



COMMUNITY  
CHAMPIONS

Diary Dates

**Community Gatherings for Project Members only**  
**4 Feb 2 - 3.15pm** Coach and Horses Pub Lubenham **WITH TRANSPORT CALL BY 27 JAN 9.30AM TO BOOK**  
**13 Feb 2 - 3.15pm** Enigma, Coventry Rd MH **WITHOUT TRANSPORT**  
**5 Mar 2 - 3.15pm WITH TRANSPORT** Kibworth Golf

Course, Weir Rd.

**New! Community Champions Digital Volunteers** will be at Market Harborough Library 5 Feb 10.30am - 12.30pm and Lutterworth Library 10 Feb 10.30am - 12.30pm, no transport provided.

**Community Voices** 29 Jan 20 2 - 4pm Torch House Join us to hear a few of the amazing stories our project community have to tell

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

## Volunteer Newsletter February 2020



Your Local Charity Improving Lives

Please note that the Breakfast Club on Tuesday mornings will now meet at Enigma at 9.30am

**January Community Gathering** 30 clients, volunteers and staff met on a grey blustery January afternoon at Market Harborough Golf Club. Sadly many people had to cancel due to ill-health. "It seems ages since the last meeting. There is so much news to catch up on!" Conversations bubbled as volunteers served drinks and clients tried the mouth-watering cakes. Rohini gave short notices about the Age UK Engage magazine and County Council Loneliness Guide. Sam gave information about the Community Voices event and gathered names for the next Gathering whilst Jenny distributed flyers with local community information. "Thank you all so much for a fabulous time at our gathering. So enjoyed seeing everyone. Feels wonderful to be able to so included. Amazing work. I feel so positive."



**Non Transport Community Gathering** 5 of us met on a rainy afternoon at Louisa's Place in Market Harborough. We had delicious cake with our coffee. Amongst the various interesting conversations we had, it was particularly useful to hear about the services for visually impaired people in Harborough. One of our volunteers also supports the Charity Guide Dogs for the Blind, doing some interesting work with local people. We also discussed our Christmas plans, the awful weather and volunteering generally - it turned out everyone present was volunteering in some capacity. Sam gave out Community Champions calendars and leaflets about services available over the Christmas period for anyone that might need some company when everything else is closed. "It was great to catch up with everyone and see some familiar faces". Next month we're at Enigma, Thursday 13 February.



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

**Tea@Three** Last Sunday of the month 3 - 4.30pm tea, cake, music, quiz, songs call David Palmer 07505 968767  
**Please note Jan session cancelled**  
**Young@Heart** last Tuesday of each month 2.15 - 3.45pm  
Harborough Theatre Lounge Call Pippa or Richard  
M: 07577 719839  
**Open Door** Congregational Church MH 2nd and 4th  
Weds from Feb 2.30 - 3.30pm friendship, tea, chat  
**Age Concern** Lutterworth offer a range of activities tea and chat, seated exercise and more T: Lutt 557116

## Volunteer Christmas Party

50 volunteers from all the VASL projects met on a cold December evening to celebrate another year of volunteering. Staff served drinks and people helped themselves to a delicious buffet. Maureen gave a short speech saying that VASL currently has 163 volunteers providing 21,869 volunteer hours per year!! Conversations and laughter bubbled around each of the tables. The event was enjoyed by all: "Thank you all so much for the great party. It was lovely and I enjoyed it so much. I hope you've all recovered, you deserve a break". "A big thank you to everybody for yesterday evening's party, good food and company, what more could we want."



## Leicestershire Loneliness Guide

The Leicestershire Loneliness Guide was launched at County Hall at an event attended by 80 people from communities across Leicestershire. Noel Singh from Leicestershire County Council had visited a Community Champions event and had incorporated the life experiences and suggestions he gathered that day, into the Guide. Community Champions clients had shared their ideas about how loneliness feels and what activities can help alleviate it. Rohini spoke at the launch event about how all of



VASL's projects help people who face loneliness (e.g. Carers, those with mental health challenges, isolated and older people). Other speakers talked about how to get public participation and how to build a new community. All agreed that tea and cake, listening and safe spaces are essential in building trust! There were also workshops on accessing Lottery funding, maintaining a community building as a hub, Social Prescribing and how to be a resilient community. It was a great networking event and all present committed to promoting the use of the Guide. See [www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/csi/tackling-loneliness](http://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/csi/tackling-loneliness)

## Building Friendships

We have a number of volunteers who visit more than one person for us. One of these volunteers thought the two people he visited separately, might hit it off and both were open to meeting up. The volunteer now goes to pick up his Community Friend and brings her to his current client. The 3 then have a chat before the volunteer leaves the ladies to chat for 45 minutes. In this way the clients are supporting each



other and building their local networks. The volunteer is the "bridge" who has facilitated this new connection. "When I returned I could hear peals of laughter" says the volunteer. His Community Friend says "It does me good to get out and meet others. It's so important to make an effort and go out. I think it's a great idea". The client also confirmed she enjoys the visit. A great win-win! Each person evokes a different conversation. Do you have ideas about how Community Champions can encourage more clients to connect?

## Purr-fect Connection

We know that regular human conversations make people feel valued and connected. Sometimes though, animal company is even more cherished. Recently a male client visited another client with his cat and the lady spent the duration of the visit stroking the cat, which brought comfort and cosiness to both the cat and

lady as the humans chatted. The male client also got pleasure from seeing how valued his cat was. Thank you to everyone involved for making this visit possible.

