



# VIC Newsletter

## Helping with vaccine fightback

**VETERANS are lending their support to assist Covid-19 vaccination hubs in Rossendale and Hyndburn.**

Several members of VIC have been providing car parking marshals at the sites to ensure that the vaccination programme runs smoothly.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "They have been doing an outstanding job in some quite challenging weather

conditions and some unwarranted comments from car drivers, however they continue to soldier on."

Strategic Manager for Rossendale Primary Care Networks Andy Lavery emailed VIC to praise the work of the volunteers saying: "The input of your volunteer marshals has been great. Please pass on my thanks. Well done all."

On a Thursday and Friday the veterans, in full PPE, have been carrying out two



shifts to make sure cars are parked safely at Rawtenstall Primary Health Care Centre on Bacup Road and also helping at Acorn Primary Health Care Centre in Accrington.

Bob added: "If any veterans would like to volunteer, please let

me know.

"The more volunteers we have, the less time outside, more brews and we can look at 3-4 hour shifts.

"The vaccination programme is the only way we are going to get back to some form of

normality, so this is one of the reasons VIC wants to support the initiative.

"When we formed in 2012, one of the main aims of VIC was to support the local community by using our unique experiences and skills."

VIC also helped to prepare the Rawtenstall centre for opening by collecting chairs from Irwell Medical Practice in Bacup and the East Lancashire NHS Trust HQ in Nelson.

### Sandbag Cafe goes online

**REGULAR Zoom meetings are now being held to unite VIC members in the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale areas and those in our model railway club.**

Using tablets provided by VIC from a grant we received during the first lockdown, members of The Sandbag Café are now getting to grips with the technology.

It enables them to not just meet up when it would be the café, but also to keep in contact in safety at any time.

The model railway club will be setting up a layout in the cellar of the Hyndburn shop in Accrington Arndale, when restrictions permit.

Until then, they are meeting online. To join, contact Ray Sharkey on 01706 833180 or email raysharkey@vic.org.uk

The next stage will be to roll out Zoom meetings to connect veterans in the Burnley and Pendle areas.

### Driving a strong partnership

**A DRIVER training centre's vehicles now display large adverts for VIC in a partnership between veterans.**

Royal Engineer veteran Mark Gaines is director of Meg Training Solutions with bases in Great Harwood and Nelson. He is now looking to further the link by introducing a 'pass it on' scheme to encourage veterans to buddy up and help each other to upskill their army driver training.

Mark, who has 30 years experience in the transport industry, said: "I am fortunate to have got where I am today because of my army background and hard work. What I am planning will be a way of helping veterans to look after



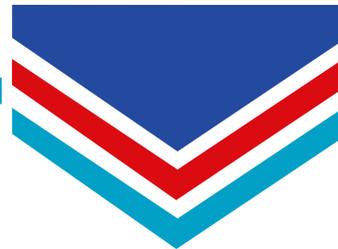
each other."

Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Project Worker Ray Sharkey forged the link with Mark and now large adverts have been placed on the rear of three of the company's training lorries and a further trailer is to be liveried. The charity is also mentioned on the business's website.

As soon as restrictions

permit, the vehicles will be back on the road helping more drivers gain new skills and VIC will benefit from the promotion.

Mark has many years under his belt in varying roles from driver, transport planner, transport manager to running his own successful training business.



# Helping hands

## Volunteer training

**SEVEN** volunteers from VIC have embarked on a special Volunteer Training programme with Lancashire Adult Learning.

Veteran Craig Harrison, a lecturer in Health and Wellbeing, organised the online course designed specifically for volunteers working with veterans.

The eight-week virtual course covers a variety of aspects including roles and responsibilities of volunteering, equality and diversity, mental health awareness, mentoring, training for befrienders, food hygiene and health and safety. It will lead to an accredited certificate.

## Fridge donation

**THANKS** to the intervention of Project Worker Ray Sharkey, an elderly VIC member was given a new fridge in time for Christmas.

