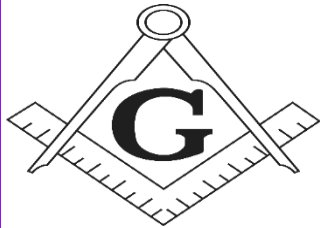


# Veterans Community Network Annual Report 2024- 2025

**With Grateful Thanks to our Funders and Donors**



**Our Standards  
and  
Memberships**

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## 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 objective: To relieve the needs of and to promote the good health and wellbeing of ex-service personnel (HM Armed Forces) and reservists and their families living in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Luton. In particular but not exclusively by providing them with help and assistance and by offering them a professionally supervised social prescribing and peer mentor led care co-ordination service to expert support providers for their benefit and in such other ways as the trustees consider fit.

## 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
 <p><i>"I didn't realise there was such a rich history on our door step".</i></p> <p><i>"As a veteran, the history of the Battle of Naseby fascinates me. Military planning is just as important then!"</i></p>	 <p><b>DOWN to EARTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-week gardening program</li> <li>• With McFarlane Horticulture</li> <li>• Starts Thursday 15 February 2024 from 1000 – 1500</li> <li>• Lunch provided</li> <li>• Held at the Cock &amp; Pullet, Park Lane, Sharnbrook, MK44 1LS</li> <li>• To book, please contact <a href="mailto:admin@vcn.org.uk">admin@vcn.org.uk</a></li> </ul> <p><i>"This has been a good start to the planning of vegetables for the year ahead".</i></p>	 <p>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.</p>	 <p><i>"It's great to be able to buy some things for Christmas that are homemade and a little bit different."</i></p>

## 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, VCN was awarded 6 months interim funding to continue to work with Veterans Outreach Support in the South East area to support some regionally commissioned research. Named the Partnership in Mind Programme and funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, VCN was tasked to gain an understanding of our partners and the support available to veterans in Buckinghamshire. This is particularly relevant as 43% of veterans who completed the questionnaire stated that the main barrier is not knowing what's out there. The local research found that if GPs, and mental health services are the first point of contact, little or no information is available to the wider offer of support, particularly local and national charities. This excludes the possibility of accessing a more holistic approach to recovery including access to housing, benefits and debt advice, employment, reducing social isolation, or addressing substance misuse problems.

There was another gap in funding until January 2025 when VCN was successful in getting further funding to be part of the South East Partnership in Mind 18 month programme taking on the role of NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT to work with the Thrive Together Network and the Partnership Development Manager is to identify 'cluster' Partners across the Counties of Buckinghamshire (excluding Milton Keynes), Berkshire, and Oxfordshire and build a meaningful network of organisations delivering support to veterans.

In January 2025, Wilf Bamford was appointed into this new role for 3 days a week.

**32** Beneficiaries accessed social support through the VCN drop-in at the Rivets social club in Aylesbury, GP services were mapped across the region and contact was made with **34** professionals making them aware of 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 awarded some interim funding via Bridge for Heroes as part of the Interim programme funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. This was to continue to provide peer mentor support in Bedfordshire and undertake some beneficiary consultation around knowledge and awareness of veterans services and barriers to engagement.

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

In January 2025, VCN learned we had been successful in our grant application to be part of the Eastern Region Thrive Together Programme as a delivery partner. Once again, Bridge for Heroes were the programme lead known as Veterans Voice.

VCN geographical area of responsibility was Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK).

We have been commissioned to deliver four work streams:

1. Hubs and drop-ins: going live of the 1 April 2025
2. Mobile Awareness and Pop-ups: going live on 1 January 2025
3. Tackling Mental Health Stigma: going live on the 1 January 2025
4. Finding Veterans in Care Homes: going live on the 1 May 2025

During Q1 of 25/26, for the active projects, **42** beneficiaries were supported through our activities.

Contact was made with **153** professionals to raise awareness of veterans services.



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 Dr Le Page with some of the 1-1 support cases.

A new coffee morning was started at Weedon Bec Industry and Supply and this was very well attended. We were very well looked after by Neil Bannister and his team.

In March we were joined by our partners from Naseby headed by Mark Linell. We had 62 people turn up for that event and it was almost standing room only. Once again we were treated to a talk about the Battle of Naseby and there were opportunities to try on some of the uniforms and get a chance to handle some of their weaponry from the time.

We were also approached by a veteran who was keen to try and set up a comedy group called Banter on Parade. Some veterans have found this a good way of getting to grips with their mental health with the idea that laughter is the best medicine. We did manage to get one session going with plans to put on a comedy show after the course. Unfortunately, the idea didn't get taken forward by the veteran but we were pleased to have been able to provide the platform for him to try and get things off the ground.

We are especially grateful to all our funders in Northamptonshire who have helped us to keep our work going. Like a lot of small local 'boots on the ground' charities, we often lose out in funding applications to the larger charities.

We would also like to give our sincere thanks to everyone who made donations to VCN. Even the smallest amount really helps and everything we raise or are donated goes straight to support the front line services we deliver.

