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LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY – OUTDOORS

SPRING 2024

WELCOME TO OUR 2024 SPRING NEWSLETTER

It is with immense excitement that I contribute to my inaugural Friends of HighGround newsletter, a journey marked by significant milestones and heartfelt accomplishments. As we delve into the depths of our organisation's endeavours, I am thrilled to highlight the insightful piece penned by Heather, our new Operations Manager, in our esteemed Rural Weeks column. Since my appointment in November 2023, our path has been adorned with remarkable achievements and impactful initiatives. From the successful launch of our pilot program at Askham Bryan College to the forthcoming anticipation of our second pilot in April, the momentum of progress propels us forward. Notably, our first Virtual Rural Week of 2024 warmly welcomed 24 beneficiaries, fostering connections and opportunities in rural landscapes. Moreover, our recent completion of the 44th Residential Week at Bicton College stands as a testament to our commitment to transformative experiences. Embracing the dawn of the new year with unwavering zeal, we have actively participated in career transition events across various regions, engaging with prospective beneficiaries and allies alike. Reflecting on my initial four months in this esteemed role, moments spent conversing with beneficiaries have left an indelible mark, underscoring the profound impact of our endeavours. Visits to the Cabinet Office have provided a platform to showcase the invaluable work of HighGround, while interactions at the National Transition Event have illuminated the bright future ahead. Additionally it was a privilege to have been invited to speak at this years Landex annual conference showcasing HighGround. I especially enjoy my time at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre alongside our dedicated team, Jane and Steve, has underscored the transformative power of Horticultural Therapy in aiding patient recovery.

A huge thank you goes to our funders... without their support we would not be able to deliver. I would also like to thank DMRC for allowing us to have our January board meeting at Stanford Hall.

As we continue to sow the seeds of hope and opportunity, the ripple effect of our efforts resonates profoundly within our community and beyond. Together, let us embark on this journey of purpose and promise, guided by the unwavering mission of HighGround.

All the very best

Jamie
CEO HighGround



Jamie outside The House of Commons



Jamie and Anna with Zoe Darnbrough from RMA – The Royal Marines Charity at National Transition Event, Silverstone.

FRIENDS OF HIGHGROUND

Friends of HighGround is the voluntary arm of HighGround which supports and promotes the work of the Charity with fundraising and community awareness initiatives both locally and nationally.

Anna and our Trustee Sue have been working with Jamie and Heather to get the Friends of HighGround section of the website live and we are delighted that Andrew Norman has agreed to be our first County Champion (Nottinghamshire) as the Friends of HighGround springs into action!



As Head of Income Generation, Anna's fundraising continues apace and we extend our grateful thanks to everyone who bought our Christmas cards, to [Black Orchard](#) who supported us via sales of their calendar and to the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths who have generously agreed to make an annual donation to support our Rural Weeks programme.

[The Veterans Foundation](#) and [Forces Trust](#) continue their brilliant support of our work via generous grants, and we are very proud to continue our association with Greenwich Hospital.

"Greenwich Hospital aims to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of the Royal Navy community whether serving or former serving. In its service of the armed forces community, HighGround has a superb track record of introducing members of our community to the mental and physical benefits of horticulture and land-based employment, and so we are pleased to partner with them as the trusted provider in this space to personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. We look forward to continuing this partnership for many years to come."

Jonathan Ball OBE. Director of Grants, Greenwich Hospital.



British Sugar Topsoil generously supported us again in 2023 and Jamie and Anna hosted Natalie and her team at Stanford Hall for the cheque presentation. Corporate support is helping us to diversify our sources of income in these challenging times – massive thanks Topsoil!

Our [TNT programme](#) in partnership with Supporting Wounded Veterans generously funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust continues.

We had a webinar in January to brief Welfare Officers, charities, and other referral partners and we look forward to welcoming service leavers to our first TNT Rural Week at Bicton in July.



STOP PRESS.

