

# Team effort keeps VIC Soldiering On to final

**MEMBERS of VIC were given five star treatment at the House of Lords as finalists in the national Soldiering On Awards.**

The champagne reception, in a marquee on the embankment of the River Thames, was an opportunity to share the work of VIC with the five other finalists in the category Working Together and to meet some of the judges.

On March 24, we will again return to London to the Park Plaza, Westminster Bridge Hotel, when

the winners will be announced in a ceremony hosted by former news reader Angela Rippon.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott and Chief Executive Liz Hamilton attended the reception. Bob said: "We are now in our fifth year and it was a great honour for VIC to be named as a finalist for such a prestigious national award.

"We would not have got to be a finalist without all the effort that all our members have put in over the last five years.



"It is a team award and recognition should go to everyone who has had a part to play in VIC being such a success; there are too many names to mention.

"As well as meeting the other finalists, finding out what they did and explaining the work of VIC, we also got to speak with British Forces Broadcasting Service.

"Last year's winner was an organisation that helped veterans retrain as teachers. They said that before

they won the award they had funding for 10 veterans a year, since winning they now had funding for 100 veterans – a 10-fold increase."

VIC has been operational since 2012 and moved into its own building in Haslingden in November 2013.

Starting with just one paid employee, VIC now has a board of seven trustees, a management board and six employees.

The other finalists in the Working Together category are: Army Training

Regiment Winchester; Brunei Stables Pony/Saddle Club; Forces Friends Project; The Invicta Foundation and Veterans Information Network Nottinghamshire.

The Soldiering On Awards provide national recognition for the outstanding achievements of those who have served their country and individuals and groups who work together with the Armed Forces Community.

## Blankets to keep poorly pets warm



**BLANKETS that have been lovingly created by members of the Crafty Chatters group at VIC have been donated to a local veterinary group.**

When Crafty Chatters was formed at the VIC Centre, the organisers found a collection of knitted squares made by a previous group.

VIC Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick said: "We were unsure what to do with all the squares so we offered to make them into blankets for Myerscough Vets as they have a base in Haslingden.

"We sewed and crocheted all the squares together and made 15 blankets of various sizes for the animals.

"It is good that they now have a good home."

Members of the group attended the practice on Blackburn Road to hand over the blankets.

# Welcome to the team



**OUR latest recruit ex-RAF medic and police officer Liz Davies has hit the ground running in her new role as Project Worker in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.**

Liz, from Rochdale, served in the RAF for five years and left while expecting her daughter Lauren, who is 24 and has cystic fibrosis.

After leaving the service, Liz became a Police Special in North Yorkshire for three years and went on to teach karate for 15 years, latterly running her own club Lotus Karate Do in Heywood before spondylosis forced her to retire from the martial art.

She said: "I was put in touch with VIC after my dad died in September 2015. The first person I met was Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth.

"My cooker had blown up and Steve arranged to get me a new one through SSAFA. I started going to the Rochdale Veterans Breakfast Club and then I was told about this job."

Since being appointed, Liz has been busy establishing veterans' links within the Integrated Neighbourhood Team in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

She said: "Heywood is up and running and other areas will follow on soon and I have



already made links with Carers' Trust, Link 4 Life and the District Nurses."

## Get out and about

**MARCH will be an active month with two walks and a social inclusion trip.**

Activities start on Thursday March 2 with a social inclusion trip to Leeds Armouries.

Then on Thursday March 16 veterans and members of the community are invited to join a four-mile circular walk from Edisford Bridge to Little Mitton.

Finally, on Thursday March 30 there will be a four-mile walk around Alden Valley.

All trips leave the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, at 9.30am. To book places call Outdoor Activities Coordinator Ivy Limbrick on 01706 833180.

## Walking football

**VOLUNTEERS are being sought to assist our plans to enter a team into the RAFT Foundation's Walking Football Tournament on June 10.**

Anyone interested in playing should contact VIC on 01706 833180.

## Bob Ross

**OUR talented artists will be tackling another painting in the style of Bob Ross and this time the subject will be the stunning Northern Lights.**

The group will meet on Saturday February 25 from 10.30am to around 3.30pm. The session costs £35 and places can be booked by contacting 01706 833180.



