



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

GET IN TOUCH Rohini, Jenny, Sam or Denise

9am - 5pm 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

7 Aug 11am - 12.15pm **WITH TRANSPORT** Kibworth Golf Club, Weir Rd. LE8 0LP *Please call by Monday 29 July 9am to book transport*

21 Aug 2-3.15pm **WITHOUT TRANSPORT** Louisa's 4A St Mary's Rd, MH, LE16 7DU

10 Sept 2.30-3.45pm **WITH TRANSPORT** Market Harborough Golf Club, Northampton Rd, LE16 8NB

14 Aug 10am-12pm **Wheelchair Handling Session** Torch House (turn over for more information)

18 Sept 12.30-3.30pm **Volunteer Event** Torch House - details to follow

Call the office to book places and transport

If you have not been contacted with a confirmation of your place on the bus by the day of travel please call us

Volunteer Newsletter

August 2019



Your Local Charity Improving Lives

July Community Gathering

We met on a warm July afternoon at Buttercups Tearoom near Tilton on the Hill to celebrate the Community Champions project second birthday. We celebrated with homemade Victoria sponge dripping with jam and buttercream. A special visitor, Hannah, from The National Community Lottery Fund also joined us and circulated amongst the tables to talk to people about why they were involved in the project and what activities most benefitted them and ideas for improvements. Rohini gave short notices and thanked volunteers, the Community Champions team and tearoom staff for all their help in making the event run so smoothly. Jenny distributed flyers and Sam collected names for future gatherings. There was a steady buzz of conversation about recent trips, the warm weather, project activities, holidays and sports (Cricket World Cup, Women's football, tennis at Wimbledon). For many the highlight of this new venue were the animals in adjoining fields – proud alpacas, a mule, Shetland ponies, horses, cows, sheep and chickens. Some clients went outside and stroked the animals. "I really like this place" said many clients as they left "please can we come back here?" Some plan to return with families for lunch. "It's been really great to talk to different people, it's helped me really understand the project" said Hannah.



Community Gathering without transport



We met at New Horizons coffee shop operated by the Baptist church. The cakes were very good, and service was really friendly. If you're not familiar with this cafe it's just opposite the Co-op in Market Harborough. As it was a small group it was great to have more in depth conversations and be able to spend time with people. We gave some information and notices, then settled back to enjoy our refreshments. The weather held and we managed to get home before the heavens opened again. If you would prefer a smaller group, you might want to join us in August at Louisa's. Feedback included: "I enjoyed this morning. I thought the little groups were much nicer".



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

Community Champions is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund
VASL Registered Charity No. 1141274
Company Registration No. 7517828



Volunteers' Cream Team 50 VASL volunteers from most projects (Community Champions, Young Carers, Transport, Support for Carers, Trustees) came to enjoy a cream tea and company on a warm afternoon. Laughter rang out as volunteers shared their stories, and VASL staff ensured that all had a good supply of drinks, homemade cakes and savoury snacks. VASL Chair, Linda, thanked every volunteer for their contribution "VASL could not do its amazing work without our excellent volunteers. This event is to thank all of you." Linda also praised VASL's amazing staff for their work and baking skills and encouraged volunteers to ask if any of their friends would like to volunteer as VASL drivers. Another volunteer took photos of the happy event.



Local Info **26 Jul 12-2pm** Community Reducing Plastics session Market Harborough Methodist Church Northampton Rd LE16 9HE includes an overview of climate change, the Harborough Plastics Pledge and an interactive session with Jayne Edwards. To book, email by 22 Jul: LALS.HarboroughBS@leics.gov.uk
New website showcasing Harborough District, places of interest, things to do and useful interactive map: www.visitharborough.com. **Free Yoga** Welland Park Saturdays 10-11.15am until 31 Aug, **Walking Netball** Harborough Leisure Centre Tuesdays 7-8pm until 24 Sept £3 p/session. For more details see: www.harboroughsport.org.uk

Boundaries - a reminder **Can we exchange numbers?** No, so you don't receive phone calls which could become a nuisance. If the client wants to cancel, we prefer them to ring us so we can try to encourage them to see you if they are feeling low. We can also keep track of meetings. **What if I can't visit this week?** Let us know, if there's a pattern that the visits aren't regular it may be a sign that the relationship isn't working or times need adjusting. We pass the message on and we normally have a few minutes chat with the client, so they have spoken to someone. **Is it okay to accept or give gifts?** Not everyone is able to buy gifts for financial or physical reasons, save embarrassment by not buying gifts. Sometimes people share flowers or fruit from the garden, a slice of cake or birthday cards. Please refuse anything of value but if it would cause offence let us know. **Is it okay for me to get estimates from the plumber, help with a GP appointment or pick up some shopping on the way?** No, this exceeds the project limits, let us know if the client is asking you to do additional things. **Can I invite the client to my house?** No. If you want the client to visit your home or meet each other's families, you need to become Community Friends, we can arrange this.

Community Gatherings - your view Gatherings are arranged to bring the project community together, enable new connections and then encourage people to arrange their own get togethers. We would like to hear your views on how the gatherings should develop to keep them friendly and safe. Please find attached/enclosed a letter about this with an SAE, seeking your views. We look forward to hearing your ideas.

Wheelchair Handling Workshop Long standing volunteer David Robbins is running this August workshop for us based on his practical experience as a VASL driver. Sharing with us the good practice David has found that works, the aim of the workshop is to enable volunteers and staff to feel confident and competent in supporting people who use wheelchairs. The session will include information on different types of wheelchair, a practice session, 'the 6 P's', a chance to feedback on your own experience and ask any questions. To book in call the office.

Human and Canine Company Some clients who love pets but no longer have one, ask if a volunteer can bring their dog with them. Volunteers commented on what difference a dog at the home visit makes: "The visit is quite relaxing with the focus of the visit on the dog. I get satisfaction that I am helping the client remember good times with beloved pets. The dog needs to have a relaxed character and not be jumpy or anxious around new people." Some volunteers don't like to leave their pet behind and feel it benefits the dog from being socialised, especially clients that like to fuss the dog. Volunteers also commented it might be best to avoid clients with other pets especially cats and that if yours is a 'chilled' dog they are ideal to take along to meet a client. The clients are really positive about having two visitors "I love animals and it's fantastic to see both my volunteer and Lily together – I like stroking Lily. I look forward to her visits". If you have any ideas of how we might involve dogs and other pets in tackling loneliness let us know.

