



**'Ration' packs**

**THANK** you for all the donations of food, cakes, drinks and treats that have kept the team going.

Volunteers have enjoyed delicious home cooked meals including chilli and chicken and rice, sausages and drinks from Simon Peace's Bratty van and treats paid for by well-wishers including, Mannings bacon butties, cakes and Ninja Coffee drinks.

**Thank you**

**AN ANONYMOUS** well-wisher sent our Chief Executive Amanda Walton and Administrator Amy Thompson a box of flowers with a card giving thanks and appreciation for all their hard work.

Amanda said: "It was a lovely surprise, but we don't know who to thank as there was no name written in the card. Whoever you are, a huge thank you."



**Vaccination support**

**A ROUND** of applause to all the volunteer marshals representing VIC who have continued to give up hours of their own time to make the vaccination hubs run smoothly.

Since January, a large contingent of VIC members willingly offered their time to marshal both the Rawtenstall and Accrington hubs.

This month we had two weeks when marshals were called to help for five full days, sometimes until 8pm in Rawtenstall.

Always in good spirits, the teams find novel ways of passing the time, 'Santa' aka Bernard Tighe now has a giant novelty Santa hand to go along with his tell-tale hat, some of the morning team posed as three 'wise' monkeys while another member of the morning team sings

and dances the hours away.

At one stage the marshals turned shepherds when a small flock of sheep made a appearance.

We were also delighted to welcome our oldest member Lewis Banham for his second vaccination.

Counts indicate that in Rawtenstall the team could be marshalling around 1,350 vehicles a day on the narrow access road.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "On average they might do 500 vaccinations throughout the day, over the five days that could be 2,500 local people will have either had a their first or second COVID vaccination.

"By far the majority of people are friendly,

appreciative of the hard work of the volunteers and NHS staff delivering the vaccines, respectful and overall have a very positive experience of the process.

"However unfortunately we have had a very small cohort of people who seem to think they can park where they want, drop off where they want, feel they can verbally abuse our car park marshals or ignore the simple instructions from the marshals.

"The experience is very well organised and this is only because of the teams on the ground playing their part in the vaccine process."

New hi-vis have been provided by Professional Workwear by StitchesRus in Milnrow.





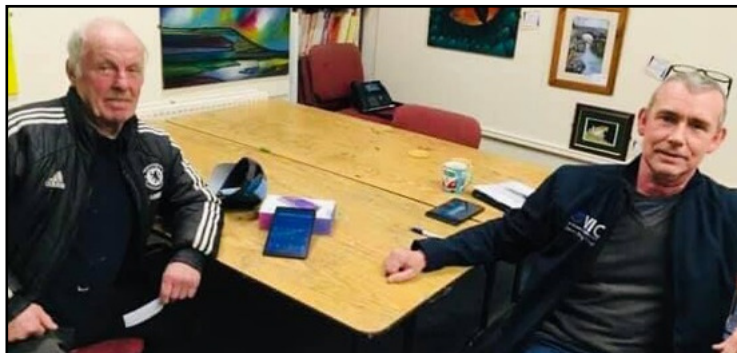
As I have been blessed with the fantastic help from Gill at VIC, I find it totally amazing that the next part of my assistance will be contacting me on Monday morning.

To be honest, with Gill referring me on Thursday morning, I want to say how much I appreciate the help given, and for such a quick response by the third party.

I can honestly say that VIC has given me the best level of support in all the years of volunteering in my time.

Many thanks for the help from Gill and the other members who have been involved with me whilst I have been a member of VIC.

**Gary Horrocks**



## Charities help each other

**A HELPING hand to assist the Haslingden branch of The Royal British Legion get into the digital age has been given by VIC.**

Our Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten project loaned a tablet to Chairman Tony Gallagher, who is pictured with Project Officer Ray Sharkey.

Local RBL Secretary Amy Thompson, who is also our Administrator, said: "During this last 12 months, there are so

many things that our branch has been unable to do due to the pandemic.

"However we have still been here, working away in the background. We now need to get our branch meetings back up and running so we can plan for the year ahead.

"However, not all of us have moved into the digital age, and our Chairman Tony is one of those who didn't have the capabilities to be able to chair a meeting digitally."

