



COMMUNITY  
CHAMPIONS

GET IN TOUCH with Rohini, Jenny or Jo  
9.00—5.00 Monday - Friday  
Phone us 01858 439262  
Email: [champions@vasl.org.uk](mailto:champions@vasl.org.uk)  
Or call in to First Floor, Torch House,  
Torch Way, Market Harborough LE16 9HL

## Volunteer Newsletter March 2017 Spring is on the way!

Dear Volunteers, As this newsletter shows our community is growing and thriving.

### Digital Training Course:

5 new Digital Champion volunteers gave up their Monday evenings for the training course, four others spent Thursday morning covering the course at slightly slower pace!

We are in the process of matching our new volunteers with clients. The project is growing by word of mouth which shows how much it is appreciated.



Remember if you are a volunteer but feel that your computer skills are rusty or non-existent and you are over 60 you can still ask for a digital volunteer to visit you, just contact Jenny.

### VASL news

We have just been awarded the Pqasso Level 2 award. PQASSO stands for Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations and it is a performance evaluation system. PQASSO makes sure that our governance and leadership are to a high standard and our recent Investors in Volunteers Award confirms that we have equally high standards in dealing with volunteers. Thank you for all your help with these awards.

The Community Champions Stage 2 Bid has now gone off to the Big Lottery – fingers crossed!

*“Visiting the client has given me a purpose to leave my house, to socialise, laugh and generally make a difference to someone. Very rewarding.”*

**Being a Pen Pal:** In this age of social media, emails, texting etc. there is still nothing quite like the sound of the letter box closing after the post has been delivered. When I first considered being a Pen Pal, I remembered how much it meant to my mum to receive a letter from me and that thought made my mind up for me - I would become a Pen Pal.

At first I was nervous as to how I would start to correspond with somebody that I did not know but, after my initial letter, it became much easier. Over time I feel I have got to know my pen pal quite well, as I hope she has me.

So if you can spare a little time then please consider being a Pen Pal. I am sure that you will find it very enjoyable and rewarding, as I certainly do.



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**FEBRUARY GATHERING** 20 participants involved in the Community Champions Project (10 volunteers, 7 clients, 1 visitor, 2 project staff) met at a local café for the monthly community gathering.

Over coffee/ tea and cakes

- Clients talked about community activities they had tried like the Shared Reading Group at the library and The U3A's Chinese Wand Class



- A client and a new Pen Pal volunteer were introduced
- A client and an interim Community Champion volunteer were introduced ( the interim volunteer will visit the client in her home whilst her usual client is on holiday)
- A volunteer talked to another volunteer about doing craft activities with The Enterprise Club
- People took away information about local clubs like the Market Harborough Welcome Club and Tea@3
- A visitor took away information about Harborough Lifeline and the Community Champions project

People also looked around the garden centre and some resisted the temptation to buy!

### Feedback from our training sessions

**New Volunteer Training:** In February 8 new volunteers were trained and a volunteer co-ordinator from another organisation observed the training. *"I thought the interaction between your volunteers was great and I'm sure many of them will stay in touch and feel like they are part of something 'bigger' with an established support network that is easily accessed on regular occasions. If I can emulate something similar it can only be of benefit to me and them."*

**Bereavement Training** Seven volunteers attended *"That bereavement training last week came just at the right time for me. It really helped me to support my client who has just lost a family member and had the funeral this week."*

*We have also recently had dyslexia and visual impairment training, if you have ideas for future training please get in touch.*



### Other groups

Sadly The Stroke Club which met in MH on Thursdays has now closed

A new Market Harborough Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Support Group is being set up– if you are interested please contact [namaste83868@gmail.com](mailto:namaste83868@gmail.com)

Parkinson's Group meets the 4th Friday of the month at 1.30pm in the Congregational Church, Bowden Lane MH.

**Tuesday 25 April 2017.** Community Champions visit to Curve Theatre Leicester . We plan to take 16 people (volunteers and clients) in the Community Bus for a behind the scenes tour of the Curve theatre.

The tour would cost £5 per person (set price) to be followed by afternoon tea (sandwiches, cake, scones and cream and tea and coffee) at £10 per person. We will pay for transport

Please think about whether this is something your client might enjoy and have the mobility and stamina for. If there is enough demand we could look at hiring another Community Bus. It should be a fun visit.

Please let us know if you want to reserve a place.

## Community Gathering

Thursday 9th March

2pm—3pm

World Peace Café,

Kelmarsh, NN6 9LZ

Please let us know by Friday

if you need transport