**A BIG thank you to the students of Alder Grange School in Rawtenstall who raised £231 through Remembrance Day events in school and presented the money to VIC.**

## Back to school for veterans

**THE latest work in transforming the school playground at St James CE School, Haslingden has been the upcycling of a Wendy house.**

The wooden structure has been reroofed and made into a potting shed complete with Perspex windows and window boxes for

planting.

For one veteran Jimmy Kudritzski it has been a return to school as he was a pupil at St James.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Over a series of months we have helped to transform the school's outside area. We started with work on an overgrown yard which is now an outdoor learning



centre and added the potting shed and will be installing a bench.

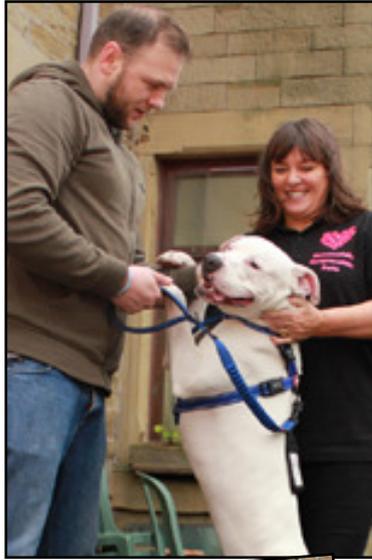
"Members of VIC have put in a lot of work to making the improvements and as well as Jimmy we

have to thank Joe Davis and Dominic."

The school will be putting in a security fence, which the pupils will be decorating with a mural.



# Man's best friend



## A RESCUE dog is helping veteran Chris Kavanagh cope with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD.

So successful has been the union of Chris with American bulldog cross Ranger, the former infantryman will now be helping Rossendale Responsible Animal Rescue to launch a new project.

Chris, 27, from Haslingden, said: "My whole family have an army background and I was born into the army. From a baby I lived on an army camp in Northern Ireland, so it was no surprise in May 2006 that I joined the First Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment."

Chris served all over the world and for his last two years in the army he was a dog handler.

He suffered severe PTSD and anxiety after a number of incidents. Three years ago when he left the army he struggled to cope. Not just because he was transitioning from the job to life on 'Civvy Street', but because army life was all he had ever known.

Chris moved to Haslingden following a relationship breakdown and began attending VIC more regularly.

Lucie Holland, a volunteer with the animal charity, said: "We know that in America a lot

of veterans with PTSD are given dogs to help them with their rehabilitation and we approached VIC to see if it was something they would like to get involved with.

"We were told of a dog that was in the 'pound' at Pet Hotel in Hapton, he was very traumatised and had shut-down'. No one had been allowed to go near him for days and the dog would not even leave the kennel he had been put in."

VIC recommended Chris and when he went to the kennels the nine-month-old puppy took an instant liking for him, bounded over and licked his face. The two have been inseparable ever since.

Chris said: "Having Ranger has given me a purpose in life. We are helping each other.

"I was always brought up around dogs as a child and I wanted another because I knew it would make me get out and about and get me socialising.

"If I have to feed Ranger then I also have to feed myself; if I have to look after him then I also have to look after myself to make sure that I can care for him."

Chris will now work with the animal charity to unite other veterans with dogs.



## Sign up to 'boot camp'

**PLACES are available on a special course being run for veterans by Natalie Smith, Personal Trainer at Bacup's Pioneer Community Health Studio.**

Natalie said: "It will be interesting to work with the veterans, they will be doing pull ups, press ups, running around with a power bag and shuttle sprints; things they will relate to from their time in the forces.

"We can also do some HIIT sessions – High Intensity Interval Training – they will do an exercise for a very short period of time,



have a little rest in between and then repeat. Each exercise will concentrate on a different part of the body.

"I think this could remind them of the army physicals, but it will also push them. They may not be as fit as they once were, but this will give them the chance to regain that physical fitness, which is also linked to mental wellbeing."

The group session will operate as a six-week course and there will be a small charge. Veterans interested in attending should contact 01706 833180.

## Survey to aid health

**VETERANS are being asked to complete a short anonymous questionnaire for an RAF veteran who is now a university student.**

Gavin Smith is currently at Nottingham University and is studying mental health. A link to his survey is on our Facebook page and group.