The pensioner, from Haslingden, was due to get one of our hampers which included a frozen Christmas dinner, but she told Ray that her fridge had stopped working.

Ray contacted Rummage Rescuers, in Blackburn, to see whether they had a second-hand fridge until a new one could be ordered.

When Ray explained who it was for, they said they had funding to provide a new fridge and, within the day, it was delivered and installed and ready for the hamper arriving.

**VETERANS** were on hand to help the charity Positive Start upgrade toilet facilities at its Rawtenstall base in Bury Road.

VIC and Positive Start have worked closely together for a number of years, assisting in collecting food for the Food Group as well as distributing food to those shielding during lockdown.

Volunteer Jo Shakeel said: "We want the building to be able to be used for different groups, but the doorways wouldn't accommodate the width of a wheelchair.

"VIC kindly volunteered to help remove a wall to allow the toilets to be made more accessible for people with disabilities.

"Bacup company J and J Ormerod kindly provided a new



toilet, sink and unit.

"We are very grateful to everyone who has helped as we could not have done the project without them."

Jo said she was hoping that adult learning classes may be able to use the facilities in the future.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We were happy to be able to help Positive Start and removed the walls carefully so that as much as possible could be saved and recycled."

## Pyrography labours of love

**VETERAN** Brian McEvoy has used his pyrography skills to upcycle a coffee table creating a beautiful African scene.

The table is just one of a number of projects Brian has been undertaking, including the bespoke industrial coffee table features in December's newsletter and a bedding box.

The projects are therapy for Brian and help him to cope with mental health issues.

All proceeds from the sale of



the items benefit VIC. For more information please contact 01706 833180.

## Christmas meals to go for 20

**TASTY** Christmas dinners were served up to 20 veterans thanks to the hard work of Sandy and Andy Bell.

Project Worker Bev Fowler said: "I would like to say a big thank you to Sarah and Andy, they made all the

difference over the festive period to our lonely and isolated veterans."

VIC members Ian Rosales, chair of The Sandbag Café in Heywood, and social secretary Peter Shinzil have also been providing meals for people in the area.



## Bob Ross

**ARTS and Crafts** Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell will be running the first painting in the style of Bob Ross class over Zoom on January 23 at 12.30pm.

The first picture is a snowy scene, and anyone wanting to join the class should contact Darren on 01706 833180 if materials are needed and for the Zoom link.

Darren has also created a series of art tutorials on YouTube.

## Hyndburn

**ALTHOUGH** restrictions mean our Hyndburn shop is currently closed, the last Friday, just before Christmas, was a huge success.

One of the regular members John brought in his accordion and a raffle was held which raised £90.



## Hampers

**HUNDREDS** of Christmas hampers were distributed by VIC – more information in the review overleaf.





# 2020 - a year no-one will forget

**THIS year has been impacted by the Covid pandemic and lockdowns that have been introduced since March.**

We had to change how we operated, however we have been just as busy.

## **WALKS**

From January to the beginning of March we started our first walks of the year; Jumbles Reservoir, Hog Low Pike, Grane Reservoir and Blackstone Edge.

## **CO-OP**

*We received a donation of £1,334 from three Co-op branches in Rossendale.*

## **BOB ROSS**

We continued with our successful Bob Ross classes at the VIC Centre.

## **LIFESAVERS**

*Members completed our first course of the year; Lifesavers run by Lancashire Adult Learning.*

## **GATES**

Veterans In Production replaced the gates of the centre using recycled pallets.

## **PARTNERSHIP**

*We attended the Pendle INT Development Event with a number of other providers.*

## **BRONZE AWARD**

We were successful in gaining the Bronze Award in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme.

## **LOCKDOWN**

**At the end of March the VIC Centre went into lockdown.**

## **REMOTE WORKING**

Our outreach team became one of many other organisations who worked remotely; our members and referrals became a telephone information, support and advice service.

After the initial lockdown, our team returned to work and although the centre remained locked down, we were able to meet members by appointment only at the VIC Centre.

