

Centre given new life by veterans on Armistice Day

WE TOOK over our new centre in Rossendale on Armistice Day at 11am on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

Although just over a year old, VIC – Veterans In Communities – is going from strength to strength.

Manager Bob Elliott said: “We are all very excited about having a permanent home that we can really establish ourselves in.

“The work we have pioneered in Rossendale has given us an amazing platform to be able to spread out across many different areas.

“Now we have a proper base we can have rooms dedicated to the work of VIC. Our successful art group can have its own room, without having to clear the work and paints away after each session.”

Working with serving and ex-service personnel from all over East Lancashire, VIC helps them to return to their communities, feel a sense of belonging and assist them to prosper.

Bob added: “Now the organisation has its own building – the former Mary Hindle Centre in Haslingden – and is providing outreach sessions across the area thanks to a number of funding streams, including money from East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Big Lottery Fund.

“We will continue to signpost people to other organi-



Chief executive of Agapao Louise Chicot shakes hands with Manager of VIC Bob Elliott after handing over the centre.

sations that can help including Military Veterans’ Service, The Royal British Legion and Combat Stress, but having our own home will enable VIC to go forward with our plans of being able to help serving and ex-service personnel from an

even wider area. Agapao’s chief executive Louise Chicot suggested the date as an option and Armistice Day is one that is always uppermost in the minds of all veterans. November 11 is a time to remember and a time to reflect on those who made the ultimate sacrifice for all our futures.

“At VIC we also see this day as one when we can look to the future with renewed hope.

“Part of our plan was always to have a permanent home in Rossendale from which we can proceed with our work. We are using this most important of days to look forward so we can help veterans to build a better future for themselves and their families.”

VIC is seeking volunteers

to help renovate the centre on Bury Road which has been gifted to VIC by the trustees of Agapao International, the charity that used to operate out of the building. The terms of the transfer ensure that the building will now forever be kept for community use and will be known as the CAR/Agapao Legacy.

Louise said: “It has been a difficult 18 months, but I am delighted to see that we have been able to secure a future for the building.

“I am pleased that VIC is taking over the centre as the communities aspect of their work fits in well with ours.

“We are looking to work in partnership with VIC on our ReLoved project to ensure that this scheme continues to benefit people of Rossendale.”



even wider area. Agapao’s chief execu-



We remembered them

VIC members attended Remembrance Services throughout East Lancashire and the Rochdale area in November.



VIC is simply the best

TOP honours went to VIC at the prestigious Rossendale Business Awards when we won the 'Not For Profit' category.

There was standing room only at the event at St Mary's Chambers, in Rawtenstall, as businesses from across the Valley joined the celebrations.

VIC civilian member Nick Byrne joined other members at the event and said: "We were all delighted when

VIC's name was read out. This award is well deserved because of the hard work that has been put in."

In the submission for judges VIC wrote: "The organisation was set up when it was realised by a small group of veterans that there was no other organisation working in the country that specialised in non-crisis management and peer support.

"VIC's aims are to

increase confidence, self esteem and raise an individuals aspirations. "

Chairman of REAL Hazel Harding presented VIC members with the award and said: "VIC has only been going for just over 12 months but is already making its mark and supporting former members of the armed forces and service personnel to return, belong and prosper."



Bonfire party

MEMBERS of VIC helped to build the bonfire for the annual celebration at Accrington Cricket Club.

The event was organised by the Rotary Clubs of Great Harwood and Rishton, Church and Oswaldtwistle and Accrington and VIC is very grateful for the kind donation of £250 from the Rotary Club in Accrington.

Calendar art

PAINTINGS and drawings by members of the VIC art group will be reproduced in the Mayor of Rossendale's calendar.

Profits from sales will be equally split between the Mayor's chosen youth charities and VIC.

Arts and crafts co-ordinator Darren Horsnell said: "We are delighted that our group's artwork will now reach an even wider audience."

To pre-order a calendar, cost £5, contact VIC on 01706 871730.



On right route with buses

A COMMUNITY Christmas party will be held in Haslingden organised by VIC thanks to a bus collection.

A partnership between VIC and community bus service Rosso saw members being allowed to collect on the buses this month.

VIC members joined Rosso staff on four routes and the £200 collected, along with a donation of £50 from Rosso will be used for a party at the IDL Club in

Haslingden and a Santa's Grotto at the former Mary Hindle Centre.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "This was great opportunity for us to raise funds and work with Rosso and to also raise awareness of the work of VIC."

Rosso was only too pleased to help as a number of its employees, including its managing director Brian Juffs, are ex-servicemen.

