

# **HELPING HOMELESS VETERANS UK**

Registered Charity no. 1195521

## **CEO Statement**

from Mr David Wood BCav

17th September 2022

Helping Homeless Veterans UK became a registered charity on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 after two previous years as a not-for-profit CIC.

Helping Homeless Veterans UK was formed to provide professional advice and assistance to any veteran of HM Armed Forces who was struggling for whatever reason to find a place they could call home.

As the charity CEO, I have gained extensive knowledge over a period of 6 years with legislation and engaging with local authorities with many contacts being made over this period. With the help of my fellow trustees as well as our ambassadors and patrons, we have once again had an exceptional year with 116 veterans helped and assisted in some form of way by our charity.

However, I would like to put on record that none of our work could have been done without the sheer hard work of our volunteers. These volunteers are the most dedicated and passionate people I have ever had the honour of working alongside and these individuals are the backbone of our charity that make the cogs rotate in the right direction. So, I send a personal thank you to each one of these people. We really have developed an awesome team with no self-inflated egos.

This year, we have been fortunate to receive several grants from companies to assist us in our projects and our work and without these grants we would not be able to carry out the work that we have.

So, thank you to Selco Builders Warehouse, Tesco Community Grants, Aviva, The Co-Op, Speedo Mick Foundation, SUEZ Recycling, The Arnold Clark Foundation as well as The Dorset Community Fund. If there is anyone else that I have forgotten please except my apologies in advance.

The most important people I would also like to thank are our fundraisers and the members of the public who have donated via JustGiving Pages to support these people in whatever task they set out to achieve.

We have had "The Return to The Severn Bridge Challenge", "The Bathtub Challenge up Pen y Fan", "The Walk Across East Anglia", "Kayaking the Thames", "The Three 3 Peaks Challenge", "Running 100 Miles in 24Hrs" and so many more fundraisers.

Without these fundraising events, we would not have been able to house 74 veterans this year out of 116 veterans helped and assisted.

We have kept to our promise where 100% of the public's donations are spent on helping veterans and this is something we are extremely proud of.

We have also kept to our promise, which will never change, and that is we are and will remain '100% volunteer powered'. That means that nobody will ever get paid a single penny from the public's donations because we believe that charity is exactly that which is giving something back to those less fortunate for whatever reason.

I have published our accounts with this statement and these accounts can be found on all our social media platforms as well as our website [www.hhvuk.org](http://www.hhvuk.org) and finally on The Charity Commission's website over the next few weeks.

We remain open, honest and transparent always which is another promise we have kept too since our formation.

Our accounts have been verified and they clearly show the growth in our charity which year-on-year is nearly doubling - which is quite scary. There have been times this year that, due to the sheer lack of funds in our bank account, we have had to refer veterans who have reached out to us to The Veterans Gateway. This is frustrating for us as a charity as we will never make a promise that we cannot keep as it takes courage for a veteran to reach out and ask for help and the last thing that veteran needs is broken promises.

The coming financial year we will have The Veterans Build Project completed which will make our lives so much easier at the charity. This building has been completely transformed into six individual dwellings for veterans with en-suite provisions in each dwelling and a shared kitchen and communal Area.

All this work has been carried out using grants we have obtained and no matter where a veteran may be homeless in England and Wales, we can bring them to the Project where they will be warm, dry, clean, able to cook and feed themselves and use the laundry facilities. However, instead of us paying out for hotels, which uses a large amount of our budget, we receive an income based on the Local Housing Allowance, which we can then use to move the veteran into permanent accommodation back home where they have travelled from.

I would like to say publicly a huge thank you to all the trades that have assisted us with the Build Project. Some of these trades have given us their time and labour for free, whilst others have given us large discounts for their services. However, I would like to put on record and state that none of this work would have been possible without Selco Builders Warehouse who have been simply outstanding in helping our charity get to where we are.

After the Covid-19 lockdown ended, the cost of building materials went sky high and left the project out of our financial reach. Selco Builders Merchants, thanks to Nathan Cross and John Harris, sat me down in a meeting with Neil Hague to talk about costs and stated that everything we purchased would be at cost. They have kept to their

promise and kept our costs down as low as is possible and I send my sincere thanks to the team at The Poole Branch.

This coming financial year, we plan to move into our own self-contained unit which will provide office space as well as storage for furniture and white goods that we get donated. Myself and our Trustees are currently looking at a few units which are perfect for what we need and this all depends on us receiving grants we are applying for to fund this. We are positive that this will happen very soon. Once this is completed, we have several plans in place to help even more veterans in the future, but it will all be carried out inhouse and controlled by our own Trustees and registered volunteers.

All I must finish on is a huge thank you to each member of the public who have supported us this financial year as without you we would simply not exist and that is not an exaggeration. Because of your donations you are helping us save lives. That is not an exaggeration. Please keep supporting us because whilst our finances might be at critical level at this present time we are still helping and advising veterans. If anyone has any questions about our accounts, then feel free to email us at [hq@hhvuk.org](mailto:hq@hhvuk.org) where we will answer them. Thank you.

**David Wood**

*CEO/Trustee*

Helping Homeless Veterans UK