

Proud to be an Armed Forces Covenant Champion

Having served with the British Army for 23 years I would describe myself as a veteran who is proud to have had the opportunity to serve his country. You can imagine, when invited by the Wisbech St Mary Parish Council to become their Armed Forces Covenant Champion, I was equally proud to accept the invitation.

So what is the Covenant all about? The First duty of Government on behalf of the people of the United Kingdom is the defence of the realm. It is our Armed Forces, whether regular or reserve, supported by their families, that fulfils that duty on behalf of us all.

Life in the Armed Forces is different to the rest of society. Servicemen and Women sacrifice some of their civil freedoms when serving. They go where they are sent. Families will have to move, sometimes with little notice, to unfamiliar areas or live apart. All of this means they can find themselves at a disadvantage In comparison with their civilian neighbours when accessing the goods and services that as citizens we should all expect.

Sadly, some members of the Armed Forces have witnessed and experienced things that most of us couldn't imagine and their healing process is a difficult one, some never overcome it and continue to be affected, both mentally and physically, by their experiences.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise between the nation, the government and the Armed Forces community, ensuring that those who serve, and have served, in the Armed Forces and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by their service.

The Armed Forces Covenant is not designed to give the Armed Forces, Veterans and their families' preferential treatment compared with other citizens. It can help the Armed Forces community find advice, information and support on a variety of needs when access is not obvious in an unfamiliar and daunting environment.

Your Parish Council is at the heart of our local community and is best placed to provide local advice and support. It is with this in mind that it has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant along with the County Council. A copy of the signed Covenant can be found on the Parish website. As the Parish Council Covenant Champion I am happy to be the first local point of contact for those seeking help or access to local networks. I am also keen to hear from or meet those who would like to explore local initiatives. My contact details can be found on the Parish Council Website.

Below I have included some links that may help inform those seeking more information

Steve Wellon
Wisbech St Mary Armed Forces Covenant Champion

www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk

www.veteransgateway.org.uk

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Pages/Militaryhealthcare.aspx

www.britishlegion.org.uk/

<http://www.ssafa.org.uk/>

<http://www.warwidows.org.uk/>

www.combatstress.org.uk

www.helpforheros.org.uk

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/armed-forces-covenant

