

# Praise for charity's work throughout Covid pandemic

**VIC was praised at its seventh annual general meeting for the continued support given to veterans during the pandemic.**

Although the trustees' report and accounts documented the work of the charity up to April, the online meeting attendees on Zoom did discuss the organisation's response to the 2020 coronavirus outbreak.

Trustee Major Bob Smethurst said: "One thing that was done especially well is the response to COVID. Myself, as a veteran, had phone calls to ask how I was doing; people at VIC really care and did something to engage with the members."

A healthy balance sheet and trustee reports were presented to the meeting by Chairman Ronnie Barker.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton then outlined how the charity had benefited from more than 5,000 volunteer hours, more than 170 new members had been identified, registered and supported and more than 200 outreach sessions had been delivered.

She said: "VIC members have also worked with

teenagers who were completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award on their volunteer aspect."

A retail outlet was opened in Hyndburn bringing new members and more volunteers.

Amanda said: "VIC has a strong belief in partnership working and we have attended more than 50 partnership meetings and helped to develop joint working practices."

That included delivering Veteran Friendly GP Practice courses in association with Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub and The Royal British Legion.

Project Manager of the Hub, based at UCLan in Preston, Ian Barber told the meeting: "I want to record my thanks to VIC who have worked in partnership with me in my project. You bring governance and oversight to this centre and to what you do."

The charity had organised walks attended by 44 people while 60 had been involved with social inclusion trips; 50 support hampers had been delivered to those in isolation and vulnerable and during the holidays, the



*VIC Choir singing 'We'll Meet Again'*



**Chief Executive  
Amanda Walton**

centre only closed on Christmas Day.

Amanda praised the VIC Choir for raising £3,800 through events, and thanked not just the singers but the collectors too.

When asked for improvements, the attendees, including one who was in Italy, voiced support for the way the organisation was working.

Lancashire County Council Armed Forces

Champion Alf Clempson said VIC was a charity that others could learn from.

He said: "Some think that they are their own empire, we need to be sharing and working together and I am a big fan of VIC."

Rossendale Council's Armed Forces Champion Councillor Christine Gill added her congratulations to VIC for carrying on throughout the pandemic.

She added: "It has not been easy, but it is so important that you are able to carry on as so many things have been left to others. Continue to do what you do and work hard."

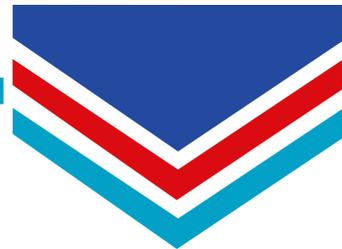
Rochdale Council's Armed Forces Representative Councillor Janet

Emsley said: "VIC does valuable work and we are really honoured and proud of what you are doing through these unprecedented and sad times and this rubbish that is COVID has made more issues that people need support with."

Chairman Ronnie concluded the meeting by showing photographs of the many successful activities from art to craft, gardening to Veterans In Production, walking to team building, breakfast and luncheon clubs to outreach and Remembrance.

After a Zoom recording of the VIC Choir singing 'We'll Meet Again', Ronnie added: "We will break down the barriers and we will not let this virus rule our lives."

# Club on right track



**IT IS hoped that our model railway club may be able to begin meeting before the end of the year, but until then preparations are being made.**

The club will be based in the basement of our shop in Hyndburn, at Accrington's Arndale, which is currently only open on Fridays.

Operations Manager Bob

Elliott said: "Over the first two weeks of September, two of our founding members of the VIC model railway club have been going through some of the models, track, buildings and other miscellaneous pieces that were donated before the COVID lockdown.

"A big thank you to Vinny Houghton from the Heywood Sandbag Café, and others, who have donated their unwanted models."



## Gone fishing

**AFTER non-stop working throughout the lockdown and subsequent months, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and Chief Executive Amanda Walton took a well earned break and went fishing.**

Amanda said: "It was nice to have a day off and to get out in the fresh air after such a hectic few months. I had never been fishing before, but I caught a fish. It was too small so we put it back in."

They went to The Rising Fishery at Fence near Burnley

## Laptop donation to aid veterans

**VIC has received a reconditioned laptop which had been generously donated by Kent-based Computers4Charity to Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.**

Computers4Charity provide reconditioned computers to charities and community groups across the UK and Africa.



*Members of The Sandbag Café in Heywood, helped Vinnie Houghton to celebrate his 85th birthday in style.*

## Tech lesson

**A SECOND tuition session has been held by Peter Ashworth at the VIC Centre to instruct members on how to use tablets to keep in touch.**

An Armed Forces Covenant Trust 'Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten' grant paid for the tablets, which are being provided for members to use.

At the second session Jack, Mick, Joe, Ann and Elaine were taught to use Zoom and emails on the tablets.

Peter is delivering the training and for the second session he was assisted by Project Worker Ray Sharkey.

Further training and refresher courses will continue to be run at the VIC Centre.

Members who would benefit from a tablet should contact the office on 01706 833180.





# Art comp goes global

## 7-mile ramble round Hassy

**THE walking group will be embarking on a moderate seven-mile walk taking in Tor Hill and High Moss.**

Current restrictions mean a maximum of five walkers, and the guide, can attend. Places need to be booked in advance by calling VIC. If more than five want to attend, an alternative date will be arranged.

