



HERTFORDSHIRE
HEROES



Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Annual Report 2023-2024



Hertfordshire

Foreword



“As Chairman of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board, I am honoured to present our Annual Report for 2023-2024. This year has been a testament to our unwavering commitment to supporting the Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire. Our efforts

have been guided by the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated with fairness and respect.

Throughout the year, we have made significant strides in providing fair access to essential services, recognising and honouring the sacrifices of our Armed Forces Community and fostering integration between military and civilian life. Our initiatives have ranged from understanding issues for the Armed Forces Community within housing and educational support to enhancing healthcare services and promoting community engagement.

It is with profound sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Colonel Clint Read, former Commanding Officer of Northwood HQ, in October 2024. Colonel Read was an esteemed member of our Board for two years, during which his extensive knowledge and

experience greatly enriched our discussions and initiatives. His dedication to projects such as the Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas Art Competition, which you will read about in this report, brought joy and inspiration to many young participants. His contributions and warm presence will be greatly missed and his legacy will continue to inspire our efforts in supporting the Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to support the Armed Forces Community as we continue to promote the Armed Forces Covenant, support local businesses and councils in their efforts, and encourage new initiatives that benefit our service members, veterans, and their families.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all Board members, partners, and the wider community for their dedication and support. Together, we will continue to ensure that Hertfordshire remains a welcoming and supportive environment for our Armed Forces Community.”

Councillor Fiona Hill

Chairman, Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board

Introduction to the Armed Forces Community and Armed Forces Covenant in Hertfordshire

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that the sacrifice of those who serve or who have served, and their families, is recognised, that they are not disadvantaged and, where appropriate, ‘special consideration’ is provided to those who have given the most or who are bereaved.

The Armed Forces Covenant is now a legal duty under the Armed Forces Act 2021. There is now a requirement for specified public bodies to pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant in the areas of housing, education, and healthcare.

Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire

The Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire includes current service personnel, veterans and their families including spouses, children and other family members.

Serving Units in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire is not a garrisoned county, but it is home to a serving population made up of the following units:

- **Northwood Headquarters** is the UK’s primary military headquarters, hosting 5 operational HQs including Joint Forces Command HQ and the Royal Navy’s Maritime Operations Centre.
- **Royal Naval Reserve Unit, HMS WILDFIRE:** based at Northwood HQ with reservists from Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire.

- **162 Hospital Squadron:** Part of the 254 (East of England) Multi-Role Medical Regiment, based at the Reserve Base in Hitchin.
- **Royal Anglian Regiment – 6 Platoon, 3 Company.** The Royal Anglian Regiment, the premier Infantry Regiment of the East of England, consists of two Regular battalions and a Reserve battalion. It primarily recruits from Hertfordshire and nine other counties in the region, maintaining strong ties to these areas.

Military Families and Children

Military families are an integral part of the Armed Forces Community. There are currently 395 children in receipt of Service Pupil Premium in Hertfordshire of which 167 are in county council maintained schools.

395

children in receipt of Service Pupil Premium

167

are in county council maintained schools

Veterans in Hertfordshire

In addition to those currently serving, the Census 2021 data indicates that there are 25,849 veterans living in Hertfordshire.

