

THE LINK IS OPENED!

The Link Community House in Temple Herdewyke was opened on Friday 27th November 2015 by Cllr Izzi Seccombe (Leader of Warwickshire County Council) and Cllr Bob Stevens (Chair of Warwickshire County Council) to the rapturous applause of the families and children waiting to get inside and play with the new equipment and toys! They were even greeted by Red Monkey!

The opening of The Link is the culmination of months and years of hard work by Gill Thomas from the Army Welfare Service and Tom Bunting, Station Staff Officer for MOD Kineton. Previously they had secured 2 former married quarters on the Temple Herdewyke estate for use as a community centre serving both the military and civilian population of Temple Herdewyke.

Following successful grant applications to the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund (£20,000), Annington Homes (£20,000) and the Felix Fund (£4,000) with a final contribution of £1,000 from Kineton Station, a substantial refurbishment of the fledgling community centre has been carried out. With the £45,000, the garden has been transformed into a fit for purpose Under 5's play area, including a Hobbit House, and a covered area encouraging outdoor play no matter what the weather! The inside has been transformed into a space that can be utilised by many different groups that can now meet there, including Messy Church, the Health Visitor, Lighthorne Heath Children's Centre – the list goes on.



'The Link' as the name suggests is designed to encourage participation by both the military and civilian communities that live



Cllr Bob Stevens, Chair of the AFCC partnership, Cllr Izzi Seccombe and Gill Thomas, Community Development Worker from the Army Welfare Service and Red Monkey.

within Temple Herdewyke and will help to provide improved integration and cohesion between the two communities.

Major Andy Mathias, Second in Command of MOD Kineton said 'This is a fantastic facility that will help to enhance the experience of living within Temple Herdewyke village for both the Military and Civilian families. The Armed Forces Community Covenant is focussed on Community Cohesion, and this is an excellent example of the money that they, along with The Annington Trust and the Felix Fund have made available, making a real difference to our community

Gill Thomas from the Army Welfare Service said 'Temple Herdewyke Village is remote and has no shop or pub, so this Community House has been very well received. It allows the community to interact with each other in a fit for purpose well resourced space that will be used by the whole Community for many years to come. In the first week of opening we have already witnessed a marked increase in the number of families using the Link, and we have been approached by a number of other agencies that are keen to work with us, offering much needed services to Temple Herdewyke Village.'

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this first Armed Forces Community Covenant (AFCC) Newsletter covering Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW). As Chair of the AFCC partnership, and an ex-Royal Navy man myself, I am deeply honoured to present the many projects and great work, which has been done since the Covenant agreement was signed back in June 2012.

During 2012 the Local Authorities across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (including Districts and Boroughs), came together with the voluntary and community sector and the Armed Forces of the sub-region to agree the local Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The Community Covenant for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire reflects the promise from the nation that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. This includes offering injured servicemen and women and bereaved families extra support where appropriate.

In addition to this we will:

- Nurture public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting our armed forces community
- Recognise and remember their sacrifices'
- Encourage activities to help to integrate the armed forces community into local community life, in particular with transition from the military into the civilian community

We proudly support those who serve and have served and their families.

You will see in this Newsletter some of the many projects carried out through the sub-region by both military and civilian agencies in support of the Armed Forces community, many of which have been funded through the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Fund.

Other achievements include:

- Events and parades such as Remembrance Day, Armed Forces Day, VE Day and the Ghurkha Mela 200 celebrations
- Changes in Housing Policy of Districts and Boroughs to give additional priority to those who have served in the Armed Forces to counter their lack of 'local connection' in housing applications
- Support and development of the Veterans' Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton with a building being provided by Warwickshire County Council to the VCP at a long term peppercorn rent. The VCP provides a base for members of the AFCC partnership to meet, for Armed Forces charities to work from and as a drop in resource for members of the Armed Forces community

We cannot and will not rest on our laurels though as much more work needs to be done. Awareness of the Covenant needs to be raised in both civilian and military communities and the principles behind the Covenant need to be embedded in everyday work and practice such that real differences are made and felt by our Armed Forces Community.



Councillor Stevens



Signing of the Covenant agreement ceremony 2012

LOCAL EX-SERVICES (VETERANS) MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES 'HIGHLY COMMENDED' IN NATIONAL AWARDS

Coventry and Warwickshire **NHS**
Partnership Trust

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust (CWPT) along with the volunteer organisation, Veterans Contact Point, Nuneaton, have received Highly Commended Recognition awards in the National Positive Practice Mental Health Awards 2015 for its work within Ex-Services' mental health services.

