



NEWSLETTER

September 2020 | Volunteers

Community Gathering Date

Zoom Community Gathering
Tues 8 Sept 2pm and Weds 7 Oct 2pm

Get in touch if you want to join us. If you have not used Zoom before and need help with joining please let us know and a Digital volunteer will help. There is a theme and small group chats.

Last month...

Clients, volunteers and staff met on Zoom for the August Community Gathering. Jenny reminded us to give everyone a chance to speak. We broke up into small groups to catch up with how everyone was – conversation included the wearing of masks when shopping, walks in the park, garden birds, and the BBC Licence fee.

Rohini shared the sad news about people from the project community who had died and talked about plans for some online workshops about Self-Care and Bereavement.

Maureen O'Malley, VASL Charity Manager shared her experience of appearing on BBC Regional TV news. The cameraman had spent an hour at Torch House filming Maureen talking to the BBC presenter Simon Ward, and getting shots of the surroundings. After editing back at the studio, 11 seconds (!) were broadcast on the evening news, everyone who saw the item congratulated Maureen on a memorable appearance. "A huge thank you for the inclusion in the zoom meeting. Really enjoyed it. Nice to see others and the CC team too" said a client who had joined the Zoom CG for the first time.



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Shared Reading Groups

Leicestershire

Libraries are offering two remote sessions of their Shared Reading Groups each week:

Weds 1.30 - 2.30pm and Thurs 5 - 6 pm. Using either a phone or computer anyone is welcome to participate, contact www.leicestershiresharedreading.org to join, you will be sent zoom or telephone details for your chosen day.



Get in touch...

Rohini, Jenny, Sam & Denise

Mon -Thurs 9am - 5pm,
Fri til 4.30pm

T: 01858 439262

E: champions@vasl.org.uk



1st Floor, Torch House, Torch Way, MH,
LE16 9HL

If you would prefer an **audio version** of the newsletter please let us know.

Coffee Connect with RCC

The Rural Community Council will be visiting Lubenham Village Green on the first two Thursdays of September between 10am and 12pm. Free tea and coffee is available along with the chance to talk to staff about any issues or just come along for a natter. This is an initiative to support rural communities. Emma from the RCC says "Our van is funded by The National Lottery to reach out to those who may be experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation by connecting people over a `cuppa`".



Leicester Befriending Network

Jenny chairs this group of befriending projects. A zoom meeting in August was their first chance to find out how they had been coping during Covid 19. All the projects stopped home visits and began phone calls. We have all been overwhelmed by the number of people wanting to volunteer and have had to find new ways to train them and to make matches. The current situation has been difficult for everyone but many busy people suddenly had to stop and realised how hard it is to be lonely, and resolved to do something about it. "Thank you to all our volunteers longstanding and new, we know that you make a difference" said Jenny.

TV licence news

The BBC has confirmed its decision to remove the TV licence concession from the over-75's. Age UK have issued guidance on how to pay your licence and how to protect yourself from any fraudsters that might try to exploit the situation. Call TV licensing on 0300 303 96 95 for information or help. No one will be visited at home about paying for their licence and you should receive an official letter regarding the new system and how to pay. Age UK guidance can be seen in full at: ageuk.org.uk

Digital News

The digital volunteers enjoy meeting up whenever possible, we are very keen on the idea that between us we can solve most digital problems, and none of us knows everything. But of course meetings at the library or The Angel can't happen, so we have been keeping in touch via zoom.

This time we talked about WhatsApp and how you can use it on a laptop or pc, so long as you have set it up on a smartphone in the first place. This is useful for group video calls as the pictures will be much bigger.

We talked about the anxieties people had initially about zoom and how the upgrades have made it a much safer place to be, and the fact that we always set up meetings to prevent uninvited people joining in.

Alan and Helen have been leading 'mini zooms' and we will continue that twice a month, with four people in each conversation, this is a good way in to using zoom and we can help if you are a beginner.

We can't return to the library or to home visits yet, but if you are stuck and would like some advice over the phone, give me a ring and we will get one of the digital volunteers to give you a ring, they are much better at it than me!

Jenny

Harborough Hygiene Bank

This national volunteer network is developing in Market Harborough. Offering donated toiletries to people living on low incomes they are looking for volunteers to help with a range of tasks including admin, finance and practical help e.g. sorting and distribution. For more details or to donate see: thehygienebank.com or contact Judy the local co-ordinator: judy.rowley@virgin.net

Life and Learning Online

Adult Learning courses are being offered across Leicestershire, online and in class by GoLearn. There are also many activities and resources available online see: W: leicestershire.gov.uk/GoLearn
E: LALS.LWA@leics.gov.uk T: 0800 988 0308

Community Friends

After a volunteer and client have been matched for about a year Rohini contacts them to ask if they feel they have become friends. If they both agree we call them Community Friends. We see this as a real success and it means that people can now develop their friendship outside the boundaries of the project e.g. they can exchange contact details, meet families, swap presents, go on trips etc. Before Covid, Jemma had been visiting Enid and they got on so well that they became Community Friends. During Covid they kept in touch via email, and now that Jemma has had a baby they are exchanging digital photos of Baby George and Enid's blooming plants.

"Enid and I certainly have a unique and special friendship. I can't wait to arrange a proper face to face introduction" says Jemma – what a heart-warming inter-generational link.

Some volunteers and clients do not feel they are friends and would prefer to carry on as a volunteer and client in a formal relationship facilitated by the project – that's fine too. We appreciate that relationships are all different; and that's what makes the project so interesting.

Self-Care Session

Some people have asked about the face to face learning events we used to run and if we have plans to resume them remotely. In response I have arranged a Zoom session about Self-Care which will take place on **Thurs 8 October 2pm**. The facilitator is Stephanie Bradshaw from The Body Shop and topics will include:

- A short talk on the history of the Body Shop,
- Information about their charity work with Children on the Edge
- Talk about some wellbeing and selfcare products she has used during lockdown.

Her personal belief is never save things 'for best' as every day is best! To book a place contact us

E: champions@vasl.org.uk or T: 01858 439262. If you need help with Zoom before the session, let us know as Jenny can arrange for our wonderful Digital volunteers to give you help over the phone so you are Zoom ready before the session.

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