



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Forces forge closer ties

LANCASHIRE Police and Crime Commissioner Andrew Snowden visited the VIC Centre to learn more about the charity and its work with blue light veterans and serving personnel.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "This was the first time he had been to VIC and myself and trustee Bob Smethurst showed him round.

"He saw some of the many projects that we are involved in and learnt more about the research project we did with Anglia Ruskin University.

"We talked about ways of engaging more with blue light veterans and serving officers and we made reference to the number of military veterans who go on after service to join the police force."

Following the visit, Lancashire's Police and



Crime Commissioner Andrew Snowden said: "Organisations such as Veterans in Communities are lifelines for veterans and former emergency service workers, and the community that the team have managed to build in Haslingden is admirable.

"I'd really like to see more police retirees take up the services they offer, even if it

is just to visit the building to socialise and meet like-minded people.

"In my role as Police and Crime Commissioner, I will continue to work with projects that both fight crime and enrich the lives of Lancashire residents and I am excited to see how the charity helps more veterans across Lancashire as it expands."

VIC open

AS IN previous years, the VIC Centre in Bury Road, Haslingden, will be open during the festive season – this can be a time which some veterans find particularly difficult especially if they live on their own.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2024.

"We know this can be a difficult time and we offer a warm space at the VIC Centre and we will be open when a lot of places are closed."

The centre will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day but open after 10am from Boxing Day to Friday December 29 and open as normal from Tuesday January 2.



Christmas celebration at the Link

NEARLY 50 people enjoyed the VIC Christmas lunch at Haslingden Community Link.

Every year, we are lucky to have a Christmas hamper to raffle, which is generously donated entirely by Chris Smethurst, wife of Major Bob (retired).

The raffle raised £290 for VIC and the

lucky winner was Andrew Holder.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "It is nice that VIC was able to support another charity just down the road from our centre and the food was delicious

"A huge thank you to Chris for the hamper and we were entertained by pre-school children singing Christmas songs."





Lunch offer

VETERANS are invited to La Latte Lounge in St Mary's Way, Rawtenstall, across from the church, on Christmas Day.

Amanda, who runs La Latte, will be serving turkey sandwiches and other food early in the afternoon.



Standard fits

THANKS to a grant from the Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund, VIC now has its own standard that was first used for Remembrance Sunday.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "The Fundraising and Marketing Committee had a discussion about having a standard to use for Remembrance and significant events."

"We all agreed on this to provide a sense of unity and belonging and it would give the members of VIC a standard to be proud to parade behind."

"As VIC had commitments elsewhere on Remembrance, Sunday, Haslingden Territorial Army Cadets stepped in to carry our flag in the parades in Haslingden and Rawtenstall, for which we are very grateful."

A stand is being created so that the standard will be able to be on permanent display in the VIC Centre foyer.



Sandbag Cafe Longridge is now open every Tuesday at Christ Church Methodist Church.



Full house at Redoubt

WHEN, due to unforeseen circumstances, a planned wreath making at Whitehough in Pendle was cancelled, the trip was quickly adapted.

The VIC crew van took the party to visit our 'Redoubt' VIC

Coffee Morning and quiz in Clitheroe.

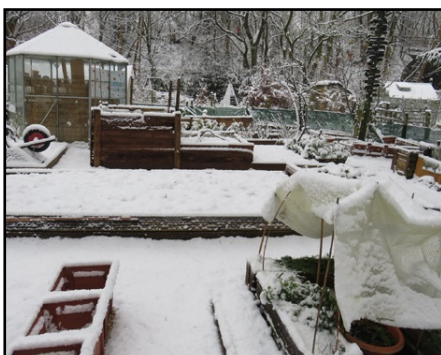
This was followed by homemade soup and a sandwich and cakes, all made by the lovely volunteers at Trinity Methodist Church in Clitheroe.

New banners

OUR new VIC banners now come complete with our QR code, which is also on the back of the newsletter.

One code provides a link to donate while the second is a link to our website.

We would like to thank Professional Workwear by Stitchesrus for the design and printing of these banners; they also supply some of our workwear.



