



Diary Dates

**Community Gatherings for Project Members only**  
**14 Jan 2020 2 - 3.15pm** Market Harborough Golf Club  
**WITH TRANSPORT CALL BY 6 JAN 20 9.30am TO BOOK**

**4 Feb 2 - 3.15pm** Coach and Horses Pub Lubenham **WITH TRANSPORT**

**New! Community Champions Digital Volunteers** Market Harborough Library 8 Jan 10.30am - 12.30pm Lutterworth Library 13 Jan 10.30am - 12.30pm, no transport provided.

**Community Voices** 29 Jan 20 2 - 4pm Torch House, hear amazing life stories from our project community

Call the office 01858 439262 to book places and transport

**YOU WILL RECEIVE A CALL THE DAY BEFORE THE EVENT, BY 4PM, WITH A PICK UP TIME FOR YOUR TRANSPORT. PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED THIS CALL**

**GET IN TOUCH** Rohini, Jenny, Sam or Denise

9am - 5pm Monday - Friday

Phone us 01858 439262

Email: [champions@vasl.org.uk](mailto:champions@vasl.org.uk)

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

## Client Newsletter January 2020



Your Local Charity Improving Lives

Please note VASL will be closed from 24 Dec to 2 Jan

December Community Gathering

We met with students at Welland Academy for mince pies, shortbread and drinks. People chatted about their memories of the school and their Christmas plans. Talented students played their flutes, sang carols and pop songs which everyone really enjoyed. Staff gave out the 2020 project calendars and people giggled at photos of themselves. Thanks to Sharlot and Welland Academy for hosting this special celebration, and all the volunteers and drivers that made it possible. "Thanks again for the lovely gathering. As usual it didn't disappoint. The children did a great job with their hosting and entertainment. I hope we go there again at some point." Such intergenerational dialogue is much enjoyed by all.



Non Transport Community Gathering

A small group met at Sweet Peas teashop and enjoyed delicious homemade cakes and hot drinks served in a vintage setting. The ladies talked about facilities in Market Harborough for older people, the joys and pains of getting older and the importance of being able to go to places on your own. "I just go where I want to go and chat to whoever is around" "You would never do anything if you waited about for people to go with you" agreed another lady. They shared stories of having met the Royal family and politicians "at the end of the day they are all humans!" Two ladies swapped contact details – "It's great to meet new people and hear different stories" said one.



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



## Local Information

**Young@Heart** last Tuesday of each month 2.15 - 3.45pm Harborough Theatre Lounge Call Pippa or Richard M: 07577 719839 **Chair based exercise sessions** £5 Kibworth Grammar School variety of times/days available contact M: 07976 741280 W: michelle-rennie.com for more details

**Moving Together** Dance classes for over 55's - Lutterworth and Market Harborough £5 per session contact E: info@movingtogether.co.uk or M: 07926

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**Silverline 0800 4 70 80 90** This is a **FREE** confidential helpline open 24 hours per day 365 days per year. Christmas can be a difficult time for some people, Silverline offer friendship, help and advice to anyone aged 55 years or over, you can also request a regular friendship call.

## Connecting with the Scouts

We visited Little Bowden Scouts to talk about how Community Champions is tackling loneliness. We met Scouts and leaders to explore how they can help their local community be more inclusive. They have already decorated kindness stones with positive messages and left them around the community for people to discover. We all explained why we are involved with this project. A client said "I really enjoy the Gatherings – it's great to go out to different cafes, chat to new people and catch up with friends". A volunteer explained that volunteering helped him to fill his time "I felt lonely after my wife of 50 years died. It's hard having no one to chat to about daily things. I really enjoy going to visit to my client weekly and I also host a weekly breakfast club where anyone from the project is welcome to join me". The Scouts shared delicious homemade cakes they had made for us, talked about the different badges they had done and the international camps they had been to. "It's been great being around young people again" reflected a volunteer and former Scout leader. "I am so glad I joined in with this event I have really enjoyed talking to the Scouts" said the client. This activity will help the Scouts complete their Community badge. We have also been to 2 more Scout meetings.



## From befriending to friendship

A volunteer and client have been seeing each other for a year but have now decided that they are Community Friends – a fantastic progression. When the volunteer first started visiting the client, the client had a number of personal challenges, was lonely and felt really low. Regular conversations helped him to regain his social confidence and sparkle. He joined the U3A and formed a new electric guitar interest group! "It was brilliant to have the volunteer when I was so low. We get on really well and I am in a completely different place now" reflects the client "the volunteer has been a really good bridge". The volunteer is also positive "I get as much from my visits as my client does – it is a real win-win". Now both volunteer and client have decided that they want to be proper friends, without the boundaries imposed by the Community Champions project. What an inspiring story!

## Steering Group

The Steering Group met recently to talk about project progress and share ideas for improvements. The team gave updates about their work, Maureen gave VASL news and Sandy reported on Transport. "It's amazing how much this project has grown. VASL helps so many people" said one client. After many years volunteering and now having someone visit her a volunteer commented "It's amazing how much difference volunteers make". "I am so impressed and staggered at all the amazing things VASL does" said a community partner "it's great to work with you". We meet a few times a year to give different stakeholders a chance to share their views.