

VASL

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Your local charity improving lives

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018

**A YEAR OF
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



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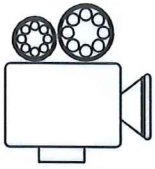


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Registered Charity No. 1141274

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VASL VIDEOS

The visual medium is becoming increasingly important to charities and VASL is no different. Over the last year we have been making videos of our volunteers and clients talking about their lives with VASL. The intention was to use the footage to make one 5 minute film.

We were so moved by some of their stories and the trust they place in us that we made a whole handful!

These are now all on line and a great way of quickly finding out what it is like to volunteer for us or to be someone that uses one of our projects.



It's so much easier now to explain what VASL does and we are so thankful to the volunteers and clients that have made it possible.

Over 2019 we will be making more films for the Support For Carers and My Mind Matters projects, which is really exciting.



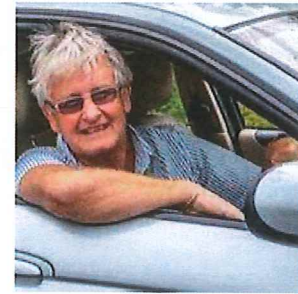
VASL Photography

The other important change in our communications in 2018 is that we now have the rather marvelous **Mike Walter** as a volunteer photographer. He joined us in April 2018 and has been attending various VASL events for us and a lot of his work is in this review. Here is one of our favourite shots!

Kathleen with her CC volunteer Christine

VASL Car Scheme

Supporting our Community when it counts



Sandy, Jo and Ann have a 3 second break from the busy phones in their office...

Car Scheme News

BY SANDY HANDLEY

2018 was an incredibly busy year for our car scheme. Over the year there was an increase in demand for the service and it became very challenging to be able to meet people's needs. We employed one of our volunteer drivers, Pete, (*pictured above*), to work helping us publicise the scheme and attempting to get more volunteer drivers on board. That has been our biggest focus for the year and we have begun to see results for all the hard work.

OUR CAR FACTS

1,817 clients

"I don't know what I'd do without VASL"

**54 volunteer
drivers**

"I really enjoy making such a difference"

**5,686
journeys**

The **mileage** of 90,337 miles equals going round the world 3 1/2 times



Nicky Morgan MP with our Carers Delivery Worker, Gurjit, at Age UK event



Oadby Carers Group at Ullesthorpe breakfast

Support For Carers - a busy and successful year!!

We spent a lot of time during 2018 heavily promoting our service around the County, attending events, Leicester Hospitals, GP's surgeries and networking with other agencies.

It is Leicestershire County Council that fund VASL to deliver the project and now that we have direct access to their staff it has definitely improved the quality of the service our carers now receive.

The new carers assessment process had some hiccups along the way, but we have worked hard to guide carers with it and assessments are being dealt with promptly.

Our team are now completing these forms online for carers, direct into the LCC portal. The figures for LCC have increased 1.5% by end of Nov 2018. The word is also spreading that we complete these assessments and other organisations are now referring people to us for this service.

Our team have enhanced the service we provide to carers, quality being the key. Our referrals have also increased and GP's are now getting on board. We have evaluated our Carers groups and our telephone befriending service; it's been so valuable to capture the comments made and has highlighted exactly why we offer them.

The Support For Carers telephone befrienders have been particularly busy over the last year.

They have supported **103** carers and made a massive **478** hours of phone calls.

It is a great service for carers, who may be isolated, need to get something off their chest or just appreciate a regular call from someone that gives them a break from their caring responsibilities.

Here is some of the feedback we received over the last year.

'I feel very upset at times, but after this call things don't seem so bad. I get so lonely I enjoy a chat with someone who just hears what I say.'

'Cheers me up and we have a laugh. I feel that my caller really does care about me'

'I feel able to talk about mum without feeling guilty, other people don't want to know. I've lost my work friends; they think being at home is alright – doing nothing!!!'



This is Shirley, one of our 19 Support For Carers Telephone Befrienders



During Carers Week in June, Support For Carers ran loads of events, such as our own carers Olympics in Whetstone, a collection for Carers at Fosse Park Sainsbury's, over 100 came to our big event at The Salvation Army in Wigston and we were also featured on Radio Leicester.



We have packed so much into 2018
- 114 active relationships including:

72 new relationships in 2018
66 befriending relationships
28 digital relationships

8 Buddies and community friends
3 Telephone befrienders
9 email/penpal relationships



Visit to No. 10

Rohini was invited to join Neil O'Brien MP for a Jo Cox Loneliness reception at Number 10 hosted by the Prime Minister. VASL then helped Neil organise well-attended Loneliness Summits in Harborough and Oadby.

Pawesome Dog Walks

Sam organised two dog walks involving 11 people and 7 dogs.

The rationale for this is to gather people with similar interests to share their hobby, to enjoy human and canine company and gentle exercise in the fresh air and swap dog related news and tips.

Feedback has been great and more dog walks are planned in the future.