25,849

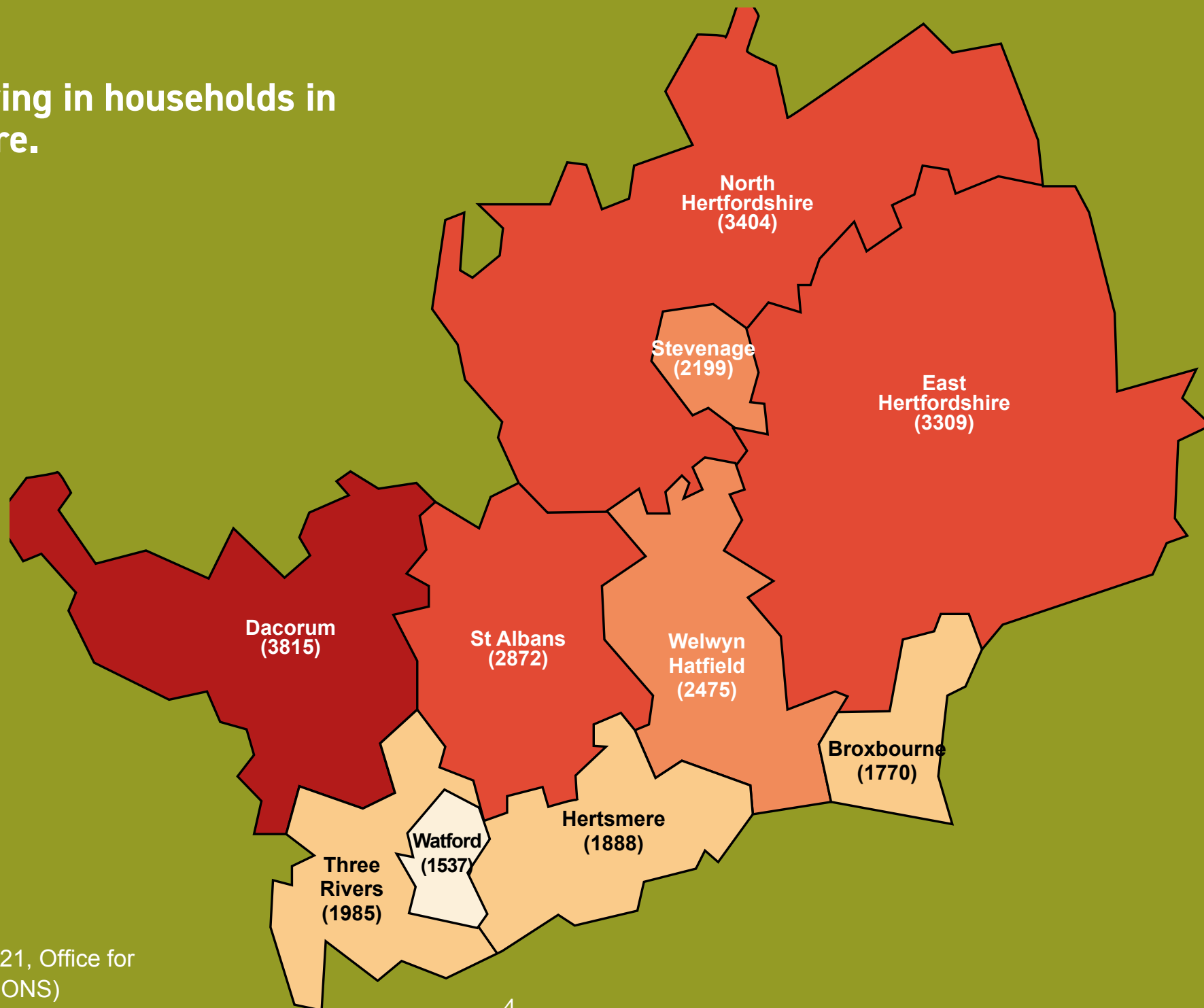


Veterans living in households in Hertfordshire.

Legend

Observation

- 1537
- 1538-1985
- 1986-2475
- 2476-3404
- 3405-3815



Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Uniformed Youth Organisations

While not covered by the Armed Forces Covenant, there are around 40 locations in Hertfordshire where young people can join a uniformed youth organisation including the Combined Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps, RAF Air Cadets and Army Cadet Force. Over 2,200 young people in Hertfordshire take part in at least one of these military-sponsored youth organisations, led by around 400 adult volunteers.

The Armed Forces Covenant in Hertfordshire

Local authorities and the Armed Forces Community are encouraged to work together to establish a Covenant and, in 2011, Hertfordshire signed one of the first. The Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board is responsible for delivering the aims of the Covenant in Hertfordshire and meets bi-annually. It is Chaired by Councillor Fiona Hill. The aims of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board are:



to ensure that veterans and those in the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged in accessing services; recognising that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those such as the injured and bereaved;



that the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces Community are recognised and remembered; and



to encourage the integration of service life into civilian life.