## **OFFICE OPEN**

*The office remained open throughout the year, but with only a small team who became the single point of contact to take referrals from partner organisations and deal with the day-to-day operations of VIC.*

## **FOOD DELIVERIES**

We offered some of our resources to support Positive Start with the delivery of food to people shielding and those who were vulnerable.

## **CARE CALLS**

*Our volunteer members were proactive in their areas checking on members, delivering food and carrying out welfare checks.*

## **ZOOM**

We reacted quickly to the changes of not meeting face-to-face or having centre-based activities. All meetings, Bob Ross classes and the Choir utilised the Zoom virtual platform.

## **COMMUNITY WORK**

*Some members continued to work in the community and helped with maintenance of*

*members' gardens while keeping Covid safe.*

## **REMEMBRANCE**

All Remembrance services, VE and VJ day celebrations, were cancelled so members dressed the VIC Centre and held a two minute silence while socially distancing.

## **HELPING HAND**

*When Covid testing stations arrived in Rossendale and Hyndburn in May, we supported the visiting military and provided cakes and brews.*

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

We started a 12-week online photography course for our members using Zoom in June.

## **RENOVATION**

*During lockdown we were able to make some changes to the VIC Centre and built a new office by adding partition wall in the old IT Room.*

## **ALLOTMENT**

Once lockdown was lifted, members returned to the allotment, cleared it and planted vegetables and these were later harvested.

## **CHOIR**

*The VIC Choir was unable to perform publically, but continued to practice using Zoom and recorded songs to celebrate the NHS and VE Day.*

## **SILVER AWARD**

In August, we were successful in gaining the Silver Award in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme.

## **NEW MP VISIT**

*We were visited by Sara Britcliffe MP for Haslingden and Hyndburn; she has pledged her support to VIC.*

## **CAFE OPEN**

We opened The Sandbag Café in September after many of the members who had been shielding and in vulnerable groups were allowed to rejoin social groups as the Government lifted restrictions.

Tablets from the Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten programme were distributed and training was given.

In November, Teir 4 restrictions in Greater Manchester again forced its closure.

## **SILHOUETTES**

*Veterans In Production launched our WW1 soldier silhouettes to coincide with Remembrance.*

## **HYNDBURN**

The Hyndburn Veterans' Drop-in had to close during lockdown, however we were able to open again in June, but only one day a week.

When Lancashire went into a higher tier, we were unable to sell any of the VIC products, but we were able to keep open as a support group for our members only.

## **ART COMP**

*We launched an art competition in August with the Veterans' Art Organisation to showcase various art, photography, sculptures and creative writing that members had produced during*

*lockdown.*

*We expect this to become an annual competition with entries from veterans all over the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA.*

## **HAMPERS**

This year has seen a greater number of Christmas hampers going out to veterans and our members.

The RBL received 240 boxes donated by the Compass Group, and VIC was involved in distributing these to a number of the football clubs supporting veteran's programmes.

We distributed more than 300 food hampers to our members throughout this year.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support of donations and food we received and other organisations who supported our members.

## **VACCINE**

*VIC supported the Covid Vaccination Programme in Rossendale and Hyndburn by providing car park marshals and this continued into 2021.*

## **ADVERTISING**

Meg Training, a local logistics training company, has supported VIC by advertising our charity on their training lorries.

## **IN MEMORIUM**

*Sadly we lost six members this year: Doug Hocken, Tracey Vick, Carl Rivers, Bob Graham, Peter Maffett and Derek Cullen. We will remember them.*



## 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

**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

**SUSPENDED**

**Walking Group**

Restricted numbers see Facebook or website for details.

**SUSPENDED**

**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

**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 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 OL3 1UB.

## HYNDBURN

**FRIDAY**

**Outreach Service**

10.30am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

## RIBBLE VALLEY

**Outreach Service**

**TUESDAYS**

9.30am-11.30pm

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

## 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**

beverlyfowler@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@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.bafc4v.org

01204 776628

## 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)

VIC supported

by:



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Rossendalealife

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