

The Veterans Hub Project

(Joint ex-services Club, 247 Barnwell road)

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Community Development

East of City / Armed Forces



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLUBS

History of CVC

History of JESC

Birth and Progress of JSVC

Cambridge Military Fair Presentation





CAMBRIDGE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

History

The Armed Forces and Veteran community of Cambridge, formed a little over 2 years ago, and has since become a solid and active community

The Veterans and their families have become a close-knit group brought together by their service experiences and the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, the first of which was founded 31/1/2022 as part of the City's AFC Silver award bid, another followed 6 months later in partnership with the MOD at 254 Medical regiment HQ, as well as the 'Cambridge Veterans Club', which was founded in the October, by a local Armed Forces Veteran. It was initially assisted with free use of space by the local working men's club, in Chesterton. The Veterans club are also responsible for creating the 'Veteran-led-shed' currently based at Brownsfield Community Centre.

Within my role as Armed Forces Community Development officer, I have been assisting them with achieving their 'aims and goals' from inception.

They meet 3 or 4 times per month over varying venues and provide a social environment, music, banter and buffet or breakfast for its members and families, as well as organise fundraisers and outings for the club. Members from all club's crossover with up to 50 being present at any one time but growing steadily.

The team were also responsible for the CMF, Cambridge's first military fair.

With guidance from across the council services, the veterans formulated the entire event management plan and successfully held a large-scale public event on Parkers Piece. None of the team had any previous experience of organising or holding such an event.

They had some excellent responses and feedback, and with newfound confidence, they were keen to do more, it soon became evident, after their first Christmas event, that their activities would soon outgrow the clubs' facilities, and so they initially set their sights upon looking for a new home.

As part of my role as Community Development Officer for the East, I had also been working with the Ex-services Club in Barnwell, (a not-for-profit organisation, set up for ex-servicemen, now known as veterans),

Having initially founded in the late 40's, the Ex-services Club was established in its current position in 1983 after being relocated due to new housing needs, and until Covid19, it was running fairly successfully; due to the pandemic, sadly many of its members had passed or were no longer able to attend, the club was struggling and facing having to close down. They were in dire need of more members, fresh blood and a team of 'doer's ' in order to survive.

With their dwindling numbers and fear of closure coupled with the Cambridge Veterans need of a new home, the needs of both groups were clearly matched.

I discussed this as being an option with the Armed Forces and Veteran community and they set their sights a little higher

At the next AGM (July '24), six Armed Forces veterans were voted onto the committee, including the Chair and Secretary, they have been working with the current 'civilian' members to seek agreement for a 'vision' and have started plans to refurbish elements of the site, interior and exterior. The veterans run the club on a voluntary basis to increase income and decrease outgoings, to rebuild the club's current financial state.



*THE WAY TO GET
STARTED IS TO QUIT
TALKING AND BEGIN
DOING.*

Walt Disney

THE MISSION

- The overarching mission is to create a veterans welfare hub, where veterans (or indeed anyone in the community) can gain access to a wide range of support organisations and signposting, alongside this they would also be encompassing 4 or 5 homeless pods onsite, specifically set aside for Armed Forces Veterans, giving them direct access to the hub and its facilities, as well as providing potential volunteer opportunities within 'their' community.
- Also opening the building up during non-club hours, to be used as a community space.
- The team have submitted a preliminary application for planning permission to install 3 'exterior' units, as well as the pods, which they hope will be utilised for the local community as well as the club members, this is currently awaiting funding for fee's.

