



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Grant secures VIC future

THE future of VIC has been secured thanks to a Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust grant of £46,725.

VIC was one of just 13 organisations country-wide to be awarded a grant under the 'Sustaining Support programme' core track Round 2.

This latest grant, in addition to the charity being awarded a further two years of funding from the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group in April, ensures that outreach across the VIC areas of East Lancashire and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale is secure.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "This grant will help to fund core staff within our organisation so they can continue delivering the service to former Armed Forces personnel who need it.

"The funding will also allow VIC to provide greater support to our volunteers, who will be upskilled which will make the organisation more sustainable beyond the life of the grant.

"VIC will be offering volunteers the chance to undertake training so they

can help with benefits and housing, learn more about mental health and receive first aid training.

"They will be able to attend suicide awareness courses as well as specialised training to aid the individual's own progression.

"This grant will be used to empower the volunteers who have come through VIC as part of a peer support model and this in turn will help the core staff to continue with the level of service they already deliver."

Throughout the pandemic, VIC staff never stopped working, provided continuous care calls and no one was furloughed.

Amanda said: "I am so proud of the way everyone has dealt with what has been a really difficult time.

"We have now restarted all of our activities and in fact have extended our provision to include Blackburn and opened up a new coffee morning in Ribble Valley.

"We are going from strength to strength and, with the additional new funding and security that it brings, we are hoping to set up new projects in 2022 in accordance with what our members are telling us they want and would like to see."



Christmas meal

A SPLENDID Christmas meal was enjoyed by 55 members and supporters of VIC at the Rose 'n' Bowl in Stacksteads.

A raffle raised £278 to support the work of VIC and thank you to Chris Smethurst and Jacko and Anne Pearce for donating the prize hampers.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "I would like to thank everyone who attended our dinner, to Jon and Carole Lowe for the lovely food and a huge thank you to Amy Thompson and Bev Fowler for organising the day."

It was the ninth Christmas dinner organised by VIC; last year Covid prevented the celebration from being held.

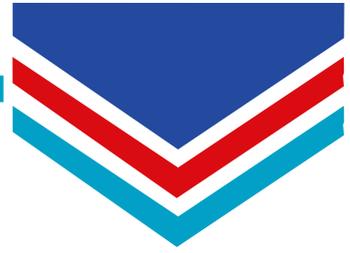
Chairman of VIC Ronnie Barker said: "What a great event – thank you for all the work that went into making this a special day. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year."

A further raffle at the Ribble Valley coffee morning and outreach raised £107.



<p>Open all hours</p>	<p>VIC will be 'open all hours' over the Christmas break to ensure veterans have a safe place to meet up. The VIC Centre on Bury</p>	<p>Road, Haslingden, will be open from 10am to 3pm on: Monday December 27 Tuesday December 28 Wednesday December 29</p>	<p>Thursday December 30 Friday December 31 Monday January 3. Normal hours resume on Tuesday January 4.</p>
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Hall transformation



Before



Hampers of cheer

VETERANS and supporters of VIC will be spreading Christmas cheer in the form of hampers which will be delivered to veterans, the elderly and vulnerable people in need.

The hampers have been created thanks to donations that have been given to VIC including a large selection of food and treats from Asda, Tesco and the Co-op.

Thank you also to Michael from the Colne Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club for their donation.



OUR entrance hall has been transformed thanks to the generous donation of a large wreath and table with a Remembrance book.

Veteran Steve Jary called in and asked if VIC was able to properly display it in a prominent place in our building and when we saw it we were blown away; it was a stunning piece of work.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Although we already had a Lest We Forget Remembrance Wall that combined a number of VIC paintings, fretwork, crafts and some donated poppy items we felt this piece would have to become the focal point.

"Any visitors who have called into the centre over

the last few weeks could not have missed the changes to the reception area.

"VIC outreach worker Steve Butterworth got his paintbrush out and the wall was prepared then repainted with a green that would match the leaves on the red poppy wreath."

Then we spent nine days planning the layout and making adjustments to the table so it fitted the space available and reused two old table legs from the back yard.

Bob added: "The end result is absolutely stunning and is a great focal point when you enter the VIC Centre in Haslingden."

● The Hide has also had a makeover.

Cuppas to benefit VIC

THANKS so much to everyone who voted for VIC to be chosen as Ninja Coffee Company's December charity.

VIC received 87 votes while Rossendale Responsible Animal Rescue received 68.

Ninja owner Matthew Devlin said: "Massive well done to VIC. These incredible people provided a huge support for our NHS in Rawtenstall and support the community.

"We will be donating 10p per coffee sold in our shops, The Hill and the Adrenaline Sports Centre. Retrospectively from December 1."