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board membership

Membership of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board comprises of the following representatives:

- Hertfordshire County Council
- His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Robert Voss CBE C Snt J
- Commanding Officer of Northwood Headquarters
- 162 Hospital Squadron, part of the 254 (east of England) Multi-Role Medical Regiment
- HMS Wildfire
- Families Federations of the Army, Navy and Air Force
- Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)
- Royal British Legion (RBL)
- Veteran's UK
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (EARFCA)
- Eastern England Veterans Advisory Committee (VAC)
- Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System (NHS)
- Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)
- Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (HCT)
- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Citizen's Advice Hertfordshire
- All Hertfordshire District and Borough Councils
- Third sector bodies.

This year the Board Chairman was pleased to welcome three new members to the Board; Carers in Herts, Forces United CIC and the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils.

Appointments to the Board reflect organisations' commitment to supporting the Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire and the value that their unique perspectives bring to the Board.

Carers in Herts provide advice, information and support to unpaid carers or people looking after a family member, friend or neighbour who could not cope without their help. Carers in Herts signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2024 and established collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces Charities and the Public Sector. The charity assisted the Adult Community Mental Health Services, Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust in achieving 'Veteran Aware' Accreditation and will continue working with the HPFT to engage carers of veterans and veteran carers caring for those with mental health issues.

Forces United, a community interest company, is dedicated to supporting armed forces personnel and veterans. It serves as a hub for support, and advice for those in need. Forces United aims to create a community where veterans can find the assistance they need to navigate post-service life, ensuring they have access to essential services and a supportive network.

The Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) represent parish councils to district/borough, county, regional and national bodies and work to enhance communication across the Parish Council network. A Parish Councillor representative on the Board will help bring a local council perspective and insights to Board discussions while working to promote the Armed Forces Covenant among Parish, Town and Community Councils in Hertfordshire.



Promoting the Armed Forces Covenant

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association (EARFCA) continue to encourage Hertfordshire employers to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and promote the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

The May 2024 edition of "Inspire", Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce's magazine, featured an insightful interview with Kristina Carrington, the Regional Employer Engagement Director for the Defence Employer

Recognition Scheme at EARFCA and Chamber of Commerce Patron, highlighting the benefits and importance of the scheme to local businesses.

As of September 2024, 188 organisations in Hertfordshire have signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Organisations that are accredited with the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme include 76 bronze awards, 22 silver awards and 12 gold awards. Stevenage Borough Council had their Silver Award revalidated in 2023.

Armed Forces Covenant Trust

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board continues to promote the funding programmes available from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and is keen to support any future bid from local organisations.

Why being a patron is 'invaluable'

Kristina Carrington, regional employer engagement director of East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, talks to Sarah Dale about the benefits of being a Chamber patron and why she is encouraging businesses to sign the Armed Forces Covenant

Being a Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce patron is an "invaluable" source of support for Kristina Carrington in her role.

As regional employer engagement director at East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, Kristina's role is to engage employers and charities into supporting the Armed Forces community in the workplace.

One of the key ways she does this is through encouraging sign-up to the Armed Forces Covenant, a pledge which supports veterans, service leavers, cadets, cadet instructors, reservists and spouses/partners. It is a promise to the men and women who serve or who have served that they will be treated fairly when they return to the civilian workforce and will be given a level playing field.

There are lots of transferable skills from the military into civilian employment. They include strong leadership skills, a range of qualifications, critical thinking, good communication, resilience, teamwork, problem solving, being highly motivated, innovation, professionalism, good decision-making, management, moral courage, high values and standards, timekeeping and well-developed work ethic.