Sally is raising funds for Friends of HighGround by taking a stand at Middleton Cheney Garden Club Annual Plant Sale on Saturday 18th May 09.00 to 13.00. Please go and support her if you can!!!

BECOME A FRIEND OF HIGHGROUND

STANFORD HALL

The Horticultural Therapy service at DMRC Stanford Hall is picking up again as the light and warmer weather return. Jane and Steve together with their wonderful gardening volunteers have been sowing, prepping for the season and tidying out stores of things brought from Headley Court "just in case"! The team continue to deliver much needed and impactful Horticultural Therapy sessions to patients.

Looking forward, Anna will be attending the Therapeutic Horticulture Australia Conference in May to talk about Horticultural Therapy and HighGround. To find out more about our work at DMRC you can read Jane's Monthly Journal [here](#).

RURAL WEEKS

The first two Rural Weeks of 2024 have been a great success with veterans, those in transition and some still serving contributing to engaging and positive conversations, with some great networking taking place.

We are always so grateful to all our presenters and the locations we visit for giving generously of time, insight and opportunities. You really do make such a difference.

Following a positive first pilot RRW course at Askham Bryan College, near York, in the autumn, we are looking forward to the second pilot week (RRW) in April, with course leader Katie Rowland, having put together a fantastic programme. Thanks to Chris Shepherd and Pete Boorn who run Virtual Rural Week (VRW21 20 - 22 May) and the RRW courses at Bicton for their continued energy and enthusiasm, as well as guidance and support for Katie. A recent beneficiary rightly described you both as being 'a breath of fresh air'.

The follow up support is a valuable part of the HighGround experience and we actively encourage those who have been on courses to stay in touch. We will help however we can in signposting to training, work experience and possible job opportunities within the sector; we are only a call away.

Upcoming course dates for 2024:

VRW: 20 – 22 May; 9 – 11 September;

18 – 20 November

RRW: 7 – 12 April (Askham); 9 – 14 June

(Bicton); 29 Sept – 4 October (Bicton); 24 – 29

November (Bicton)

There are likely to be two more weeks at Askham Bryan once the pilot has been completed.

For more information on VRW21 20 - 22 May and RRW and to register, please contact Heather Crawford

operationsmanager@highground-uk.org



CAREERS FAIRS AND NETWORKING

As ever, we continue to spread the HighGround Word and have attended the [BFRS](#) careers fair at Tidworth with a forthcoming event at Catterick to look forward to. We increased our reach this year and are attending the [CTP](#) careers events, with Newbury and Plymouth having been positive experiences. [The National Transition Event](#) at Silverstone was a fantastic day put on by Mission Motorsport, with excellent networking and showcase opportunities. We also attended the [Veterans Growth Event](#) in Bristol, another new network which provided interesting conversation and new opportunity to spread the HighGround message. In addition we provide regular presentations to the Pathway Recovery Units and look forward to continuing our relationship with them.



THE HIGHGROUND TEAM HAS NOW SETTLED INTO THEIR ROLES:

CEO

Jamie Crisp

Head of Income Generation and Founder

Anna Baker Cresswell

Operations Manager

Heather Crawford

Horticultural Therapist

Jane Taylor

Therapeutic Gardens Manager

Steve Waters, ably assisted by our supportive Trustees, alongside Chris, Pete, Katie, Ruth, Andrew and Shaun.

We look forward to another exciting few months and continue spreading the message – #outdoorsisbetter!

GET IN TOUCH

DONATE NOW

GDPR AND OUR STANDARDS

GDPR came into effect on 25th May 2018. We had an extremely busy run up to this date, but our small team were able to pull out all the stops and get things in place in time. As a charity we take GDPR and the security of your information very seriously. To this end, we have ensured that all of our data processors comply rigorously to keep everything secure. You can read about our Standards [here](#).

Thank you for reading and please do share this email with anybody you think may be interested in supporting HighGround or who may be in need of our support.



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