

There when you needed us most

OPENING the VIC Centre over the Christmas and New Year period was such a success that funding is being sought to continue the programme.

Open All Hours was an initiative funded by the MoD and saw more than 60 people accessing the centre at a time when many places are closed.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We opened from Boxing Day right through to December 30 and then again on Bank Holiday Monday January 2.

"We also used the money we had been given to open over the Easter period as we



know that holiday times can be very difficult for veterans, especially if they are not with their families.

"I would like to say thank you to Carole Mills for providing a chilli meal, to Barry Payton for the pasta dish and Claire Wright for a chicken stew and vegetable lasagne.

"We received excellent feedback and more people accessed the centre than we had expected. We also provided a food parcel for a young veteran's family who were in crisis."

In the centre, people could watch films, do arts and crafts, use the Wii and enjoy the company of others.



Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell ran a class to paint in the style of Bob Ross.

His first class of 2017

will be on Saturday January 28 from 10.30 to 3.30pm. the cost is £35 and all materials are supplied. To book call Darren on 01706 833180

Thank you and best wishes from all at VIC

A HEARTY thank you is being paid to Executive Director Diane Owen who has stepped down from the board.

Diane has been with Veterans In Communities from its inception and is one of our original trustees.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Diane resigned because she has family commitments and she felt she couldn't give the same level of support she had given to VIC previously. We are grateful for all her help over the years especially in securing funding from the Armed Forces Covenant and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

"We wish her well for the future

and look forward to seeing her at the VIC Centre as a member."

At the Christmas Dinner we also said thank you and good luck for the future to Outreach Worker Claire Wright who is now working at The Royal British Legion's The Poppy Factory, which is nearer to her home.

Claire was an Outreach Worker in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale. Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "I would like to say thank you to Claire for all the work that she put in at VIC.

"She is still a volunteer member and we hope she will stay in touch and will call in whenever she can."



Ramble round Healey Dell

WALKERS from VIC got their boots on and enjoyed a healthy start to the New Year by walking around Healey Dell on the outskirts of Rochdale.

For Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell it was the first walk he had joined for six months because of ill health and VIC commitments.

He said: "It was a good walk and nice to get out in the fresh air.



"I have now made a New Year's resolution to put the effort in and join as many walks with VIC as I can in the coming year."

Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick has also organised a five-mile walk on Thursday February 2 around Rawtenstall and Cribden Hill. Call 01706 833180 for more details.

Veterans' workout

A SPECIAL veterans' gym workout session has been devised by personal trainer Natalie Smith at Pioneer Community Health Studio in Bacup.

Following a meeting between Natalie and Operations Manager Bob Elliott, a special group session has been arranged, which incorporates an army-style physical with circuit training and the session can be adapted to suit fitness levels or injury.

The group session will operate as a six-week course and there will be a small charge.

Bob said: "We are very grateful to Natalie for devising the course, which I am sure would help many of our members to improve their fitness levels.

"Natalie has also signed the gym up with the Defence Discount Card, so all of our members who have the card can obtain a discount on membership. Anyone who is interested in attending the course should contact me on 01706 833180 for more details."



AN INCREDIBLE £910 was raised by the VIC Singing Group at two supermarket concerts. They entertained customers with festive favourites at Asda and Tesco in Haslingden where a customer even took over from Santa, picked up the baton and conducted the Singing Group... see below.



Makeover for VIC

WORK is now underway to spruce up the VIC Centre thanks to a grant from County Councillor David Stansfield.

We would also like to thank Crown Paints for donations of paint and willing volunteers who are now carrying out the work. Patrick O'Reilly will be repointing ridge tiles, windows will be painted and resealed and work will continue for two months.

Satisfied reader

☞ Cheers Bob... I now have something to read at breakfast! ☞

Norman Hart
Group Secretary
Lincolnshire Royal
Observer Corps
Association

Welcome to Liz

VIC is pleased to welcome Liz Davies to the team – a new Project Worker in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

Liz takes over from Claire Wright and her post is working with the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.

Liz will be working alongside Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and Volunteer Outreach Worker Tony Stubbs. **A full interview will be in February's VIC Newsletter.**

Museum trip

A TRIP to the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester will take place on Saturday February 18.

En route Veterans will be visiting Trafford Veterans' Club where a full English breakfast is just £3.50. A charge of £1 will cover transport costs. Book places on 01706 833180.



2016 Round-up



OUR fourth year has once again exceeded all our expectations.

GRANT SUCCESS

We secured funding for 2016-17 from East Lancashire CCG and Heywood Middleton, and Rochdale CCG.

Three years of funding was also confirmed by Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust to work with the Community Health and Care Services. This funding is to deliver a veterans' service within the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams across Heywood Middleton and Rochdale.

