



COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS

NEWSLETTER

March 2022

Volunteer

This month... Face to Face Community

Gathering Weds 9 Mar 2-3.15pm The Roebuck, Rockingham Road, Market Harborough. Transport available, please call to book by 9am Thurs 3 Mar.

Breakfast Club every Tues 9.15am. Enigma, MH. Just come along, no need to book, buy own breakfast, ask for Dave, usually sitting in the window, all welcome.

Lutterworth Library Digital Session Mon 14 Mar
Appointments available from 10.30am
Market Harborough Library Digital Session Weds 2 Mar
Appointments available from 10.30am

All Face to Face events dependent on Covid.

Zoom Book Club Weds 9 Mar 11am. Join us to discuss a novel on the theme of the family. It can be anything, a romance, thriller, mystery anything which features a family of one kind or another.

Zoom Mini Gathering Weds 23 Mar 2pm. A reminder email with the link will be sent nearer the time.

Call or email Community Champions for details or to book on any session.

Leicestershire Adult Learning Service

Elaine from the Support for Carers team, staffed a VASL information stand at the Leicestershire Adult Learning Service (LALS) Open day in Market Harborough. "It was a good opportunity to talk to a few people about VASL services, give out information and talk to LALS" she said. There are a wide variety of online and face to face learning opportunities available in areas like languages, better mental health and well-being. For more information contact FREE phone **0800 988 0308** or **W: leics.gov.uk/GoLearn.**



Knitting for the Jubilee VASL is the nominated charity for this project asking people to knit or crochet red, white and blue squares to decorate Harborough Market with Union Jack flags for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. **Craft-I-trims**, a stall at the market, is available for purchasing wool and also offer free lessons on **Thursdays 10am - 12 noon**, to learn to crochet and knit, if you want to take part. See Fb: **Craft-I-trims-Market-Harborough** for details.



Get in Touch... Rohini, Jenny, Sam & Denise. Mon -Thurs 9am - 5pm, Fri till 4.30pm. T: 01858 439262
E: champions@vasl.org.uk
Torch House, Torch Way, MH, LE16 9HL



VASL
INCLUDE • INVOLVE • ENRICH

February Community Gathering

19 people met at the Market Harborough Golf Club for the first face to face Community Gathering of the year. Introductions were made and refreshments served. People chatted about health challenges, family news, outings to London and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Rohini gave short notices and thanked the Harborough Community Bus drivers for transporting everyone safely. She also thanked the CC volunteers for hosting the tables, Emma and her team at the Golf Club for delicious cakes and the CC team (Denise, Sam and Jenny) for their patience in making all logistical arrangements. There was lots of positive feedback: "It's so lovely to be out meeting up with people again"; "I enjoy the bus journeys through the town." "Thank you so much for organising these events for us." "What a happy bunch you have there" said a golf club user "well-done."



Health+ Volunteer Opportunity

This project aims to support older people to access their GP and other health services online. They are recruiting volunteers to build patient's confidence and digital skills, helping them to use apps and websites to book appointments, join groups and much more. For information call Caroline Pepper **M: 07715 078735** or email them at: **E: healthplus@reachingpeople.co.uk**

Free Online Talks and Events

National Charity Independent Age has partnered with Mirthy, a company offering events and workshops, to give free access to 100's of online sessions for 3 months. Contact Community Champions to sign up via the email we have been sent: **E: champions@vasl.org.uk**

Conversational Skills

8 people, a mix of volunteers, clients and VASL staff joined facilitator Wendy for an interactive session about improving our Conversational Skills. We learnt that humans are wired for storytelling, and that every conversation is an opportunity to share a story. The magic ingredients that lead to good conversations are people who listen well, show genuine interest, are aware, concise, ask open questions and are themselves. We learnt that when we are given proper attention we feel heard and respected. Everyone contributed their experiences to the conversation, we had tears, laughter and everything in between. We discussed how communication has changed, with mobile phones and predictive texting and the advantages and disadvantages of zoom chats, telephone calls, letter writing and face to face contact. People reflected about how they would use their learning: "I will be aware about not jumping in to fill silences." "I will listen more to people in phone calls." All liked the facilitator: "Very good, relaxed and encouraging"; "excellent, modelled good conversational skills"; "Used good graphics." People also made suggestions about other things that could be included in future sessions. "Thank you so much, I really enjoyed my first face to face event."



Volunteer Party

The postponed Volunteers party took place at Louisa's where 21 volunteers, staff, VASL Chair of Trustees and a Steering Group member from Harborough District Council met. People chatted about their volunteering experiences, holiday plans, local issues and Covid changes. Linda, Chair of Trustees thanked the volunteers for their efforts in tackling loneliness, which had increased through the pandemic: "We could not deliver this project without you, volunteers are essential." Rohini thanked volunteers for their time and energy and encouraged all to celebrate 3 years further Lottery funding, a fantastic achievement in the current funding climate. Everyone enjoyed the event: "A huge thank you for yesterday. Wonderful to see people again and have a natter. Loved it." "It was a lovely event, thanks to the team for organising it." "I just wanted to thank you all, the venue was superb as was the food and drinks. I really enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with some of the other volunteers."



Travelogue part 5

After our (family pictured below) in the Camargue, we thought it would be a great idea to turn towards home and gradually wind our way through France towards the ferry. We stuck to this plan for one whole day before we realised that the weather forecast was awful. We got soaked to the skin in the (admittedly very picturesque) medieval citadel of Carcassonne and realised that we needed a change of plan (in addition to a change of clothes!). After a quick google of the weather forecast, we turned around and headed south across the Spanish border. We still had ten days or so before we had to get on a ferry so we thought a bit of winter sunshine would be just what we needed before the long journey home. We had never

been to Catalonia before, let alone in the winter, but we had a fabulous time exploring the mountains and wild coastline in the sunshine. One of the strangest things we found out about was the Catalan tradition of building human towers or castells. We were lucky enough to see the students from the University of Girona



showing off their skills. By climbing up backs and balancing on shoulders, Catalonians stack their bodies on top of each other until one person clambers to the pinnacle. They then reverse the process and try to deconstruct their tower without it collapsing. It looks like a random process but we were assured that everyone had their specific place in the tower, the biggest and strongest at the bottom and the lightest and most agile at the top. For a spectator, it was fascinating and alarming in equal measure. Eventually we had to turn for home, before too many Covid-related travel restrictions were necessary. We would love to continue our European adventures. We hope to see what 2022 brings and report back!



Scams Update

Local police are warning that fraudsters are calling residents pretending to be from their bank or the police, stating there is a problem with an account. The scammers then send a courier to their house to collect valuables or cash. See **W: [leics.police.uk/advice](https://www.leics.police.uk/advice)** or call Action Fraud **T: 0300 123 2040** for information and support.