



FLEETWOOD ARMED FORCES CHAMPION'S NEWSLETTER



01 JUNE 2026



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER WITH ONWARD

FOCUSING ON FLEETWOOD ARMED FORCES DAY 2026



CLLR ALICE JONES JOINS FRIENDS OF FLEETWOOD MEMORIAL PARK IN ORGANISING A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION TO MARK THE END OF ARMED FORCES WEEK 2026

Councillor Alice Jones has joined the Friends of Fleetwood Memorial Park in organising a special event to celebrate the conclusion of Armed Forces Week 2026.

The event will bring together veterans, serving personnel, families, and members of the local community to recognise and honour the dedication and sacrifice of the Armed Forces.

Everyone is welcome to attend and help mark the end of Armed Forces Week 2026 in a spirit of remembrance, gratitude, and community togetherness. This event will take place on the 27th June from 10:00am at Fleetwood Memorial Park.

Fleetwood's Remembrance Day Parade Marshall Gary Smith is organising a small, intimate march for veterans who wish to show their support at the opening of Armed Forces Week on the 22nd June at 10:45am. The pavement parade will begin at the Lower Lighthouse and proceed to the Mount, where a flag-raising ceremony will take place. There will be no sermon or formal service, just the piping of the flag, followed by fall out.

Weather permitting, attendees are invited to bring their own food and refreshments for a picnic in the Marine Hall Gardens following the ceremony.

All veterans and supporters are welcome.



BELINDA ARMSTRONG LEADS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL POPPY APPEAL

For decades, Belinda has taken a leading role in the Poppy Appeal in Fleetwood. Despite illness and significant family commitments, she continues to dedicate her time and energy to fundraising and supporting the Appeal. Her unwavering commitment, resilience, and dedication have made a lasting contribution to the local community and to the remembrance of those who have served.



A recently confirmed figure has revealed that an outstanding total of £12,260.96 was raised for the Poppy Appeal 2025. On behalf of Belinda and everyone involved with the Poppy Appeal, thank you, Fleetwood. Your generosity, support, and commitment to remembering those who have served continue to make a real difference and are greatly appreciated. As we look ahead, we continue to count on your support for this year's Poppy Appeal and hope that, together, we can once again make it a great success.

LCC ARMED FORCES CHAMPION CLLR GARY KNIVETON AND CLLR ALICE JONES PAYS A VISIT AT THE VETERANS GARDEN

The Veterans Garden is currently organised and managed by Tony Codling and his dedicated team from Fleetwood Town Community Trust. Through their tireless commitment and hard work, they continue to promote wellbeing, resilience, and positive mental health among veterans and their families. The garden provides a welcoming space where members of the veteran community can come together, share ideas, support one another, and build lasting connections. Their vision is to create a space that not only benefits veterans and their families but also serves the wider Armed Forces community, fostering a sense of belonging, purpose, and mutual support for all who have served.

The Armed Forces Champion for Lancashire County Council shares the same commitment to creating a positive impact that gives all veterans a sense of inclusivity, purpose, and personal growth.

Having seen first-hand the work carried out by Tony and his team of veterans at the garden, it is clear that the project fosters a strong community spirit and provides a welcoming environment for those who have served. Their dedication continues to raise positive awareness of the challenges and achievements of the veteran community while creating opportunities for support, engagement, and wellbeing.





ARMY

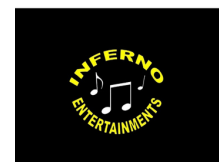
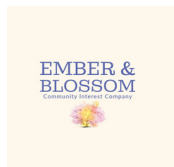
FLEETWOOD ARMED FORCES DAY EVENT



27 June 2026
Fleetwood Memorial Park
10am - 4pm



Fleetwood Armed Forces Day event will take place on 27th June 2026 at Fleetwood Memorial Park. Everyone is welcome to attend, with a variety of stalls located around the cenotaph, creating a space for the community to come together. Join us as we celebrate and show our appreciation for all those who have served, while also taking a moment to remember those who are no longer with us.



YOUR LIFE IS A BOOK
By Gregg Norton

I think one of the biggest mistakes people make in life is believing the chapter they're currently in is the whole story.

A bad few months suddenly becomes "my life is ruined."

A mistake becomes "this is who I am."

A difficult period becomes "things never get better."

But life doesn't work like that... Life moves in chapters - Some chapters are exciting... Some are peaceful... Some are painful... Some are confusing... Some feel like everything is finally making sense, while others feel like you're completely lost.