Kristina's reach covers the six counties of East Anglia - Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

"I work on behalf of the Ministry of Defence on employer engagement and that's why we're patron members of Hertfordshire Chamber," says Kristina, who has been in post for the past 14 years.

"The extra support we receive as patrons - including the one-to-one introductions to meet people - is exemplary."

Based in Chelmsford and living in Colchester, the busy commute is a bit far for Kristina to attend the Chamber's breakfast meetings, but she rarely misses a lunch.

"They're always very well-attended and meeting people at lunches, you get to know people much better," she says.

"The Chamber's networking events and the connections you make are really invaluable."

"They multiply the reach I could achieve on my own."

The Chamber has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, as have several members.

"The biggest challenge I have in my role is finding the hook to get people interested," says Kristina.

"If you haven't been involved with the military, receiving a cold invite from me would be different to getting to know me and what it's all about first."

"The Chamber helps me reach more people so they can find out face-to-face what the Covenant is and how it helps people."

She advises new members to work with their business manager and "forge a good relationship".

"They will explain all the Chamber benefits and make sure you get the most out of your membership," she adds.

If you would like to find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant or sign up, email Kristina Carrington at: ea-emp@rfca.mod.uk

Patron Focus

“ The Chamber helps me reach more people so they can find out face-to-face what the Covenant is and how it helps people. Kristina Carrington

Patron Focus

Inspire 02 7

Progress towards the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board aims

The Armed Forces Covenant is now a legal duty under the Armed Forces Act 2021, requiring specified public bodies to consider its principles in housing, education and healthcare. The Board has subgroups addressing these areas, identifying issues for the Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire and developing local solutions. The following outlines the projects and initiatives undertaken towards the Board’s aims.

Covenant Board aim 1 – Fair access to services

Fair access to housing

This year, the Housing Subgroup focused on three main areas of work. Research to understand and evaluate the availability and cost of utilising the private rental market as a housing option in Hertfordshire showed that the cost of renting housing in Hertfordshire has seen an increase and they are higher than the national average in England.

Hertfordshire Royal British Legion and Hertfordshire Constabulary are working together to support police officers to ask those found to be homeless as to whether they have served in the Armed Forces, and then signposting them to the support services available to them. The project started in August 2024, and as of the second week of September 2024, 2 veterans have been identified as ‘rough sleepers’ by Hertfordshire Constabulary and supported in this way.

As part of a review of the resources military charities can provide to the Armed Forces Community, it was found that all major military charities will provide funds for qualifying veterans who are homeless or require repairs to a home that they own if they are unable to afford it.

Fair access to education

In 2024 the Education Subgroup of the Board focussed on fostering connections between county council school admissions team and staff at Northwood HQ as well as investigating attainment of children in receipt of Service Pupil Premium.

- **School admissions**

Those serving in the military are often required to move home every few years and sometimes those families do not have their new address at the time school applications are required. Families in Hertfordshire who are based at Northwood HQ are able to use the base address on their applications. County council school admissions team and staff at Northwood HQ continue to work together on this issue as cases arise.

- **School attainment**

A report was commissioned from Hertfordshire County Council’s Intelligence Team to determine headcount and level of attainment of Service children in Hertfordshire schools. The report found that the cohort of children in receipt of Service Pupil Premium is smaller but has comparable attainment levels to other children in KS2 and KS4. Service Children in 2023 have higher level of attainment than other cohorts in early years – “achieving a good level of development”.



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Covenant Board aim 1 – Fair access to services

Fair access to health

The Health Subgroup of the Board has made progress across a number of priorities in 2023-2024.

• Promoting the Veteran Friendly GP Practice and Veteran Aware Schemes

As of June 2024, there are 53 GP practices accredited as Veteran Friendly in Hertfordshire with one accredited practice in each Primary Care Network. Work is now focused on creating a network for those people identified as armed forces leads within accredited practices and trusts.

