VETERANS IN COMMUNITIES

October 2026

VIC Newsletter

No 10 appointment



IT WAS a great honour for three members of Rossendale-based Veterans In Communities to be invited to attend a special reception at No 10 Downing Street on November 5.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton selected two VIC service users, to accompany her to the Remembrance event in London.

Also invited to No 10 were serving personnel, cadets, veterans and representatives from other organisations across the country that support the Armed Forces community

Amanda said: "The representatives from VIC held several conversations with many of the attendees and it was a really lovely afternoon.

"It was great to see so many people coming together as we start our week of Remembrance."

Minister for Veterans and People Calvin Bailey MBE MP said: "Ahead of Remembrance Sunday, I'm pleased that we can pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces community by giving veterans easier access to the support they need, regardless of where they are in the UK."

They also heard from Prime Minister Andy Burnham who said: "It is a privilege to be able to honour our veterans, not just as we mark Remembrance Day, but year-round as we remember the service and the sacrifice of those who fought for the lives we live today."

VIC is now a VALOUR recognised centre and two new employees have been recruited to deliver the programme of support.

Amanda said: "I invited Shane Niewenhuizen, who served in the Scots Guards for three years in Northern Ireland and in the first Gulf War. He struggled with transition and reached out to VIC to help him with his mental health and also to change his career.

"More recently, he was reunited with VIC under VALOUR and we have referred him to Op Courage.

"I also took with me Mini Leather who served in the Kings Regiment and with the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was on Telic 9 and was medically discharged."

Mini has received ongoing support from VIC including peer support.



A SPECIAL Rossendale Walk of Remembrance, organised by members of VIC, took place across Rossendale.

VIC Operations Manager Phil Speddy Veteran Bob Brindley and Veteran Alastair Padget walked every day from Monday November 2 to Thursday November 5, starting at the highest Rossendale Memorial on Deerplay Moor above Weir.

From there, they walked into Bacup and on to Whitworth.

This is the third year the Rossendale Walk of Remembrance has been held, and the main walkers were joined by staff and beneficiaries on different days as they completed more than 60 miles to visit every known site of Remembrance in Rossendale. At each, a short service was held and the Last Post was played. Donations were also collected for VIC.

Pop-up shop back

FOR the next three months, visitors to Mill Gate Shopping Centre in Bury will get the chance to find out more about VIC and support our charity.

Chief Executive Officer Amanda Walton said: "I would like to thank Kelly Townend, Retail Liaison and Duty Manager of Mill Gate, and her team for offering VIC this fantastic opportunity to showcase what our charity does.



"We have been given the opportunity to show people of Bury and the many shoppers who attend the town and its famous market the chance to buy incredible artwork created by veterans and a range of products made by our Creative Hub."

Information will also be available on the work of VIC.

The shop will be open on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays to coincide with market days, and, should the demand be high, could also open on a Thursday.

If anyone would like to help run the shop, they can contact Administrator Amy Thompson on 01706 833180.

VALOUR - the work begins



VIC was represented by Chief Executive Amanda Walton and VALOUR Project Co-ordinator Billy Benson at Lancashire Listens: The Big Conversation on Care Working with Veterans Services.

As guests of Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub Project Manager Gregg Stevenson, VIC attended with Claire and Leigh from Veterans' Services.

VALOUR Field Officer Gary Shivers, from the Office of Veterans' Affairs, also attended along with lots of different organisations that support the armed forces community throughout Lancashire, including Age UK, Carers Link and Connect to Work, were present.

Christmas celebration

COME along and join us for a fabulous Christmas celebration meal at Baxenden Golf Club on Wednesday December 9.

We used this venue last year and it was such a success Administrator Amy Thompson has booked it again, and managed to secure the same price as last year.

The meal costs £19 for two courses or £23 for three courses.

A non-refundable deposit of £10 will secure your place, along with meal choice, and the full cost must be paid by Dec 17

Contact Amy on 01706 833180 or email amythompson@hotmail.co.uk for more information and to book.

The full menu is on the VIC Facebook page and group.



Festival of Remembrance

OUTREACH Worker John Pluckwell attended the Rochdale Festival of Remembrance.

It was a great event with a mix of service personnel, veterans and cadets showing their respects and following the traditions of the British Armed Forces.

John said: "Thanks to the Mayor of Rochdale, his committee and the members of the Rochdale Breakfast Club for a great evening."



