



# Alabaré Newsletter

Spring 2023

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# Creating safe, supportive pathways for veterans

**Creating a bright future for those who are recovering from crisis or homelessness is key to our vision and mission at Alabaré. For over 14 years we have provided dedicated homes for ex-Armed Forces personnel who have struggled in their civilian lives, by offering a chance to live in accommodation with other veterans who have a shared understanding and an appreciation of the unique challenges they face.**

Alabaré's Anne Williams, Operations Manager for Veterans Services tells us why our approach matters so much.

“With 19 **Homes for Veterans** across England and Wales we currently offer a home to over 100 veterans every night.



Our teams are making sure that each veteran gets personalised support and the opportunities they need to rebuild their lives.

Crucially we link together our Alabaré services to ensure that our veterans have a holistic pathway of support that helps them achieve successful, sustainable, independent living when they move on from us.”

**Read more about our veterans journey on page 4 & page 8**

There are many ways that veterans may find their way to Alabaré. Some may be accessing our drop-in centres in Wiltshire, some may find us online. The majority are referred to us through our partnerships with other veterans organisations, both national and local, which demonstrates how charities are working together to help our collective beneficiaries.

75%\* of the veterans we help say that they would like support with their mental wellbeing. This could be because of a diagnosed condition such as anxiety, depression or PTSD, or it may be connected to other health or addiction challenges. As well as helping residents access GP and the specialist support, in Wiltshire our **Riverside Sanctuary** mental wellbeing team link up with our veterans services.

Jacob Beale, Operations Manager for Mental Health says:

“Our support phone line is an important way that veterans in Wiltshire can reach out for help seven days a week if they need to. In addition, we can provide drop-in sessions in our veterans' homes giving residents access to further help from the familiar surroundings of their home.”



\*approximate 2022



## Young Parents Service - Connecting young parents and their children through nature

**For a number of years, Alabaré has provided vital accommodation for young parents and babies without stable accommodation in Salisbury. They may have come from overcrowded or unfit accommodation, have been forced to leave their parental home or suffered a family breakdown or domestic violence. Many come with a variety of issues around poverty, poor education or have had traumatic childhoods themselves.**

We offer tenancy skills training and opportunities through Wiltshire College as well as organising activities such as cooking, swimming and interactive play sessions for our clients and their babies.

Recently our **Boots on the Ground** team have been working with our young parents, to build confidence and overcome barriers to accessing green spaces. Connecting with nature boosts

their own wellbeing while developing cognitive and emotional skills in their children, and creating some magic memories in the process.

Gemma came to our home after her mother married someone with three small children, so after falling pregnant she was told she could not stay.

**“I was scared and upset. I heard about this house and moved in. I was still scared and worried but they helped me with Billy as I didn't know anything about babies or what to do with him. The staff were so lovely. No one played with me when I was little and now I've learnt how to play with him and care for him.”**

We are enormously grateful that The Community of St Denys continues to provide service funds so young parents have the knowledge and skills to independently raise their children.



**Graham came to Alabaré's Homes for Veterans in Plymouth last year, following over 12 years as a homeless street veteran. He was dependent on drugs following a tough childhood, his years in service and the death of his lovely partner from cancer after which his life unravelled.**

**Your support has saved the lives of people like Graham**

## Barford celebrates 25th Anniversary this May

Barford Development Centre was one of the first projects Alabaré established, operating as a welcoming centre for vulnerable adults who enjoy the strong, happy family atmosphere. Set within old, converted barn buildings, kindly let to us by the Wilton Estate, we have a pottery studio, woodwork barn, and a large allotment-style plot with numerous poly tunnels. The team can do cookery lessons that create delicious home-grown meals from the produce provided by the Gardening Group.

To celebrate this significant anniversary on **20th May** there will be a Garden Party with cream teas and fun activities.

Many of the clients like Stephen have been coming to the centre for many years, Stephen says that he loves coming and loves to see his friends and do pottery.

**“Every day, I see how a happy crafts-based environment changes lives. We build confidence and learn new skills every day, but overall, it is a place to make friends and achieve training through the National Open College Network. I am enormously proud of all we have achieved and of every client, my team and all the volunteers.”**  
Sarah Collis, Centre Manager

For **Garden Party** details please see overleaf

During the pandemic, Graham's health deteriorated rapidly, and he spent considerable time in hospital with Covid and was not expected to survive.

He had previously spent some time in our Gosport home, but he had been unable to hold down the tenancy. Now he recognises, in his words, he was a bit troublesome and that he hadn't appreciated what a good thing it was. Following his hospital stay, he knew he was dying and that he had to sort his life out.

He was discharged and stayed in an

Oxford night shelter, but he was once again admitted to hospital urgently with a couple of tumours.

**“I made a promise to God and said that if he saved me, I'd do the best I could to turn my life around.”**

“I spent a year proving to the authorities that I was staying off drugs by attending meetings and avoiding my usual triggers, which meant they approved my application for a detox and rehabilitation programme, which is the best thing I ever did.”

