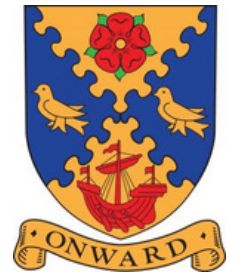


01 JULY 2026

FLEETWOOD AFC

NEWSLETTER



Fleetwood Armed Forces Day was held on 27 June at Fleetwood Memorial Park. Although the event was smaller in scale than previous years, it brought together a wide range of stallholders representing charities, local businesses, and organisations dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community.

Members of the public attended throughout the day to pay their respects and show their appreciation for the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces. The event provided an opportunity for the community to come together in recognition of those who have served and continue to serve, while highlighting the valuable work of local organisations that support veterans, serving personnel, and their families.

FLEETWOOD THANKS OUR ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

The service was led by Minister Stuart Gay MBE, whose thoughtful words added dignity to the occasion. Technical support throughout the event was provided by Inferno Entertainments, whose continued commitment and generosity in supporting our veterans year after year is greatly appreciated.



Veterans proudly took part in the parade, led by Gary Smith, marching to the Cenotaph in a moving display of remembrance and respect. It was a proud moment for all those who participated, reflecting the unity and enduring spirit of the Armed Forces community.

We were especially grateful to the Sea Cadets for representing the younger generation by laying the wreath in honour of our Armed Forces, ensuring that the tradition of remembrance continues for future generations.



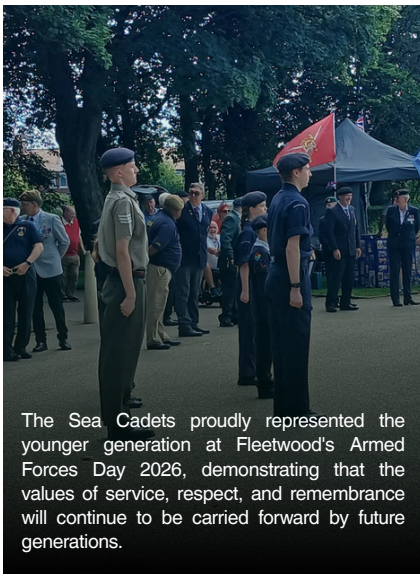


YOUNGER GENERATION FOR THE FUTURE

A New Beginning

To our young people, the future of our Armed Forces community is in your hands. Joining one of Fleetwood's local cadet forces is an opportunity to challenge yourself, build confidence, develop new skills, and form lifelong friendships in a supportive and welcoming environment.

The cadet forces offer so much more than military traditions. They provide opportunities to learn leadership, teamwork, resilience, discipline, and respect, while taking part in adventurous activities, community events, and nationally recognised qualifications that can benefit future education and career opportunities.



The Sea Cadets proudly represented the younger generation at Fleetwood's Armed Forces Day 2026, demonstrating that the values of service, respect, and remembrance will continue to be carried forward by future generations.

Reaching Our Goal, Changing Lives



Whether your ambition is to join the Armed Forces, pursue a different career, or simply become a more confident and capable individual, the cadets can help you achieve your goals. You'll be part of a team that values commitment, integrity, and service to others while making a positive difference in your local community.

Fleetwood is proud of its young people, and we encourage anyone looking for new challenges, new experiences, and a sense of purpose to consider joining their local cadet unit. The skills, memories, and friendships you gain could last a lifetime, and you will play an important role in carrying forward the proud traditions of service and remembrance for future generations.

Gregg Norton



What Are You Waiting For?

I've noticed something over the years, both in myself and in the thousands of people I've met through the Army, business, property and life in general.

We're all waiting... We're waiting until we have more money, until the children are older, until work calms down, until we lose weight, until we're more confident, until we're happier, until the timing feels right. And whilst we're waiting, life quietly carries on without us. I know this because I've done it myself.

After leaving the Army, I spent years thinking that once I'd solved one problem, achieved one goal, earned a certain amount of money, or fixed one part of myself, then I'd finally be happy. Then I'd relax... Then I'd enjoy life... But there was always another target, another challenge, another reason to postpone living.

The older I get, the more I realise that life has a habit of reminding us that tomorrow isn't guaranteed. Whether it's losing someone you love, receiving bad news, watching somebody close to you battle through illness, or simply looking at the calendar and wondering how another year has passed by so quickly, you begin to understand something very important - there is no perfect time... There never was.

I've spent a lot of my life around disciplined people - soldiers, athletes, business owners and entrepreneurs - and if there's one thing I've learned, it's that the people who seem to live the fullest lives aren't necessarily the richest, the smartest or even the happiest. They're simply the people who stop waiting.

They book the trip they've always talked about... They make the phone call they've been putting off... They start the business... They repair the relationship... They take the photograph... They say "I love you..." They go for the walk... They have the difficult conversation...

They begin before they feel ready, because the reality is that very few of us ever truly feel ready for anything. We just decide that the cost of waiting has become greater than the fear of starting.