John Newsholme, driver, said: "We are very supportive of our

veterans and are proud to assist them by helping them re-enter into the community via job opportunities or assisting in other areas to help promote VIC and veteran families.

"I would just like to say that the work carried out at VIC is vital to the Veterans who use this facility. It is a very worthy cause and all involved should be very proud of themselves."

VIC will be sending out invitations for the party in the next few weeks.

Renovation underway

RENOVATION works can begin at our new base thanks to a government grant.

VIC was successful in securing a small grant towards renovation costs from the Armed Forces Community Covenant, which was signed in Rossendale last year.

Project co-ordinator Andrea Goodall said: "It is all about bringing the armed forces and the community together and that is what our centre in Haslingden will enable us to do.

"Although the former Mary Hindle Centre is in a pretty good condition, there are some remedial works that need to be carried out and for that we needed funding.

"We have already been approached by a number of groups wanting to use the centre and once the work is completed we will be in a position to determine its future usage."

If you need help – just chat

A TEAM of health chatters is being set up by VIC in the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale areas to help signpost veterans and their families to key services.

VIC won a tender to the public health community project, from Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Project Co-ordinator Andrea Goodall said: "Our four qualified Health Chatters will be training a further 25 people who work or live in the Heywood, Middleton and

Rochdale areas who are themselves Armed Forces veterans, have a family member in the forces or work directly with the Armed Forces community.

"Health Chatters will undertake seven hours training on a wide range of health subjects, get to understand the health issues of their local area, find out about local services and be confident to signpost to these services."

If you would like to become a Health Chatter please contact 01706 871730 for more information.

VIC walk to Lee Quarry

AS WELL as keeping healthy by walking, members also took in a spot of geocaching while they were in Lee Quarry.

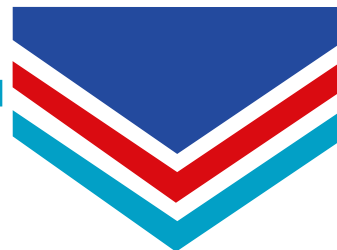
The quarry, above Stacksteads and Bacup, is now set out with routes for walkers as well as mountain biking trails making it an ideal location for the veterans.

And while there, they also sought out hidden treasure in the form of a geocache and deposited VIC goodies for the next



seeker to find.

The next walk will be on December 12 meeting at 7 Canal Street, Church at 11am for a walk along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.



ROSSENDALE

VIC Outreach Service

MONDAY

11am-1pm

new venue

Former Mary Hindle Centre, 12 Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL.

WEDNESDAY

11am-3pm

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

VIC Art Group and drop-in

FRIDAY

11am-3pm

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

Walking Group

THURSDAY

Walks are arranged on the 2nd and 4th Thursday, weather permitting. Contact VIC on **01706 871730**.

VIC Family Support Group

FRIDAY

A support network that meet every week at 1pm at Asda, Rawtenstall. Contact Suzanne on **01706 871730**.

HEYWOOD

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

11am-2.30pm

Recovery Republic, 63-65 York Street, Heywood, OL10 4NR.

Badminton

3pm-4pm

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

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

BURNLEY

VIC Outreach Service

TUESDAY

10am-2pm

Retreat 'n' Recover Centre, 21 Hammerton Street, Burnley, BB11 1NA.

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

Mental Health Helpline

0500 639000

Monday to Friday 7pm - 11pm Saturday &

Sunday 12 Noon to 12 midnight

East Lancashire Single Point of Access

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

Contacts

VIC – 01706 871730

Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@veteransincommunities.org

07961 554 006

Project Co-ordinator Andrea Goodall

andregoodall@veteransincommunities.org

Family Support Worker Suzanne Preston

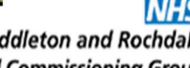
suzannepreston@veteransincommunities.org

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@veteransincommunities.org

VIC supported by:

powered by



VIC update

MOVING house is supposed to be one of the most stressful things to do but we are delighted to be moving into our first proper home.

It wouldn't have been possible without a lot of help from many people 'behind the scenes' not least Louise Chicot from Agapao and her charity's board who have gifted the former Mary Hindle Centre to VIC. A sincere thank you from everyone here.

Not only did Agapao give us a building but loads of extras including computer desks and equipment to stock our community IT room, office furniture, a fully stocked kitchen, and the use of the ReLoved van to move our furniture.

We also need to thank Cash Converter in Darwen for the generous gift of a Wii and Tony Jordan for a large television.

A Haslingden veteran kindly donated loads of books to stock our library

Community Restart has given VIC a settee and matching chair, four desks, two filing cabinets and a pool table. We have also had furniture donated by Rossendale Borough Council's One Stop Shop and well wishers in Bury and Colne.

And... even a Christmas Tree!