The problem is, when we're inside a difficult chapter, we often convince ourselves the story ends there.

It doesn't.....

A chapter is not the entire book.

I think a lot of people carry old chapters around for far too long as well - They keep reading the same painful memories...the same regrets... the same mistakes and the same moments that hurt them. It is almost as if they've accidentally become emotionally trapped inside those pages.

Meanwhile life is still trying to move forward.

You can't change the chapters that have already been written - but you can influence the next ones.

That's the important part.. and I invite you to read that line again !!

Not pretending bad chapters never happened... Not ripping pages out...Not ignoring difficult memories - But understanding that one chapter does not define the entire story.

Some people spend years believing they are broken because of one period of their life.... Others allow one failure to stop them ever trying again.

But if every good story ended during the difficult part, nobody would ever finish the book.

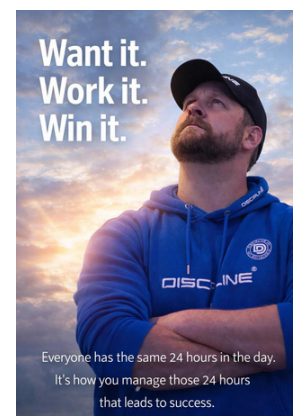
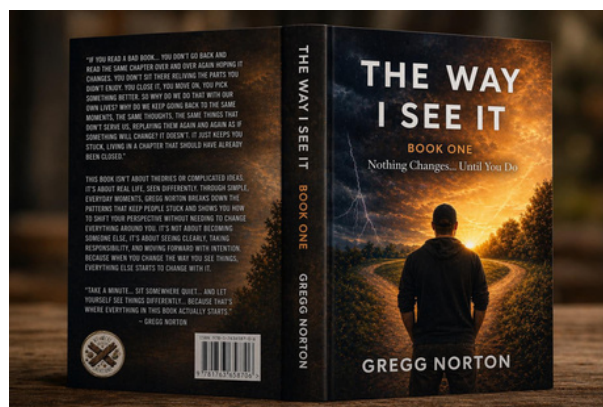
Growth often happens in the chapters we'd never choose for ourselves - The uncomfortable ones...The lonely ones... The uncertain ones etc.

Because those chapters usually teach us the things comfort never could.

And sometimes the strongest thing a person can do is stop obsessing over the chapter they're in and remember there are still plenty of pages left to write.

So what are you waiting for - start writing!

Smiling is healing baby 😊





TWO ORGANISATIONS THAT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT LOCALLY



For many veterans in our local community, unity plays a vital role in their lives. Engaging with events, activities, and national celebrations helps build commitment not only to support one another, but also to recognise and understand the importance of feeling valued.

Fleetwood Men's Shed has long supported veterans and their families, including by organising a weekly veterans' breakfast despite limited financial support. They have now joined forces with Vet's (Veterans) Shed, working collaboratively to raise positive awareness for veterans and their families across the community.

In order to continue and expand these vital support structures, ongoing financial assistance is essential. Both organisations play a significant role in changing lives simply by offering a listening ear, companionship, and a safe space for those who need it most.

They provide invaluable support for veterans experiencing mental health challenges, PTSD, and other conditions linked to service and trauma, both past and present. Local organisations such as Fleetwood Men's Shed and Vet's Shed truly make a difference, and they continue to need the community's support. Please consider reaching out and supporting them, your help can contribute to life-changing moments for those who have served.

STRAWBERRY GARDENS OFFER 25% OFF FOR LOYALTY CARD MEMBERS

📌 25% OFF MAIN MEALS AT STRAWBERRY GARDENS 📌

Loyalty card members can enjoy 25% off main meals at Strawberry Gardens! Simply pop in, fill out a short form, and sign up to start enjoying the benefits straight away.

Great food, great value, and a great way to support both the local community and our veterans community.

📌 Get yourself down today and take advantage of this fantastic offer!



Fleetwood Town Council recently held its Annual General Meeting (AGM), where Councillor Jimilai Kuruvakdua was re-elected as Armed Forces Champion.



🏊 FREE SWIMMING FOR KIDS – FY7 AREA 🏊

Free swimming for children is available locally, funded by Fleetwood Town Council.

This is a fantastic opportunity for families to take advantage of a healthy, fun activity, especially during the warmer weather.

The scheme has been running for some time and is available to all children living within the FY7 postcode area.

