



GET IN TOUCH with Rohini, Jenny or Jo
9.00—5.00 Monday - Friday
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Volunteer Newsletter May 2017

The project is busy as always with new clients and volunteers, see the diary for our range of events.

The **VASL April Community Gathering** took place at Lutterworth Sports Centre. 13 people (6 volunteers – including 2 new volunteers interested in being Digital Champions), 5 clients and 2 project staff attended.

There were 2 men, and 11 women aged 40 - 95. We were joined by 4 Lutterworth Sports Centre Staff who were delightful.

We started by having tea/coffee/ cake and biscuits in the lounge area. As usual there was a buzz of conversation as new people were introduced to each other, clients discussed what they had been doing with their volunteers, and trips and holidays and we observed the variety of people using the sports centre including the children in the swimming pool. One client showed others photos on his iPad.

Rohini reminded everyone of the visit to Curve on 25th and announced the next Community Gathering at the Roebuck in MH on 4th May.

Next we got active! Everyone took part in a seated chair exercise session led by Phil. We rolled our heads and shoulders, stretched and lifted arms and legs for 15 minutes.

Then those who wanted had a tour of the Sports Centre.

All who came really enjoyed the meeting:

volunteers may start using the Lutterworth Sports Centre gym and pool and the rest of us will use the seated chair exercises whilst watching TV to keep our bodies supple. We will be a fit project community!

Community Champions Steering Group – the first meeting of this took place with volunteers, clients and partners sharing their positive experiences of the project and feeding in ideas for future events. Watch this space!

Digital Champions making a difference



A Digital volunteer showed a new client how to post her photo on Facebook. The client had lots of likes and positive feedback from friends saying she looked as young as ever. What a wonderful way for technology to connect people!

April Gathering at Lutterworth

“its great to get out somewhere different, away from my four walls “

“Thank you for arranging this – its been fun and different”



The trip to Lutterworth Sports Centre went well, and the team who hosted the event were absolutely lovely.”



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

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Case Study

Joining groups

The Community Champions Project encourages volunteers to build a warm relationship with their client, and if the client is interested and has the mobility, to accompany them out into the community, to have a coffee or participate in local groups. Groups are a great way of meeting local people with similar interests.

By connecting older people with their local community in this way, it is hoped that older people can build local connections which are sustainable and improve the quality of their lives.

Linda and Zalie have given us permission to share their story.

Diary Dates

New volunteer training

Thurs 27 April 10.30am – 4pm, Torch House

May Community Gathering

Thurs 4 May 2.30 – 3.30pm The Roebuck, Market Harborough

Optional Training for Volunteers

Thurs 18 May 1- 3pm The first hour about Exercise Referral and second hour a Dementia Friends session

Market Harborough Carnival

Sat 10th June VASL will have the MPV joining the procession and we need volunteers and clients who are happy to be VASL ambassadors – and collect money; please let us know if you are interested in riding in the MPV or walking alongside.

VASL Volunteer's Tea party

Weds 28 June 1.30 – 3pm our chance to thank you for all your support- keep the date free in your diary; invites to follow (this event is for all VASL volunteers but not clients)

Optional Deaf Awareness and Communication Training

26th July 10-12 at Torch.



“We had another good session at the library shared reading group on Tuesday with coffee in *Insomnia* afterwards. Zalie read aloud for quite a long time and where appropriate with the broken, heavy northern accent. *Wuthering Heights!*”

Several in the group congratulated her as none of us can make head nor tale of the passages written with the accent. She was delighted and kept saying what a lovely afternoon she'd had. Next week we are off to the Angel hotel to watch *Wuthering Heights* video with the group”.

Zalie told us “I really like the reading group, the other people are nice and Linda enjoys it. It's optional if you want to read and at first I didn't want to but the last couple of times I did and it really gives you confidence. It's a relaxing group and I am looking forward to the DVD. It's hard not to have fun with Linda; she's lovely!”



The following week Linda (the volunteer) was unable to get to the library but Zalie had the confidence to go and participate on her own she says “ It helped that it was a nice day. I walked to town and rested when I needed to. We all took turns reading and the group was as nice as usual.” Linda and Zalie have also been to the local farm shop to buy tasty meals and are regular attendees at the Community Gatherings. Who knows what they will try next?

Rohini and Jenny are both undertaking professional development with the Befriending Network, sadly we are doing this online as funds don't allow us to travel to Edinburgh!

Funder Reports – Community Champions project reports were sent to Harborough District Council and The Bowdens Charity explaining how money has been spent to alleviate loneliness amongst older people. They liked the diverse case-studies and number of volunteer hours and training hours.

Our thanks to HDC and The Bowdens Charity for their support.