



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
Or call in to First Floor, Torch House,
Torch Way, Market Harborough LE16 9HL

Volunteer Newsletter November 2016

It's been another busy month with plenty of activity. Our project community is growing with new people joining and volunteers and clients getting to know each other. Read on....

FUNDRAISING VASL is

delighted to have been chosen as one of the local charities for November's Mocket Harborough.



Big Lottery application Stage one submitted



VASL has submitted a funding application to The Big Lottery for a Community Champions Project for 5 years based on what we have learnt through the recent consultation and the pilot project. Keep your fingers crossed that our application is selected to apply for stage 2 – we all know the positive difference the project makes to combatting loneliness amongst volunteers and clients and encouraging new local friendships.

We have got five people who are Digital Champions, but we need more.

If you are patient and willing to show someone else the basics of using a tablet or a computer, please let Rohini or Jenny know.

The next training is on 12th, 19th and 26th January, and it covers the different ways that people learn, introduction to an online course that clients can follow, and an opportunity to take a City and Guilds qualification.



We're looking for people who are reasonably confident with emails, google, social media and skype/facetime, but we can help you to update your skills.

The November Community gathering at The Greenhouse Café on 1st November was a real success.

There were 14 of us present: 5 clients, 7 volunteers and 2 VASL staff.

We celebrated the start of Befriending Week (1 - 7 November) with lively conversations about the Kibworth Choir appearing on television with Gareth Malone, the Community Champions project, VASL's recent move to Torch House, the growth of Market Harborough as a town and the glorious autumn colours. We also toasted a volunteer's birthday.

During the gathering, a volunteer and client were introduced, 4 clients signed up to get a Digital Champion volunteer, we told the venue about our project and left project leaflets there and we met a Carer from a local organisation who also took project leaflets away to distribute.

"Thank you for a really lovely event. There were so many nice people to talk to and I look forward to the next one"

The next Community Gathering on Thursday 1 December will take place at The Green house Café again 10.30am – 11.30am.

Please let us know if you need us to organise Social Transport.



We sent a photo of our gathering at Langton Greenhouse to Befriending Network Scotland to mark Befriending Week.

Search 'Befriending Week 1-7 November 2016' on Facebook to see what other projects are doing.



Community Champions is part funded by VASL and Harborough District Council's New Homes Bonus/Community Fund

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VASL Housewarming

35 volunteers were able to join VASL staff and Trustees to celebrate VASL's move to Torch House. Volunteers had tours around the new office. All liked the light, airy offices with beautiful countryside views



Investing in Volunteers (IiV)

On Tuesday 8 November an assessor for Investing in Volunteers came to talk to volunteers and staff about how VASL supports volunteering. Thank you to all the Community Champions volunteers who shared their experiences of volunteering by joining a volunteer group discussion, or speaking to the assessor Heather individually. Your time in helping us to communicate what we do well and to improve our practice is much appreciated. The IiV accreditation is a useful quality indicator for future funding applications.

Sight Loss Training – VASL staff and volunteers were invited to join a Sight Loss training course run by Torch Trust. The course was interesting ; with a great mix of theory (definitions, information about different eye conditions, statistics, different disability models etc) and practice (guiding a blind person) and learning from the direct experience of a blind person (Angela – a VASL telephone befriender)

We had a lively group including 3 from VASL (2 staff and a (Volunteer Drive/ CC volunteer). The trainer was really clear and gave out useful handouts.

“ It was absolutely brilliant – I learnt a lot” reported the volunteer.

We hope to be able to offer this training again.

VASL has funding from Children in Need to support Young Carers, we offer the group a chance to go out and have fun as a break from their responsibilities of caring for parents and siblings



June is a Community Champion volunteer with VASL and a volunteer with The Alzheimer's Society. She has used the knowledge from both these volunteer roles to provide tailored support for older clients. One client had a close family member diagnosed with dementia but did not feel able to go to the Alzheimer's Support Group alone. June met this client, introduced her to staff and other members of the group and explained how the group worked. The client is so happy with the support she received that she is thinking of becoming a volunteer for The Alzheimer's Support Group!

In her role as a Digital Champion volunteer June is also supporting another client to use a computer to access an audiobook about dementia. This client has dyslexia and requested help with understanding information about dementia so that she can provide the best care for her husband. In this situation June has utilised her skills as a Community Champion volunteer, Digital Champion volunteer and Alzheimer's volunteer to provide holistic support. The client is delighted “ *Thank you so much for finding this volunteer – she is so helpful and friendly ; I feel really lucky.*”

Diary Dates

Thursday 1 December 10.30 – 11.30am Community Gathering at Langton Greenhouse Café (MacDonalds roundabout)

Friday 23 December – Monday 2 January 2017 : VASL office closed

Wednesday 11 January 2017 2- 4pm Community Gathering at The Methodist Church, Market Harborough. 2- 3pm is social time to welcome in the New Year and at 3pm David Palmer will tell us about various gardening and social projects he is running to combat loneliness among older people.

Thursdays 12, 19, 26 January 2017 10am – 2pm Digital Champions Training course, Methodist Church Northampton Road, Market Harborough

Tuesday 7 February 10.30am – 11.30am Community Gathering, The Greenhouse Café, Market Harborough (tbc)

* see VASL website for groups and activities for your clients vasl.org.uk/our-projects/community-champions/ community-champions-whats-on

Alone on Christmas Day? The poster for the event in MH is enclosed, if you or your client lives outside the town please contact us and we will try to find alternatives.