**“I always knew God existed, but when my health was going, I begged for another chance and it was granted, and so I know he's there. He's always been there. That's why I'm here to talk to you now.”**

Graham has recently completed street pastor training which means he can help others who may be struggling. He enjoys meeting fellow housemates and helping them along by encouraging others to share films or a coffee with him.

Graham thought Alabaré would not accept him again because of what happened previously, but he adores life in Plymouth and we are helping him to secure a permanent tenancy of his own. Graham says he appreciates the structure and the way he's been supported and signposted to activities and help.

Most importantly, his relationship with his son is stronger than ever and they are planning a trip to Germany so Graham can show him where he grew up.

# Alabaré Upcoming Events



## The Big Sleep Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London

We invite you to stand against homelessness by bedding down for one night at this iconic London riverside UNESCO World Heritage Site in a single act of compassion to help save lives. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, never been done before event that will change the lives of homeless and vulnerable veterans needing our care. A thought-provoking, community event that promises to be bone-chilling, humbling, yet powerful.

### Date and Time:

October (Date to be confirmed) 20:00 – 07:00

**Registration:** We ask that participants joining us pledge to raise a minimum of £200.



## Barford Development Centre 25th Anniversary Garden Party

There will be cream teas and gardening activities, craft and plant stalls together with an art competition, and an exhibition of photos through our 25 years. The team will also be planting a tree for the Coronation and will be celebrating the opening of a new garden room.

### Date and Time:

Saturday 20th May 13:00 - 16:00

**Location:** 1 Dairy Road, Barford St Martin, Salisbury SP3 4AT

Discover more about our events at -

[alabare.co.uk/get-involved/events](http://alabare.co.uk/get-involved/events)

**Pre-register:** email [fundraising@alabare.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@alabare.co.uk)



## Southwick Revival - Charity Partnership

We're delighted to be a beneficiary at the Southwick Revival this year which presents a 'Spirit of D-Day' Revival. A truly magical event that is not to be missed, so why not get a ticket and come and enjoy a great day out!

Planned activities include -

- 1940's School Lessons
- 1940's Singalongs
- Cadet Field Gun Competitions
- Military Vehicles – including a Sherman tank
- Home Front re-enactments
- Mulberry Harbours and Models for Heroes displays
- Spitfire Flypast (TBC)
- Captivating Military History Talks

**Date:** 10th - 11th June

**Tickets:** From £8 in advance

**Book:** [southwickrevival.co.uk](http://southwickrevival.co.uk)



## Salisbury Marafun - Runners wanted!

Here is one to prepare for!! Run in Salisbury and help us to raise money to help end homelessness. We are looking for 25 fundraisers to take a place on the start line of the 13 mile (approx.) Trethrowans Salisbury Marafun in October.

Join us in the historic market square bright and early on race day and soak up the vibes before setting off on this fun run. Circuit the city centre before heading through the Cathedral Close and out into the Wiltshire countryside. Mile 6 sees a steady climb to Salisbury Racecourse before descending into the Chalke Valley and turning back towards Salisbury with a fine downhill all the way through to the Cathedral and the finish line.

**Date:** Sunday 8th October

We ask that runners pledge to raise £200 in sponsorship together with a registration fee of £20 per place.

**Email:** [fundraising@alabare.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@alabare.co.uk)



## How we are supporting our veterans in the community

**Since establishing our Homes for Veterans initiative in 2009, we have helped thousands of ex-Armed forces personnel. As a charity we saw that many of our service users were veterans who struggled with unique challenges. Our first home in Plymouth looked to offer dedicated support with shared accommodation.**

Today we have veterans homes in Wiltshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Plymouth, Dorset and Bristol plus across North and South Wales.

As part of our support we are committed to providing ways to help our veteran service users as they overcome the challenges they have

faced so that they can build successful, independent lives of their choosing once more.

Our Boots on the Ground project provides meaningful activities that focus on improving mental health and wellbeing. Day to day, there is a rolling programme of community-based activities that work closely with partner organisations. Veterans can join various outdoor social activities; social forestry and Mindful Woods, veteran-led walks, veteran hubs in Salisbury and Wales, Guitars for Veterans and a Veterans Choir; and a host of restoration and heritage sessions. From horticulture and conservation to environmental art and archaeology, there is something for everyone.

The activities have many highlights: **The Gibraltar Heritage Project**, which we hope will become an annual event; a rolling events programme in North Wales with 42 veteran participants; the construction of a memorial garden at the Firing Line Museum in Cardiff Castle and the renovation of a redundant garden at Arundells in Salisbury.

Other veterans are volunteering with local groups which helps to build their confidence and their self-esteem. Rhys was offered a place in Alabaré's Homes for Veterans South Wales in early 2022. He was determined to embrace the opportunity to get involved in new activities. Through his local church he also volunteers helping homeless people access essential support. He was recently awarded a Hero of the Year accolade at Cardiff City Stadium.

Now Rhys doesn't miss any opportunity to join the Boots on the Ground team, and encourages other residents to take part as well. He says he can really feel the benefit himself, both in his mental wellbeing and in his confidence. He enjoys spending time with other veterans and has become a Buddy to Buddy, supporting and mentoring other veterans as they get involved in new projects. He says the shared banter and camaraderie from all being veterans makes it easy to fit in and support one another.

