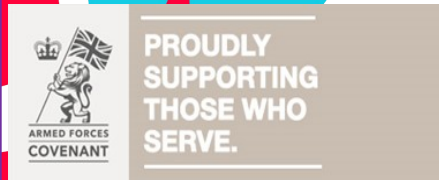
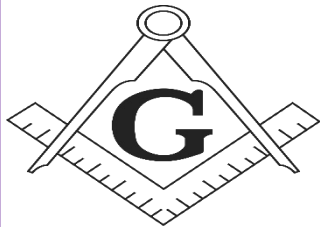


Veterans Community Network Annual Report 2024- 2025

With Grateful Thanks to our Funders and Donors



**Our Standards
and
Memberships**

Contents

Trustee Foreword.....	3
About Us.....	4
Structure, Governance and Management.....	5
Our Activities.....	6
Achievements and Performance.....	9
Financial Review, Accounts, and Independent Examiner's Report at 31 March 2023.....	14

Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name	Veterans Community Network
Registered Charity Number	1191970
Charity's Principal Address	Union House 111, New Union Street Coventry CV1 2NT
Accountant and Independent Examiner	Streets Chartered Accountants

Chair of Trustees Foreword

This year has been one of both challenge and renewal for the Veterans Community Network. We faced significant financial



pressures, including gaps in funding that affected our ability to maintain services at previous levels. The Board took difficult but necessary decisions to protect continuity of support for our beneficiaries, and we are focused on rebuilding our reserves and strengthening our financial position in the year ahead.

Amid these challenges, there has also been real progress. We were pleased to welcome several new trustees to the Board, bringing fresh expertise and renewed energy to our governance. Their contribution is already helping to strengthen the charity as we move into a new phase of development.

Despite operating with a small team and navigating funding uncertainty, VCN continued to deliver meaningful impact across all our regions. Our staff, volunteers, and partners have shown exceptional commitment, ensuring that

veterans and their families continued to receive vital support, connection, and community.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported VCN this year. Your dedication enables us to remain a trusted source of help for those who have served.

Tom Crossman-Kellie
Chair of Trustees

About Us

Veterans Community Network was constituted on 10 June 2020 and commenced its charitable activities on 23 October 2020. The trustees present their fourth Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The aim of VCN is to support Veterans, Reservists, and their families in accessing the treatment and support services to help cope, adjust and manage situations such as mental health, housing, benefits, and social isolation. We do this through our network of trained Veteran Peer Mentors combined with 1-1 intensive support and a wide range of social prescribing activities. Our goal is to improve mental health and wellbeing to help veterans, and their families live fulfilling lives after their service. The trustees that have managed the Charity during the period are as follows:

Trustee name	Position	Date of Appointment	Date of Resignation
Patricia Haslam	Chair of Trustees	7 July 2022	
Keith Le Page	General Trustee	5 May 2022	November 2024
Hannah Cruickshank	General Trustee	3 May 2023	
Gary Middleton	General Trustee	June 2024	January 2026
Paul Dunkley	General Trustee	June 2024	
Aaron Clark	General Trustee	June 2024	
Richard Browne	General Trustee	October 2024	
Chris Hern	General Trustee	January 2025	



Structure, Governance and Management



The Charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the Charity Commission 'Foundation' model. The Charity is managed by its trustees, which currently number four. The Service Director, Dr Gillian Le Page, deals with all operational matters relating to the delivery of peer mentoring services. The other trustees deal with administrative and financial matters according to their particular area of experience.

The other trustees have been recruited in order to provide the Charity with a broad mix of such experience.

Related parties

Our objectives are to improve the health and wellbeing of service personnel, HM Armed Forces and reservists and their families in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Northampton, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. In particular but not exclusively, providing assistance and by offering professional and peer mentor led care for their benefit and in such

Our Activities

During this reporting period, VCN has continued to provide a wide range of social activities to help reduce social isolation and enable veterans to re-connect with their military communities. These events also create an opportunity to honour the service and sacrifice made by our veterans and their families.

We had to say goodbye to the RVP at Sharnbrook in June 2024 and move on to pastures new. Our grateful thanks to the Paston family for letting us set up the RVP at their farm.

Our pastures new was a beautiful location at Croughton in Northamptonshire. Once again we have been very lucky to have such a fantastic bit of land to grow vegetables and 'chew the fat' over coffee and cake.

