



# NEWSLETTER

April 2021 | Volunteers

## This month...

### Zoom Community Gathering

**Weds 7 Apr 11am-12.15pm.** Ellie Franklin Community Recovery Officer from HDC joins us to talk about her role and the Covid Champions

### Zoom Wildlife Drawing Session

**Weds 14 Apr 10-11.30am**

**Zoom Mini Community Gatherings** will be running between **19-21 Apr**, Jenny will be in touch with details or call us to get involved.

Contact CC team to book onto any session.

**Volunteer Help Needed** The CC team are planning to deliver cream teas to clients w/c 21 Apr - when you next speak to them please can you ask if they have dietary preferences e.g., gluten free, vegetarian and when it is best for deliveries to be made, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday that week in the morning (10am - 12 noon) or afternoon (2 - 4pm). Please email this information by 12 Apr to: [champions@vasl.org.uk](mailto:champions@vasl.org.uk)  
Thank you, we appreciate your help.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### VASL Transport

are looking for volunteer drivers to deliver Foodbank parcels and to join the Car Scheme, which is preparing to restart. If you have some time to offer please contact the Transport Manager Sandy Handley for an initial chat: T: **01858 468 499**.

Also available to join are the Covid Health Champions, an initiative from **Leicestershire County Council**. Volunteers will be tasked with keeping their local community up to date with the latest advice and guidance on Covid 19 to ensure residents are getting clear and factual information.

Volunteers will be kept up to date via WhatsApp, or another way if they prefer, on the latest guidance and then share this via their own chosen means with their local communities. Volunteers can give feedback via a monthly online meeting about what works best to support local communities. To register your interest go to: W: [leicestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/how-you-can-help/become-a-covid-19-health-champion](http://leicestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/how-you-can-help/become-a-covid-19-health-champion)

### Get in touch...

Rohini, Jenny, Sam & Denise  
Mon -Thurs 9am - 5pm, Fri till  
4.30pm.

T: 01858 439262

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

Torch House, Torch Way,

MH, LE16 9HL



## March Community Gathering

The March Community Gathering was a busy one with 20 people joining us. After the initial ice breaker from Jenny, there was an opportunity to chat in small groups – topics included the joy of being a Pen Pal, exciting holidays to look forward to, and the challenges of digital connection. Rohini gave short notices, including wishing happy birthday to people with March birthdays and naming people from the CC project community who had died over the last few months. As a community we celebrate happy times together, and support each other during hard times. Our speaker was Kate Scott, Sports Development Officer from Leicestershire and Rutland Sport (LRS) who talked about all the free resources on their website [Irsport.org](http://Irsport.org) along with suggestions of how games could be adapted for people with limited mobility. Free Healthy at Home bags include activity cards, a beach ball, a resistance band, sunflower seeds, a 'Strengths and Balance' booklet and feedback card. LRS have already delivered 1200 and 1000 are packed ready for distribution! If you would like a free bag, please let Sam know and she will arrange delivery. Kate also talked about This Girl Can and the Twilight Games Project taking place in care homes. A video of the UK Postcard Project was shown, including postcards drawn by CC volunteers, which are now part of a digital gallery. Volunteer Helen explained how she helped the project set up a Wildlife Drawing class in April. (W: [wildlifedrawing.co.uk/our-story/](http://wildlifedrawing.co.uk/our-story/)). Volunteer Linda talked about joining the litter-picking Wombles, and Tony informed us about Littercamps. "Thank you all ladies. I so appreciate all the work you do behind the scenes. Really interesting and lovely to see so many faces again. Thank everyone who took part and made a dull damp day a joy."

## Volunteer Zoom Event

21 people (volunteers, CC staff and speaker Ellie Franklin, Harborough District Community Worker) met on Zoom at the CC volunteers meeting. Sam facilitated an ice breaker asking about everyone's favourite biscuit. There was a chance to chat socially in smaller groups, ideas for local walks /cycle rides and cafes were shared. Rohini explained how the CC project had been adapted during Covid restrictions, and signposted old activities that would be resuming, once it was safe to do so, and Trustees were happy for us to proceed – these included our monthly face to face Community Gatherings with accessible transport, Home befriending, Digital sessions at the libraries and home visits, volunteer training and celebrations. Ellie then explained her role which was to help individuals and organisations move out of lockdown, and regain their independence. Practical support she could offer included delivery of food parcels and medication, help with Track and Trace and sharing information about the latest local Covid updates. Rohini agreed to send out links enabling people to register as Covid Champions via email or WhatsApp.



Next Jenny led an interactive session about how CC supports volunteers and encourages self-care. We talked about expectations of volunteering against the reality – most volunteers feedback they found their volunteering really rewarding, although maintaining a conversation when no one was doing much could be challenging. We took part in a poll which showed most people found getting out in the fresh air, or doing physical activity boosted their well-being. There was a reminder about volunteer boundaries, and the supportive role of the CC team. Feedback has been good: “Absolutely loved today. So interesting. Lovely to see our pals and to learn so much from each other and you all. Ellie Franklin is very nice. I had no idea there were people out there doing this...my first port of call is always you all....cant wait to have the digital lessons again....and our first gathering after Covid restrictions end. “Thank you all...so grateful and happy that we have you in our community to help and guide us”.

## Health and Wellbeing Coaches

Some local GP surgeries are offering this new service to support their patients to take control of their own health. Patients can be referred to a coach who will support them to make the changes they need to improve their health and wellbeing. People given health advice to manage a condition or make changes to their lifestyle, often find it difficult to put this into practice. This is where the Health and Well Being Coach comes in. Offering 5 weekly sessions they will help the patient to build the skills and confidence they need to make long lasting changes to their life, to become healthier and feel better. Referrals to the coaches are made through the GP surgeries, ask your surgery for more details.

## Harborough Mail Blog

The VASL

blog is a great way for us to showcase a variety of stakeholder voices e.g., volunteers and partner organisations. Many people have already kindly volunteered to write a blog – the remit is 350 – 450 words, with a photo if possible, talking about your involvement with VASL and linking with community issues. If you are interested in getting involved get in touch with Rohini who coordinates these articles.

## Female Volunteers Required

Community Champions are lucky enough to have new volunteers and clients joining us all the time. However at the moment we do have clients waiting particularly for female volunteers. If you are a female telephone befriending volunteer and would like an extra client please get in touch.

## Fundraising Fun

One of our volunteers involved with another organisation has put together a list of imaginative fundraising ideas along with how to collect the sponsorship or donations raised by doing them. For details on how to get involved in fund raising for local charities get in touch with us and we can forward the details to you.