



First sessions for veterans in Rochdale as VIC expands

WE HAVE been given a massive boost in our bid to assist veterans in the Rochdale area.

Veterans In Communities (VIC) is delighted to announce a partnership with Link4Life and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council enabling outreach and art classes to begin this month.

We are using our successful Rossendale model to reach into other areas and extend services.

The Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group backed VIC with a grant of £5,000. Following a very positive meeting between Rochdale Council's external leisure providers Link4Life and VIC administrator Suzanne Preston, Link4Life agreed to provide free accommodation to start outreach and art classes for veterans at Heywood Sports Village from Wednesday April 17th from 10.30am to 2.30pm.

VIC manager Bob Elliott said: "This is a fantastic extension to the success-



ful work we have been carrying out in Rossendale and we are very much looking forward to working in partnership with Rochdale MBC and Link4Life

"Veteran Darren Horsnell will be leading the art sessions while the outreach will be provided by Suzanne.

"She will be meeting with the different partners and agencies to start building up a forces network to get to know the services out there and link in with the veterans families.

"If this is successful we are hoping to be able to offer similar sessions in Rochdale and Middleton sports centres.

"The benefits of using a sports centre is that the veterans and their families can also use the recreational facilities. There is discussion about the possibility of being able to offer veterans use of the facilities at a reduced rate.

Suzanne said: "I am delighted to be taking the lead and it will be a really big step in the growth of VIC.

"We have had a lot of support and interest from the Rochdale area and there is lots of scope. It is really exciting."

Anyone wanting to know more can contact Suzanne by email on suzanne.preston@veteransincommunities.org or phone or text 07917 710629.

*Huge VIC thank you to **ASDA***

RAWTENSTALL's Asda store has generously agreed to allow VIC to collect in its foyer on Saturday July 20th.

We will have a team in store from 10am to 4pm at the first floor food entrance.

In the March newsletter we reported how the store pledged to support the work of VIC and donated £200 after we were picked as the most popular charity by customers.

The store has donated tables and chairs along with a photocopier to be used in the community centre we are planning to open.

Charity status is granted

THE Charities Commission has officially recognised VIC as a charity enabling the organisation to tap into more funding streams.

The work of VIC is already expanding into other areas, like Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton and the charity will be working alongside other veterans groups in the whole of East Lancashire.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "Gaining charitable status was extremely important for VIC's

future. It enables us to allow people the chance of Gift Aiding their donations, which allows us to claim back tax.

"It also enables us to apply for additional grants so that we can extend the work of VIC and move the organisation forward in the way we want to.

"It will be a tremendous help to our plans to open a community centre for veterans, their families and people who have served in other uniformed services like police, fire and ambulance."



VIC members mingled with shoppers when a stall was held at Bacup Market on the town's busiest day of the year – Easter Saturday.

Summer art festival

ALDER Grange High School in Rawtenstall will be the venue for the first art exhibition to be held by VIC on Saturday July 20th.

The school's new Sixth Form AG6 will be the venue for a stunning display of works created at the art workshop held in Bacup, and soon to be in Heywood. Veterans from all over the country have also been invited to display their work at the school.

For more information call Darren Horsnell on 01706 871730.



Courses for all from health to tai chi



VIC members have started the first 'Manage Your Health' programme this month at the REAL offices in Bacup.

These courses are being funded from the National Lottery Awards For All grant awarded to REAL at the beginning of the year. The eight-week programme will enable veterans and their partners to manage their disorders, support each other and make positive contributions to their com-

munities, with an opportunity to train as support workers using their skills to help others.

Bob Elliott said: "Further programmes will run later in the year and we are hoping to include veterans from other organisations on these so they will have the same opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge gained during the eight weeks."

Four VIC members have almost finished the

Mindfulness course that is being delivered for us by Rossendale Hospice in Rawtenstall.

We are very grateful for East Lancs PCT for funding this course and hope to offer this to other veterans and members of the Family Support Group in the future. Rossendale Hospice has been an ideal venue due to its central location in Rossendale as it is a relaxed and peaceful environment.

VIC members completed the four week Tai Chi and Martial Fitness programme that was delivered by Lighthouse Tai Chi at Alder Grange High School.

Six VIC members attended the programme and would like it to be continued. Bob said: "It was great to meet in the evening for a couple hours and develop another technique that could help members relax."

A musical evening to remember

THE Band and Corps of Drums of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Lancashire) are playing in Rishton on Saturday May 18th and VIC is among the good causes to benefit from

funds raised.

The Rotary Club of Great Harwood and Rishton has organised the Charity Fundraising Concert at Norden High School when, by kind permission of Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Eric W

Davidson MBE DL, the Band and Corps will provide a comprehensive two hour programme of music.

The 33-strong band will perform a wide variety of musical entertainment and a highlight will surely be

the famous 'black light display',

VIC has been picked as one of the many local charities the Rotary Club is helping.

