



## DENBIGHSHIRE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

### Introduction

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013, sixteen Partners across Denbighshire signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant (AFCC) for Denbighshire.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the National Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Denbighshire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Denbighshire.

For Denbighshire County Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives.

For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

This report highlights the activities of the Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership since the Community Covenant was signed in July 2013.



## What has taken place?

A partnership working group was set up following the signing of the Covenant. This Partnership is chaired by the DCC Member Champion. This Group meets on a quarterly basis and developed an action plan. It provides an opportunity to network, share information, and assist in resolving problems by signposting to the appropriate agencies. For example, a veterans housing situation was resolved when SSAFA and Denbighshire's Housing Service worked together following a Working Group meeting.

Through Denbighshire County Council a dedicated website page has been set up providing information and details of the support available, with links to the Partners.

(<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/community-and-living/support-for-the-armed-forces.aspx>)

The screenshot shows the Denbighshire County Council website. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for 'Resident', 'Business', 'Visitor', and 'Your Council'. Below this is a main navigation menu with categories like 'Bins & recycling', 'Council tax', 'Education', 'Jobs', 'Leisure', 'Libraries & archives', 'Parking, roads & travel', 'Planning & building regulations', and 'More'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Community & living > Support for the armed forces'. The main heading is 'Support for the armed forces'. The content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a list of services: Home, Community & living, Weather, Support for the armed forces (highlighted), Public toilets, Biodiversity, Commuted Sums, RSPCA, Keeping animals, Menter Iaith, Clubs and societies, and Communities. The right column contains text: 'If you or a member of your family is currently serving, or has served, in the armed forces, we can help you to get the support and advice you may need.', 'Along with some other community organisations, we have formally signed a community covenant with the armed services, veterans and their families. This is an agreement that sets out how we and our partner organisations can support the armed forces community working and living in Denbighshire.', and 'You can download the covenant here.'. Below this text is a list of service areas: Community, Education and training, Employment, Housing, Health and wellbeing, Leisure, and General advice and support.

The Partnership undertook a mapping exercise with the aim of establishing the needs of those in the armed services, veterans and their families and to determine their demographic make-up and where they are residing in Denbighshire. It proved difficult to obtain information about ex-force members, due to data protection and the data collected may not have been a true representation of veterans, as it is possible the data may have been duplicated; for example, the housing department may have records about the same person as the CAB.

An Information Event was held in October 2014 in Rhyl Town Hall to show case the support and information from organisations that is available to veterans, serving personnel, and their families.



DCC Officers are providing assistance with the development and implementation of the WW1 Trenches Project in the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle. The project aims to re-create a comprehensive WW1 trench system that can be used as a hands-on visitor attraction. The trenches will be used as a practical educational resource for schools and as a memorable live-learning experience.

There is now extensive collaboration with other counties through the North Wales Regional Leadership Board. This regional board has representation from all the local authorities in North Wales, the Local Health Board, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Probation Service, and all the key armed forces organisations. Its remit is to coordinate activities on a North Wales basis.

### **Future developments**

A regional application for funding for a University to undertake a mapping exercise for North Wales has been submitted.

Denbighshire will be hosting the 2016 Armed Forces Day at Bodelwyddan Castle, which is a national military themed event for the whole family. A Working Group has been established to coordinate the event which is taking place on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