A great way for kids to stay active, enjoy themselves, and cool off on hot days, well worth looking into and making use of while it's available.







The local Regiment is proud to celebrate 20 years of The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment with a special anniversary event in Preston on 4th July.

Join us for a ceremonial parade through the city centre, followed by a families day at Fulwood Barracks.

This is a chance to meet our soldiers, explore military equipment and celebrate alongside the community that has supported us over the past two decades.

There will be a DJ and entertainment from our Fijian Choir plus FREE FAIRGROUND RIDES FOR ALL!

-  17 4th July
-  Parade 11am
-  Families Day 12pm
-  Free and open to the public

Everyone welcome!

★ CONGRATULATIONS ★

A massive congratulations to Paul Roberts on being re-elected as Chair of the Fleetwood Remembrance Day Committee. His continued dedication and support for the Armed Forces community is greatly appreciated and makes a real difference to local remembrance efforts.

Let us all continue to support Paul and the committee as they work to honour and remember those who have served.



★ CONGRATULATIONS ★

Huge congratulations to veteran Joanne Mallon on being elected as Secretary of the Royal British Legion, Fleetwood Branch.

Joanne and her family have long supported the Armed Forces community, and her dedication continues to shine through in her ongoing commitment to service.

The memory of her late husband, and father to her children, remains a source of strength and motivation as she continues to support others.

Wishing Joanne every success in her new role and all the very best for the future.





ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL



**BALLOT OPENS
WEDNESDAY
27TH MAY**

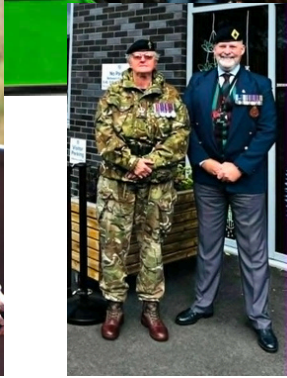


**BALLOT CLOSES
WEDNESDAY
24TH JUNE**



RBL MEMBERS ONLY

FLEETWOOD ARMED FORCES CHAMPION'S VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH FOR MAY 2026 IS SHARON HOBSON



At AKS Lytham (Arnold and Annesley School), Sharon serves as the school's Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Administrator and is a former Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2) in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

With a distinguished military career spanning 1990 to 2001, Sharon served as a Military Skills Instructor and rose to the rank of Warrant Officer Class Two. Her extensive experience enables her to bring valuable insight and leadership to her current role, effectively combining her military background with her work in education. Sharon is a highly respected and influential figure within many veteran groups and activities across the Fylde Coast.

She currently serves as Treasurer of the Old Comrades Club (The Duke of Lancaster) in Fleetwood. In this role, she has modernised financial processes, introducing greater security, accountability, and transparency. Her diligent work ensures that all financial matters are clearly reported at club meetings throughout the year. On Friday 19 September 2025, Sharon organised a shooting competition for veterans from across the Fylde Coast, hosted by AKS Lytham. The event brought together 26 veterans and their partners, creating a memorable day focused on camaraderie, recognition, and community spirit. It also strengthened the relationship between the school and the local veterans' community.

While primarily a social occasion, the event also raised valuable funds for the Fylde Memorial Arboretum, an important part of the local veterans' community. After the competition, attendees gathered in the pavilion to relax, reflect, and enjoy refreshments together.

Sharon also serves as Treasurer for the Fylde Memorial Arboretum and Community Woodland, where she plays an active role in fundraising efforts to ensure the site remains well maintained and continues to serve the community.

In January 2026, Sharon was elected Chairperson of the Fylde Ex-Service Liaison Committee (FESLC). Since taking on this role, she has worked tirelessly to modernise the committee and further strengthen links with military associations across all three armed services.

FESLC supports military veterans and the wider Armed Forces community across the Fylde area, acting as a key partner in local service provision. The committee is also responsible for managing the Fylde Memorial Arboretum and organising community-focused events.

Building on her reputation for successfully organising veteran activities, Sharon coordinated another shooting competition on 6 March 2026 at the Blackpool Rifle and Pistol Club. The event was widely enjoyed and provided a valuable opportunity for veterans to connect, strengthening both individual wellbeing and community ties. Sharon has become an outstanding representative across the Fylde Coast, working tirelessly to bring veterans together and foster a strong sense of community and support.

We extend our sincere thanks to Sharon for her service and her continued dedication to the veteran community.