All Hertfordshire NHS Trusts are now accredited as Veteran Aware:

- East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
- Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation NHS Trust
- West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

• Social Prescribing

Op COMMUNITY is a support helpline for the Armed Forces Community which is available across seven pilot areas in England. The Op COMMUNITY lead in Hertfordshire has presented at workshops covering all 100 local social prescribers and GP Practice link workers to update them on Op COMMUNITY and the needs of the Armed Forces Community. In Hertfordshire across 2023-2024, Op COMMUNITY has provided assistance to 91 people, mostly veterans with complex multi-agency service needs, ensuring they receive the care and support they need. In addition to direct casework, colleagues at Op COMMUNITY have conducted workshops for all social prescribers within the Hospital Community Navigation Service to enhance their understanding and support for the Armed Forces. Additionally, they have promoted their work to Adult Care Services within Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB). Following that promotion, Op COMMUNITY saw an increase in referrals made to them.

• Promoting Hertfordshire Services for Armed Forces Community

Work has been completed to map 170 services available to the Armed Forces Community in Herts and west Essex ICB and this information will be uploaded to the Forces Connect app. The app was launched in May 2018 and aims to make it easier for users to access the support they need by providing clear and consistent information. It was developed by a partnership of local authorities with funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund.

Covenant Board aim 2 – Celebrating and Honouring

The following outlines the work towards the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board aim to celebrate and honour the commitment and sacrifices made by those in the Armed Forces and their families.

Remembrance 2023

Each year, Hertfordshire comes together to honour the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces through numerous Remembrance and Armistice Day events and parades. Hundreds of events and commemorations take place each year across the county.

Hertfordshire County Council marked Armistice Day in 2023 at all sites with a two-minute silence at 11am and Remembrance resources were

shared across the organisation. School resources specifically created by the Royal British Legion for teaching Remembrance was shared with Hertfordshire schools and information about Remembrance parades with Parish and Town Councils. There was a programme of communications across social media for all residents. Applications to close public roads for Remembrance Parades were free and promoted by Hertfordshire County Council to organisations and the public.



Covenant Board aim 1 – Celebrating and Honouring

Forces United Lounge opened at Watford FC

Marking Remembrance Day at Watford Football Club, the Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire and Luther Blissett OBE DL, opened the Forces United Lounge. The Lounge is home to the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club and will host regular events where local businesses and other services will meet to provide advice to veterans.

80th Anniversary of D-Day

This year marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day. To honour the anniversary, events took place around the county.

- Along with communities across the United Kingdom, Broxbourne Council lit three beacons across the Borough to remember those who were killed and injured.
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council hosted an evening of activities with bell ringing, music and also lit beacons to mark the occasion.
- St Albans District marked the anniversary with a series of special events including a ceremony at the war memorial led by St Albans Mayor Cllr Jamie Day in the city centre with Daisy Cooper MP and a former British Army soldier.
- Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Chairman Councillor Fiona Hill attended the D-Day Commemoration event hosted by Buntingford Town Council and the Buntingford Branch of the Royal British Legion during which there was a special ceremony and beacon lighting.

Armed Forces Day 2024

In June 2024, member organisations of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board paid tribute to the Armed Forces Community by marking Armed Forces Day in their own way.

Hertfordshire County Council Chairman Councillor Terry Douris hosted a flag raising ceremony at County Hall on 26 June 2024. The Chairman welcomed local dignitaries and representatives from the public sector and charity sector. The 'County of Soldiers' exhibition was also showcased which was curated by Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies.





During the week leading up to Armed Forces Day, Hertfordshire County Council hosted two staff events and promoted resources through internal communication channels. Colleagues from Op COMMUNITY joined Hertfordshire Heroes to host a stall for staff as well as a virtual lunch and learn meeting.



Covenant Board aim 1 – Celebrating and Honouring

Hertfordshire County Council delivered a social media campaign across X, Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor to ensure promotion of Armed Forces Day.

Other organisations in Hertfordshire hosted events for Armed Forces Day.