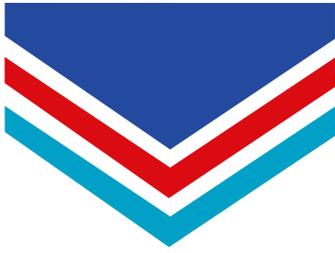


VIC finalist

AFTER an incredibly tough year for charitable organisations, VIC was delighted to be named as a finalist for the Not For Profit category of Rossendale Business Awards.

Five VIC representatives attended the presentation evening at The Ashcroft in Whitworth. Congratulations to trophy winner Rossendale Hospice.

Photo Liz Henson Photography



Memorial benches



STUNNING hardwood Remembrance benches have been created by a veteran as a way of thanking VIC for its help.

Royal Navy veteran diver David Green sought help from VIC when he was going through a dark time after a difficult break up.

David, from Rawtenstall, followed in his mother and father's footsteps when he joined the Navy in 1984, just after the Falklands War, and he served for seven years.

He said: "In 2019, I was poorly and I was at an all-time low. I went to VIC and asked for help. I was dealing with lots of traumas and needing to use food banks, but VIC has helped me massively.

"This community that VIC has created is priceless; an invisible shield for when you're down and feel



beat."

David, who is supported through the Building Better Opportunities, Changing Futures Project, said he received help from VIC's Transformational Coach Gill Hughes, Chief Executive Amanda Walton and latterly Veterans' Mental Health Caseworker Cath Mitton.

The charity had been donated vintage cast iron bench ends and David, together with VIC member Graham Limb,

organised a project to create the benches, assisted by North Lancs Training Group student Bailey Ralphs who is volunteering with VIC.

David said: "We got the ends professionally acid dipped and then black power coated and went to North West Timber Treatments in Waterfoot to get the best Sapele wood for the slats and advice on how to treat them."

He then sought the best products to stain and treat the wood and



Fletchers in Waterfoot provided the necessary products at a very reasonable rate.

David said: "Making the benches has helped me because it stopped me thinking about the problems in my life and gave me a purpose – to do something constructive and to say thank you to a service that helped me at my lowest point."

Volunteer veteran Graham Limb said: "It has been a labour of love. We took

everything to the basement of the VIC drop in and shop in Accrington's Arndale as there was lots of room for us to make the benches.

The charity had enough bench ends to make five high quality benches and each can be fitted with a personally inscribed plaque and is being sold for £600 each.

For details contact VIC on 01706 833180 or call at the Hyndburn shop on a Friday.



Bailey settles in

STUDENT Bailey Ralphs, from North Lancs Training Group, has been hard at work in the VIC Centre ensuring all the certificates won by VIC are neatly on display.

Together with veteran Andy Greaves, Bailey also helped to lay a base and assemble a small garden shed for Haslingden Community Link.

Bailey is on a 22-week work placement with VIC and is volunteering two days a week at the centre and also at the drop in and shop in Hyndburn.



Model railway takes shape

THE Sandbag Café member Vinnie Houghton has donated lots of items to our Model Railway Club for our layout which is being built in the cellar of the shop in Hyndburn.

The Old Contemptibles Railroad

is in the process of being constructed and Bob Brindley attended The Sandbag Café to give Vinnie the chance to make items for the model railway layout.

It was the first time Vinnie had used plaster, but he made a cracking job of it.



Thursday grubs up



VETERANS are now meeting regularly every Thursday afternoon at the VIC Centre in Haslingden to enjoy Greggs food and a natter.

What started as a one off, has now become a regular get together and is attracting veterans from all over East Lancashire, not just Rossendale.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "I think it is great and it is good to see so many veterans in The Hide enjoying the banter.

"I am impressed with

how popular it has become in such a short space of time. If it carries on as it has started, we are either going to have to extend it to another day or find a larger venue where they can meet.

"We are very grateful to Greggs in Haslingden for the supply of surplus food; we could not run this afternoon without their help."

David Hoyle has been attending VIC for around five years and his wife Maureen has accompanied him for the last three.

She said: "Coming



here helps David because he was getting depressed and he was

struggling at home."

David, 84, from Haslingden, joined the Royal Engineers on his National Service in 1956 and he served in Germany.

Roland and Sheila Dunn, from Rawtenstall, are also regulars at the Thursday Greggs and natter.

Roland, 93, joined up in 1947 and served for six years initially in the Border Regiment, then Manchester Regiment and finally Kings Liverpool.

He worked on transport, was a dispatch rider and drove Bedford QL lorries

serving three years in Berlin.

Roland said: "I have been coming to VIC for about five years and I have met quite a few people.

"It is nice to come here on a Thursday afternoon and have a good chat to everyone and we have made quite a few friends."