Free footy

VETERANS are invited to attend a free football match for Remembrance on Saturday November 14 at 3pm when Rochdale AFC will be playing York City at the Crown Oil Arena, Willbutts Lane, Rochdale OL11 5DS.

To book your place email community@rochdaleafc.co.uk

Monty talk

THE Grandson of Lord Henry Montgomery retraced his grandfather's journey across Britain and France from 1944 at a special talk in Preston.

"In Monty's Footsteps" was the title of the talk which took place at the University of Lancashire.

Foodie Thurs

EVERY Thursday, the VIC Centre is provided with free food from The Raft Foundation – Rossendale's Foodbank.

There is always lots of bread and fresh food available for anyone to collect. There is usually some food still available on a Friday, so please call in.

On a mission

A DAY packed full of banter, brews and cars is on offer at the Three Sisters Circuit, Wigan on Wednesday November 18 from 9am-3pm.

Misson Motorsports organises the free days out which give veterans the chance to be driven around the racetrack in vehicles supplied by the owners.

To book a place on the trip, contact VIC on 01706 833180.

Dave Joddrell

IT IS with great sadness that we have to announce of the founding members of VIC Dave Joddrell has sadly passed away

Dave was an armourer with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) from 1969 to 1976, serving two tours in Northern Ireland, one in Cyprus with the United Nations and he finished his service in Windsor with the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards.

He became a maintenance engineer after the army and enjoyed understanding how things work.

After discovering VIC through a friend, he initially joined the Art Group. He had a love of sculpture and mechanisms and described himself as a 'putter-togetherer'.

What began as a way to connect, became a lifelong commitment to supporting fellow veterans and serving his local community.

Dave became a stalwart member and volunteer with VIC and he said it gave him an outlet for emotions and a way to learn new skills through art.

Countless veterans benefited from his support, encouragement, friendship, and practical knowledge.

Many people across Rossendale, and beyond, will have seen Dave's work without ever knowing the man behind it.

His creative talents contributed to numerous community projects, including the wicker Concorde sculpture at Manchester Airport, sculptures for local schools, and a First World War tank sculpture in Whitworth.

He also played a significant role in the Whitworth Memorial Garden dry stone wall project and many other initiatives that helped strengthen and enrich local communities.

Dave appeared in the VIC documentary short film, co-created with Anglia Ruskin University, alongside veterans Darren Horsnell and Steve Butterworth.

The film explored how creativity had helped all three transition from military to civilian life and went on to be screened at locations across the UK and internationally, including the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.

Dave gave his time freely, shared his talents generously, and made a lasting difference to the lives of so many people.

Thank you for your service, Dave. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for everything you gave to VIC and our community.

VIC's original Operations Manager, now trustee, Bob Elliott said: "I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Dave from the onset of VIC.

"He was always an inspiration and I don't think I met anyone as talented as he was. You are going to be missed, mate."

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "Dave was such a valued member of VIC and on a personal note what he didn't know was not worth knowing.

"He had an incredible mind, in artistic, logic and engineering terms - and he used to amaze me every time I spoke to him. He had such a battle over the last few years and he had the strength of an ox."

Amanda, and all the VIC members, passed on their condolences to his family and friends.







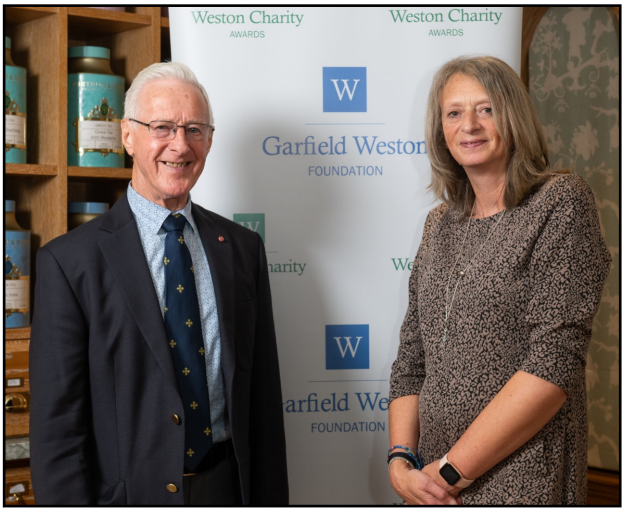


Choir in fine voice

THE VIC choir was in fine voice at Asda in Rawtenstall and kind staff and customers donated £255.87.

The choir performed some of the golden oldies songs and VIC standard bearer and veteran Jacko Pearce and Margaret volunteered to collect donations.