- The Mayor of Hertsmere showed support for the people who make up the Armed Forces Community, as part of a special event to commemorate Armed Forces Day outside the Civic Offices. Mayor Cllr Butler said: **“We raise the Armed Forces flag today to pay tribute to our serving troops, service families, veterans and cadets. The day provides an opportunity to recognise their sacrifice, dedication and commitment and show our appreciation for the valuable service they provide to civilians in keeping us safe.”**

- Dacorum Borough Council hosted their annual Armed Forces Day event, also commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The Deputy Mayor of Dacorum, Councillor Catherine McArevey, opened the event which included Hemel Royal British Legion, cadets, stalls, music and entertainment.

- Stevenage Borough Council hosted an event in Stevenage Town Centre which featured a WW2 Spitfire, Royal Guard Stilt Walker, life-saving CPR demonstrations, a marching band and other live music.

- Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust hosted a bake-off competition across their sites, some organised by veterans, to raise awareness throughout the Trust and over £600 in funds for SSAFA in honour of Armed Forces Day.



Covenant Board aim 3 – Joining the Communities

Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas Art Competition

The Hertfordshire Heroes Christmas Art Competition, organised by Hertfordshire County Council, continues to attract entries from both new and returning schools. In its 11th year, the competition received 670 entries from 18 schools. Key Stage 2 children created artwork to bring cheer to Armed Forces personnel serving away from home. Hertfordshire County Council Members and Officers shortlisted the entries, with military personnel at Northwood HQ selecting the winners:

Year 3 winner – James from Hartsbourne Primary School, Bushey

Year 4 winner – Filip from Kingsway Junior School, Watford

Year 5 winner – Aria from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Waltham Cross

Year 6 winner - Ali from Woolgrove Special Needs Academy, Letchworth

Although not every child wins, all submitted artwork is sent to our military colleagues to enjoy over the holiday period. The four winners, one from each Key Stage 2 year group, received their certificates at a school assembly and were invited to spend a day of adventure at Northwood HQ, the UK's military strategic headquarters in Hertfordshire.

YEAR 3 WINNER -

James from Hartsbourne Primary School, Bushey



James, Year 3, Hartsbourne Primary School in Bushey Heath was visited by Councillor Fiona Hill, Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Chairman and the late Colonel Clint Read, Commanding Officer of Northwood HQ.

Covenant Board aim 3 – Joining the Communities

YEAR 4 WINNER -

Filip from Kingsway Junior School, Watford



Filip, a student at Kingsway Junior School (Year 4) with Councillor Mark Mills-Bishop, Vice Chairman of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board, the late Colonel Clint Read, and County Councillor Tim Williams.

YEAR 5 WINNER - Aria from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Waltham Cross



Aria, Year 5 pupil at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Waltham Cross, with Councillor Fiona Hill, the late Colonel Clint Read, Councillor Mark Mills-Bishop, Councillor Dee Hart, and Councillor Paul Seeby, the Armed Forces Champion for the Broxbourne District Council.

YEAR 6 WINNER - Ali from Woolgrove Special Needs Academy, Letchworth



Ali, from Woolgrove School (Year 6) in Letchworth, enjoyed a visit from Cllr Fiona Hill and the late Colonel Clint Read.

Day of Adventure and music assembly

The competition winners were invited to spend a day of adventure kindly organised by Northwood Headquarters. They were put through their paces with some team building activities run by an Army Physical Training Instructor followed by an archery tournament which culminated in the Lord Lieutenant Robert Voss and the Commanding Officer, the late Clint Read, challenging each other to target practice, resulting in a very diplomatic tie-breaker result.



Covenant Board aim 3 – Joining the Communities

The children were then treated to a range of musical activities with Northwood's Bandmaster teaching them percussion and conducting skills, receiving an insight into an aspect of the military they may not have considered. The children were even taught the art of camouflage and concealment by a Royal Marine.

To celebrate Ali, the Year 6 winner from Woolgrove School, Northwood Headquarters Volunteer Band Instructor (VBI) CSgt Steve Saleh together with Paul Wood (AWS) delivered a 'Military Music' activity session to four separate classes, which included lessons in marching, saluting, conducting, and playing percussion.