## Marshalling feedback

*First of all thank you, for the kind and efficient manner in which the lads and lasses carried out their duties at the Rawtenstall Hub over these recent weeks. It's not easy dealing with members of the public, who are confused, bewildered and a little overawed by pandemic speculation.*

*Cool, calm efficiency calmed that situation, borne by military tone, but with compassion and kindness.*

*Secondly, although I saw only a small proportion of VIC members, I can honestly say, that they represented just what is the very best in ex-military people.*

*A smile, a laugh and joke in adverse circumstances, but let's get on with the job.*

*Finally, I don't know who organises the logistics, but absolutely well done. A seamless integration with the NHS staff who made all this possible. Everybody was happy. End of!*

*VIC has the potential to become a valuable resource, if only the powers that be would realise it.*

## In memorium

### Duncan Johnstone

**IT IS with profound sadness that we have to report the passing of VIC member Duncan Johnstone, who died suddenly this month at his home in Rossendale, aged 38.**

Duncan – DJ – served with the Queens Lancashire Regiment for more than nine years and was based at Catterick. He completed tours of Iraq and Afghanistan. Duncan's sister said that the army was his life and his family requested a military presence at his funeral.

A bugler played the Last Post and the cortege was accompanied by a piper from the Scots Guards. Veterans were asked to line the route into Accrington Crematorium.



### Jack Gregory

**VETERANS from The Sandbag Cafe were shocked to learn of the passing of VIC member Jack Gregory.**

Liz and Lauren Davies quickly arranged for there to be veterans to attend his burial at Rochdale Cemetery.

As there was no time to plan a proper send off, COVID-restrictions willing, there will be a fitting tribute service to Jack on June 24 at his graveside and standard bearers would be appreciated.

For more information contact Ian Rosales.



## Bespoke gifts c/o VIC

**WE WILL soon be launching an ebay shop to sell our bespoke sublimation gifts now that the service has been relocated to the VIC Centre in Haslingden.**

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell will be using the technology to enable people to create personal gifts for friends and family.

He said: "We can use this

to put pictures, images and messages onto cups, mugs, coasters, place mats, mouse mats, water bottles and thermos mugs.

"We can make keyrings, wallets and also put pictures on to cotton clothing. A catalogue is being put together and the ebay shop will be open soon. Keep an eye out for information on our Facebook page."





# Step-by-step - welcome back

**THROUGHOUT the pandemic, VIC has kept supporting veterans, even though the centre has not been able to operate as it normally would.**

However, with restrictions scheduled to begin easing from next week, we already have plans in place for the safe, scaled reopening

of services at VIC.

Many services switched to online Zoom meetings, including in more recent months, The Model Railway Club on Monday mornings, The Sandbag Café on Tuesdays and Burnley and Pendle outreach on Fridays.

Art sessions and Bob Ross classes have also been held over Zoom.

If the road map goes

according to plan, from next week **Step one** walks will be able to be organised and Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick will be arranging for walks of differing length and difficulty to be held twice a month. The allotment will also be allowed to open, activities will be for a maximum of six people outdoors.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "**Step two** will be no sooner than April 12 and that is when we will be able to start looking at reopening the VIC Centre and our shop in Accrington's Arndale.

"We will still be sticking to social distancing rules and limiting numbers and although our art group will be able to return,

there will be less members and so some will still access it over Zoom.

"**Step 3** will be no earlier than May 17 and that is when we hope to switch The Sandbag Café from Zoom to Sandon House and hopefully reopen the Mess Tin in Middleton. This is all dependent on community centre restrictions easing."

## Tablet unites D-Day hero with family in Aus

### HMR news

**ALTHOUGH The Sandbag Cafe is still waiting to reopen, members who are not joining the Zoom sessions are not left out.**

Sandbag Committee Chairman Ian Rosales said: "I have been keeping a watchful eye on a regular basis to make sure their wellbeing is ok, they have medication and have gone for their vaccination.

"Andy Bell and I have been delivering lunches in all weathers and thanks to Sarah for making the lunches as well as looking after her children while they were home schooling."

Birthday cards have been sent to make sure veterans special days were remembered.

### Food donation

**HEYWOOD Morrisons Champion Joanne kindly provided VIC with generous donations that will be put to good use for the veterans in the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale areas.**

**THE only surviving member of D-Day heroes No 4 Commando E troop can now see his family on the other side of the world thanks to VIC.**

Private Harvey O'Hara, from Burnley, was one of the original D-Day leaders, when aged 21 he landed on Sword Beach in Northern France.

He has benefited from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust funded Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten project and now has a tablet on loan.

Harvey, 97, whose service nickname was Paddy because of his Irish surname, lives with his grandson Brett, a Royal Logistics Corps veteran.

Brett's technical skills enabled his granddad to Facetime his second youngest daughter Pat who lives in Australia and he had not seen since 1994.

