



VIC Newsletter

Project Worker and Administrator take up roles at VIC

TWO new employees have started at VIC this month – our first Project Worker for Hyndburn and Ribble Valley and a new Administrator.

Former Scots Guard Ray Sharkey, from Haslingden, is now the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Project Worker and is looking forward to using his years of experience to help others.

He said: "I spent five-and-a-half years serving in the Scots Guards and then two years in the reserves. When I left, I started building electricity pylons in Germany and I was working as an overhead linesman. I moved into communications and was building masts, but I was away from home a lot and decided I needed

to assess my quality of life."

At 35, that took him to UCLan in Preston where he gained a First Class Honours Degree in History. He started his Masters, but because he was also lecturing he did not have the time to complete it.

He worked for an agency driving lorries while on the courses but found it hard to work half the day behind the wheel and still have the motivation to study.

A major accident at home then left him with irrevocable damage to his arm and unable to continue with his driving career.

Ray said: "My wife Caroline is the financial services lead at East Lancashire Hospice in Blackburn and last year she took on the remit of volunteer project

co-ordinator and part of that was forming partnerships which is how she came across VIC."

Being too late to apply for the Administrator job, Ray saw the Project Worker role and applied.

He said: "Veterans struggle to accept that they may need help when they leave the services; it took me 25 years to understand that.

"When you leave you don't quite fit in the outside world; it was my wife who helped me to understand that I had issues.

"I have walked down that road that veterans can find themselves in; I have lost a house, I have been in debt and I know how low it can get.

"Hopefully now I have got something



to give back and I am looking at how best to serve my areas by finding out from other Project Workers what works in their areas."

Welcome also to our new Administrator Amy Thompson, who is volunteer Secretary of The Royal British Legion in Haslingden.

Amy has been doing the admin work for the Commercial Hotel, where her husband Dave is the landlord, and was looking for a new role. Three years ago they got involved with the Legion and offered their pub as a meeting place.

She said: "I already

knew Amanda and Bob because VIC has always supported the Legion fun day that we run each year.

"I like this role because no two days are the same. Last week I was on a first aid course learning about using a defibrillator. I like the unpredictability of the job and that you don't know each day what you have to do."

Amy is also the Haslingden branch standard bearer and deputy county standard bearer and her daughter Millie, 14, is the deputy branch standard bearer.



'The Mess Tin' opens at Lighthouse Project

OUR Middleton Drop In is proving so popular it is being relocating to a larger room at the Lighthouse Project.

It has also now been named 'The Mess Tin' and is attended by Project Worker Bev Fowler or Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth. The café and drop in is on every Tuesday from 1pm-2.30pm at The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

Partnership all sewn up



THANKS to a post on the Oldham Breakfast Club page, followed by a meeting with Professional Workforce Stitches R Us, VIC has been selected to be their chosen charity.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We are very grateful to the Oldham Breakfast Club for suggesting VIC. When

Nigel and Angela from the organisation came out to see us they had just got the licence to produce MoD embroidery. "We are providing them with charity collection buckets and will use the firm when we require more embroidered clothing."

Partners Nigel and Angela Cullen run the business. Nigel said: "I am a veteran and I was in the army in the

'80s for nine years. While I was fortunate to miss the Gulf War and the Falklands, I have a lot of service friends and I have seen some of their toils. We wanted to support a local charity that is working with veterans, not a national one, because we wanted to know that the money is being spent locally, and VIC work in our area."

Events for VE Day 75

THE 75th anniversary of VE Day will be celebrated with a weekend of events in Colne, a street fair on Deardengate, in Haslingden, and an afternoon tea dance

art Haslingden Community Link - among many other events.

On Saturday night May 9, the Union Public House in Colne will have a '40s disco, cost

£5 per head.

Names and payment is needed up front. To book contact Jimmy Ellis on 07534 710068 or Tony Davies on 07904 984521.

VIC members from Rossendale and Burnley visited the Wings Centre in Preston where they got to meet veterans from Skelmersdale Veterans Association and the team from the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.



VIP Paddy calls in to Accrington shop



VETERAN Paddy (Harvey) O'Hara received a warm welcome when he called into our Accrington Shop at Arndale Centre.

The 97-year old, who was awarded the Legion d'Honneur medal in 2016 was brought in by his grandson who also served.

