

WORCESTERSHIRE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT



March 2014

WELCOME

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Working Group.

Last month we saw the Community Covenant in action when the 1st Battalion Royal Irish provided flood relief support to communities across Worcestershire, and you can read more about it in an open letter from their Commanding Officer.

We have just received the good news that we have secured £1,800 for resources to promote the Covenant. A further bid for £26,000 to fund a memorials project was approved but unfortunately will need to be resubmitted subject to a revised Heritage Lottery Fund application being successful.

And finally The Two Worlds of Charlie F comes to Malvern Theatres at the end of this month. I was fortunate to see it last year and can highly recommend going if you get the opportunity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Adams".

Cllr Rob Adams

Chair of Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Working Group

LATEST FUNDING NEWS

Veterans Accommodation Fund

The Minister for Defence Personnel, Veterans and Welfare recently announced a one-off £40million Veterans Accommodation Fund. The Fund seeks UK wide projects which offer access to accommodation for Veterans with a housing need. This could include homeless hostels; homes for the wounded, sick or injured; and long term care facilities.

Applications to the Fund will be invited up until 13th June 2014 with a value range between £10,000 and £10,000,000. The MOD plans to host a briefing and networking event about the Fund in March 2014. Further details about the Fund, including criteria and application form, can be found at the following address: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/veterans-accommodation-fund>.

Covenant Grants Scheme

We are entering the final year of the Covenant Grant Scheme with a further £10,000,000 available nationally for projects. Applications need to be made through the Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Working Group to ensure that the project meets the grant criteria and local requirement before they can be submitted to the regional panel for consideration. The next regional panel meeting will take place in June 2014 and applications must be submitted to us by **17th May 2014**.

For more information on applying for funding visit www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk or contact Worcestershire Partnership Relationship Manager, Alan Smith by email at asmith3@worcestershire.gov.uk or call him on 01905 822836.

LOCAL BUSINESS AND COUNTY COUNCIL WORK TOGETHER TO SUPPORT WORCESTERSHIRE'S ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Worcestershire County Council and Quanta have joined forces to support local Armed Service personnel with their journey into civilian life. The Worcester based training company was one of the first to sign the Corporate Covenant towards the end of last year, making it the City's first organisation to have done so.

Quanta and Worcestershire County Council are working together to help educate other local businesses on the benefits of employing members of the Armed forces, as well as providing that much needed support and career advice to those returning to Civvy Street.

Quanta has been supporting service leavers for over a decade, and throughout this period have built strong relationships with Worcestershire based companies that employ ex-service personnel. As an approved learning provider for the ELC Scheme, Quanta's primary aim is to provide service leavers with the highest quality resettlement training to ensure they make the most effective transition possible into their new career.

At Quanta, there are a number of personal connections to the MOD, that's why the support is so close to home for many of its employees. The training provided to service leavers isn't just about business, it's more personal than that; Quanta values its Armed Forces and wants to give something back to those that deserve it most.

"It has been great working together with the Community Covenant" Kristen Leith, Sales Manager at Quanta said. "You don't often get to partner with an organisation whose values so closely align with your own. I'm sure with our combined efforts we can really start to get the message out there and make the transition a far easier one for service leavers. "

The Worcestershire Community Covenant and Quanta plan to roll out a number of actions to encourage local businesses and the community to join together in supporting local service leavers. This collaboration aims to show businesses the true value of employing ex service personnel and the benefits that are available to those that have left or are leaving the forces.

Worcestershire Partnership Relationship Manager, Alan Smith said "We were delighted to find out that Quanta had become the first business in Worcestershire to sign this pledge. The Corporate Covenant sits alongside the Community Covenant in supporting the armed forces community and both share similar aims.

There are a number of potential challenges and opportunities facing the County as a result of the future reductions in numbers of armed forces personnel and the increase in numbers of reservists. This is why we welcome the opportunity to work together with Quanta to support the armed forces community and to increase the awareness of the benefits of employing ex-forces personnel and reservists to other Worcestershire businesses."

This is only the start of a long standing partnership that can have the potential to revolutionise Worcestershire businesses, further boost our community and value our Armed Service personnel.

If you're a business that employs a number of ex-service personnel, or maybe you're a recent service leaver looking for some career advice, visit [Quanta](#) or call Miranda Andrews on [0800 018 5597](tel:08000185597) for more information.



THE TWO WORLDS OF CHARLIE F.

The play *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*, which was first performed in January 2012 at two charity fund-raising evenings at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, followed by a small tour, will start a new UK tour in 2014, preceded by a two-week run at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Canada. The tour, which will be supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, will be supporting The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal at each performance and this will fund The Royal British Legion's theatre welfare programme. It will be performed by serving and medically discharged military personnel, as well as professional actors.

The Two Worlds of Charlie F was the idea of Alice Driver, the then Masterclass Creative Producer and now the Executive Producer of this new tour. Her initial idea was to provide a the first theatre recovery project and unique work placement for serving wounded, injured and sick (WIS) military personnel within a theatre company. This was the first time that the MOD had allowed a theatre company access to their wounded soldiers and led to workshops and interviews with the WIS service personnel from the war in Afghanistan, which, in turn, led to a play being created through the partnership of The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust, The Royal British Legion and Defence Recovery Capability, written by the award-winning poet and playwright Owen Sheers. The play was rehearsed and performed on stage at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End for two sold-out performances. The play then went on a short UK tour, visiting Birmingham, Cardiff and Edinburgh, and won the Amnesty International Award for Freedom of Expression 2012. The production was directed by Stephen Rayne with the support of patron Trevor Nunn. The other two patrons were Ray Winstone, the project ambassador, and recently retired General Sir David Richards, Chief of Defence Staff. It received five-star reviews, full houses and standing ovations wherever it played.

A documentary commissioned by Alan Yentob and made by UpperCut Films looked at the process of creating and staging *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*. Called *Theatre of War*, it was first shown on BBC1's *Imagine...* and is currently nominated for The Grierson Documentary Awards.



The Two Worlds of Charlie F looks at injury before, during and after. It is a soldier's view of service, injury and recovery. Moving from the war in Afghanistan, through the dream world of morphine-induced hallucinations to the physio rooms of Headley Court, the play explores the consequences of injury, both physical and psychological, and its effects on others as the soldiers fight to win the new battle for survival at home. The play is a very personal and very moving look at the

effects of war on individual combatants, but it also has a huge amount of humour and humanity.



Writer Owen Sheers is the author of two collections of poetry, *The Blue Book* and *Skirrid Hill*, a work of narrative non-fiction about Zimbabwe, *The Dust Diaries*, a novel, *Resistance*, and a novella, *White Ravens*. In 2011, he wrote the script for the National Theatre of Wales's *The Passion*, directed by and starring Michael Sheen. His verse drama *Pink Mist*, commissioned by BBC Radio 4, was published by Faber and won the Hay Medal for Poetry 2013.

The cast will include serving and veteran servicemen and women Bombardier (Rtd) Gareth Crabbe, Rifleman (Rtd) Daniel Shaw, Darren Swift, Marine Cassidy Little, Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Stewart Hill, Lance Corporal (Rtd) Maurillia Simpson, Corporal (Rtd) Steve Shaw and Lance Corporal Ashleigh Young. They will be joined by professional actors Lily Phillips, Miriam Cooper, Owen Oldroyd, Terri Ann Bob-Baxter, Tom Colley, Tomos Eames and Venetia Maitland. Marine Cassidy Little, who plays the title role of Marine Charlie Fowler, was born in Canada and studied performance art in the United States. He

then did stand-up comedy in Britain before joining the Marines (as the result of a bet). Cassidy lost a leg in his second tour of Afghanistan.

The Two Worlds of Charlie F will be directed once again by Stephen Rayne, with music by Jason Carr, design by Anthony Lamble, lighting and projection design by Will Reynolds, sound by Colin Pink and choreography by Lily Phillips.

A new production company, **The Charlie F Project (UK) Ltd**, has been created by Garry McQuinn and Amanda Faber to produce this new tour. Garry's producing credits include the international hit shows *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* and *Tap Dogs*. Amanda is a film and television producer, who produced the feature film of Owen Sheers's award-winning novel *Resistance*. She was also a director at the BBC.

Website: www.charlie-f.com
Twitter: @CharlieF_Tour
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CharlieFTour>

The Two Worlds of Charlie F is at Malvern Theatres from 31st March to 5th April 2014.

Times: Eves 7.45pm; Wed and Sat Mats 2.30pm
Price: £15.68-£29.12. Under 26s £8.96. Service Personnel £11.20. (Prices quoted include 12% booking fee).

A Charity Gala evening will be held on Monday 31st March. The Charity Gala package is £50 each and includes a ticket to the show (nearest and best seats available), a glass of champagne, drinks after the show with the cast and a donation to charity – proceeds to The Royal British Legion.

For more information and to book please contact the box office on 01684 892 277

IN SUPPORT OF



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF WORCESTERSHIRE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 1ST BATTALION, THE ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT



ARMY

Lt Col IM Gardiner
Commanding Officer
1ST Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment
Clive Barracks, Tern Hill, Market Drayton TF9 3QE

Telephone: (Mil) 94462 8282 (Civ) 01630 698282
Fax: (Mil) 94462 8208 (Civ) 01630 698208
Email: 1RIRISH-BHQ-CO@mod.uk



February 2014

My unit, The 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, recently provided flood relief support across Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire; ably supported by soldiers from the 1 RIFLES operating out of Hereford. The main focus of our efforts, which at one point saw more than 300 soldiers from 1 R IRISH being out on the ground, was Worcestershire.

We deployed from 13 February to all complete by the 19th. From the outset, my unequivocal impression was of an area under significant pressure from floodwaters but being overseen by people, from many agencies, possessed of a calm, confident and professional focus. I must single out West Mercia Police for their tremendous handling and coordination of the efforts. We provided but additional horsepower to the already hard working people in evidence all over Worcestershire. I cannot praise highly enough those with whom we came into contact across all agencies and local councils for their dedication and utter professionalism. It was clear it was a team that knew how to pull together. My soldiers were entirely in a supporting role to your highly capable emergency services. We brought only the mass, muscle and enthusiasm of the infantryman to get stuck in and help out. The expertise was already there amongst people who were winning the battle before we arrived.

From the outset we were made to feel exceptionally welcome. My soldiers were overwhelmed by the warmth and kindness with which they were received across Worcestershire. Local homeowners offered tea and biscuits; Asda in Worcester provided hundreds of bacon butties and "brew kits" to the TA Centre; other businesses in local towns brought food and refreshment or offered large discounts. We were all made to feel so incredibly welcome. Touchingly, after discovering the soldiers were sleeping rough, we had the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK providing us with nearly 100 blankets - a tremendous gesture of consideration and friendship.

We of the R IRISH spent a very short time trying to help where we could. For my soldiers, after all the support we have enjoyed from the British public over the last 10 years of operational deployments, it was a privilege to be able to give something back. Those hit by the floods have to deal with the lasting effects, and yet the enduring memory we take away from our in Worcestershire is not of floodwater and damage, but of generosity of spirit, genuine warmth and kindness, helpfulness and true camaraderie. We had the pleasure and privilege of working amongst a community standing together in tough circumstances; always humbling and heartening.

Please accept, on behalf of the soldiers of 1 R IRISH, my heartfelt thanks for your kindness, support and comradeship. I hope Worcestershire makes a speedy recovery from this challenging period and I believe it can take comfort from the certainty that it is in excellent hands in the people representing it and those populating its emergency services.

Faugh-A-Ballagh!

SSAFA BRANCH WORCESTERSHIRE CONTINUES TO GIVE LIFELONG SUPPORT TO OUR FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

As the oldest military charity in the country, founded in 1885, it has been another extremely busy year. Our annual statistics cover 01 January to 31 December 2013 and they show that, in sum, 302 cases were completed, 31 clients in care or nursing homes, or their own homes, received regular friendship visits, and £246,000 was raised for the cases during the course of the year.

The majority of the clients, some 62% are aged 70 or over, and 16% aged 40 or under, with the balance falling between, with one client having reached the magic 100! Their needs are wide and various. 30% need household goods, 25% need help with accommodation, 18% need help to acquire medical aids which they cannot get through the NHS, electric mobility scooters, walk in showers, stair lifts etc., and some 8 % have debt related problems. It also important to signpost enquirers to another organisation who may be able to assist them if they are not eligible under SSAFA rules.



This work is carried out by some 50 dedicated volunteers who very often go the extra mile to help the client. No official funding is received from any source and there is not a single salaried person in the Branch. Fund raising to help meet the administrative expenses of the Branch is undertaken by the same volunteer caseworkers, or friendship visitors, demonstrating their continuing commitment. The Branch is also extremely grateful to those who make charitable donations throughout the year.

