



COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS

GET IN TOUCH Rohini, Jenny, Sam or Denise

9.00—5.00 Monday - Friday

Phone us 01858 439262

Email: champions@vasl.org.uk

Or call in: First Floor, Torch House, Torch Way,

Market Harborough, LE16 9HL

Diary Dates

Community Gatherings, for Project Members only, please call by 9.30am on Mon 25 Mar to book transport

3 April 2.30 - 3.45pm Lubenham Village Hall, Langham Road, LE16 9TE Harborough Movie Makers

7 May 2.30 - 3.45pm The Roebuck, Rockingham Road, MH, LE16 7XY

11 April Dog walk, time tbc Welland Park, non dog owners welcome, contact the office for details.

17 April 10am—12pm Cyber and Fraud Prevention Session Torch House

1 May 2 - 4pm Dementia Friends Session Torch House

Call the office to book places and transport

Volunteer Newsletter

April 2019



Your Local Charity Improving Lives

Changes to Community Gatherings

We have a lovely problem! The Community Gatherings are growing, in October we had 30 people, this month we expected 50! We realise that it can be difficult to hear and move around, even at the larger venues, so we want to try something different for three months starting from May. Each month we will run two Community Gatherings. Both will have speakers, refreshments and the venue will be provided. You can choose which one you would like to attend **but you can't do both**. The difference is that we will only provide transport for the one in the first week of the month. We expect that the new group on the third week might be smaller and quieter, which some people will prefer, but you will have to make your own way to it. We will choose venues within walking distance for a significant number of people and other people might use mobility scooters, share a taxi or drive. We have the Methodist and Community Churches in mind as more people have travelled independently there in the past. People who need transport will continue to be able to access a monthly gathering by bus or car. We want everyone to be able to join a gathering and to enjoy the experience so we will see how it works in May, June and July. Please ask if you have any questions.

Effective Listening

12 people participated in an Effective Listening session led by Linda (pictured), a soul mid-wife. We learnt about the importance of really listening, rather than hearing and the advantages of being listened to – speakers feel validated, have witness to their thoughts and get a chance to order their thinking. We participated in circle time during which each person explained what Community Champions meant to them by bringing in a symbolic object (e.g. photo, keys, notebook, address book) – key themes were connections, friendships, confidence, getting out and community. We discussed the magic power of touch within appropriate boundaries, empowering people to come to their own solutions and the importance of giving people time. Our last exercise was listening for joy. Feedback has been excellent: "I really enjoyed the interaction and listening to people's views. The trainer was excellent and included everyone" "I will use these skills in my volunteering and life" "As usual I had a fabulous time – so inspiring – thank you".



VASL News

3 May 8pm Quiz and Raffle in aid of VASL at the Conservative Club £2 p/p, teams up to 4 people, tickets from Sandy at VASL t: 439260 or Conservative Club 465103.

My Mind Matters workshops available in MH, Kibworth and Lutterworth various dates/times, call Debbie or Sarah for details on MH 411 383 or vasl.org.uk/our-projects/my-mind-matters



We support people and communities to thrive.
The National Lottery Community Fund

Community Champions is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund
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March Gathering

50 people met at Kibworth Golf Club for a Community Gathering (CG). Simon and his team served a variety of delicious cream cakes along with refreshments. Volunteer hosts introduced people to each other and the tables hummed with conversation. Rohini used the microphone and amplifier to introduce our guests:

1. Val Moore from Kibworth Community Library (www.kibworthcommunitylibrary.org.uk) then explained the range of activities that take place there; a book club, tea and chat sessions, author events, games sessions. She encouraged everyone to pop in and try these activities. She also showed people a photo album of past events.

2. Emma Dowman from The Well (thewellkibworth.org) then used paper cups and water to demonstrate how the organisation promoted well-being by being a place to get refreshments, by repairing 'leaks' and by helping people find themselves. She distributed leaflets about an intergenerational group and learning opportunities. We hope you will take up these opportunities to meet new people and try different activities. There are hourly buses to Kibworth (except at lunchtime) from MH, Great Glen and Fleckney. (www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk).

"Its fantastic to get out" said one client " I really love these gatherings – thank you".



Volunteer Event

14 volunteers met with the CC team and Becky, our external evaluator, to reflect on the experience of volunteering with Community Champions. After introductions, volunteers were asked if their volunteering was enjoyable, impactful, connected and balanced. They commented: "I enjoy what I do, I get a lot from it. It's great to put something back in the community and clients are company for me" "My volunteering is fulfilling and interesting. I have learnt a lot about the local community through it" "My client says 'I can talk to you about things I don't share with family and friends'" "I do feel supported – I know I can ring the office if I need any help or information" "The CC team were supportive and helpful when my client developed dementia and I appreciated that".

No one wanted more administrative processes but recognised the CC team need to gather information for evaluation reports to the Community Lottery Fund. Volunteers also made suggestions about improvements – requesting a Dementia Awareness session and speakers from local organisations. Some requested more tailored feedback about their clients. Becky then led a session about 'Supporting Change' including discussion about motivations, readiness for change and volunteers' role in encouraging clients wanting to make changes. We learnt about our emotional and cognitive brains. Evaluations showed volunteers had really enjoyed meeting and networking together. It was agreed that the CC team would organise two volunteer events a year to facilitate this.



Vista Workshop 8 digital volunteers met with Brian and Ian from Vista, to explore ways that technology can help people with visual impairment. The development of voice activated programmes has meant that people can tell the phone to dial a number, dictate emails, or answer questions rather than having to use a keyboard.

We were amazed at a device which clips to the side of your glasses and can identify the face of someone approaching you, if you know them or can describe them and can read labels on tins and packets. Expensive at about £2500 but there are plenty of apps on smartphones and tablets which are free and can make a huge difference. Once it is set up, a phone can read out passages of text if you point the camera at it, or magnify it. Please get in touch if you would like to know more, our VERY patient digital volunteers can help you find out more about various devices. "Thank you for today, it was really interesting. Brian was an excellent speaker and very engaging" "I have signed up to the Be My Eyes app as I thought this was just another way of helping". Follow this link for more details about the app www.bemyeyes.com

Local Info **Young @ Heart** Roman Way Day Centre first Wednesday each month 2.15 -3.45pm friendly gathering for over 60s. Call Richard/Pippa 07577 719839 for details.

Harborough Twenty 12 Lions Band Concert 23 March 2.30pm free, tickets from Bray and Bray Solicitors 51 High St. MH. Call Lesley MH 445238 for details.

MH Methodist Church 13 Apr 7.30pm Choral Society concert and coffee mornings Saturdays and Tuesdays, call MH 463834 for details.

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