Lord Lieutenant visited Northwood HQ

In July 2024, the Lord-Lieutenant and a number of Deputy Lieutenants were hosted by the Commanding Officer, the late Colonel Clint Read, including a tour of the site.

Hertfordshire County Show

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board members, including Carers in Herts and 254 Multi-Role Medical Regiment, were honoured to participate in the Military Village at the County Show, engaging with the community and showcasing the vital support provided to our armed forces.

Army Engagement Event

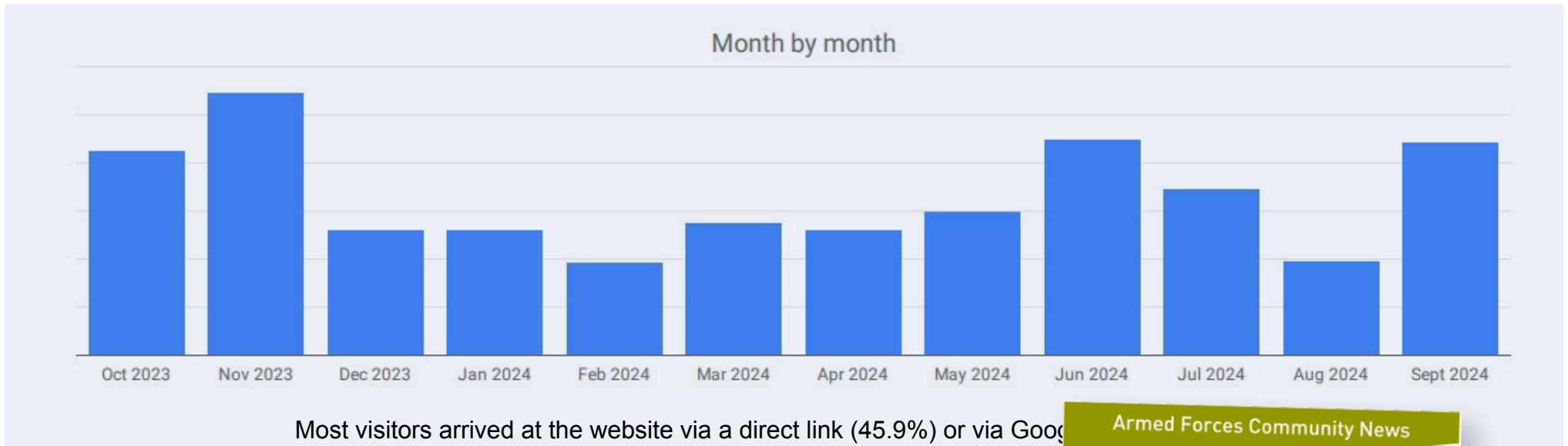
In July 2024, the Army Engagement Group hosted a "Meet your Army Event" in Hatfield. This event offered a unique opportunity to engage with the Army and learn about the various departments, their missions and the individuals who serve. This event was promoted within the Hertfordshire Heroes monthly newsletter and attended by the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board Chairman.

Learning about the Armed Forces Community

Building on the e-learning modules promoted on the Hertfordshire Heroes website, two new modules were published this year. The Armed Forces Covenant and Covenant Duty Explained: Health is designed for anyone working within the NHS, Local Authority or other organisation who need to understand what the Armed Forces Covenant Duty is and how it applies within healthcare. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty Explained: Housing is for those who need to understand what the Armed Forces Covenant Duty is and how it applies within housing and homelessness support. These free to access training modules are actively promoted.

