



Preston Council re-signs Armed Forces Covenant



THIRTEEN years after signing an Armed Forces Community Covenant, Preston City Council has signed a new Armed Forces Covenant.

On February 4, Major Steve Tickle, the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire Amanda Parker and Chief Executive of Preston City Council Adrian Phillips were joined by council staff and members of the Armed Forces community for the formal re-signing event.

Armed Forces Champion Councillor Mel Close said: "I am delighted that Preston City Council is repledging its commitment

to the Armed Forces Covenant. We are proud to reinforce our commitment to supporting our existing service personnel and their families, reservists and veterans who have all made a significant contribution to our communities."

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly. This commitment is made in recognition of the sacrifices they make on behalf of the country. The Covenant focuses on helping members of the Armed Forces community have the same access to Government and commercial services and products as any

other citizen. This support is provided in a number of areas including healthcare, education and childcare, housing and accommodation, employment, and financial services.

Adrian Phillips, Chief Executive of Preston City Council, said: "We support employees who are volunteer reservists by allowing up to 10 days paid leave of absence per year to assist them in the commission of their duties, including attending training camps."

In 2022, Preston City Council was awarded the AFC Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award which recognises that the authority proactively demonstrates that service personnel/armed forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of recruitment and selection processes and that the workforce is aware of the positive policies towards defence people issues.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

A MILITARY preparation college believes that young people can achieve their goals through outstanding leadership and teaching.



Chorley's Military Preparation College for Training is unique and helps 16+ year olds develop their fitness, vocational qualifications, and employability skills to help them to prepare for

employment, including rewarding careers in the UK Armed Forces.

Around nine months ago, Ellie Wood was welcomed to the college in Chorley. She had the desire and determination to join The

Royal Air Force, however she needed to work on her fitness to achieve to the standards required. During her time at MPCT, Ellie showed true grit, ambition and spirit and took on board the training, guidance and advice of staff and instructors.

MPCT Chorley is incredibly proud and delighted to say she has now joined the Royal Air Force in March.

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YOUR COVENANT AT WORK



MEDALS BACK

A ROYAL Marine D-Day commando veteran, whose medals were stolen, was delighted to receive replacement medals from The Royal Marines Association.

Jim Laughlin, 101, was presented with his new medals a 1939-45 Star, an Africa Star, an Italy Star, a Defence Medal and a War Medal at his care home in Accrington in December.

His medals had been on his wall, but they went missing before Mr Laughlin went into hospital.

Shafiq (Sid) Sadiq, an Armed Forces veteran advocate support officer with East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, applied to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to get them replaced.

When he contacted the MoD they had no official records of Jim being awarded the medals, so they could issue originals rather than duplicates.

Sid said. "It's an amazing thing to reach the age he's reached and to achieve some of the things he's achieved."



From left, Ian Barber, Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub, Major Stephen Tickle, 4 Lancs Regt, Councillor Phil Crowe, Mayor of Preston, Gary Shivers, DWP Armed Forces Champion.

CAREERS FAIR SUCCESS

THE University of Central Lancashire played host to employers and military veterans in April at the second Lancashire Armed Forces careers fair.

The event was held in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and much of the planning was undertaken by the DWP Armed Forces Champion, Gary Shivers.

As a veteran himself, Gary understands the issues faced by veterans when they are seeking employment, and, along with the network of DWP work coaches, Gary supports veterans back into

work across the counties of Lancashire and Cumbria.

These careers fairs allow military veterans to get face to face with supportive employers with open roles and they offer veterans opportunities to speak directly with recruiters who understand the Armed Forces and understand the many transferable skills they bring.

Sometimes Forces people can forget to shout about the discipline, loyalty and teamwork they were trained to demonstrate, but remembering these skills is important and it sets military veterans apart from many others in the job market.

WATERLOO DAY FUN

A REGIMENTAL family fun day and Waterloo Parade will be held at Weeton Barracks in Preston.

On Saturday June 21 from 1pm, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment will host a Regimental Family Day and there will be various displays, stands, bands and family activities on the camp. The event is open to all members of the regimental family, serving soldiers, families, veterans, association and those affiliated to the armed forces and invited guests. For tickets visit www.eventbrite.co.uk and look up The Duke Of Lancasters Regiment Family Day.

YOUR COVENANT AT WORK

VE-DAY EVENTS

A CIVIC Evensong service will be held at Blackburn Cathedral on Saturday May 11 at 4pm to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Victory in Europe was declared on May 8 1945.

May 5: free open-air music festival at Witton Park, Blackburn, organised by RBL; display of military vehicles, stalls, food and games at Read and Simonstone Constitutional Club.

May 8: evening of entertainment at Fairhaven Lake, Fylde, and beacon lighting; beacon lighting Crown Point Road, Burnley; beacon lighting Astley Park, Chorley, and light projections over Rivington Pike; beacon lighting Lostock Hall, South Ribble; civic event at the Flag Market Preston and beacon lighting; breakfast drop in at Haslingden Community Link and a quiz at the Veterans In Communities Centre in afternoon.

May 10: Music in the Town, Leyland.