RVP CROUGHTON



Monthly Activities

Tea and Banter

Every Tuesday with the exception of the third Tuesday

Online via Zoom

Bedford Veterans Brunch Club	First Saturday of the month	North End Social Club, Bedford
Bedford Drop-in	Third Tuesday of the month	North End Social Club, Bedford
Veterans Get Together	Second Monday of the month	Rivets Sports and Social Club, Aylesbury
Wellingborough Hub	Every fourth Wednesday	The Masonic Hall, Wellingborough
Wellingborough Breakfast Club	Third Saturday of the month	Ock n' Dough, Wellingborough
RVP CROUGHTON	Every Thursday	Croughton
Weedon Bec Coffee Morning	Last Friday of the Month	Industry & Supply, Weedon Bec

Weedon Bec Coffee Morning



Veterans Get Together



Bedford Christmas Drop-In



Banter on Parade



Additional Events

Other social events held this year include:

- Naseby Battle Field Talk at Weedon Bec June 2024
- Down to Earth Garden Programme February 2024
- Launch of the VCN Community Tapestry January 2024
- VCN Craft Stall at the Bedford Drop-in. November 2024

Naseby Battlefield Talk	Down to Earth	Launch of the VCN Tapestry	VCN Craft Stall
			
<i>"I didn't realise there was such a rich history on our door step".</i> <i>"As a veteran, the history of the Battle of Naseby fascinates me. Military planning is just as important then!"</i>	<i>"This has been a good start to the planning of vegetables for the year ahead".</i>	The tapestry was launched to celebrate 80 years since VE / VJ day. The plan is to take it to all of VCN's events and activities and engage the local community in the project by getting them to add some stitches to the tapestry and learn more about the end of WWII.	<i>"It's great to be able to buy some things for Christmas that are homemade and a little bit different."</i>

Achievements and Performance – Dr Gill Le Page, Service Director

During this reporting period, VCN has faced some difficult challenges in relation to the continuation of funding with there being some gaps which left a financial shortfall and reduction in the level of funding in the Eastern Region between April and December 2024.

As a consequence, we very sadly had to say goodbye to Tina Griffiths who was the social activities co-ordinator for Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes in November 2024.

We also said goodbye to Paul Dunkley earlier in the year in March 2024. He was the Peer Mentor Support Worker in Buckinghamshire. He decided to leave at the end of the V PPP and take a well-earned rest and then coming back as a Trustee.

Goodbye and thank you to Tina and Paul

- Left to right:
- Sher George Peer Mentor Northamptonshire
- Pat Haslam VCN Chair of Trustees
- Tina Griffiths
- Paul Dunkley Trustee



On a more positive note, VCN was delighted to have been successful in our application to once again partner with Veterans Outreach Support in the South East Region and Bridge for Heroes in the Eastern Region as part of the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund National Thrive Together Programme.

This new programme came about as a result of the research that had taken place over the summer of 2024. The main findings included a lack of awareness of services, barriers to help-seeking and a complex service provision with no clear entry point.

 **THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST**

Thank you for your service and being part of the

VCN journey.



South East Region. Portfolio Lead: Veterans Outreach Support – Partnership in Mind

From the 1 April 2024 to the 30 September, 2024, the team was awarded 6 months interim funding to continue to work with Veterans Outreach Support in the South East area to support social inclusion. Commissioned research from the Partnership in Mind Programme and funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the team was tasked to gain understanding of our partners and the support available to veterans in Buckinghamshire. The research was completed by 43 veterans. The questionnaire stated that the main barrier is not knowing what's out there. Local services, and mental health services are the first point of contact, little or no information is available under other or support from locally located charities. This excludes the possibility of accessing information and support including advice, employment, reducing social isolation, access to support, and more. There was another gap in understanding when it came to successful outcomes for veterans. As part of the South East Partnership in Mind programme, the team is working on the WORK AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT to work with the Thrive Together Network and the Partnership Development team is to identify 'clusters' across the Counties of Buckinghamshire (excluding Oxfordshire and Oxford) and build relationships with organisations delivering support to veterans.

In January 2025, Wilf Bamford was successful in securing funding for the project. **32** Beneficiaries accessed social support services in Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, GP services were mapped across the region and contact was made with **34** providers to map the support available for veterans and their families.

Eastern Region Portfolio Lead: Bridge for Heroes - Veterans Voice

From May 2024 to October 2024, VCN was funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to undertake some beneficiary consultation around knowledge and awareness of veterans services and barriers to engagement.

During this period, **80** beneficiaries accessed support through community activities, gardening or 1-1 support.

In January 2025, VCN leadership has been selected as our geographical area of the Eastern Region Thrive Together Programme as a delivery partner. Once again, the heroes were the reason we lead knowledge as Veterans Voice.

VCN geographical area responsibility covers Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes (BLV).

We have been commissioned to deliver four work streams:

1. Hubs and drop-ins: go live on 1 April 25
2. Mobile Awareness and support go live on 1 January 26
3. Tackling Mental Health go live on 1 January 26
4. Finding Veterans in Care go live on 1 May 2026

During Q1 of 25/26, for the active project, we have been working through

Contact was made with **153** professionals to



Sher George continued as our main peer support worker in Northamptonshire with a total of **112** beneficiaries accessing social activities and / or 1-1 support. She was supported by Doreen who with some of the 1-1 support.