Harvey said: "I talk to my daughter every week but when we were able to see each other, she started bawling her eyes out."

He is now looking forward to Facetimeing the grandchildren he has never met.

VIC Project Worker Ray Sharkey said: "Harvey's story is the embodiment of what this project is all about.

"Enabling veterans to see family and friends and helping



them to gain a new skillset."

Photographs of Harvey and his comrades were made into commemorative stamps and

postcards that were issued in 2019 for the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

He recalled his experience on June 6 1944 saying: "There were six troops of Commandos and in each troop there were 60 of us.

"The landing craft opened at the front, I jumped off and found I was up to my chin in water and I was 6ft 1ins tall, 13 stone and a fit young man.

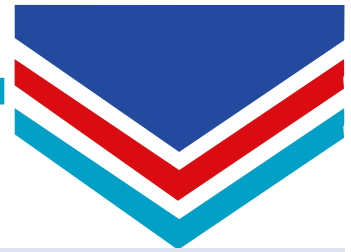
"In front of us was quarter of a mile of steel barricades that were 10ft high before we got to the beach. I had no fear because we had trained so much and had carried out so



many practice landings and landings that had been aborted; it was just automatic for us.

"The Commandos were the most fantastic bunch of men you could hope to meet; they were all volunteers and we had a saying 'me and my pal' and where your pal went, you went."

On D-Day plus five he was severely injured after being blown up by the Nazis and was taken back to England. He spent the next 11 months being treated and was one of the first military personnel to have his wounds treated with penicillin by Alexander Fleming's team.



## ROSSENDALE

**NOTE COVID CHANGES TO ACTIVITIES  
FOR ZOOM DETAILS CONTACT VIC**

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

**Outreach Service**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

9am-4.30pm

VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL.

Call 01706 833180

**TUESDAY**

**ON ZOOM**

**Art Group**

12.30pm

**WEDNESDAY**

**ON LOCATION**

**Allotment**

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180

**THURSDAY**

**ON ZOOM**

**Art Group**

12.30pm

**STILL SUSPENDED**

**VIC Choir**

6.30-8.30pm

**EVERY MONTH**

**ON ZOOM**

**Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes**

Contact Darren 01706 833180

**ON LOCATION**

**Walking Group**

Restricted numbers see Facebook or website for details.

**BY INVITATION ONLY**

**Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club**

9.30am-11.30pm

Spencer's Coffee Shop, The Old Chapel, Ebenezer Terrace, Billington, BB7 9NN.

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

**Outreach Service**

**TUESDAY - alternate weeks**

Breakfast at Burnley FC in the Community Cafe, Sharpe Walk. 9am-11am

**ON ZOOM**

**FRIDAY**

11am

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

**ON ZOOM**

**The Sandbag Cafe and drop in**

**TUESDAY**

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

**VIC Outreach**

**TUESDAY**

12.30pm-2.30pm

Middleton Gardens, M24 1AB

**The Mess in the safe and drop in**

1pm-2.30pm

The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

**THURSDAY**

**BY INVITATION ONLY**

9am-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club

Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon

**VIC Outreach**

1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

## HYNDBURN

**ON ZOOM**

**MONDAY**

**Model Railway Club**

10am

**FRIDAY**

**Outreach Service**

10.30am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

## RIBBLE VALLEY

**Outreach Service**

**TUESDAYS**

## VIC 01706 833180

**Chief Executive Amanda Walton**

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

**Operations Manager Bob Elliott**

bobelliott@vic.org.uk

07961 554 006

**Admin Officer Amy Thompson**

amythompson@vic.org.uk

**Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth**

stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk

**Project Worker Bev Fowler**

beverleyfowler@vic.org.uk

07741 902 343

**Project Worker Ray Sharkey**

raysharkey@vic.org.uk

**Transformational Coach Gill Hughes**

gillhughes@vic.org.uk

07741 902 411

**Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald**

melfitzgerald@vic.org.uk

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

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

**Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick**

ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

**Sessional Worker Bernard Tighe**

bernardtighe@vic.org.uk

**VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde**

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

## Contacts

**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

**Rossendale Citizens Advice**

0300 456 2552

**The Samaritans**

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

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**

0800 018 2361

**Veterans UK Free Helpline**

0808 1914 218

**East Lancashire Single Point of Access**

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

**Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans**

www.ba4v.org

01204 776628

**VIC supported**

by:



East Lancashire

Clinical Commissioning Group



Rossendalealive  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Putting people first



ROCHDALE  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH  
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of Service Charities



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To donate to support the work of VIC please visit our website and click on the secure

Virgin Money Giving link

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