The Ex-Armed Forces project from CWPT works to ensure that Ex-Service personnel receive the right mental health support at the right time. The project offers assessments and treatment as well as signposting to other services. Part of the success of this project is the identification of over 40 'Champions' within the Trust with either personal or clinical experience of working with mental health issues of Ex-Service personnel. An enhanced 'care pathway' has been developed to support individuals to access Mental Health and other services. Awareness raising/training has also been provided to CWPT staff.

The awards ceremony took place on Wednesday 14 October 2015 in Newcastle upon Tyne. The CWPT ex-Armed Forces Project was shortlisted from over 400 entries for two award categories; Specialist Services, and Partnership Working.

Lynne Davidson, Ex-Armed Forces Project Lead at CWPT, said: "Veterans, like all our service users, need to have confidence in our recognising and understanding of their issues.

"By involving the veterans and ensuring we work in collaboration with them and the many organisations available to ex-Forces, in particular the local charity Veterans Contact Point, we are now able to work in a more joined up way for this group. We carried out a number of case studies with veterans to ensure we were aware of their mental health needs".

"Receiving these national awards affirms the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. Their resourcefulness and relentless enthusiasm is a key to mental health recovery in many cases".

Dr Dan Barnard, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and Clinical Lead for the Ex Armed Forces project has also recently received further recognition for his work with Veterans by becoming the National Clinical Lead for Mental Health Care and Military Veterans for the Positive Practice Mental Health Collaborative Organisation.

Dr Barnard said "I feel underqualified but very honoured to be given this role as National Lead for Veterans Mental Health".

"I'll be able to see first-hand some of the great work from across the country, as well as offer support and guidance to others. I can

seek out backing from senior bodies and groups to help keep the spotlight on veterans and our obligations to ensure they are not disadvantaged in accessing the care and treatment they may need post-discharge from HM Forces."

If you, or someone you know, are ex-Armed Forces and would like to speak to someone about these services please contact Lynne Davidson on 07768130502 or exarmedforces@covwarkpt.nhs.uk

Further information on the project can be found at www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/veterans



Top row from L to R: Barry Day, Associate Director of Operations Integrated Community Services, Dr Dan Barnard, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Len Hardy, Chair of the Veteran's Contact Point in Nuneaton

Bottom row L to R: Lynne Davidson, Ex-Armed Forces Project Lead

PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE AFCC GRANT SCHEME

For a number of years the Government has provided funds to support the Armed Forces Community Covenant. Across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire a number of organisations have been successful in bidding for and securing over £200,000 from the AFCC grant schemes. This has been used, along with other funding, to deliver 11 projects from 2013-15.

Samples of these projects are below:

SERVICE TO CIVVY STREET BOOKLETS

Public Health Warwickshire secured £20,000 to produce 3 information booklets. These were aimed at veterans, the families of veterans and NHS and other Public Sector professionals supporting veterans to access a range of support and services across Warwickshire.

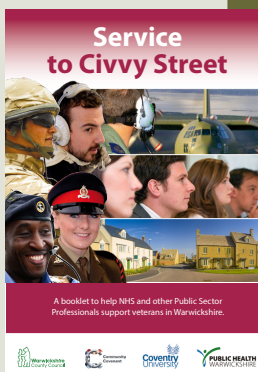
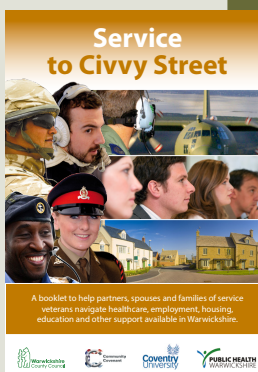
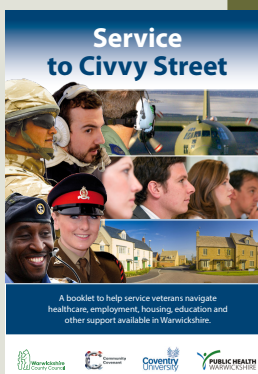
The booklet aimed at veterans highlights the locally available support, providing information covering post service access to healthcare, housing and education. It includes information about what to expect in terms of the transition to civilian life, mental health awareness and guidance about a healthy lifestyle.

Information aimed at veterans' families includes information about how best to deal with transition into civilian life and ways to support loved ones.