VASL contributed to the national Loneliness Strategy consultation and VASL's work was mentioned in Parliament and recorded in Hansard.

Digital Peer Group meetings –

Jenny has met with Digital Volunteers six times this year to share ideas and discuss how they can improve support for each other and their clients. Digital volunteers have run training about Digital storage and Facebook, attended conferences on Cyber Security and shared practical tips for working with clients.



Mini gatherings –

Sam has organised six mini-gatherings for clients living in villages so that they can meet other people living in rural areas. Accessible transport and suitable venues are arranged and conversation flows over tea and cakes.

Clients have said they value these smaller meetings as they can hear more clearly and its a great chance to try out some different venues.



Community Champions were runners up in the Rural Service awards presented by the Rural Community Council.

MY MIND MATTERS



We started the project to support people experiencing mental health distress and in need of guidance, information and support.

Access to free mental health support is in short supply and our project, which started in October 2017, took off from the start.

We spent a lot of time designing the workshop content and ensuring that the information we put online was truly helpful.

We also started Mental Health and Wellbeing advice drop in sessions twice a month within the Job Centre at Market Harborough.

OUR WORKSHOPS

We have been running variously themed workshops in Fleckney, Kibworth, Lutterworth and Harborough and the feedback has been so encouraging with people telling us that being able to meet and talk to like-minded people about what they are going through, can be life changing.

ONE TO ONE'S

These have proven to be extremely popular and effective. In December 2018 a new member of staff joined the project and we hope that next year we will be able to offer even more.

MMM STATS 2018

Workshops held = 25

In contact with us = 198

Active clients = 59

Funded by :

Call us on 01858 411383

NHS
East Leicestershire and Rutland
Clinical Commissioning Group

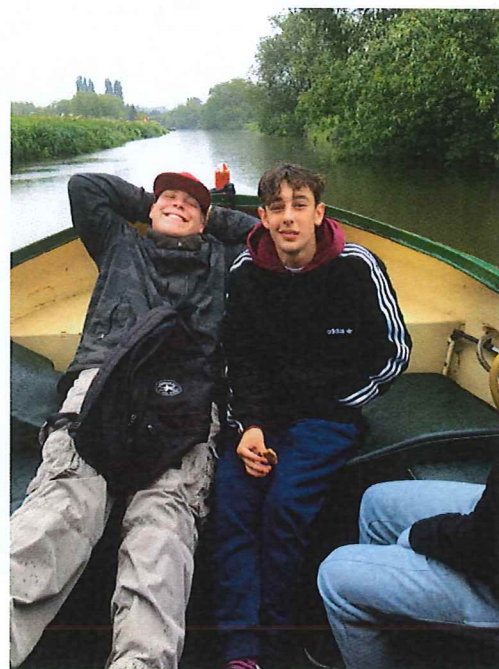
VASL Young Carers Activity Club

For Young Carers between the ages of 11 to 18, a chance to make new friends and have fun outside of their caring responsibilities.

The Young Carer's most high-octane trip of 2018 was definitely going indoor skydiving at Milton Keynes in February half term. Imagine floating mid-air above a giant and very fast hairdryer and you'll have some idea of the sensation. It only lasts 60 seconds but believe us that's quite enough!

In the early summer we did an unusually high number of day trips including a jaunt on a canal boat, a tour of the King Power Stadium and our now-traditional trip to Aquapark at Rutland Water.

In November, we were invited to Nottingham Uni for a Young Carers open day organised by their Widening Participation Team. We did some stop-motion animation, got a tour of the library and a hall of residence, and played softball at the amazing David Ross Sports Village.



Although we are funded by **Children in Need**, any additional donations allows us to put extra trips on. The staff at Erskine Murray kindly raised a massive £ 2,290.42p for us and invited us along to meet staff and present us with a rather large cheque!



Charity Manager: Maureen O'Malley

Thanks to all!

With a New Year dawning, it fills me with pride and a massive appreciation for those that gave their time to support VASL in 2018.

Everyone plays a part in making VASL what it is today - a thriving and surviving local charity, improving people's lives every year.

I want to thank everyone; starting with the Trustee Board who steer the charity and ensure we are compliant, legal and our finances are transparent and used in the most appropriate way.

It's tough working for a charity with the ever present concern around funding and long term job security, yet VASL staff, seventeen dedicated individuals, all work hard and without exception, go that extra mile to support our volunteers and clients.

Of course, most of what VASL provides, wouldn't happen without our teams of volunteers. It never ceases to amaze me how much our volunteers are willing to give in terms of time and commitment.

Huge thanks to our funders; voluntary and public sector bodies that all contribute to the overall funds needed to keep VASL afloat.

At VASL we have made a conscious decision not to rattle tins.

That said, we are always happy accept donations and are regularly chosen by local groups and societies to benefit from their charitable collections.

We don't forget that they have a choice of whom they support and thank them for deciding VASL was the best fit for them.

No doubt 2019 will be challenging and surprising in equal measure and we hope that you will be with us along the way!

With all good wishes,

Maureen xx