May 11: celebration at The Ashcroft, Whitworth; picnic in Astley Park, Chorley.

HEALTHIER HEROES EXPANDS

HEALTHIER Heroes has opened its first Armed Forces Veterans and Families Community Hub at the Saxton Centre in Alexandria Road, Morecambe.

The Community Interest Company has its main base in Burnley and was established in 2018 by Andrew and Rio Powell.

The dedicated space in Morecambe provides a resource for veterans, their families, and the wider community, giving access to tailored support services. These include wellbeing programmes, mental health support and opportunities for social connection and more.



The hub aims to foster a sense of belonging, offer guidance on transitioning to civilian life, and addresses the unique challenges faced by the armed forces community. A second hub, in Preston Flag Market (next to Nandos), is due to open soon.

● Last September, Healthier Heroes was honoured to win the Community Business of the Year title at the BiBAs – Lancashire's Premier Business Awards.

THRIVING TOGETHER

MORE than 120 people attended the launch of the Thrive Together Programme at the Forces Wellbeing Collective held at The Edge in Wigan.

Throughout the region, Capacity Builders are being employed to create a network of different organisations to work with veterans, families and their carers.

At The Edge, speakers included Step Together Volunteering, Burnley FC in the Community and Tom

Harrison House along with Ian Millen from Veterans Outreach Support, which is based in Portsmouth.

Veterans In Communities Community Capacity Builder Brian Hawke, *pictured right*, said: "My role is to work within the community and to build its capacity to work with organisations and services across Lancashire that support veterans to



create a network so people are not working independently and are sharing best practice so they can work together to support veterans, families and their carers."

Thrive Together is the legacy phase of the VPPP – Veterans Places, Pathways and People

using what was learnt in the programme to provide safe places for veterans to access.

To find out more about how your organisation can get involved with the Forces Wellbeing Collective, sign up and become an affiliate member contact Brian on 07741 902 343 or email brianhawke@vic.org.uk

YOUR ARMED FORCES CHAMPIONS

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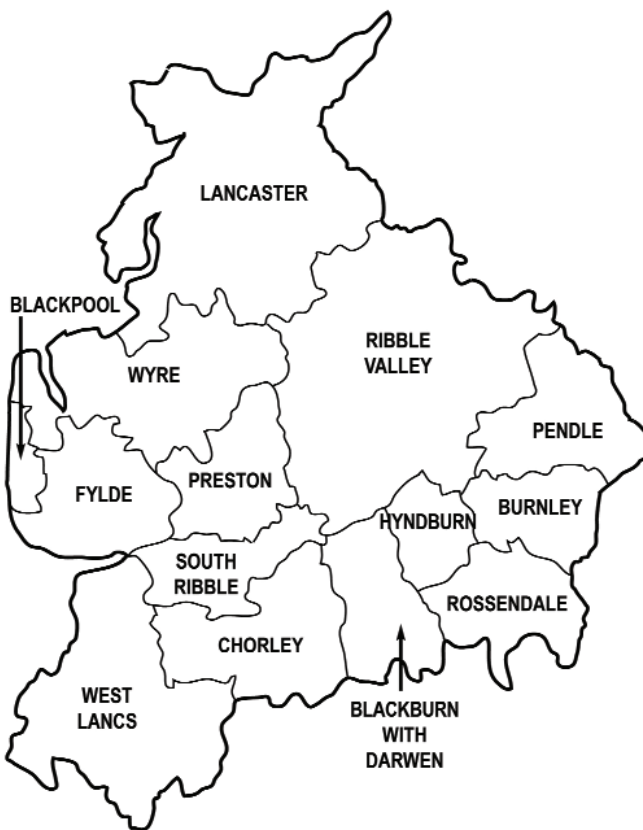
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Information correct at time of going to press

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GROWING PROJECT BLOSSOMS

THERE have been huge developments at the Roots to Branches CIC based within the service community at Weeton Barracks, near Kirkham.

A Veterans' Foundation Grant has provided three years of funding, and led to two more members of staff being appointed. Director Lisa Jones said: "One new member of staff is an army wife who has taken up an admin role and we also now have a community

engagement officer Helen Leece."

Helen has introduced a new Wednesday cookery group where up to 30 families who live on the camp meet to cook produce from the Wellness Garden.

The Defence Gardens Scheme (DGS) is partnering with Roots to Branches to offer nature-based therapy for veterans, service leavers, and personnel. A pilot course

offered eight sessions which were held every fortnight. Lisa said: "We are still encouraging the wider community to come down to the barracks and we are looking at developing a garden play area where children will play and be at one with nature, having a mud kitchen and sensory plants."

Already a fun crawl tunnel has been introduced under a mound of earth which was removed to make way for a micro-forest and a National



Lottery Community Fund grant will fund an outdoor kitchen and a large shelter so, whatever the weather, cookery clubs can continue.

For more information visit www.rootstobranchesfc.co.uk



**THE LANCASHIRE
ARMED FORCES
COVENANT HUB**

Lancashire
County Council



**University of
Central Lancashire**
UCLan



**Lancashire &
South Cumbria**
NHS Foundation Trust