The guidance aimed at GPs, NHS staff and public sector workers addresses what the Community Covenant means for service delivery. It also includes information to raise staff awareness about life in the military, the common needs of the veterans' community, how veterans can contribute to society and some of the difficulties they may experience. For example, possible reluctance to access support due to mental health problems, pride or not feeling deserving of help.

1000 of each booklet have been developed and distributed to GP surgeries, military barracks and the Army Welfare Service, Local Authorities and other establishments within Warwickshire. The booklets are downloadable from the web and can be found at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/veterans

These booklets were commended in Lord Ashcroft's 'Veterans' Transitions Review' and have been developed by another Local Authority for use in their area.



POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

Normandy UK received £16,280 for their 'Postcards from the Past' campaign. A pop-up shop was set up in Coventry's West Orchards shopping centre between July and September 2014, staffed by young and older volunteers. Web links were provided for shoppers to research armed forces connections in their family history. They were then encouraged to write a specially designed post card to those service people who may have suffered or died for their country.

The shop averaged around 20 visitors per day – around 2,000 in total, some of whom were former service people. Many visitors showed their appreciation for the opportunity to express their sentiments to fallen ancestors or those they researched on line. Several WW II veterans attended as volunteers for short periods and spoke with visitors about their experiences. Some 1368 'postcards' (messages) were submitted and displayed in the shop.



LOW ROPES CHALLENGE COURSE AT KINGSHURST ACADEMY, SOLIHULL



Kingshurst Academy in Solihull were successful in receiving £30,000 from the Covenant fund for the provision of a 'Low Ropes' challenge zone as part of the Academy's £250,000 development of an Outdoor Education and Adventure Centre. So far, over 2000 young people have used the OEA Centre.

The 'Low Ropes' course provides an opportunity for challenging people at both an individual level and within a team building perspective. This can be part of an Adventure Challenge Day involving Low Ropes, Caving, team building and Archery or as part of a bespoke workshop for a particular school or organisation. Kingshurst Academy has worked with other schools and organisations including:

- Northern House School
- Solihull Girls Can
- Solihull Active
- Local scout and cadet groups



Strengthening links between the civilian and armed forces community is a key aim of the Outdoor Education and Adventure Centre. To find out more about how you can use this innovative facility see the virtual tour at: <http://www.ctckingshurst.academy/about-us/academy-life/virtual-tour/> and select Outdoor Education and Adventure Centre. Alternatively, please contact Lee Fletcher on lee.fletcher@ctckingshurst.academy or 0121 329 4799. Kingshurst Academy is delighted to support the AFCC and look forward to working with the community to maximise the benefits for all in the CSW area.

PETER PAN PLAY AREA AT BRAMCOTE BARRACKS



Peter Pan Nursery is an independent nursery situated in Gamecock Barracks on the outskirts of Bramcote within Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough. They worked with 30 Signal Regiment and the Army Welfare Service to secure £30,000 from the Covenant grant fund in order to develop an outdoor play area. The idea of the Peter Pan Play area is to stimulate a 2 year old in an outdoor environment and includes:

- A sensory area so children can learn about the changing seasons
- Equipment such as stepping stones, tunnels and a climbing frame so they can develop their physical skills
- A small den as a hideaway for some 'quiet time' or to play with friends
- A roof covering to protect the children from inclement weather and allow them to have physical play in spite of any rain!

The Peter Pan Play area was opened in June 2014 and is in constant use as part of the Nursery's programme.

AFCC PROJECT WORKERS



Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council worked together to secure £47,000 of Covenant grant funding for 2 part time Project Workers. Phil Deakin and Helen Gould came into post in July 2015 and are here until July 2016. Their principle task is to raise awareness of and promote the Covenant and to support agencies in turning the principles into practice.

They have hit the ground running as there's only a short amount of time for them to make a difference. Since joining Helen and Phil have met many people from a range of agencies across the CSW sub-region and been involved in the following:

- Reviewing and improving the AFCC website
- Collecting data on the numbers, needs and issues of the AF community across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire
- Collating the work and developments of the AFCC partnership and other agencies between 2012-15
- Presenting to the Solihull Schools Conference and community development events in Rugby, Warwick and South Warwickshire

Over the next few months expect to see them involved in:

- Supporting schools who have Service Children on the school role and supporting schools to take up MOD programmes such as Soldiers to Schools
- An awareness raising and training programme of what the AFCC is and how statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies can support our Armed Forces community even better
- Supporting bids to the AFCC Fund
- Working with a range of agencies to improve support and services for the Armed Forces Community

Helen and Phil (and others) will be able to use the AFCC resources (pop up stands, pens, bags, wrist bands) provided by another successful AFCC bid.