As I've got older, I've started to appreciate the small things much more than the big things. A quiet morning before everyone else wakes up. A coffee with someone you care about... A walk with the dog... A laugh that catches you off guard... Watching the sun rise while the rest of the world is still asleep...

Years ago, I thought these were the things you did in between living - Now I realise they are life.

We spend so much of our time chasing the next thing that we forget to appreciate the thing we're currently living through. We tell ourselves that we'll be happy when we get there, without ever stopping to ask ourselves where "there" actually is.

One of the greatest lessons I've learned is that happiness isn't waiting for us somewhere in the future. It isn't hidden behind a promotion, a bank balance, a holiday, a bigger house or a perfect set of circumstances. It's happening right now, in this ordinary day that we might otherwise overlook. It's in the conversation we almost didn't have, the person sitting next to us, the memories we're creating without even realising it.

So here's my question to you this month:

what are you waiting for?

Because whatever it is, there is a very good chance that the perfect time isn't coming. And perhaps the greatest risk in life isn't failing. It's reaching the end of it and realising that we spent most of our time waiting to start living.

And as always keep smiling...

Because smiling... is healing baby



Fleetwood's First Vets Shed Officially Opens Its Doors

A new chapter in supporting Fleetwood's Armed Forces community began on 27 June 2026 with the official grand opening of the Vets Shed, a dedicated space created for veterans, serving personnel, and their families. The opening ceremony was conducted by Gary Smith, Paul Unsworth and Councillor Alice Jones, marking the culmination of months of planning, fundraising, and hard work by a committed team of volunteers and supporters. Their dedication has transformed an idea into a welcoming community hub that will provide lasting support for many years to come.

The Vets Shed has been established as a safe, friendly, and inclusive environment where veterans can come together to share stories, enjoy companionship, and access welfare support when needed. It is also open to members of veterans' families, providing a comfortable venue for meetings, activities, and social events, recognising that families are an integral part of the Armed Forces community.

As the first dedicated facility of its kind in Fleetwood, the Vets Shed represents a significant step forward in supporting the wellbeing of local veterans. It offers opportunities to reduce social isolation, encourage meaningful conversations, strengthen friendships, and ensure that no veteran or family member feels alone.

During my recent visit, I was struck by the warm and welcoming atmosphere. It was clear that this is far more than just a building, it is a place where people can find friendship, understanding, and a genuine sense of belonging.

Projects like the Vets Shed demonstrate the very best of community spirit. They show what can be achieved when local people, organisations, and volunteers work together with a shared vision to support those who have served our country.

Congratulations to everyone who has played a part in making the Vets Shed a reality. Your hard work, commitment, and determination have created a lasting legacy for Fleetwood's Armed Forces community, and the positive impact of this wonderful facility will be felt for generations to come.





Bench Dedication Honours a Fallen Comrade

On Sunday, 28 June 2026, Mr Martin Poole and Councillor Maureen Blair organised a moving bench dedication ceremony in memory of one of our fallen comrades, ensuring that their sacrifice will always be remembered within the Fleetwood community.

The dedication was attended by the Lord Mayor of Wyre, whose continued support for community organisations and commitment to promoting community spirit has been greatly appreciated. Their presence reflected the importance of remembering those who gave so much in the service of our country.

Representatives from the Armed Forces community joined members of the local Freemasons to pay their respects during the ceremony. Together, they honoured the life and service of a fallen comrade in a moment of quiet reflection, remembrance, and gratitude.

Mr Martin Poole and Councillor Maureen Blair have consistently worked to preserve Fleetwood's rich history, ensuring that the stories of our town and the sacrifices of those who served are never forgotten. Their dedication to commemorating our fallen and raising awareness of our local military heritage is a lasting contribution to the community.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mr Martin Poole and Councillor Maureen Blair for their continued commitment to remembrance. Through initiatives such as this bench dedication, they help ensure that the memory of our fallen comrades lives on, inspiring future generations to remember the sacrifices made in the name of peace and freedom.

We will remember them.



Fleetwood Armed Forces Champion's Volunteer of the Month

Congratulations to Army Veteran Rick Clement, who has been recognised as the Fleetwood Armed Forces Champion's Volunteer of the Month for June 2026.

Rick's unwavering commitment to supporting veterans, serving personnel, and the wider Armed Forces community has made a lasting difference to countless people across Fleetwood and surrounding areas. Through his dedication, willingness to help others, and continued service to the community, he exemplifies the values of loyalty, compassion, and selfless commitment.

Volunteers like Rick are the backbone of our Armed Forces community. Their time, energy, and enthusiasm help bring people together, provide support to those who need it most, and strengthen the bonds that make our community so special.

This recognition is a small token of appreciation for Rick's outstanding contribution and the positive impact he continues to make. His efforts do not go unnoticed, and he is a worthy recipient of this month's award.

On behalf of the Fleetwood Armed Forces community, thank you, Rick, for your dedication, friendship, and continued commitment to serving others. Congratulations on being named Fleetwood Armed Forces Champion's Volunteer of the Month for June 2026, a well-deserved honour.