community.

Bob and Amanda were very impressed with the facility, although they talk with Veterans' Support Centre a lot, they had no idea of the resources they had on their doorstep.

Bob said: "There is a Veterans NAFFI, Counselling Suite and a Community Hall that can be used for some many occasions including weddings, Tai Chi classes, different

functions and even Regiment Association meetings.

"The outside park area can be used for fun days, themed events, bowling and there is also a café that is open to the public who use the park.

"They have a fleet of vans that go out into the community and will repair and maintain bikes for those in the wider community.

"If you live around the Warrington area, then it is worth a visit and speak to the guys, it is totally volunteer led and it works."

One of their current projects is to refurbish a trailer donated to them from 75 Engr Regt. Once it's been finished, it will be available for other veteran groups to borrow for their outdoor events.

Carp social nets PBs

A MASSIVE thank you once again to everyone who took part in our first Veterans In Communities Carp Fishing Social of 2024.

The event, at Pavyotts Mill Carp Fishery, saw four fish caught and two were personal bests.

Our next carp social will be on Wednesday June 26 at Sandhurst, cost £160 per angler. Places on a first come first served basis and a £60 deposit needed. Contact 01706 833180.



Art work on show

VISITORS to The Whitaker, Rossendale Museum and Art Gallery in Rawtenstall have been able to see a small sample of paintings from the VIC Art Group.

During March, the work has gone on display in the Corridor Gallery at the museum on the ground floor. Thank you to The Whitaker for allowing VIC members to put on the exhibition.

The display will be on until the end of April.

Veterans out and about

A TRIP to Samlesbury Hall, near Preston, will be made by veterans on Wednesday April 24.

The minibus will leave Haslingden at 11.30am and lunch will be served in the Heritage Hall Café in the hall.

Anyone attending can

select their own food and the transport costs £5.

On Friday April 19, VIC members will be making a visit to the Bay Veterans Association Hub in Morecambe at 2pm.

To book a place on the minibus contact the office on 01706 833180.



Tesco mural

A PLAIN white wall in the Community Room at Tesco Rawtenstall is being transformed by volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell.

After seeing the mural which is painted on the back wall of the VIC art room, the Tesco Community Champion asked if VIC could paint a scene of Musbury Tor within their community space at the Rawtenstall store. Watch this space.

Bob Ross

A FEW places are left on the next Bob Ross style painting class on Saturday and Sunday April 6 and 7.

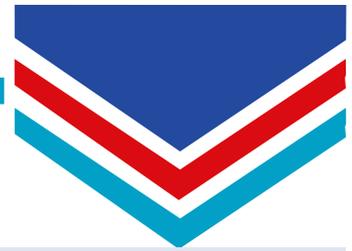
A stunning sunset painting will be created by everyone who attends. To book a place please ring Amy Thompson at VIC on 01706 833180. You will need to pay a £15 non-refundable deposit either at the centre or bank transfer.

The class costs £45 and includes all materials needed to complete the painting and take it home at the end of the day.

Painting classes start at 10.30am and conclude around 3pm. Refreshments are available, but please bring a packed lunch.



DARREN Horsnell has now joined the Throttle Twisters Motor Cycle Club where Bob Elliott is also a member.



ROSSENDALE

Activities 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

Greggs RV

1pm-3pm

THURSDAY

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

SUNDAY

Drop-in

10.15am-12.30pm

SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

Haslingden Community Link Cafe, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG (book in advance)

EVERY MONTH

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180

Walking Groups/ Social Inclusion trips

see Facebook or website for details

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

MONDAY

10am-noon

Breakfast Club at Burnley Miners' Social Club, Plumbe Street, Burnley, BB11 3AA.

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

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

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 Flying Horse Hotel, Packer Street, Rochdale, OL16 1NJ.

RIBBLE VALLEY

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

Sandbag Cafe Longridge

9.30am-noon

Christ Church Methodist Church, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA.

VIC – 01706 833180

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raysharkey@vic.org.uk 07741 902 188

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren

Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

Veterans at risk of homelessness

or organisations working with them are encouraged to contact OP FORTITUDE

0800 952 0774 or visit riv.org.uk/opfortitude

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@ssafa.org.uk

01772 260 462

Citizens Advice East Lancashire

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

The Samaritans

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

Freephone 116 123

Op Courage

0300 373 3332 email

opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via

GP or self-referral

0800 0130 707

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 EVERY MONTH

9.30am-11am

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

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Veterans' football

MONDAY 8-9pm

Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre, Ewood Park, Blackburn BB2 4JF. A cost applies.

Outreach Service

TUESDAY 10am-noon

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

Contact Chris McGrail 07787 585109

Veterans In Communities
Charity Number 1151194

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