The medal was in recognition of the outstanding contribution that he made in 1944 in the

efforts to liberate France.

This medal was originally introduced by Napoleon and remains the highest award that the Republic of France can give for outstanding military service.

Paddy is a real character and has already shared some of his experiences with our staff. He has also promised to return to the shop when the weather warms up.

Police talk

OUTREACH Worker Steve Butterworth explained the work of VIC and his role in the organisation at a meeting at Greater Manchester Police's Sedgley Park Complex.

The event was to highlight the work GMP is carrying out to engage with veterans and encourage other police forces to do similar in their areas.

Train club

VIC is planning to start a model railway club at the Accrington Shop.

It is proposed to use the basement of the shop in the Arndale to set up different layouts and anyone who has any unwanted model railway track or locomotives or scenery can call in the shop or ring the centre on 01706 833180.

I had a fantastic craft morning with my young daughter at the Accrington VIC shop this morning. Thanks to all who made this an enjoyable experience for her.

Thank you Gary Horrocks



Co-op stores raise £1,334



STAFF and customers from Rossendale's Co-operative supermarkets raised an incredible £1,334 for VIC.

A variety of events were held throughout the year at the stores in Haslingden, Waterfoot and Whitworth including tombolas, raffles and events to mark special occasions.

VIC Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We were overwhelmed by the amount raised by our three Co-operative supermarkets and would like to say a huge thank you to the staff and customers."

Craig Fort, Manager of the Haslingden store, said: "We chose VIC because we wanted to support a local charity and VIC works throughout Rossendale."



Course to save lives

VETERAN Craig Harrison from Lancashire Adult Learning delivered a Lancashire Lifesavers course at the VIC Centre.

The course consisted of basic lifesaving skills and how to use a defibrillator.

Future courses that are being planned include understanding dementia and microwave cooking.



Bob Ross class

A TRICKY log cabin picture proved no problem for members of the Bob Ross painting class at VIC and once again stunning artwork was produced.

The next class, on Saturday February 29, will be producing a beautiful spring woodland scene.

Classes cost £40 per person with all materials supplied. They start at 10.30am, but participants are asked to arrive 15 minutes early to get organised,



and they normally finish around 3pm.

Tea and coffee is provided but a packed lunch is advised. Places are limited and a £15 non refundable deposit is required to book.

VIC walks

GETTING up and active is often a New Year's resolution and the walking group at VIC is ensuring people can honour their pledge.

Members have been out and about since the last newsletter and they enjoyed a six mile walk around Haslingden Grane and the first walk of the year saw two



groups set out from Jumbles Reservoir. One did a 5.5 mile walk and the other group walked round the reservoir.

On March 5 there will be an eight-mile walk from Whitehouse Public House, Littleborough, and on

March 19 the hidden valley of Sabden Brook in Pendle will be explored.

The crew van will leave the VIC Centre at 9.30am and a voluntary donation of £3 is requested to cover transport costs.





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

WEDNESDAY

Allotment and Veterans In Production

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore, or manufacture wooden items at the centre. Contact 01706 833180.

Art Class

2pm-4pm

Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Haslingden, BB4 4DD.

THURSDAY

Woodworking Course

10am-3pm

THURSDAY

Computer and IT help drop-in

11am-3pm

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Art Group and drop-in

10am-3.30pm

SECOND SATURDAY

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

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

EVERY MONTH

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

Walking Group, Social Outings and

Outdoor Activities These are held every

THURSDAY. Visit the *Events* section on our

VIC Facebook page or the VIC website and follow the link to *Projects and Activities*.

9.30am-11.30pm

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

RIBBLE VALLEY

Outreach Service

TUESDAYS

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

TUESDAY - alternate weeks

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

9am-11am

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach

at Burnley FC in the Community, the Pendle

Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield

Mill, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, at 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

12.30pm-2.30pm

Middleton Gardens, M24 1AB

The Mess Tin cafe and drop in

1pm-2.30pm

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

THURSDAY

9am-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club

Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon

VIC Outreach

1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

HYNDBURN

Outreach Service and Art Group

TUESDAY

10am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1PL.

FRIDAY

Outreach Service

10.30am-3pm

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

VIC – 01706 833180

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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

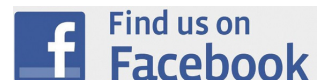
01282 657116

Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans

www.bafc4v.org 01204 776628

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