



# ARMED FORCES & VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUBS

[www.afvbc.NET](http://www.afvbc.NET)

## Starting a Breakfast Club.

*Scanning down this document, it may seem like a lot to do, but it really isn't, and it is SO worth it!!*

*I have included lots of tips and advice below, much of which has been gained by experience, both by me, and the Admins that came after me.*

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**1. Preface:** Firstly, it is vital that you are a veteran, or serving member of Her Majesties Armed Forces, **OR** partner/relative to someone who is, and they are willing to assist you. This is purely pragmatic; it is extremely difficult to promote your club to veterans/serving members if you do not have access to them, either socially, or through social media.

This organisation is not a charity or a business, nor should it ever be, and no money or goods in lieu of payment are required for membership or involvement; the only thing you pay for is your own breakfast! You will find that your group will grow organically, as veterans gravitate towards it; they will simply [return to the tribe!](#)

Please do not decide your club should be a charity or 'Support Group'. There are already 3000+ military charities out there, and the world does not need another! Your Breakfast Club will represent the 'customer base' for the military charities, so please invite them to by all means, but if you feel that is what you wish to do, then feel free to go and do it elsewhere. Your club will no longer fit the criteria for an AFVBC, if you decide to lead it in that direction.

The running of your group should be fun for you and your members, with very little for you to do, other than to organise whatever activities your members choose to participate in and setting up your club should be the most you will ever have to do.

To remain affiliated to the AFVBC network, your club must remain within the constitution and guidelines of the AFVBC Organisation, and use the Copyright, Trademarked logo, to indicate its affiliation to the Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs, other than that, each club is left to run as its members see fit, enabling them to tailor their club to their own demographic.

National Admins are not there to interfere with the running of your club, impose or enforce any rules or regulations outside of those that you are agreeing to now by default, by starting your club with the AFVBC network. National Admins are there to assist you and your club, to disseminate information that affects the organisation, the clubs, members and veterans in general. The only thing we ask is that we all maintain links, and develop a common 'corporate identity', as far as the Facebook Groups and webpage are concerned, adhere to the fundamental core principles set out in the constitution and clubs' description to maintain a common code of conduct (which simply protects the basic human rights of all members), and the use of terms such as 'Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club', common logos and insignia, so that veterans, no matter where they are, can find, join, return to the tribe, and enjoy the 'Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs'.

Your Facebook Group will be set up for you, with all graphics and description (constitution) added. It will then be handed over to you and your members, and the National Admins will simply be there to assist and support you whenever necessary, as well as providing you with information for you to post in your group.

The administration of the group does not have to be time-consuming, once it is established, especially if you have multiple admins; it is imperative you have more than one simply to allow access to the group settings should you become 'unavailable' for any reason.

If you follow these instructions in the order I have written them, step by step, you will end up with a Breakfast Club at the end of it, and an enormous amount of fun, fulfilment, camaraderie and assistance, as well as a very busy social life, should you choose it, etc. etc. etc. It's life-changing, not just for you, but for everyone who gets involved. It will surprise you with how many veterans it actually helps. The Breakfast Clubs have and are continuing to improve the lives of many veterans, and believe me; you will have the deepest gratitude of all your members, which is MY greatest reward!! Simply by starting a Breakfast Club, you will have joined a great support network, which is expanding daily.

If after reading this far, you are still committed to starting a breakfast club, we will need a commitment from you that you consent to being the point of contact for your 'group' for any veteran or a family member thereof, in the role of 'Head of your Club; and to that end you agree to provide a phone number (mobile or landline), and an email address. These will be available to the national admins and be used to inform you of developments and information for the benefit of you and your members.

**2. Check the proximity of other clubs:** Firstly, because there are so many springing up, so that you don't conflict with another club, please check there isn't one already in your area (*Right click [here](#) and click the hyperlink for the Map*). If there is one in the vicinity, but in your opinion far enough away that you don't believe it will clash, or if they convene on different days to those you intend to (e.g. once a fortnight, and you choose the intervening weeks!), it should not be a problem because it will give veterans more choice, but please do make contact with said club, and discuss your plans with them, at least out of courtesy. It is very likely they will assist you, because it will give their members more opportunities to attend a Breakfast Club!

**3. Find a venue:** You will need a venue that is open and does breakfast on the day you want to convene e.g. Saturday morning. It should preferably be 'central' to your catchment area, easy to find, and with decent parking & transport links. Please try and ensure they have good disabled access & facilities, for those veterans who have physical injuries, and not too 'loud & busy' for those who have invisible injuries. Places like Toby Carveries, Wetherspoons etc., often do a good value-for-money breakfast, and have all these features, but look around; some of the private ventures will often offer you a good deal for the guaranteed custom, and the kudos of being seen to support Veterans; some cafes are even run by veterans, so a little research doesn't go amiss.