VIC is a centre for veterans, members of the blue light services and the community.

The Thursday Greggs and natter is on from 1pm to 3pm every week at the Bury Road centre. Call 01706 833180.



The Mayor of Ribble Valley Councillor Tony Austin is raising money for VIC during his year of office and invited Project Worker Ray Sharkey and volunteer Ron Flowers to attend a luncheon for fellow Lancashire Mayors at Whalley Golf Club.





Veterans stories on film

RESEARCHERS from Anglia Ruskin University attended the VIC Centre to meet with staff and volunteers ahead of filming in the New Year.

At the annual general meeting in September, it was revealed how VIC had been selected by a leading research project which is focusing on telling the stories of veterans and their transition into civilian life.

VIC is involved in the project looking into how veterans have been

helped by the arts and by being creative and a team visited VIC last month to meet with Darren Horsnell, Steve Butterworth, Dave Jodrell and Graham Limb.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "A team from the film department talked to them about their stories and how it links with VIC and the upshot is they will be creating a piece of art in the form of a film.

"There are ongoing conversations, they are preparing storyboards



and they will be returning towards the end of January with a film crew.

"This is something really exciting for VIC to

be a part of and we are delighted to be involved with such a major research project."

Not only will the members of VIC be

recorded, they will also learn new skills as they will be involved in the editing and production of the finished film.



Bike club raises £650

A HUGE thank you to biking club the Throttle Twisters MCC who held a rock night and raised £650 for VIC.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We would like to thank the club for choosing us. It was a brilliant night at the North Chadderton Social and

Bowling Club and the band was fantastic.

"They made us feel very welcome and VIC would like to thank the bike club for their support.

"It was a very well organised event so well done to the club, a lot of hard work went into putting the night together."



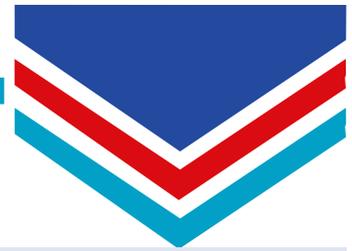
Thank you to the 'man in red' for making a guest appearance at VIC's The Sandbag Café in Heywood and spreading some Christmas joy.



VIC Choir entertain shoppers

THE VIC Choir was delighted to be back entertaining shoppers at Rawtenstall's Asda when more than £300 was raised for the charity.

The choir was also in fine voice at Trinity Baptist Church in Bacup for the Bacup Now's Big Christmas Bash.



ROSSENDALE

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

Outreach Service

MONDAY-FRIDAY

9am-4.30pm

For a home appointment call 01706 833180

MONDAY

Crafty Chatters

10am-12 noon

TUESDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

WEDNESDAY

Allotment

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

THURSDAY

Greggs and natter

1pm-3pm

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

Haslingden Community Link Cafe, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

Limited numbers book in advance

EVERY MONTH

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes Contact Darren 01706 833180

Walking Group see Facebook or website for details

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

MONDAY

Breakfast Club at the Community Kitchen, Charter Walk.

10am-noon

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

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

VIC Outreach

TUESDAY

The Mess Tin - cafe and drop in

1pm-2.30pm

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

THURSDAY

Rochdale Veterans' Breakfast Club and VIC Outreach

9am-10.30am Touchstones Cafe, The Esplanade OL16 1AQ.

RIBBLE VALLEY

Coffee Morning and Outreach

TUESDAYS

10am-noon

The Family Thrive Centre, New Market Street, Clitheroe, BB7 2JW.

VIC – 01706 833180

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Transformational Coach Gill Hughes

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07741 902 411

Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald

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Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

Veterans Mental Health Caseworker Cath Mitton

cathmitton@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@ssaafa.org.uk

01772 260 462

Citizens' Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn
0808 278 7975 freephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

The Samaritans

01282 694929

Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

Freephone 116 123

Op Courage

0800 652 2867 seek a referral through a GP or health professional

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

Armed Forces Support Group

01282 613132

HYNDBURN

Outreach / drop in/ Model Railway Club

FRIDAY

10am-3pm

VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

Accrington Stanley veterans' social coming soon – more information to follow

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Outreach Service

Alternate TUESDAYS

10.30am-noon

Rovers Breakfast Hub, Legends Lounge, Blackburn Rovers FC, Blackburn, BB2 4JF.

Want to donate?

To support the work of VIC please make direct donations to: Veterans In Communities

Sort code 01-07-29 Account Number 54450780

Veterans In Communities Charity Number 1151194

VIC supported

by:


East Lancashire
Clinical Commissioning Group

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 ASDC

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WHO
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 Borough of
Pendle

 ROCHDALE
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