If you want to know more contact Helen and Phil via email at afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE AF COMMUNITY IN THE CSW AREA

- There are 2 Regular Army bases in Warwickshire with approximately 690 serving soldiers; MOD Kineton and Gamecock Barracks. There are 2 Army Reserve bases in Coventry and 1 in Rugby with approximately 115 Reservists
- It is difficult to estimate the number of ex-Service personnel, but it is likely to be around 100,000 people
- Approximately 275 people leave the Armed Forces and return to the CSW area each year

MYTH BUSTING

There are a number of myths about serving and ex-Service personnel, which, not only are they wrong, but can do harm in terms of diverting resources away from real problems as well as harm the employment prospects of ex-Service personnel when they seek work after discharge from the Armed Forces.

These myths include:

- PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is the biggest mental health problem facing the Ex-Service community: this is FALSE. Issues such as depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse have a greater impact on the ex-Service community (Fear N et al, 2009)
- Ex-Service personnel are more likely to take their own lives: this is FALSE as suicide is less common among ex-Service personnel than the general population. With one exception; young Early Service Leavers (Kapur N et al, 2009)
- Many ex-Service personnel are in prison: the FACT is that serving and ex-Service personnel appear to be less likely than the general population to have a criminal conviction (Royal British Legion, 2014)
- Many ex-Service personnel sleep rough: It is difficult to assess the exact figures for homelessness amongst the ex-Service population. The absolute numbers of ex-Service personnel using generic housing and homelessness services are relatively low and represent a small proportion of the total service users (Jones A et al, 2014).

UNDERSTANDING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL



Following a presentation in 2013 by the Royal British Legion and Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust to the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board concerning the mental health needs of ex-Service personnel, Public Health Warwickshire were asked to conduct a more detailed needs assessment.

This was carried out during 2014-15 and involved obtaining stats from the MOD, looking at local services and discussions with stakeholders and local ex-Service personnel.

The findings suggest that 'adjustment disorder' impacts on ex-Service personnel returning to Warwickshire following their time in the services and their transition back into a civilian environment. Also, ex-Service personnel are more than twice as likely to experience anxiety and

depression as the general population, yet Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (contrary to media hype) is broadly similar to the general population! Added to the difficulties of the ex-Service population is the issue that they are twice as likely to experience alcohol problems as the general population.

These findings are being fed into the Warwickshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the action plan of the Armed Forces Community Covenant partnership for CSW. This is to ensure that those serving our country are not disadvantaged by their time in the Services and that they can receive appropriate services as easily as possible.

The report can be found at <http://hwb.warwickshire.gov.uk/2016/01/04/veterans-mental-health-jsna-needs-assessment/>

LAUNCH OF NEW AFCC WEBSITE

Following extensive revision the AFCC website was re-launched in February 2016. It is now better focused for those who use smart phones to get their information. It also includes more information about the AFCC partnership and it's work along with details of many more support agencies and ways of getting advice, information and support.

The website can be found at:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/armedforcescommunitycovenant

ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT FUND



The Government has previously provided funding to support the AFCC through a number of schemes. Nationally, this has now been agreed as a permanent £10 million programme fund annually for a range of priorities. There is a small grant scheme, up to £20,000 and a large grant scheme of up to £500,000. In 2015-16 these priorities were:

- Community integration between the Armed Forces community (including ex-Service personnel) and civilian communities (Small Grant scheme)
- The co-ordination and delivery of support to the Armed Forces Community; strategic solutions delivered through the Large Grant scheme
- Former service personnel in the Criminal Justice System; strategic solutions delivered through the Large Grant scheme

After the first round of national submissions 59 out of 250 applicants have been successful in the small grant scheme and 35 out of 195 large grant applications have been invited through to the next stage. One of these is from West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioners, who, working with other partners, are developing a project to support ex-Service personnel in the Criminal Justice System.

The second round closed on 17th December and the priorities for 2016-17 have yet to be decided, but it's likely that 'Community Integration' will continue as the priority for the small grant scheme.

For further information on the Covenant Fund go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund>

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The AFCC partnership wants to continue to build on the good work and progress underway. Key priorities for 2016 onwards include:

- A programme of awareness raising and training of what the AFCC is and what can be done to improve support and services to our AF community across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire
- Further developments to improve the mental health of ex-Service personnel and to encourage them to come forward and access the support that is there
- Support schools to take up the 'Soldiers to Schools' programme
- Improving access to housing, especially for young single ex-Service personnel
- A conference during Armed Forces Week in June to further raise awareness of the AFCC, to review progress and decide on actions for the future

If any of this interests you and you want to know more or be involved please send an email to afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk outlining who you are and how you'd like to be involved.