Check out your venue: It's often helpful to them, AND YOU, to pop in and explain what you intend to do and tell them; judging by the success of other clubs around the country, it is likely to grow exponentially.

Your venue should ideally have the capacity to absorb growth, or alternatively, if you have another venue in mind, it can be changed later, once your club is established. Please take a photo of the outside of your chosen venue; I will explain later.

**4. Frequency:** Some clubs have started with monthly meets (for example 'every third Sunday' or 'every second Saturday'), but by far the most successful ones have been the ones that have plunged straight in and said, for example 'Every Saturday 09:30' or 'Every Sunday 10:00' or similar, simply because it becomes a 'routine' for their members (we're all ex-military and conditioned to love routine!!). People who have expressed an interest then don't need to mark it on a calendar, or remember which Saturday or Sunday in the month it is; they simply know that the guys/girls will be there EVERY Saturday/Sunday, and they can just have to pop in; while it may be out of curiosity the first time, the Breakfast Clubs just seem to have a magic about them, and they *just keep turning up... every week!!!! I KNOW this from experience!!!!*

**5. Facebook Group:** At this juncture, this is where we do the work for you... please contact our National Coordinator, using the email [coordinator@afvbc.net](mailto:coordinator@afvbc.net), who will create a 'Facebook Group' for you. It will be populated with all the graphics and information required, such as a banner at the top, group description (constitution of the CIC), electronic flyer (which can also be printed for handing out at Veteran's Days or Remembrance days etc.), the history, and guidance for things like charities and businesses. Your Breakfast Club will also be added to the main webpage, your club promoted, and you will be given access to the rest of the network including all the benefits that this entails, which are increasing by the week, which you will discover as you go.

**6. Contacts:** If you need to discuss anything, please use the following contact details to get in touch: -  
 Founder - Dereck Hardman [founder@afvbc.net](mailto:founder@afvbc.net) 01482 811191

For anything to do with the website, it is [infotech@afvbc.net](mailto:infotech@afvbc.net). You will be asked questions about your venue, frequency of your meetings and contact details, and once the group is created, you will be made admin, and you can begin to add members.

**7. Administrating your group:** You can administrate the group yourself, but you should definitely have more than one Admin. We have found it is very helpful to appoint other 'Admins' to assist you, giving them defined roles, such as 'Event Organiser' for anything you want to organise like trips or parties; we, at the original Breakfast Club, the 'BBC', now have a 'Summer Ball' and a 'Christmas Party' (it'll come, have patience), the organisation of which is handled between admins. You could appoint someone to be responsible for vetting new members. We often get 'Walts', or people looking to make money for businesses, or so called 'Charities', attempting to join, as well as other undesirables. Don't get me wrong, I'm not 'anti-charity', far from it, but veterans should not be put off attending Breakfast Clubs thinking they will have to dip into their pocket for their last two quid or feel like they will be expected to don their beret and blazer to go bucket-rattling. Representatives of charities who are veterans are also welcome to join, as long as they don't attend to ram their charity down the throats of other veterans. A document with advice on businesses and charities will be placed in your group files anyway, which you can refer to.

If you are lacking in experience on Facebook, or if you're not that confident, you can always ask 'Admins' from any of the other clubs to assist you, or any national admin. You could, for example, make one of them an Admin temporarily (they will definitely help you; we're all in it together), and you can remove them later if you wish.

**8. *Group Description/constitution & settings:*** The Group Description/constitution (now published as the constitution of the Veterans Breakfast Clubs CIC) will already have been loaded and edited to include your own club details. If your group is set to be a 'Closed' group, which is the recommended setting, it can still be read by anyone who finds your group, before they have access to it.

**9. *Join the Network of Breakfast Clubs:*** Once you are this far, you should have been added to a Facebook group called 'AFVBC Support' Group, which is the 'Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club Support' Group (*If not, simply right click [here](#) and select 'Open hyperlink' for the 'AFVBC Support' Group, and apply to join*)

This group should be solely for Admins to allow clarity for the passage of information. Once you applied to join, please keep an eye on your 'other' message box, because someone from the National Admin will probably ask you why you want to join. Once you've clarified this and have joined the Admin Group, you will get lots of help and advice, just for the asking. You will no doubt be asked which group you are admin of, so if you would please not be offended, and identify the new group you are representing, you will find that everyone will help if you ask them; e.g. helping you to promote your club, and offer any advice you need.

**10. *Purpose of AFVBC Support:*** Once you have been added, please use this page to copy and paste information into your own group; remember, some information may not be relevant to you, but it may well be to other veterans in your group.