For tickets contact Ann-Marie Etherington on 07739 689710.



Introducing: Andrea Project Co-ordinator

ANDREA Goodall has been appointed as the Project Co-ordinator to lead the development of VIC across East Lancashire.

She was previously employed by Heywood Middleton and Rochdale (HMR) NHS Trust as project manager for military veterans across HMR, Bury and Oldham an area with some 40,000 veterans.

She said: "My main focus in my previous role

was to raise issues involving military veterans and their families from a clinical perspective.

"Now I will be challenged to grow VIC as a charity across East Lancashire and getting to know the key people in this area.

"I already know the area well having previously worked in Blackburn, Pendle and Rossendale.

"The two-year contract means I have the time to really develop programmes and to secure funding to

ensure the charity's work continues.

"I will be looking at ways that we can support local authorities to implement their Armed Forces covenants along with the third sector to make sure these documents are live and they really make a difference."

Andrea's post has been funded by a grant from the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group that was awarded to VIC in February.



Worrall project

A HOUSE renovation project for a veteran and his young family should be completed in May.

Veterans In Communities' members have devoted many hours to working on the home of RAF veteran Andrew Worrall, who is battling leukaemia.

Before he was diagnosed, Andrew had bought a house in Rishton to create a family home. He was struggling to finish the job and so VIC stepped in.

The flue and fire are now in place and the upstairs is decorated ready for the carpets to be installed. Doors have been hung, painting completed and once all the internal work is finished, Veterans' charity Dig In North West, from Preston, will complete the garden.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "Everyone has worked exceptionally hard and done an excellent job."



Clothing gifts help needy at Family Centre



BAGS of baby clothes were donated to Bacup Family Centre by VIC.

Administrator Suzanne Preston was delighted to deliver the clothing to the centre on Pennine Road, Bacup.

She said: "The clothes were donated by one of the young families VIC is supporting and I immediately thought of passing them on to Bacup Family Centre.

"I came across the centre on a visit and I know the good work they do. It is what Veterans In Communities is all about. We are not just for veterans but also provide a support network for families and help them to be part of the communities they live in."

Manager Leila Allen said: "We are always able to put donations to good use. We will pass clothing on to families in need in the area, sell some items on a stall at the centre and pass other clothing to Bacup Fellowship of Churches charity shop and the Hospice Shop in Rawtenstall. We are very grateful."



What's On and Where

ROSSENDALE

VIC Outreach Service

MONDAY

11am-3pm

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

WEDNESDAY

11am-3pm

REAL Office, St James Square, Bacup, OL13 9AA.

VIC Art Group and drop-in

FRIDAY

11am-1pm

REAL Office, St James Square, Bacup, OL13 9AA

Walking Group

THURSDAY

Walks are arranged on the 2nd and 4th Thursday, weather permitting.

VIC Family Support Group

FRIDAY

A support network that meet every fortnight at 1pm at Crystal Rocks, Bacup Road, Waterfoot, BB4 7AW.

HEYWOOD

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

10.30am-2.30pm

Heywood Sports Village, West Starkey Street, Heywood, OL10 4TW.

Walks will be held fortnightly on **Thursdays** combined with the Rossendale walking group.

Art Group sessions will be held on alternate **Wednesdays**.

VIC update

VIC has been invited by Hyndburn and Pendle to support their Armed Forces Community Covenants.

VIC has now developed a new Facebook page which is updated regularly with news and our recent activities; <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransInCommunities> In addition to this page we have launched a new group.

VIC Family Support Group will replace the WAGs group for wives and partners of veterans. For more information please contact Suzanne on 01706 871730.

We are working on a number of exciting new projects, which will involve supporting local communities and local groups with their activities.

This will include working on Stacksteads war memorials in preparations for next year's centenary of the start of the First World War and we are also planning to take part in the procession for the 60th anniversary of Bacup and Stacksteads Carnival on Sunday 30th June. We will also have a stall in the park.

VIC has also held discussions with Lancashire Adult Learning Education with a view to putting on courses for veterans at one of our venues.

Accrington Rotary Club has invited VIC to be guest speakers at the club's monthly dinner.

Useful Contacts



www.veteransincommunities.org

Manager: Bob Elliott

bobelliott@veteransincommunities.org
07961 554 006 / 01706 871730

Project Co-ordinator: Andrea Goodall
andreagoodall@veteransincommunities.org

Admin: Suzanne Preston
suzannepreston@veteransincommunities.org

VIC Art Group

Darren Horsnell
darrenhorsnell@veteransincommunities.org

Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

PCT Military Veterans Service

0161 253 6638

The Royal British Legion

08457 725 725

Rossendale Citizens' Advice Bureau

0844 499 4121 (from a landline)
0300 456 2552 (from a mobile)

The Samaritans

01706 830999



VIC supported by:

