



The Community Covenant e-Newsletter

Issue #5, September 2013



Welcome!

Welcome to the Fifth Community Covenant e-Newsletter! In this edition we take a look at the responsibilities local councils have in the provision of transport services and highlight some innovative ways Community Covenants across the country are using the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to help service people and families. We also have an update on the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund and new Corporate Covenant.

We welcome your thoughts – information on how to provide feedback or join our mailing list is located at the end of this e-Newsletter.

For Your Diary

20 September 2013

**Deadline for submission to regional
Community Covenant Grant panels**

16 October 2013

**Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) fund
bidding for Tranche 3 closes**

22 November 2013

**Community Covenant Conference
BIS Conference Suite**

Bringing Communities Together: Trafford Council

A central aim of the Community Covenant is to foster mutual understanding and integration between the local civilian and military communities, and there are many ways you can facilitate this. When we heard about the fantastic work of the Trafford Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership we were really keen to share details of their projects. They have held several community engagement events, including an event for young local footballers and a multi faith project to bring together a number of cultures and communities.



Emergency life support training with local communities

Firstly, they held a fun-filled day of football activities as part of a community engagement project for young people from Manchester and Liverpool. Trafford Council, Trafford Leisure Trust and the Territorial Army 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers) based in Trafford joined forces to deliver the Building Bridges programme at Stretford Sports Village. Netherley Wood Lane British Legion under 14s football team, from Liverpool, travelled to Trafford to spend time with players from the Broadheath Central under 14s squad. The day included Heart Start training provided by the Army, five-a-side team games and team building activities in the sports hall, and an 11-a-side game on the outdoor 3G pitch.

The second project brought together Trafford's diverse community. The North of Trafford has large Muslim and Sikh Communities. The Community Covenant was keen to engage with the different faith groups in the local area.



Territorial Army 207 (Manchester) and under 14s football teams

The Community Covenant and partners, along with 207 Field Hospital, organised two days of activities with local Sikh and Muslim groups. The activities involved two sessions each day with the morning sessions being given over to visits by the different faith groups to the TA Centre for a look around, accredited emergency life support training and refreshments. This was followed by afternoon sessions which involved a visit to the local Mosque and Madrassa and also to the local Sikh Temple by members of 207 Field Hospital.

Outcomes of the event included training of 32 community members in emergency life support, greater understanding of roles within the community and mutual respect for different cultures and religions. The event also provided a platform for further training and organisation of future events.

After the football event Colonel Kerry Trow, the Commanding Officer of 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers), said "It has been really pleasing to be part of events that break down cultural barriers. Our strength in the military is our ethos immersed in our value and standards. It's not about gender, religion or cultural divides, it's about teamwork in saving lives. Through our engagement we have helped introduce to the adults and young people from this area our beliefs, they have met soldiers and officers who have served in Afghanistan and while it might not have made them better footballers, I am confident it will assist in them becoming better people!"

We would love to hear about similar events going on in your area.

Corporate Covenant Launch

The brand new Corporate Covenant was officially launched on 28 June 2013 during which representatives from five key business organisations publically pledged their support.

A Corporate Covenant is a voluntary pledge from businesses and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their concrete support for the armed forces community. All corporate covenants include a core statement of commitment, covering the two principles of the Armed Forces Covenant that those adopting the scheme sign up to. Each organisation is also encouraged to offer support in a way most appropriate to their situation and capacity, with the Corporate Covenant pledge including a 'menu' of options to sign up to.

Be sure to encourage local businesses in your area to [sign up!](#)

Communicating the Covenant: Westminster City Council

Communication plays a central role in any Community Covenant. Building mutual understanding and integration between the local civilian community and those in the Armed Forces Community, requires excellent communications. It is important that your local military community understand the support that is available to them, but also ensuring that your local civilian community understand why you have signed a Community Covenant.

Rob Patrick of Westminster City Council has given us an account of how they innovatively integrated the work of the Community Covenant into the organisation of a council forum:

"Westminster City Council holds six [Area Forums](#) across the City, three times per year. These forums provide an opportunity for anyone who lives, works or learns in Westminster to have a say on issues affecting their neighbourhood and put forward suggestions to councillors. On 27 June 2013 we held the West End Area Forum in the Officers' Mess at Wellington Barracks. This gave us the opportunity to bring local residents into the unique environment of a military barracks to help strengthen ties with the Armed Forces community.

At the forum there were presentations on the events in Hyde Park during the summer, the Westminster cycling strategy and our waste and recycling services. Our Armed Forces Champions, Councillor Alastair Moss and Councillor Rachael Robathan also gave a presentation about what has been achieved in Westminster since we signed our local Community Covenant a year ago."

Since signing their Community Covenant Westminster Council has established a number of excellent initiatives. This includes appointing Armed Forces Champions and designating a single point of contact for Armed Forces issues, and a dedicated section on the council's website. An amended housing allocation scheme has been put in place to take into account the needs of serving or former Service personnel and their families, and Westminster Council have been able to secure discounted access to grass sports pitches in Regents Park. In the longer term, Westminster Council are planning to carry out work to map their veterans population and identify any gaps in service provision, and promote training and employment opportunities for the Armed Forces Community including through apprenticeships.

Made an Action Plan: What Should We Do Next?

We are delighted that 372 local authorities across Great Britain have now signed a Community Covenant, but deciding how to implement your Community Covenant Action Plan can be challenging. There are a few top tips you may want to consider to help put your plans to action.

Many councils organise regular meetings with partnership boards and working groups, to ensure that progress is maintained.

Publicising your Community Covenant will help a wide audience learn about the support provided by your council and the intentions of your action plan. One of the best ways to do this may be through your council website. Check out the great examples of [Milton Keynes](#) and [Oxfordshire](#) to see what you might want to do.

Another important step may be to appoint a Councillor or council employee as your Armed Forces Champion who can keep up momentum. Wyre Council's idea of providing a [profile](#) of your Champion is a great idea.

Gateshead Community Covenant Grant Project Wins Award

We are delighted to hear that as a result of their initiative to set up the Armed Forces Community Outreach Worker, Gateshead Council were nominated for and won the [Municipal Journal Local Government Achievement Award](#) in the "Delivering



Gateshead Council receiving their award

Better Outcomes Category". These awards provide national recognition for excellent work being done by local authorities up and down the country.

One of the projects which impressed the judges was the formation of Gateshead Council's Armed Forces Network. This included a strategy action plan, which identified gaps and good practice in service provision for ex services personnel. A housing sub group was also created to progress action in relation to the needs of the veterans community.

The Council successfully won funding from Community Covenant Grant Scheme and Jobcentre Flexible Support Fund, to establish an Armed Forces Community Outreach Worker, to provide housing advice and support to veterans and their families, serving reservists and other vulnerable people in the community.

Having a single point of contact for the Armed Forces Community in Gateshead has had tangible benefits for those in the local area. One former Royal Engineer who approached the council for support, said "[This] has been extremely helpful and an absolute godsend, he has been available and helped my family so much."

Congratulations Gateshead Council on your success!

Update on the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund Scheme

You may have seen in the news that successful projects from the second round of Libor funding have now been announced. On Armed Forces Day the Prime Minister announced that 17 projects had been awarded a total of £3.77 million to fund projects which will provide support for the Armed Forces Community up and down the country.

Successful projects include the Warrior Programme for Veterans and Families which will support veterans transitioning to civilian life and the Veterans Council Headquarters which will provide mental health and social care and transitional services. Meanwhile, £300,000 was awarded to build a Bastion Memorial Wall at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. The project will use dismantled parts of the current memorial in Camp Bastion and will honour those who have died serving our country in Afghanistan.

The Libor fund has now re-opened to accept bids for Tranche Three, and details of how to apply can be found on our [website](#).

Stay Up to Date!

We hope that these newsletters provide you with news about the work of local authorities and examples of best practice, but if you want to find out about what is going on in between issues, why don't you take advantage of social media?

Connecting with the MOD on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) allows you to keep up to date with the Covenant and inform us of the exciting projects taking place in your area.

Local Government Responsibilities: Transport

Many military establishments are located in isolated areas, and the lack of choice that Armed Forces families have over the location of their Service accommodation, mean that some can face transport difficulties. The partners of Service personnel can also struggle to maintain employment as a result of their mobility and public transport can be a crucial factor in seeking employment. As part of your Community Covenant you may wish to consider the requirements of any Armed Forces families in their area when making decisions about transport services.

Worcestershire Cadets Support their Local Area

Cadets in Worcestershire having been taking part in a brilliant Community Covenant Grant scheme project to improve their local area. Hereford and Worcester Army Cadets were awarded £3,000 to purchase safety equipment and tools to complete ongoing volunteer work with the Canal and River Trust.

The young volunteers aged between 12-18 have been taking part in various activities which range from tree-planting, lock cleaning, towpath vegetation removal, litter sweeps, and most recently, re-painting locks at both Stourport

Basin and Lapworth as part of the Battalion's 2013 Canal Volunteering Project. Funding for the new equipment allowed cadets to pull rubbish out of the canal. Amazingly, a folding bike, six shopping trolleys, half a block wall, a road barrier and various other bits of scrap were just a few of the things that were found by the cadets!

Councillor Rob Adams, Worcestershire County Council Chairman and Chair of the Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Working Group who recently paid the Cadets a visit at their Duke of



Cadets repainting locks



Maintaining vegetation

Edinburgh's Award Summer Camp said, "It is excellent news that Worcestershire communities are already benefitting from a successful application for Ministry of Defence funding. I am delighted that the Cadets have gained funding for such a worthwhile project and hope that they continue to prosper and contribute towards beneficial projects within our communities."

Major Bob Harrison from Hereford and Worcester Army Cadets echoed the support offered by the Councillor. He said, "The work carried out by our cadets really benefits the local community and ensures the canal towpath is both accessible and attractive. The funding we received has been a great help and enabled us to buy the necessary tools and safety equipment to allow our cadets to continue their valuable work. The

cadets really appreciate the councillors' support, and are delighted with their new equipment. We are delighted that Councillor Adams has taken the opportunity to visit our cadets and seen them in action on the canal. We are the first County Force to pilot this volunteering scheme between the Army Cadet Force and the Canal River Trust."

This is a great project that brings together the local civilian and military communities, with real benefit for the local area. Keeping the stretch of canal tidy enables the local community to appreciate the canal and make greater use of it. We were delighted to hear about the success of the cadets and that leaders from other Army Cadet Forces also visited to see how they might offer similar projects to their cadets and their local communities.

"THE ARMY CADET FORCES DO GREAT WORK IN THIS AREA FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THE FUNDING BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ALLOWS US TO CONTINUE GETTING OUR YOUNGSTERS INVOLVED IN VALUABLE COMMUNITY PROJECTS"

Major Bob Harrison
Hereford and Worcester
Army Cadets

The Third Community Covenant Conference



We are pleased to announce that the Third Annual Community Conference, which this year will be held in association with the Local Government Association, the Welsh Local Government Association and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, is set for Friday 22nd November 2013 at BIS Conference Suite, 1 Victoria Street. The Minister is keen to attend and congratulate all on their hard work over the past year. Past conferences proved to be valuable routes to sharing Community Covenant best practice and this year will provide updates on new schemes as well as further practical advice.

The day will begin with a keynote speech and an insight in to current issues facing the Armed Forces. This will be followed by sessions including:

- Best Practice for Community Covenants
- Community Covenant Grant Scheme bid advice and successful case studies

We are also planning to provide a choice of workshops in the afternoon on a range of topics aimed at sharing best practice. The Conference will provide delegates an opportunity to meet the MOD Community Covenant team, other Local Authorities, representatives from Devolved Authorities, charities and members of the Armed forces. Further information (including registration details) are on our website. Alternatively, please email COVENANT-MAILBOX@MOD.UK. Please note that there is a limit of two delegates per authority area.

To be added to the distribution list, please contact us at COVENANT-MAILBOX@MOD.UK