Finally, to all those organisations in Worcestershire that have supported the Branch in its work throughout the year a very sincere thank you.

Colonel Tony Ward OBE
Chairman SSAFA Worcestershire Branch

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION REACHING OUT



In support of Worcestershire's commitment to the Community Covenant and as part of a new nationwide strategy, The Royal British Legion have established new Outreach Locations across the County, designed not only to promote the many services that we offer to the Armed Forces Community but to also provide a more visible presence in the local areas.

So far we can offer outreach support in Redditch, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Warndon and we hope to have a presence in Evesham in the near future, for full details of opening times and locations, or any other information or enquiry, ring our Contact Centre on the new national Freephone number: **0808 8028080**.

The purpose of our outreach support is to offer a face to face service, where the serving and ex-service communities can access not only Royal British Legion support, but be signposted to the different types of assistance offered by the relevant Local Authorities and other support agencies.



The Royal British Legion spends £1.8million per week on the serving and ex-service population, but we know there are still eligible people out in the local communities that would benefit from our intervention but have not yet come forward.

Finally, in order that we can continue provide the high level of service support our beneficiaries receive, we are in need of volunteers to fill a wide range of support posts, ranging from caseworkers, ambassadors through to administrators, so if you think you could spare some time to volunteer, please register your interest by calling the free phone number **0808 8028080**.

EVERY MAN REMEMBERED

At the end of January the Royal British Legion launched [Every Man Remembered](#) - a campaign which aims to individually commemorate the Service men and women that were killed during World War One. In partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission the Legion plans for each of these men and women to be individually commemorated by the British public throughout the centenary years (2014-2018).

1,117,077 Commonwealth Servicemen and women were killed during the First World War.

The inspiration for Every Man Remembered, a five year project, came from 14 year old Gemma who contacted the Legion following a battlefield tour of France and Belgium. TV Historian Dan Snow is working with the Legion on this new five year project. He is narrating a special five part history for our supporters, taking them through the First World War year by year and explaining the key events that shaped our future.

To launch the project a warm mailing is being sent to 300,000 existing Legion supporters. We have chosen a name of a fallen Service person at random, for them to commemorate. All supporters will be able to make their own selections once the full site is up and running in spring and those who make a commemoration will receive a personalised certificate.

For more information and to watch Dan Snow's introductory video please visit www.everymanremembered.org.

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION: REPRESENTATION, SUPPORT, INFORMATION



Royal Naval and Royal Marines families are independent and resourceful, however, the NFF offers a voice to families should they feel they wish to use it. It represents your views and concerns to the highest level within the Naval Service, Government, and to service providers. The NFF is working to ensure that the unique challenges faced by Naval Service families are considered in the tri-Service arena and when policies are reviewed. Your feedback is important; tell the NFF where the system is working and where you are having difficulties.

The NFF also offers information, support and guidance to families on their individual issues that result due to Service life. They can assist on many issues including: housing, pay & allowances, education & childcare, access to healthcare, and community/family support. If the system lets you down and you have an issue you are struggling to resolve, you can contact the NFF.

Armed Forces Covenant



The NFF has welcomed two new Armed Forces Covenant Co-ordinators to the team. The posts are funded by money received from the LIBOR Fund, and additional Co-ordinators will be introduced. They are covering the Midlands and the North and South of England. They are focusing on the Armed Forces Covenant; liaising with local councils and service providers in order to improve two-way communication. They are gathering up examples of good practise and identifying areas that would like a bit of help.

They are also encouraging a better understanding of what makes a Naval Service family tick.

The NFF understands the importance of keeping families informed about developments within the Service community. Stay in touch with the NFF for breaking news and helpful articles:

www.nff.org.uk is a comprehensive site, updated as and when announcements are made
[Homeport](#) – To join the mailing list for their free, quarterly magazine e-mail: editor@nff.org.uk
[NFF e-update](#) - This e-mail update is issued every month and provides a short, snappy roundup of news and information. To join the mailing list e-mail: info@nff.org.uk



Find the NFF on Facebook



Follow the NFF on Twitter



Join the NFF on LinkedIn

Alternatively you can contact the NFF on 023 9265 4374 or email admin@nff.org.uk.

If you have any feedback, contributions or suggestions on this or future issues please contact Worcestershire Partnership Relationship Manager, Alan Smith by email at asmith3@worcestershire.gov.uk or call him on 01905 822836.