SERVICES AND SUPPORT AGENCIES

Veterans UK is part of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and aims to help ex-service personnel get appropriate support from government, local authorities, independent bodies and the charity sector.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

Big White Wall is a safe online community of people who are anxious, down or not coping who support and help each other by sharing what's troubling them, guided by trained professionals. Big White Wall is available FREE to all UK serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

www.bigwhitewall.com

Combat Stress is the UK's leading Veterans' mental health charity. Our treatment and support services are always FREE of charge, and are proven to work.

www.combatstress.org.uk

Moneyforce aims to assist all Service personnel, their partners, families and dependants, to be better equipped to manage their money and financial affairs.

www.moneyforce.org.uk/

The **Army Families Federation (AFF)** is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world - on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle. AFF is independent of the Army and offers confidential advice. We will deal with your enquiry without revealing your identity.

www.aff.org.uk/

Lifeworks is a FULLY FUNDED 5 day course which equips ex-Armed Forces personnel with the tools to get into and maintain a civilian job that is appropriate for them.

www.rbli.co.uk/employment_solutions/lifeworks/

The **Defence Discount Service** gives members of the Armed Forces Community discounts both online and on the high street. The Membership Card is a physical card that members of the Armed Forces Community can take into stores, restaurants and venues in order to obtain a discount.

www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

The **armedforcescharities.org.uk** website contains details of over 2,200 armed forces charities registered in the UK, including charities that cater for the needs of serving and ex-serving personnel and their families, armed forces museums and heritage organisations and cadet units and organisations.

www.armedforcescharities.org.uk



Veterans Contact Point

The Veterans Contact Point (VCP) was established in 2010 as a local group supporting former members of the Armed Forces (Veterans). It became a charity in February 2014 and is totally run by volunteers and is based in Nuneaton, North Warwickshire.

The VCP supports only local veterans and their families in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull areas. But it does provide advice and information outside these areas. Every penny donated is used in direct support of local heroes and their families.

Volunteers at the Veterans Contact Point can provide information, advice and referrals to a wide range of specialist organisations and service charities that are ready to help. It also offers specialist advice and support for veterans who have been in contact with the law.

The Veterans Contact Point
The Horsa Building, Bentley Road,
Nuneaton CV11 5LR

Telephone: 02476 343793

Email: contactus@veteranscontactpoint.co.uk

www.veteranscontactpoint.co.uk



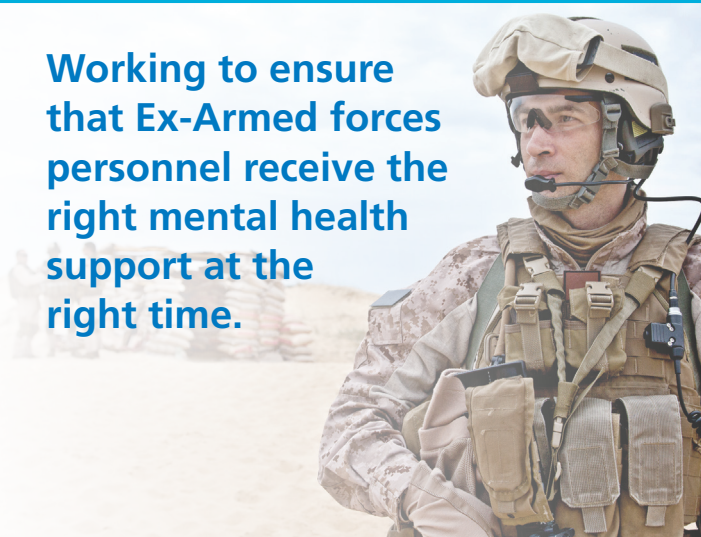
@veteransCP



Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership **NHS**
NHS Trust

Ex-Armed Forces (Veterans) Project

**Working to ensure
that Ex-Armed forces
personnel receive the
right mental health
support at the
right time.**



exarmedforces@covwarkpt.nhs.uk
Lynne Davidson 07768 130502



NEED SOME ADVICE?

If you're currently serving or have ever served
in the Armed Forces,
The Royal British Legion can offer you and your
family advice and support.

Visit rbl.org.uk, call 0808 802 8080



Registered charity number: 219279

ssafa | the
Armed Forces
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Open Monday - Friday
9.30 to 12 midday

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