

Private motion from Cllr Paul Jacobs

As someone who has served in the Armed Forces, I know how important that sense of comradeship can be — and how easily it can disappear once you leave the service.

This isn't a small community either. Thanet has one of the largest veteran populations in Kent. The 2021 Census recorded 5,765 veterans living in Thanet, representing around 5% of the adult population. Across Kent, more than 52,000 people had previously served in our Armed Forces.

Behind every one of those numbers is a person. A former soldier, sailor, airman, reservist — and often a family who has shared that journey with them.

For many veterans, it's not about needing another organisation or another form to fill in. Sometimes it's simply about having somewhere to go, sitting down with people who understand, having a cup of tea and knowing that you're not on your own.

That's why I'm proposing we establish a monthly Veterans' Café at Pierremont Hall, on the second Thursday of every month.

It would be simple, informal and, importantly, it would cost the Council nothing to deliver, using the Hall's existing free community offer.

This isn't untested. Councils in Telford, Waltham Forest, Petersfield and Stirchley all run the same model — free venue, fixed monthly date, tea and a chat — and it works. It also directly supports commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant and the Kent & Medway Partnership Board's aims to raise the visibility of the armed forces community.

I believe this is exactly the sort of practical, low-cost initiative that can make a real difference to our veterans and their families.

We have thousands of veterans living across Thanet. I think the very least we can do is make sure they know there is a place where they can come together, meet old comrades, make new friends and simply feel part of the community again.

For Council's approval.

Do Councillors agree to setting up a monthly café in Pierremont Hall on the second Thursday of the month under the free community offer? Cllr Jacobs to host and promote. Other councillors welcome.