Dining London style



A SPLENDID afternoon tea at Fortnum and Mason in London was enjoyed by VIC Chair of Trustees Ronnie Barker and Chief Executive Amanda Walton.

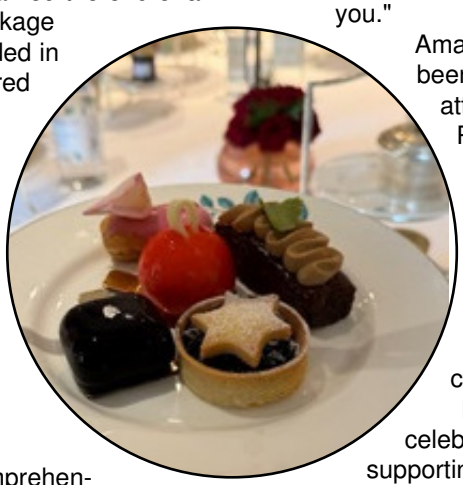
The celebration marked the end of a business support package which VIC was awarded in June 2024, but deferred implementation for a year

VIC was the only veteran charity to be selected as one of the 24 charities to be awarded the Pilotlight 360 support package by the Garfield Weston Charity Awards.

It resulted in VIC benefiting from a comprehensive package of support helping the organisation to take a strategic view on how it operates.

In London, they listened to guest speaker Catherine Gladwell, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Refugee Education UK.

Amanda said: "She gave a very inspirational talk about leadership and having people around you to help and support you."



Amanda has also been invited to attend the Pilotlight Summit 2026 which will be based on the theme of building residence in charities through cross-sector collaboration.

Pilotlight was celebrating 20 years of supporting charities and strengthening collaboration between the business and charity sectors.

Guy Weston, Chief Executive of Garfield Weston, a family owned trust, awarded each participating charity £5,000.



Oldham Festival of Remembrance

VETERANS are invited to attend the 56th Festival of Remembrance held at 'The Loom' in Parliament Square, Oldham, OL1 1HY on Friday November 6.

The night will start with a parade of cadet units followed by The Oldham Scottish Pipe Band, which this year celebrates 100 years since it formed.

They will be joined by the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Lancashire Band & Corps of Drums with a drum light show, and then the act of Remembrance with a muster of standards and Regimental Queens. Last Post, Exhortation, a period of Silence then Reveille. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased from RBL branches.

Congratulations to our Administrator Amy Thompson who has successfully retained her title of Lancashire County Standard Bearer for another year. Well done from all at VIC.





Clitheroe

THE banter was fierce during the Coffee and Quiz at Trinity Methodist Church in Clitheroe.

Quizmaster Ron Flowers tested the group's general knowledge and some were better prepared than others.

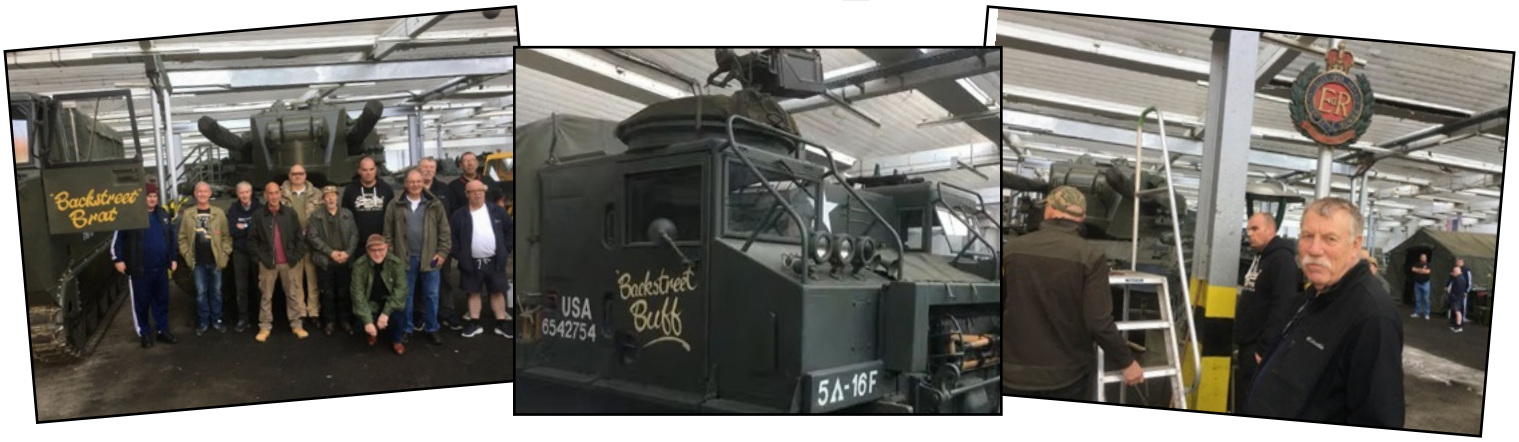
There is a growing and steady presence from the Corps of the Royal Engineers and a healthy input from all other services.