POTENTIAL SITE PLANS

SITE WITH MODULAR BUILD UNITS

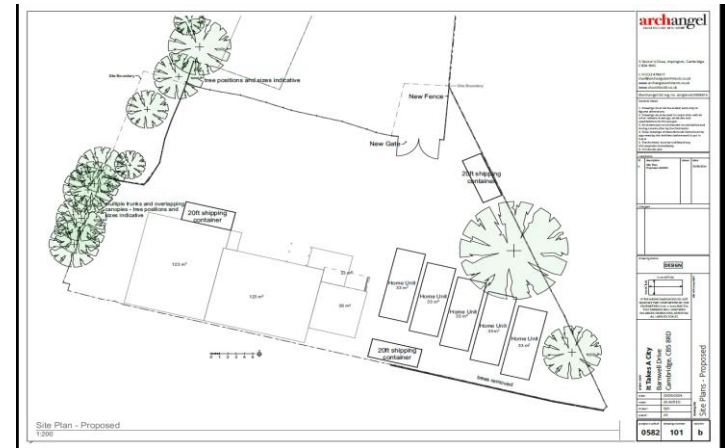


• One of the units is to be used as a kitchen to serve the premises, the other would initially be used as storage however it would then be used as the new home of the 'veteran led shed' which is currently based at Brownsfield community centre, the third would be an extra community space, but are hoping the food hub may like to use it, as construction works in the Abbey area progress.

• The team are working with ittakesacity.org for the homeless pod work, and all sides are keen to see this project happen.

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SITE WITH CONTAINERS



THE PROCESS

Beyond the pods, the team have managed to secure more than £75k worth of materials and labour to completely refurbish the interior of the building as well as landscaping the exterior.

By using their own networks and partnering with several building companies and tradesmen they successfully secured agreement to carry out all the works onsite and supply all labour and materials necessary, pro bono.

Ground works begun 5th October, and included 40 tonne of pea shingle, 20 tonne type 1 hardcore, 10 tonne of sharp sand, some cement and 2 pallets of slabs, 1 digger, 1 dumper and four workers. They lifted cleaned and re-laid all the slabs, creating a sterile level garden area that can be accessed from the club, as well as cleared all green areas and levelled the carpark adding pea shingle to revamp the parking area.

Knee rail fencing will be placed alongside the 'garden' to secure the 'sterile' area and to prevent cars accessing it, panel fencing will replace the current fencing on the other side of the garden. as well as knee rail along the front of the building. Turf has been added to the garden as well as plants in the new planters marking the site entrance.





Site before works commenced



Site after Works



Interior

Interior works will begin by the 11th of November with all works being carried out while the club is not usually open, therefore negating closing the building in its current format.

Electricals all wiring tested throughout the building and any 'excess/ outdated systems' removed, movement sensors to be fitted to male, female and disabled toilets.

Plumbing New porcelain fitments for all toilet areas as well as removing 'step' from disabled toilet and reconfiguring to meet modern specifications.

Plastering, Decorating and tiling all toilet areas will be made good replacing as necessary

Ceilings new ceilings throughout the main hall as well as reinsulating

Flooring as of yet they have not secured a flooring contractor willing to supply and fit with our current terms, however, the team will leverage where they can. (estimated cost >£13k).

Doors & windows Four new windows and 1 main front door to be installed. The team have negotiated down to £3225+vat. However, do not yet have the funds to cover this.

The Veterans hope to have their side of works completed by December 7th in time for their first Christmas in their new home but will more likely be mostly complete by middle/end of November.

TEAM



Cambridge

Armed Forces &
Veterans
Breakfast Club



Armed

Cambridge
Veterans Club



Forces

Joint Services &
Veterans Club



Community

The City
Veterans



THANK YOU

Cambridge Armed Forces and Veteran Community

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(CMF presentation & feedback on next slides)



CAMBRIDGE MILITARY FAIR (CMF '24)

June 29th, 2024



Cambridge Military fair arrived in a military manner, the team were on-site, briefed and ready prior to the first stalls arriving, it quickly began to fill, and every stall holder was in position and ready for the day 20 minutes before the event was due to open. The day was a huge success from all perspectives, despite some minor disappointments, i.e pricings on some of the food trucks and the cancelled fly-by.

The weather was fantastic, there were no incidents, barring a grazed knee 15 minutes towards the end of the day.

There was a wide variety of stalls, information, activities and food available to suit all ages.

(feedback from CMF'24 on final slides)

Overview

The overall cost of the event for was £3480, this mainly comprised of mobile Toilet fees and advertising costs.

Of this cost the £2000 came from the City councils AFC budget and the veterans paid £1480, these included among others St Johns Ambulance, Site rental fee and events insurance etc.

These costs could have been lowered further, had the fees and that were generated by council costs been absorbed by the relevant departments as 'their contribution'.