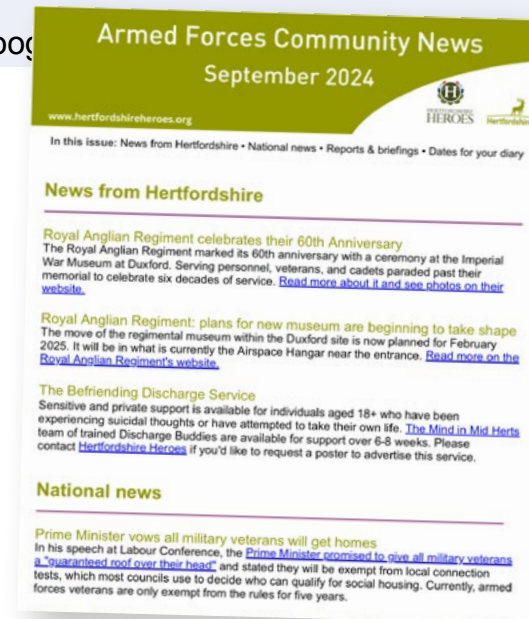
Hertfordshire Heroes website, monthly newsletter and email inbox

Our dedicated website has since October 2023 received 3,670 visits, an increase of 119% from the previous year.



Most visitors arrived at the website via a direct link (45.9%) or via Google

The Hertfordshire Heroes monthly newsletter has seen significant growth and enhancement over the past year, serving as a vital source of information on the Armed Forces Covenant. It delivers news, research, briefings, key dates and other updates relevant to Hertfordshire and nationally. In November 2023, the newsletter moved onto Hertfordshire County Council’s email platform. This move has allowed newsletters to be sent in a more visually appealing format and track engagement metrics effectively. Residents interested in this newsletter are now able to subscribe easily via Hertfordshire County Council’s “Update Me” sign up page by selecting Armed Forces Community news. As a result of these improvements, our subscriber base has grown substantially, increasing from 101 in November 2023 to a current total of 323 recipients.





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In the past year we have handled queries from the press, external organisations offering support, members of the Armed Forces Community seeking support or organisations seeking advice or connections sent to the Hertfordshire Heroes inbox. The emails were referred or signposted appropriately. One query from a veteran spouse seeking clarification on government policy around childcare proved fairly complex but working with colleagues from HMRC and Veterans UK, we were able to resolve this.



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Looking ahead

As we move forward into the next year, the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board will continue to monitor any new developments that may arise with the new government, in particular the Prime Minister's announcement on housing for veterans.

The Health Subgroup is considering several initiatives for the coming year. They are exploring ways to improve access to dental services for the Armed Forces Community, and efforts are underway to link accredited Veteran Friendly practices with local Maternity Service programmes. The subgroup also plans to focus on asking GP practices to include veterans and their families in cancer screening and triage calls for those aged 55-75 as well as continue to build relationships with Hertfordshire Constabulary regarding best practice to help reduce ex-military suicides.

The Housing Subgroup of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board is dedicated to enhancing the support provided to our Armed Forces Community. Over the next year, they will focus on promoting online training to housing officers across Hertfordshire. This training is specifically about understanding how the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applies when it comes to housing. The initiative aims to support housing officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to better understand and address the unique housing needs of service members, veterans, and their families.

The Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board will continue to promote the Armed Forces Covenant Trust programmes and support, where appropriate, future bids by members and other interested organisations.



The 2024 Christmas Art Competition has been launched and promoted to Hertfordshire schools.

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board will continue to promote the Armed Forces Covenant to Hertfordshire businesses and organisations and to Parish, Town and Community Councils.

The Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board remains steadfast in its dedication to the Armed Forces Covenant. This year, we have made significant strides in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for the Armed Forces Community in Hertfordshire. We are committed to continuing this momentum and working to address challenges that arise.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Board members and their colleagues for their unwavering dedication and hard work in compiling this year's annual report. Their efforts are instrumental in ensuring that the Armed Forces Community receives the recognition and support it deserves.

Together, we look forward to another year of progress and collaboration, strengthening the bonds between the Armed Forces and the civilian Hertfordshire community and ensuring the Armed Forces Community feel supported and welcome in Hertfordshire.

For more information, please visit our dedicated website

www.hertfordshireheroes.org.



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