QUALIFICATIONS

Over the last 12 months a number of our members have completed courses in: mental health first aid, 3-day first aid, navigation, community reporter training, fire marshal training and creative writing. We currently have members on ICT functioning and craft skills courses.

SINGING GROUP

The VIC Singing Group increased its performances; in addition to supermarkets, residential homes and community events, they performed in Bury, Accrington and Burnley, on the back of a lorry at Bacup and Stacksteads Carnival, at St George's Hall in Blackburn and at the annual Shires, a reunion for ex-service personnel from the Queen's Lancashire Regiment.

A live concert at Alder Grange School saw students filming and recording the group to make a CD and DVD.

OPEN ALL HOURS

We received an Armed Forces Covenant grant to extend the opening of the VIC Centre to include Christmas, Easter and weekends.

VIC ON AIRWAVES

In January we were visited by presenter Sally Naden from

BBC Radio Lancashire who broadcast the morning show live from the VIC Centre.

FIRST ALLOTMENT

We took over an allotment in Helmshore in January and our members cleared the site and over the last 10 months they have built raised beds, a shed, Poly Tunnel and we harvested our first organic produce in the summer.

In June the Prince's Trust Programme from Rossendale chose our allotment as their community project. They worked hard and had a hand-over ceremony with VIPs, invited guests and families.

5-A-SIDE FOOTBALL

We started a VIC 5 a-side Football team in February that plays in the Blackburn Social Inclusion League. The team strip was sponsored by Lifestylish.com, a Bacup home furnishings company.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

This year was the first time we had planned and mapped in advance a full 12 months walking and social inclusion trips. The walks included many outside of the local area. We held a sponsored Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge and this will become an annual event. Our members also enjoyed trips to the National Arboretum, Brockholes Nature Reserve, Crosby Beach, Burnley Fire Station, Illuminasia in Blackpool, and Manchester Science and Industry Museum.

ART UPDATE

We held regular Bob Ross painting classes and the Art Group exhibited its work at a number of local galleries and community events.

We relocated the Positive Art Shop in May to the VIC Centre. The shop achieved its aims as our first Social Enterprise and continues to sell art materials at low prices to the local community.

In April the Creative Community Hub launched Crafty Chatters. This group now meets every week and has attended a number of craft fairs where they have sold their homemade crafts for VIC.

TEAMBUILDING

We have worked with Alternate Forces in Littleborough, Rochdale, and have held three team building days; the final day was a competition between two other veteran groups; Forward Assist and Salford Armed Forces Veterans' Network, all we can say was... we were 'robbed'.

ARMED FORCES DAY

VIC celebrated the launch of the Armed Forces Day for the first time this year in Haslingden with a short ceremony with the new Mayor of Rossendale. Afterwards, we opened our centre for invited guests and members. Our members also joined many of the other ceremonies across East Lancashire and Greater Manchester. Armed Forces Day will now be celebrated in Rawtenstall and Haslingden each year.

BRITAIN HAS SPIRIT

One of our members Darren Horsnell was nominated in the Britain Has Spirit Awards; he won the regional vote and was then entered into the National final. The regional winners were invited to an Awards' Ceremony at the Barbican in London. Although Darren didn't win outright, he is our winner.

SOLDIERING ON

We have also been nominated for a Soldering On Award and picked as one of the finalists. Next month we will meet the judging panel at the House of Lords. The Awards' Ceremony is in March.

24-HOUR VIGIL

VIC held a 24-hour vigil to remember the Somme on July 1.

In the morning a service was held with readings from three of the local clergy.

FREEDOM PARADE

We supported Rossendale Council when the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment held its Freedom Parade in Haslingden.

SECOND ALLOTMENT

We signed for our second allotment in Middleton and work started in July.

AGM

We held our first public AGM in September. Accounts are available on the Charity Commission website.

CENTRE USERS

The VIC Centre has been used for outreach by: Military Veterans' Service, Combat Stress, Inspire, Lancashire Wellbeing, Shelter and Citizens' Advice.

REMEMBRANCE

During Remembrance, VIC attended services in Rossendale and Greater Manchester. Our Singing Group performed at the Festival of Remembrance Concert and we organised a small service at the Haslingden Memorial Gardens on Armistice Day, supported by the newly formed Haslingden branch of The Royal British Legion.

HAPPY 94th BIRTHDAY

We celebrated two of our oldest members' birthdays this year; Tommy Norfolk and Lewis Banham. They are both Second World War veterans and both turned 94.

SADLY MISSED

We lost two members this year: Maureen Siddall, who was one of the first to join the Singing Group, and Les Ellis, who came to our craft group. Both will be sadly missed. The VIC Singing Group was asked by Maureen's family to perform at the her funeral.



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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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-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

VIC supported by:



East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group



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



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