Rhys says he really values being able to help other veterans turn their lives around as he is, as he recognises the huge difference it has made in his life.



**“A year ago, I was in such a difficult place. Others might have given up, but Alabaré gave me a home and a chance to build a future. The Boots on the Ground team have helped me gain skills, confidence and the ability to lead – they have made me a better person, and I am so grateful to them all. I hope that all veterans in need have the opportunity to benefit from Alabaré’s support.**



If you have served in the Armed Forces and would like to support these initiatives or you know others who may benefit from our support, please reach out to the team at [veterans@alabare.co.uk](mailto:veterans@alabare.co.uk)

# Christmas Thank You

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported us over Christmas. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide gifts and shared meals for all our clients and residents while it was wonderful to meet many of you at events around Alabaré.



Over the Christmas period itself, our residents from around the charity were able to spend day in the ways that felt right to them. Many shared meals and spent time playing games, while some spent it with other family or friends. Whilst Christmas is a celebration for lots of us, for many others it can be a challenging time – your support means we are able to be there to help those who are struggling and help everyone to continue on their journey to achieve their personal goals.

One resident said in the run up “I hate Christmas and won't be joining in”.....but said afterwards “It was the best Christmas, the day went so quick and was so lovely to spend time with the volunteers and play games”. Thank you so much.

**A gift in your Will means we'll be here for those in crisis long into the future.**



People like Jess who Alabaré helped after she sofa surfed with friends from college when her relationship with her mother broke down



As an Alabaré supporter you are entitled to a FREE Will with Guardian Angel or Steele Rose. See our website for details [alabare.co.uk](http://alabare.co.uk)

# Charity Challenges Raising Vital Funds for Alabaré

We have teamed up with specialist charity tour operator, Discover Adventure to offer you a range of fundraising challenges to choose from this year.

Although not for the faint-hearted as they are meant to challenge you, the flip side of the coin says they will leave you feeling accomplished in more ways than one. We have chosen three tough-ish treks, so a level of fitness is required. Training walks in the lead-up to the departure are advised so that you get the most out of the experience.

**Here's where you can go whilst raising vital funds for Alabaré...**

A 3-day trek along the Jurassic Coast in Dorset in **May**. You start at Swanage and end at Durdle Door. To get there, you experience the ups and downs of the coastal path and camp for two nights until you reach your destination, the scenery is stunning, and the camaraderie is superb – this is guaranteed!



In **September**, we would love to see you take a place on the Pyrenees Freedom Trail Trek, the itinerary follows the escape route many were forced to take in WWII from German-occupied France into Spain. With heights of 2500m you will feel the courage and bravery of those who went before you. Truly historical and something you won't forget.

If you wish to head north and have dreamt of seeing the Northern Lights, perhaps consider a fundraising trek in Iceland. The terrain will challenge and mesmerise in equal measure. You'll see a striking mix of geothermal valleys and stunning mountain scenery, streams and waterfalls on a 5-day trip which includes a three day trek at the start of the **November** winter season – take on whatever Mother Nature throws at you!

*“I always felt safe and secure with the team around me. You definitely gain a fresh perspective on life when you arrive back home which stays with you long after the rucksack has been unpacked.”*

\*past participant

# Mental Health Support



Access Community Mental Health (Wiltshire) in partnership with Alabaré and Rethink, is helping to transform mental health service provision across Wiltshire.

The team are trained to deliver short-term intervention for people struggling with their emotional wellbeing. Peer support is at the heart of everything we do and we walk alongside those needing our support.

**Riverside Sanctuary** took 1000 individual calls from people seeking support or advice in January demonstrating significant growth, and sadly significant need, over the last 12 months. Above the **Catherine Street Alabaré shop** we now have a dedicated space for our Counselling Service office which offers short-term support for those ready to take the next step in managing their wellbeing. We continue to offer an out of hours telephone support service and face to face appointments seven days a week. and we are building partnerships with the emergency services, probation and the criminal justice service to bridge support gaps and help cater for those who may struggle traditionally to access wellbeing support.

Finally, please note a new a digital resource, **CLIC**, for residents of Wiltshire provides direct wellbeing support and links to self-referral community resources, see the link below.

## Support details:

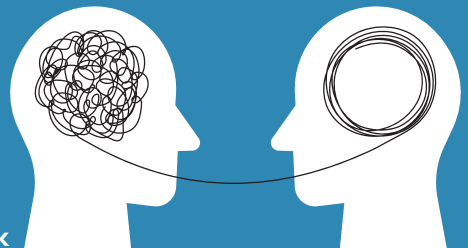
[wiltshireinclusionsservice.clic-uk.org](http://wiltshireinclusionsservice.clic-uk.org)

**Riverside Sanctuary:**

**Open 9 am – 11 pm 7 days a week**

**tel: 08082 803528**

**email: [riversidesanctuary@alabare.co.uk](mailto:riversidesanctuary@alabare.co.uk)**



Models may be used and names changed to protect client confidentiality.

Alabaré Christian Care & Support, Riverside House, 2 Watt Road,  
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