

# VIC Annual Review for 2018

*This reviews some of the main highlights of our activities and news from 2018. All our other news can also be viewed in the Newsletters and New Stories on our website [www.vic.org.uk](http://www.vic.org.uk).*

- We held our fifth public AGM in September. Accounts are available on the Charity Commission website and a copy is available on the VIC website.
- VIC received a further grant from the Armed Forces Covenant to provide a range of activities and services across Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale as we move into 2019. This funding will allow us to continue in those areas.
- Our outreach in East Lancashire has been extended to cover Accrington.
- As part of our involvement with the Pendle Armed Forces Group, we organised a Veterans Awareness Week in Pendle where we invited all the other veteran groups working across Pendle.
- Our Project Worker on the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams across Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale is having very positive results, although many of those referred to us are mainly elderly. We are working with the health centres to identify the numbers of veterans in each practice and they average 150 – 200. Most are now accessing the Sandbag Café in Heywood and Veteran Breakfast clubs as part of social inclusion activities.
- The VIC veterans ‘Sandbag Café’ in Heywood, had their first birthday in 2018. This weekly coffee morning is run by VIC volunteers and has seen numbers steadily increase. Regular attendance exceeds 20 members.
- We had information stands at health centres and mental health community events in East Lancashire, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.
- The VIC Singing Group increased their performances this year; in addition to the local supermarkets, residential homes and community events, in June VIC organised a second Veterans and Voices concert at St Mary’s Parish Church in Rawtenstall. This was a great success and we are in the process of organising one for 2019. They also performed at the Rossendale Festival of Remembrance.
- The VIC Centre underwent some general refurbishments and the outside of the centre was painted, a sign made by a VIC member and updated our security system. Many of the downstairs areas were newly painted and the art room was re-boarded so that the pictures could be hung as they would be at an art exhibition.
- VIC have held five outdoor adventurous activities in 2018; three at Whitehough Outdoor centre in Barley, Canoeing on the Leeds Liverpool canal, Bowley Scout Camp, bush craft day at Bellisama Retreat on the banks of the River Ribble and one at an indoor centre in Manchester.
- VIC have provided the weekly transport for Positive Start Food Group in Rossendale where unused food is re-distributed from large supermarkets to community groups to help those who are on low incomes. Due to change of staffing at Positive Start for 2019 we will only provide transport in emergencies.
- VIC members Darren Horsnell and Steve Butterworth were interviewed on Radio Lancashire to promote the work the work that VIC does across East Lancashire.
- VIC members were invited by Burnley FC in the Community to watch their last home match of the season against Brighton.
- Our allotment in Helmshore had its best year, not only did we grow a greater variety of fruit and vegetables that was made into meals for our members but we have built some additional raised beds, a water storage system, and seating area.
- Our Crafty Chatters group has been busy making a good range of crafts which have been sold at a number of Craft Fairs, and seasonal Easter and Christmas crafts have once again been successful.
- After a survey at the end of 2017 we made a decision to change the walks throughout the 2018; members said that they wanted longer and more physically demanding walks. This year our members have had an average of one per month and averaged seven miles each.
- Our Social Inclusion trips have included; Hack Green Nuclear Bunker, VIC members were invited to a meal at the Bombay Grill in Barrowford, Yorkshire Mining Museum, a Canal Boat cruise along the Leeds Liverpool Canal, Helmshore Textile Museum, Anthony Gormley Statues in Crosby, Canal Boat Museum, Blue Johns Mines, Brockholes Nature Reserve, and a number of Veteran Breakfast Clubs.

- We held Bob Ross art group sessions virtually every month from the VIC Centre and there were some great pictures produced.
- VIC held three art exhibitions in 2018; Haworth Art Gallery in Accrington, in a shop unit in Pendle Rise and Burnley FC Community Café.
- We were one of the beneficiaries of the TESCO book stall in Haslingden. Our members and supporters donated the largest amount of books this year.
- The VIC Centre was opened during the Rossendale Art Trail where we held a number of workshops demonstrating the work our craft group, wood carving group, stone painting, fret work and art group. During one of the open days we had a visit from Tony Attard the High Sherriff of Lancashire.
- The VIC Centre opened throughout the Easter, and a Christmas period again has seen an increase from 2017 of members using this service during the periods when other organisations usually close.
- We have worked with a number of young people in 2018, school leavers on the National Citizenship Scheme and have provided a work placement for young people on the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, North Lancs Training Group and Nelson College.
- We organised the Armed Forces day for the third year in Haslingden, with a ceremony with the new Mayor of Rossendale. Our members also joined many of the other ceremonies across East Lancashire and Greater Manchester.
- Three of our members worked with Bravo 22 through 'The Art of Recovery' to create some life-size head sculptures of themselves.
- Tony Stubbs our outreach worker for Middleton was nominated in the 'Inspiration Award' category in the 2018 Soldiering On Awards.
- We have delivered two first aid courses for our members at the VIC Centre and 6 of our core team have completed a Veterans Mental Health First Aid course in Burnley. We also hosted a Mindfulness Course for our members.
- We attended two large outdoor shows and events in 2018; Trawden Show, and the Royal British legion Haslingden Branch Fun day.
- Our oldest WW2 veteran Lewis Banham was invited to three commemorative organised events; two in Holland and one to visit the D-Day beaches.
- We carried out a number of community projects in 2018 which included; building a shed at a local primary school, some gardening and general maintenance of properties, and we were asked to support a community Café run by Burnley FC in the Community by stripping out their shop prior to the re-build.
- VIC was a chosen charity for the Ride of Respect Remembrance event on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Earlier in the year we received a cheque for £2000 which is very much appreciated.
- VIC produced a range of commemorative WW1 products in 2018, a piece of fret work produced by one of our members was printed on mugs, table mats, towels, key rings, coasters , wallets and clocks. This was such a success that we will continue into 2019 with a new fret work piece.
- This year saw our busiest Remembrance period to date; we were asked to be part of two school Remembrance services and managed to have members at many of the services held around Rossendale, Lancashire and Greater Manchester. Some of our members attended the Manchester Airport Festival of Remembrance for the third year.
- In November we were offered some complimentary haircuts and beauty treatments by Barbers At Work. This was a generous offer and 15 of our veterans had a haircut for Remembrance Sunday and four our female veterans had some beauty treatments.
- Our newest VIC project Veterans In Production (VIP) has seen a rapid growth in the second half on 2018; we provided some raised beds for the 'Only Foals and Horses Sanctuary and Haslingden Civic Pride. Planters, bird tables and log sheds that have been sold to members of the public, and all have been made from pallets that have been donated to VIC.
- We were able to make 35 Christmas hampers and delivered them to our single or vulnerable veterans with families, from food and toys donated from a number of sources. We have given out a number of food parcels for veterans and families experiencing financial hardships.
- We had the highest number of veterans, families and carers at our Xmas meal in Rochdale, over 70 attended.