*Veterans Supporting Veterans*



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  
 1 x PTE Cluster Lead South East (22.5 hours pw) for 3 months  
 1 x Volunteer Eastern Region & Northamptonshire

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

Veterans Community Network	1191970
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CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025
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### 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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grant Income	-	40,045	-	40,045	88,944
Donations	6,625	-	-	6,625	16,267
Other Revenue	300	-	-	300	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>6,925</b>	<b>40,045</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,970</b>	<b>105,211</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>6,925</b>	<b>40,045</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,970</b>	<b>105,211</b>

### 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
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>11,933</b>	<b>52,732</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,665</b>	<b>111,967</b>

<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>11,933</b>	<b>52,732</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,665</b>	<b>111,967</b>

<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	- 5,008	- 12,687	-	- 17,695	- 6,756
A5 Transfers between funds	- 8,431	8,431	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	14,165	4,519	-	18,684	25,440
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	726	263	-	989	18,684

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

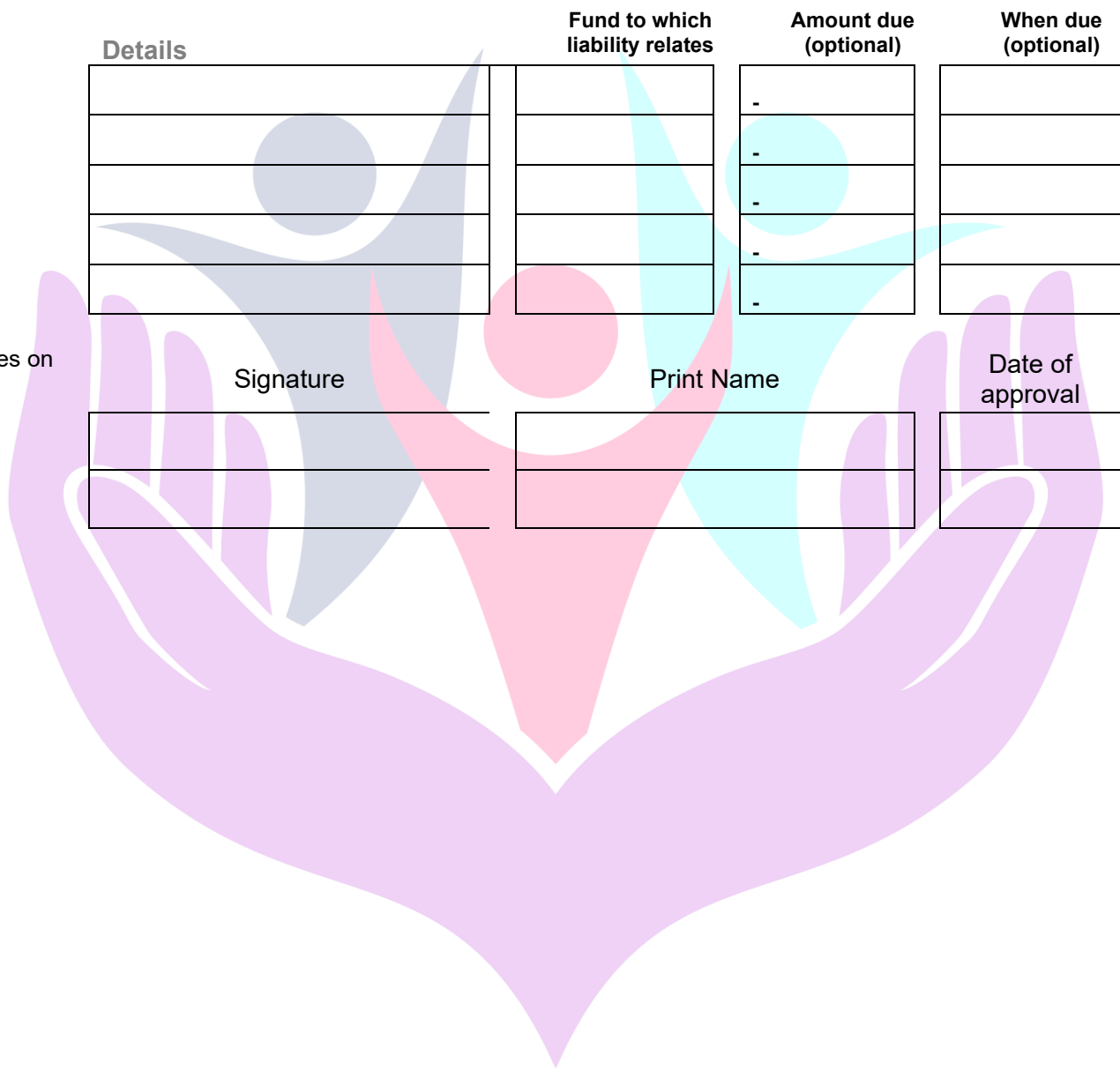
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash at Bank	726	263	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	726	263	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>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

**B3 Investment assets**

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

**B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use**

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-



**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



*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	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	1191970
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**Set out on pages**

**1 to**

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

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.