A new coffee morning was started at Wootton Bassett Industrial Supply and the event was very well attended. We were very well looked after by Neil Bannister and his team.

In March we were joined by veterans from Wootton Bassett and the event was a great success. People turned up for the event and it was almost standing room only. Once the event was over, we treated everyone to a meal and the Battle of Marston. There were opportunities to try on some of the uniforms and get a chance to see some of the equipment from the time.

We were also approached by a veteran who was struggling to find a way to help. He had been called a hero and some veterans have found this a good way of getting on with their mental health. It is the best of all. We did manage to get one session going with plans to have a show after the event. Unfortunately, the idea was not taken forward by the veteran but we were pleased to have him on the platform for a while and get things started.

We are especially grateful to all the volunteers who have helped us. Like a lot of small local 'boots on the ground' charities, we are very grateful to them.

We would also like to give our sincere thanks to all the donors who have helped us. The smallest amount really helps and everything we raise or are donated goes straight to support the services we deliver.

Veterans Supporting Veterans



Aspirational

Inspirational

Motivational



187 professionals
have been given
advice on military
support
services.



266
beneficiaries
supported

352 FB
members



Staffing

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025
VCN staffing level was as follows:

1 x FTE Peer Support Worker

(12 months) Northamptonshire & Eastern
Region.

1 x PTE Social Activities co-ordinator (15
hours pw) for 7 months

Despite the financial challenges that came towards the end of Q3 of this reporting period, VCN is proud of what we have achieved with such a small team

"VCN has helped me get back on my feet and they stay with you for as long as you need."



Financial review, Accounts and Independent Examiner's Report at 31 March 2025

I joined the Board in July 2025 and became Chair shortly thereafter, so my comments are based on a full review of the financial records, minutes, and the Independent Examiner's report rather than direct involvement in the period covered.

The reduction in unrestricted reserves reflects a documented Board decision to honour a staff contract following the early termination of a commissioned service. This use of reserves aligns with the charity's Reserves Policy and ensured continuity of support to beneficiaries. Restricted funds at year end relate to a contract nearing completion and remain committed to their designated purposes. Income comprised grant funding, donations, fundraising activity, and staff salary-sacrifice arrangements.

The Independent Examiner confirmed the accounts are consistent with the records. A historical £8k timing difference was identified, relating to delayed income recognition, but retrospective adjustment was deemed disproportionate. The key recommendation was to strengthen grant-level tracking, which the Board has already begun to implement.

Since taking on the Chair role, I have reviewed and strengthened financial controls, including removing a payment-authorisation risk, recruiting three trustees with strong financial backgrounds (including a qualified insolvency practitioner now acting as Treasurer), and moving to cash-based accounting to reduce timing discrepancies. Based on the information available and the examiner's assurance, I am satisfied the accounts present a fair reflection of the charity's financial position.

Signature	E - Signed
Trustee Name	Tom Crossman-Kellie
Position	Chair of Trustees
Date	28 Jan 26



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Veterans Community Network

1191970

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2024

To

31/03/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grant Income	-	40,045	-	40,045	88,944
Donations	6,625	-	-	6,625	16,267
Other Revenue	300	-	-	300	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	6,925	40,045	-	46,970	105,211
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	6,925	40,045	-	46,970	105,211

A3 Payments

Sub-contractors	-	13,527	-	13,527	11,373
Garden Expenses	-	1,517	-	1,517	86
Direct Wages	-	-	-	-	20,184
Advertising and Marketing	546	-	-	546	110
Audit and Accountancy Fees	6,473	-	-	6,473	825
General Expenses		656		656	2,296
Telephone, IT Software & Consumables	4,563			4,563	2,259
Postage, Freight & Courier	126			126	54
Rent		900		900	660
Salaries, NI & Pension		33,726		33,726	64,310
Staff Training	24	-	-	24	75
Subscriptions	201	-	-	201	753
Motor and Travel	-	2,406	-	2,406	8,982
Sub total	11,933	52,732	-	64,665	111,967

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	11,933 3	52,732 2	-	64,665 5	111,967 7

Net of receipts/(payments)					
-	5,008	-	12,687	-	6,756
A5 Transfers between funds					
-	8,431	-	8,431	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end					
	14,165		4,519		25,440
Cash funds this year end					
	726		263		18,684

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	726	263	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	726	263	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

[illegible]

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

[illegible]

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Charity Name
Veterans Community Network

On accounts for the year ended

31 March 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1191970

Set out on pages

1 to

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31/03/2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date: 26/01/2026

Name:

Alan Endersby

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACA

Address:

Streets S J Males Limited, Basepoint Business & Innovation Centre,
110 Butterfield, Luton LU2 8DL

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None.