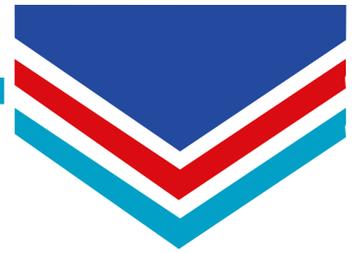
He is trying to set up a mental health recovery course for veterans, not based in a hospital or treatment centre, but one run by veterans themselves in Breakfast Clubs.

## Manifesto launch

**THE launch of The Royal British Legion's Manifesto 2017 at Manchester Town Hall was attended by VIC Project Worker Liz Davies and Transformational Coach Terry Morley.**



**VIC Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and Project Worker Liz Davies had a stand at the It's Time to Talk Day at Number One Riverside in Rochdale. The event aimed to get people talking about mental health issues and featured a variety of organisations.**



## ROSSENDALE

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

### Outreach Service

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

10am-3pm

To book a home appointment call 01706 833180.

**MONDAY**

**Crafty Chatters**

10.30am-12.30pm

**WEDNESDAY**

**Community Arts and Crafts**

10am-noon

**Computer Functional Skills**

9.30am-12.30pm

**Art Classes**

2pm-4pm

Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Haslingden, BB4 4DD.

**THURSDAY**

**Rossendale Citizens' Advice (weekly)**

by appointment only

**Shelter (second Thursday only)**

Morning

**Singing Group (weekly)**

6.30-8.30pm

**TUESDAY AND FRIDAY**

**Art Group and drop-in**

11am-3pm

**Walking Group**

Morning

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS**, weather permitting. Log on to VIC Facebook page to see where the next walks will be.

**Outdoor Activities**

Log on to our website and follow the link on *Projects and Activities* to see what we have planned and how to book a place. A full leaflet is available.

**Positive Art**

Our art shop is now based at the *VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, contact 01706 833180 for details.*

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

**Outreach Service**

**MONDAYS**

1-3pm

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

**TUESDAY - alternate weeks**

11am-3pm

Allotment, Latrigg Crescent, Langley, Middleton M24 4LU.

**THURSDAY**

9.30-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club, Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon **VIC Outreach**, 1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

**THURSDAY**

11.30am-1.30pm

Lighthouse Project, Unit S6b/c Middleton Shopping Centre, Limetrees Road, Middleton M24 4EL.

**Walking Football**

**First Thursday only** 1pm-3pm

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

**Walking Group**

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS** and are combined with Rossendale.

## Contacts

### VIC – 01706 833180

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**Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth**

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**Project Worker Liz Davies**

lizdavies@vic.org.uk

**Volunteer Outreach Worker Tony Stubbs**

tonystubbs@vic.org.uk

**Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell**

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

**Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick**

ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

**Volunteer Outreach Worker and Music Project**

**Co-ordinator Peter Webster**

peterwebster@vic.org.uk

**Combat Stress Helpline**

0800 138 1619

**NHS Military Veterans Psychological Therapies Service (NW)**

0161 253 6638

**The Royal British Legion**

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

**SSAFA**

email Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk

01772 260 462

**Rossendale Citizens' Advice**

0300 456 2552 Mon to Fri 10am-4pm

**The Samaritans**

01706 830999 Freephone 116 123

**Mental Health Helpline**

0800 915 4640 Mon to Fri 7pm - 11pm Sat

& Sun 12 noon to 12 midnight

**Royal Air Forces Association**

01772 426930

**Veterans UK Free Helpline**

0808 1914 218

**East Lancashire Single Point of Access**

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

**Outreach Service**

10am-noon

**MONDAY - first week only**

Place de Creil, near Wilkos, Nelson.

**MONDAY - second week only**

Market Place Car park, Town Square Colne.

**MONDAY - third week only**

Town Square, Albert Road, Barnoldswick.

**MONDAY - to be confirmed**

Town Centre, Burnley.

## Want to help?

To donate to support the work of Veterans In Communities please visit our website and click on the secure BT MyDonate page

[www.veteransincommunities.org](http://www.veteransincommunities.org)

VIC supported by:



East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group



Supported by NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group's social investment fund



[www.facebook.com/VICVeteransInCommunities](http://www.facebook.com/VICVeteransInCommunities)