No matter what your cap-badge or service, military or Blue Light, there is always a warm welcome, a brew and chocolate biscuit on offer.

We meet every Tues 10-12 noon at Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row, Parson Lane, Clitheroe BB7 2JY.

All welcome.

Loads of trips ahead



OUR trips co-ordinator Andrea Whiteley is looking for venues for future VIC outings in the New Year.

In October, members enjoyed a visit to local Rossendale company B and E Boys in Waterfoot to see a private collection including tanks.

VIC members were shown around the collection by the very experienced and capable team who talked them through the many pieces of armour and fighting vehicles as well as some more support vehicles too.

We were allowed to get on, and in, many of the pieces in the collection.

For all trips please book and pay for places as early as possible – contact Administrator Amy Thompson on 01706 833180 for more information.

Upcoming trips and events



Thursday November 5 – there will be a trip to Manchester Airport - for the Festival of Remembrance concert which is held next to the Concorde plane.





Wednesday November 25 – there will be a VIC trip to Hackgreen Secret Nuclear Bunker.
Cost is £36 including admission, guided tour and transport from Haslingden. The tour takes approximately 2 hours and there is also the option to spend an additional 45 minutes to watch a film entitled War Games.

Tuesday November 17 – join us for a trip to Chatsworth Christmas Market. The cost will be £20 per person.
The minibus will leave Haslingden at 9am and we will leave Chatsworth at approx 3pm.
There are many options for food and drink and more than 100 stalls selling clothing, decorations, gifts, food and more.

Got a suggestion for an outing? Add your trip ideas to the noticeboard at VIC or contact Amy.

VIC
VETERANS IN COMMUNITIES
Return Belong Prosper

What's On and Where

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

THURSDAY
Bimble Walks
Call 01706 833180 for more details
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 01706 833180 ***Social Inclusion trips*** *see Facebook or VIC website*

RIBBLE VALLEY & PRESTON

TUESDAYS
Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach
10am-noon
Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row, Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.
Sandbag Cafe
10am-12.30pm
St George's Church, off Lune Street, Preston PR1 2NP. *This is a joint session with Lancashire Armed Forces Association.*

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton
amandawalton@vic.org.uk
Operations Manager Phil Speddy
philspeddy@vic.org.uk
Administrator Amy Thompson
amythompson@vic.org.uk
Project Worker Ray Sharkey
raysharkey@vic.org.uk **07741 902 188**
Outreach Worker John Pluckwell
johnpluckwell@vic.org.uk
VALOUR Pathways Co-ordinator
Tony Codling tonycodling@vic.org.uk
VALOUR Project Co-ordinator
Billy Benson davidbenson@vic.org.uk
Volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator
Darren Horsnell
darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk
VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde
b.hyde@ntlworld.com

Veterans In Communities Charity Number 1151194

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

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.

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club/ Art Group
FRIDAY 10am-3pm
VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.
Accrington Stanley Breakfast Club/ Drop-In
LAST SATURDAY EVERY MONTH
10.30am-noon
Stanley Sports Hub, Thorneyholme Road, Accrington, BB5 6BD.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Veterans' football
MONDAY 8-9pm
Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre, Ewood Park, Blackburn BB2 4JF. A cost applies.
Outreach Service
TUESDAY 10am-noon
Rovers Breakfast Hub, Legends Lounge, Darwen End, Blackburn Rovers FC, Ewood Park, Blackburn, BB2 4JF.
Contact Chris McGrail 07787 585109

Want to help?
To support VIC scan this QR code

BOPP

VIC supported by:

VALOUR
PROUDLY SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE.
ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Borough of Pendle
ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
VETERANS FOUNDATION
Cobseo The Confederation of Service Charities
ASDIC
NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Find us on Facebook
www.facebook.com
VIC Veterans In Communities

VIC News is produced by: Catherine Smyth Media. 07903 997375 www.catherinesmyth.co.uk