Allotment life



Nuthatch



Robin



Coal Tit



Blue Tit



Hampers of cheer

Choir in fine tune

THE VIC Choir had a very busy December singing in both Tesco supermarkets and Asda.

When they sang at Haslingden Tesco, a fantastic £400.15 was raised for VIC and the choir also performed at Asda Rawtenstall.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We would like to say a big thank you to VIC volunteer Lorraine and Haslingden Army cadets who helped with the collecting."

On Friday December 22, from 1pm, they will also be singing at Tesco Rawtenstall.



HAMPERS were handed out to vulnerable veterans across our areas of benefit to help them and their families enjoy Christmas.

The art room became a supermarket as donations came in and an army of volunteers offered their own time and vehicles to deliver the Christmas cheer.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We put together 53 hampers and these were delivered to veterans living across our areas of benefit. We would like to say thank to everyone for their kind donations and to the volunteers who offered to help with delivery.

"We were chosen by 8th Rossendale Brownies when they were completing their charity badge. They held a fundraising night when raised £30 for the hampers."

Bay Veterans

CHIEF Executive Amanda Walton and Operations Manager Bob Elliott enjoyed a trip to Morecambe to meet with the members of Bay Veterans Association at their breakfast club.

There were around 40 members at the York and

the veterans chatted with Bob and Amanda.

Amanda said: "In the New Year, we will be inviting organiser Gary to VIC as he is looking to obtain premises and we are helping him to develop his ideas and helping him to set it up."



Bike donation

TWO bikes have been donated to VIC after a request was made to the Veteran Support Centre in Warrington.

A veteran, who needs transport, had asked VIC if it was able to obtain a bicycle for him to use.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We are working in

collaboration with the support centre and we asked them if they would be able to help. They provided us with two bikes not just one, for which we are very grateful.

"As yet, we are undecided what to do with the second bike, but we would like to thank the support centre for helping us."



Colin Crawforth



VIC was saddened to hear of the passing of a former trustee Colin Crawforth.

Colin was appointed as a trustee in 2016 when, as a Rossendale Councillor, he was appointed the borough's Armed Forces Champion.

He went on to be Mayor of Rossendale and stayed with VIC until he resigned in 2021.

His funeral was on December 12 at St Paul's Church Constablelee followed by a cremation at Burnley.

RIP Colin and thank you for your dedication and service. VIC sends condolences to his family.

Groups meet

A MEETING of like-minded community groups was held at Gannow Sports Centre, Burnley, organised by Burnley Pendle and Rossendale Community Service Volunteers.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott attended and discussed VIC with the other organisations who were there to explain what opportunities there are to volunteer with VIC.

At the moment, VIC is looking for a volunteer to help with the sublimation programme where images are printed onto placemats, mugs, baubles and other items.



ROSSENDALE

Activities 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 RV

1pm-3pm

THURSDAY

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

SUNDAY

Drop-in

10.15am-12.30pm

SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

Haslingden Community Link Cafe, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG (book in advance)

EVERY MONTH

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180

Walking Groups/ Social Inclusion trips

see Facebook or website for details

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

MONDAY

10am-noon

Breakfast Club at Burnley Miners' Social Club, Plumbe Street, Burnley, BB11 3AA.

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

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

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 Flying Horse Hotel, Packer Street, Rochdale, OL16 1NJ.

RIBBLE VALLEY

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

Sandbag Cafe Longridge

9.30am-noon

Christ Church Methodist Church, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA.

VIC – 01706 833180

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Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren

Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

Veterans at risk of homelessness

or organisations working with them are encouraged to contact OP FORTITUDE

0800 952 0774 or visit riv.org.uk/opfortitude

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

Citizens Advice East Lancashire

0808 278 7975 freephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

The Samaritans

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

Freephone 116 123

Op Courage

0300 373 3332 email

opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

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

0800 0130 707

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 Breakfast Club/ Drop-In

LAST WEDNESDAY EVERY MONTH

9.30am-11am

Lancashire Carers Link, 54-56 Blackburn Road, Accrington, BB5 1LE.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Outreach Service

TUESDAY

10.30am-noon

Rovers Breakfast Hub, Legends Lounge, Darwen End, Blackburn Rovers FC, Ewood Park, Blackburn, BB2 4JF.

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