



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

GET IN TOUCH Rohini, Jenny or Sam 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 June 2018



YOUR LOCAL CHARITY IMPROVING LIVES

Case Study

A Befriending volunteer Lisa visits Barbara weekly and takes along her son during the school holidays.

Usually the Lisa and Barbara talk about their family, local news, their holidays and their bargain buys. A recent conversation focussed on what accessories would look best with a dress bought in the sales!

When Lisa's son also visits the conversation turns to what he has been doing at school and his hobbies. He has met the client 10 times so feels comfortable sharing his news.

He says "I really enjoy visiting the client because it makes me warm inside to make people happy. She's interesting to listen to and we have a laugh."

Barbara reflects "It is always lovely to catch up with his news - he does so much there's plenty to chat about"

Lisa gives the Community Champions Project Team weekly feedback about each visit:

"I had a lovely time today. Barbara was wearing a fabulous silver necklace which she had made herself many years ago. It was interesting to discover this hidden skill of hers. She missed my son as he is back at school now, but they will be able to see each other in the May half term."



Intergenerational conversations like this bring a new dimension to befriending – is this something you would consider?

Rural Update

10 of us recently met at the Old Black Horse in Houghton on the Hill, a lovely country pub close to several of the

people that joined us. There was much discussion about the upcoming royal wedding, sport, gardening and many other topics. Attendees shared lots of ideas about good places to meet, interesting groups and activities that are happening near them as well as sharing their thoughts

'what a lovely bunch they are! I had some really good chats!'

generally on the project and other services locally. We were joined by volunteers from both the Community Champions project and Lutterworth Transport Scheme. We'd like to

thank them for making our time together possible as without the drivers and volunteer support we couldn't offer these types of events.

'thank you so much for enabling me to come today, I really enjoyed it, I so rarely get to go out'

New Data Protection Regulations this is the last newsletter we can send by email without your permission, please confirm that you want to receive it if you haven't already done it..

You can always stop the newsletters by emailing champions@vasl.org.uk.



Community Champions is funded by the Big Lottery



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May Gathering

May's Sing a long Community Gathering

32 people (12 clients, 9 volunteers, 3 Community Friends, 5 guests from Kibworth Ladies Choir, 2 staff and a VASL volunteer photographer gathered at the Community Church for a lively Gathering.

We needed 2 Harborough Community Buses to bring people and volunteers helped host the event by organising refreshments, setting up and clearing the room. Other volunteers drove clients to the event. It was wonderful to see new clients coming on their own and familiar Community Friends.



After everyone had had a chance for a quick cuppa and chat

Linda F, a Community Champions volunteer and member of Kibworth Ladies Choir introduced her friends and they gave a performance of 5 songs and invited people to join in. People smiled, feet tapped and a few brave souls also joined in with the singing.

Feedback has been positive:

"Just to say a huge thank you to all of you for yesterday. So enjoyed it and I know that others did too. Well done. Xx"

"The gathering yesterday was great fun..."

"Lovely to be able to attend a Community Gathering & I was delighted to see it sooooo well attended"

We also had a VASL volunteer photographer Mike who took action shots that we hope to use in the 2019 calendar.

One of the choir ladies also wants to become a PenPal so all in all a fun and productive afternoon.



Local Groups

Don't forget about **Harborough Carnival** on 9th June, this year we are delighted that VASL has been selected as one of the four charities which will benefit from the day.

ROMEO is a new lunch group for men on their own which will meet at the MH Golf Club on Thursday 14th June, It is £8.50 for 2 courses by you must book by 7th June by contacting David Palmer on 07505 968767. (Transport can be provided)

*Retired Older Men Eating Out in case you were wondering!

Tea @ Three Sunday 24th June Vive la difference! French day with delicious French pastries and a number of different activities 3-5pm note the longer time. David Palmer can arrange transport 07505 968767



First Aid training

On 16th May we had three course running, the first Aid course was run jointly with VASL drivers, thanks to Helen and Alison for their feedback

"This was common sense training with clear guidelines, accompanied by a little book with key actions for the main injuries we may encounter. Most useful was knowing the contents of the 'de fib' boxes that are appearing in the community and seeing how easy they are to use, easier than working the new parking machines in town !!"

"It was a wonderful afternoon!

Claire was a brilliant tutor to us all. We learnt so much, relating from minor to major injuries/situations. In all categories Claire referred not only to the patient but to those offering support and their potential vulnerability in trying to assist. There was a lot of "audience participation", a lot of giggles and most importantly, a lot of learning absorbed by us all.

I would recommend this course to everyone - it just inspired so much confidence."



Confidence Training

Eight of us volunteers, clients and staff had a very interesting and enjoyable morning considering the things which dent our confidence, the ways we can build it up again and how we can move out of our comfort zone.