The walk will leave Clough Head Cafe and Information Centre, Grane Road, Haslingden, at 10am on Thursday October 15.

Suitable clothing and footwear must be worn as it can be quite boggy on this route. There is a cafe at the end for refreshments afterwards, but there are no toilet facilities at the start. Those attending must make their own way to the start point.

To book a place call 01706 833180.

## Choir practice still on hold

**PLANS to resume the VIC Choir practices at Haslingden Community Link have been postponed after additional lockdown measures were introduced across Lancashire.**

VIC Chairman and founding member of the choir Ronnie Barker said: "Whatever the outcome of our request for clarification by the Musicians Union over rehearsals for community choirs, we have decided the ever-rising risk is not acceptable so we are cancelling for the foreseeable future. Your safety is our main priority."

**ENTRIES are coming in for our Art Competition that is being organised by VIC in conjunction with the Veterans Art Organisation Facebook group.**

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth has been establishing links across the globe to encourage entries from veterans and emergency service personnel and their families.

Veterans Arts Organisation is an online network set up by VIC Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell and his partner Tracey Vick for veterans and their family members who enjoy art at all levels. Darren uses art himself as a way of expressing his emotions or feelings.

Our competition is open to amateur and hobby artists only and all works to have been completed in the past six months and must be the artist's original work.

Steve said: "I contacted Graeme Stevenson, who is a fine artist in Australia and runs 'Colour In Your Life' programmes.

"I have been watching him for about seven or eight years. He knew the effect that art can

have on people's mental health and began making programmes from all over the world.

"COVID changed things and now he has set up a virtual studio and he welcomes artists in over Zoom."

Steve was amazed when his email led to a call from Australia and an offer to host webinars for members to improve their ability.

He said: "We will be holding Zoom meetings and explain what we are doing and we will be seeking Australian veterans to enter the competition."

Steve also got connections to veterans' arts groups in America and is working on how to get interest from veterans in Canada. In the UK, Steve has connected with The Soldiers' Arts Academy in London.

Submissions should be under one of the following categories:

- Paintings - either wildlife, landscape, seascape or portraiture.
- Photography; either landscape or portraiture.
- Poetry or creative writing.
- Music.
- Other art eg sculpture,

pyrography etc

● Lockdown artwork in any of the above categories.

Files must be submitted by email to: [stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk](mailto:stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk) and sent in jpeg format only.

There will be one winner and one runner up from each category and the closing date will be Armistice Day at 11am on November 11. The judges' decision is final.

The winners and runners up, will be announced on our Facebook page and our website on Friday December 18, 2020.

### Judges so far:

Northwest poet and radio DJ Paul Jenkins will be judging the poetry and creative writing class.

Photography will be judged by Emma Holt from Emma Holt Photography who ran our successful online course Developing Veterans Photography.

Renowned aviation and maritime artist Derek Blois will be one of the art judges. He has also been known to turn his hand to portraits and landscapes.

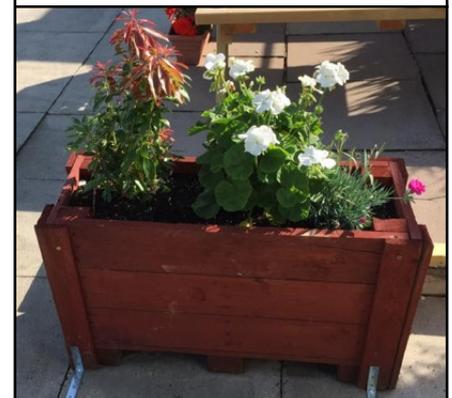


**MP visit**

**HYNDBURN and Haslingden's MP Sara Britcliffe attended the VIC Centre to find out more about our work.**

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "It was great to see her and talk about the work VIC does in her constituency. She's planning another visit when we can have more time to show her around, meet some of members and other staff. Sara has offered to support us where she can and we look forward to working with her."

**A geranium which was donated by VIC to Pat McEvoy is now growing in a planter that was made by Veterans In Production for Bolton Bowling Club.**





## ROSSENDALE

**NOTE COVID CHANGES TO ACTIVITIES**

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

**Outreach Service**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

9am-4.30pm

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

Call 01706 833180

**MONDAY**

**ON ZOOM**

**Crafty Chatters**

10.30am

**TUESDAY**

**ON ZOOM**

**Art Group**

12.30pm

**WEDNESDAY**

**ON LOCATION**

**Allotment**

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road,

Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180

**THURSDAY**

**STILL SUSPENDED**

**VIC Choir**

6.30-8.30pm

**FRIDAY**

**ON ZOOM**

**Art Group**

12.30pm

**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**

Haslingden Community Link

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

**Outreach Service**

**TUESDAY - alternate weeks**

Breakfast Club at Burnley FC in the Community Centre, Charter Walk.

9am-11am

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at Burnley FC in the Community, Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield House, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, at Morrisons in Nelson and Asda in Colne.

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

**BY INVITATION ONLY**

**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 Cafe 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

**FRIDAY**

**Outreach Service**

10.30am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1PL.

## RIBBLE VALLEY

**Outreach Service**

**TUESDAYS**

9.30am-11.30pm

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

## VIC – 01706 833180

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**Project Worker Ray Sharkey**

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**Transformational Coach Gill Hughes**

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**Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald**

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

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**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@ssafo.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:



## Want to help?

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)

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