The Armed Forces community have been incredibly active over the last year or so, with the Military Fair being a show of what they can achieve, with little or no prior experience.

This community will thrive with minimal support and by its nature will support the surrounding communities.



Cambridge Military Fair

CMF '24

CMF FEEDBACK

Facebook comments

Thank you - We had a great day with the grandsons - it was well appreciated and well organised. Even met other green jackets

Great day well supported,

Met some old faces and made a couple of new ones, hopefully expanded membership of mess membership also.

See you at breakfast.

It was really good, especially for a first event, well done to you and your team.

Well-done for organising such a great day! It really was a great atmosphere and to have our Armed Forces presence in the city connecting with the community, also the organisations who support Military/Veterans, as someone who works in the local community, I found it helpful and Informative to meet people face to face to be educated in what support is available. Looking forward to seeing more events happening in Cambridge...

The cadet band was brilliant

Enjoyable day here's to next year 😊😊

Well done to all the organisers and participants. A really enjoyable day and great to be able to meet up with other veterans. Here's to next year!!!!

Thoroughly enjoyable walk around and talking to lots of people. Looking forward to next year.

With [x](#) in Cambridge at Parker's Piece excellent first event we'll done everyone xxx

Onsite

Thoroughly enjoyed walking around, it's an excellent day

I saw the event advertised on Cambridgeshire Live and really wanted to come down and show my support, I'm glad I did I've had a wonderful time.

Brilliant day in the sun for the armed Forces, please send on our thanks to the organisers.

We came from Leicester and decided to stop in Cambridge for lunch for an hour on our way to London for the day. We saw the fair and ended up staying here instead, it's been great, we have been made to feel very welcome here and after chatting with the old man in red, our children showed their respects, and we were humbled by his soft demeanour. We will Visit Cambridge again it seems a lovely place.-(Muslim family)

We were on our way into the town with our children, 3 hours ago, It's been brilliant the army guys were really good with our two (boy 9, girl 5), and they've dragged us round everything, we had a dance and it's just been great being part of what's going on here, well done to all involved, I look forward to coming back next year.

Stall holders.

One small observation when the event was over there was quite a lot of vehicle movement from the site exit that did not seem to be controlled at all, the marshallers were very good on our arrival directing traffic but virtually not existent on our exit. It would have been useful for somebody to stop the traffic so we could exit the site, the old vehicles aren't too quick off the mark to find a gap.

First off, thank you for the invite it was an amazing event. Loved the variation you had there including the singing and dancing. It was a really good day and absolutely the largest event of the week that I attended (I went to 3 so including the RBLI's one so...). I think you did a really good job of pulling all those people together and you had something for everyone - truly across the board. I didn't meet many actual veterans myself but I'm sure others did. I can imagine you are getting some excellent feedback and again thank you for inviting me - it's a shame 'x' couldn't attend as that would have doubled our numbers but maybe next year.

Fantastic event and well done to you and the team for pulling it all together. A couple of things that would help improve the military exposure side of things is that the Mayor comes to see us and that we are involved in the flag thing at the end of the day. Apart from that it was definitely the best event of the week for us.

Mate it was awesome to be fair. For a first shot it was pretty much on target. Everyone in the military line came to me and said they had had a brilliant day and are definitely up for it again next year so its only going to get bigger and better.

From my perspective the weekend was flawless. Greeted and helped with the initial set up of my gazebo, talked thru what was happening, checked on throughout the day and then escorted thru a busy park to allow us to leave. 'x' will definitely be returning next year.

Verbal anecdotes (post event)

Resident that overlooks Parkers Piece,

approx. 7pm, on day of event.

This was relayed to me, about 1 week later.

My husband looked out of the window and gasped in surprise; he called me to 'come look'. I went over and looked to see what he was talking about and was amazed to see that the event was over, with no trace. No lingering vehicles, no loitering and more importantly, no litter. It was like they were never there'.

Andy's Man Club

Prior to this event we had a regular show of around 8 -12 attendees, the next meeting after the event we saw 35, amazing work you guys, thank you, look forward to next year.

254 Medical Regt

Off the back of this event, we recruited 13 new members, that is more than we had recruited all year, was well worth our attendance, great job.