Please ensure you add your fellow admins from your group, provide their preferred contact details to [infotech@afvbc.net](mailto:infotech@afvbc.net), and keep us updated to any changes in your group, such as appointments or removals of admins, changes in timings, frequencies of meetings, venues of your meetings, so that the main website and we can stay on top of it. Ultimately, this is how veterans can find, and attend your meetings.

**11. *Page banner & flyer:*** As you will have seen by this point, your club Group Page has a banner at the top with the Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club trademarked logo, and there will be a flyer loaded into your files. On the 'AFVBC Support' Group page, you should put on a post, asking for any edits to be done on the flyer. You should have one with all the details of your BC on it in the same format as the others (this will again help with searches, and identify that the club that veterans are looking at is a genuine, affiliated AFVBC when they are searching for their nearest network breakfast club) and you can then paste it into every veterans page you can find, to promote your BC. This flyer can also be printed off in hard copy, so you can hand them out, put them in shop windows, give them to your local RBL or association, or council, so they know you exist too. Please make sure when you correspond with anyone, to include a link to the Breakfast Club web page which points veterans from other areas to their nearest BC.

Once you get started, send the flyer to your local authority, and seek out your local Covenant Champion, RBL & SSAFA reps; let them know where you are, and that you are there for veterans.

**12. *Security:*** We have found that the best security setting for the Group page is 'Closed', as mentioned previously. This allows people to find the club on a search, read the description and apply to join the group, but does not allow them, or anyone else, to see the posts before they are a member. When someone applies to join your page, a statement asking them to provide brief service details will automatically appear before them. They will be asked to state which service they served in, their service dates and what trade/regiment or corps they were with. If you are satisfied that they have answered the questions and they are who they say they are then you can add them to the group. If they do not provide answers to the questions then your nominated administrator, should at least have a cursory look at their profile to see if they have served, and/or message them and ask them for some service history if you are not sure. We regularly have 'undesirables' attempting to join clubs, and if you get any, please warn other admins on the Admin group page!

**13. *Pressroom and using the Event feature:*** Once you are ready to let the world know you exist, please ask to join the [Breakfast Clubs UK Pressroom](#) which gives you access to a wide range of media, video, and

sound-bites that can give you some ideas for reaching out to the Press. You will see, one of the best ways of increasing your membership is local publicity; contact your local paper, TV and radio... you can usually simply find email addresses on Google or if they have a web page; tell them about the huge network which you are now a part of, send them something from another club from the pressroom if you think it will encourage them, and invite them to come and see for themselves. Please add any successes you have to the press room but restrict posting on this page to press items only.

**14. Invite/remind your members:** Use the 'Events' feature on your Facebook Group to personally invite all your members with a message. Click 'Create Event', add an image, perhaps of your venue, type in the details of your meeting and the venue, and the time it starts, add a few details telling people about the banter camaraderie and the great breakfast. Click 'create', then click 'Invite' and as you select each member, they receive a personal invite to join you. Use it as a reminder every time you have a meet. There will also be a step by step instruction in your files called 'Top tip for welcoming peeps to your club in a professional manner' which is quite clever too.

**15. PLEASE NOTE!** By agreeing to open an AFVBC, you in effect are agreeing to become the 'Administrator' of the wishes of the majority of your club members. What those wishes are can be decided by the use of polls on your Facebook Group, or simply by a show of hands at a meeting.

It is completely unnecessary to form a committee or elect a 'Chairman'. In fact, we have found that this seems to be a poisoned chalice where AFVBC's are concerned. There are already 3000 + military charities out there, and your club has no reason to become No. 3001. It's meant to remain informal. It is not an 'Association', and as soon as you form a committee, you put in place a 'top down' hierarchy. ALL of your club members can act as a committee, if your club does decide to have any kind of 'fund' for day trips, summer ball, or Christmas party, and in that way, you maintain a 'bottom-up' hierarchy. To that end, you should also be aware, that as an admin, you may be called upon at some point to implement something that the majority of your members want, and you may not agree with yourself!

**16. That's it!!** This looks like a lot of work, but I promise, it really isn't. I have just explained EVERYTHING, and you'll find it is WELL worth it.

Anything else I can help you with, just let me know... after all, it's my fault, cos I started all of this!!!

My email is [founder@afvbc.net](mailto:founder@afvbc.net)

My mobile number is 07867 301603 to call or text, and evenings/weekends it's 01482 811191 – if I don't answer, please leave a voicemail explaining who you are, and I will get back to you.

***Once you're here, all there is left to do is, sit back, watch it grow, and enjoy it!!***