Just to say a big thank you for the hospitality and training this morning. Really beneficial to me and inspiring. Amazing people..."

importantly came away with things to think about.

The best aspects was when we identified the things that are stopping us doing something new, and between the group we were able to remove some of the obstacles for one participant with very practical suggestions.



I suspect that I wasn't the only one who wasn't sure what I had signed up for, but Jayne the trainer from Adult Education soon had us at ease and we all contributed to the discussion and more

importantly came away with things to think about.

The next course Jayne is leading is about dealing with stress on 20th June 10-12noon,

"The thing I enjoyed was the interaction between the course members"

"I'm going to make a plan to start something new"

Rohini went to Stoneygate

School in Great Glen for a special assembly to receive the £350

they have raised from their Bring

and Buy sale for VASL. They would like most of this to go to Young Carers as they like supporting local projects for young people with the remainder for Community Champions.

A BIG THANK YOU to June Wicks, Community Champions volunteer, whose daughter Sophie suggested VASL as the charity for the school to fundraise for. We really appreciate your support June, and this money will make a positive difference.

Young carers

This VASL project supports under 19s who help to care for a parent or sibling at home. We offer Young Carers regular respite from their caring responsibilities; the chance to be themselves for an evening; and the opportunity to try new things and meet new people.

We run fortnightly evening sessions in Market Harborough, and we try to do about six special events a year. The project is looking for drivers who go with an escort to collect the young people, if you could help please contact Hannah on

07845 789782



The Sainsbury Living Well Index is exploring what it means to live well and how we are really living as a nation. You can take part in the research via the website which has the full report or there is an article in the Guardian search for 'the friend factor Oxford economics'



"The good news is that many of the factors affecting how well we're all living are with-

in our control. Nothing beats the power of simple human interaction. Spending more time with people face to face, rather than communicating via phones, can really help to improve how well we're living.

It was striking to me that something as simple as how often we sit down and share a meal with someone can make a real difference to our wellbeing. We could all feel better if we made more time to get together, eat together and share together." Mike Coupe, Group CEO, Sainsbury's

Diary Dates

If you need transport for Community Gatherings please let us know one week in advance

Weds 30 May 10 – 3.30pm **New Volunteer Training** Torch House, existing volunteers very welcome

to come for a refresher.

Tuesday 5th June 2-3.15 **Community Gathering** The Roebuck, Rockingham Rd, Market Harborough LE16 7XY

Weds 20 June 10 – 12 noon **Stress and You** course Torch House-open to clients and volunteers.

Wednesday 27th June **Volunteers Tea**, Youth Wing Methodist Church, Northampton Road 1.30-3.00pm (volunteers only)



Weds 4 July 10.30 – 11.45 **Community Gathering** MH Golf Club, Great Oxendon Road, Market Harborough LE16 8NB

Volunteers' Week is at the beginning of June, and you will see national publicity celebrating the difference that volunteers make.



There is a website with inspiring stories www.volunteersweek.org.

Here at VASL we will take be hosting a cream tea on Wednesday 27th June 1.30-3.00pm, for volunteers from all the projects.

Kath's volunteering story

Kath saw an article in The Harborough Mail about VASL and was drawn to the Digital Volunteers aspect of Community Champions because her professional background was as an IBM IT Project Manager and she is currently on a career break. She felt motivated to help older people develop their digital skills so that they could email people, research information, download music etc

Kath contacted VASL Community Champions, was interviewed and accepted as a volunteer. She completed Volunteer Training which gave her more information about VASL as an organisation, details about the design of the Community Champions project and key policies such as Safeguarding. Digital volunteers have further training covering learning styles, safety online and ways to encourage clients to get online.

Kath reflects: "My volunteering with Community Champions has really given me a purpose and it is wonderful to meet diverse clients with different needs. I like the flexibility of this volunteering which can be fitted in around my family and other community commitments"

The Digital Volunteers also meet regularly as a peer support group. "Its great that we can ask each other any technical questions or ideas for support" says Kath

One of the ideas from this peer group was for Digital volunteers to share knowledge with each other. Kath ran a one hour workshop about Facebook which attracted excellent feedback.

Kath has seen 5 Digital clients, helping them to access Radio 3/TV on their lap tops, get familiar with an Ipad, start emailing, sending photos etc " I now realise how important the social chat is, as well as the digital help" she says.

Kath and a Digital client were also filmed by BBC East Midlands and appeared on regional television explaining how the Community Champions Digital support works.

Kath has also just agreed to become a Community Champions Steering Group member and will use her practical volunteering experience to give feedback about how the project can evolve to tackle loneliness by empowering older people to build their local connections.