



GET IN TOUCH Rohini, Jenny, Sam or Denise
9.00—5.00 Monday - Friday
Phone us 01858 439262
Email: champions@vasl.org.uk
Or call in to First Floor, Torch House,
Torch Way, Market Harborough LE16 9HL

Client Newsletter March 2019

VASL Your Local Charity Improving Lives

Diary Dates

Community Gatherings, for Project Members only, please call by 9.30am on 25 Feb to book transport

5 March 2.30 - 3.45pm Kibworth Golf Club, Weir Rd, LE8 0LP Talks: Emma - The Well, Valerie - Libraries

3 April 2.30 - 3.45pm Lubenham Village Hall, Langham Road, LE16 9TE
Harborough Movie Makers

20 March 10am - 12pm **Fraud and Cyber Prevention Information Session**
Torch House, Conference Room

Call the office to book places and transport

February Gathering

We met at The Roebuck for the February Community Gathering. Volunteer hosts made sure that everyone had a drink. Cakes and flapjacks were on each table. There was a lively hum of conversation as new introductions were made, people swapped news about family and volunteer visits. Rohini used a microphone to wish everyone Happy Chinese New Year and gave short notices reminding everyone to book for the next Gathering. She also encouraged all to go to community activities run by Leicestershire Libraries and a new social group started by Christ Church (see flyer). The focus on Year Two of the Community Champions project is to encourage people to expand their social networks by getting involved with local clubs that appeal to them. Rohini asked all for feedback about new groups they join. New connections were made - some people discovered that they were going to be new neighbours. Feedback included: "So enjoyed my time with you all today. Great crowd...wonderful feeling of 'some body cares'.... lovely to meet new people and chat. Thank you so much". Some people fed back they have joined the library since the talk last month.



Mini-gatherings Update

A small group of us started to meet every other month in the villages around Harborough as some people had found it hard to get to the Community Gathering or found it too loud. We've now found that everyone that attended now comes to the main gathering so this smaller group will no longer be running. Thank you so much to everyone that came along and to all the volunteers who helped transport, support and host.



Community Champions is funded by the
National Lottery Community Fund
VASL Registered Charity No. 1141274
Company Registration No. 7517828



Community Pet Support Scheme

A pet companion scheme is now offered in Harborough District. Pet owners suffering from social isolation will be able to apply to Leicester Animal Aid for assistance with pet related tasks. Businessman and charity patron Barrie Stephen said: "Animals are a bridge for people suffering social isolation, including many of the older generation". VASL has welcomed the news and are set to refer their clients to LAA. Anyone wanting more information can contact 01455 888257 or info@leicesteranimalaid.org



A fast journey to friendship

Candi and Diana were introduced in October 2018 as a Befriending relationship. Both have had fascinating local and international jobs and are interested in global travel, local events, history, dancing, reading, music and their families. Candi has been visiting weekly on Monday afternoons and the conversation just flows. Initially visits were about an hour long but now they can be almost 3 hours long! "Its amazing how well we connect" said Candi "we talk about so many different topics and the time just flies". "I really look forward to her visits" said Diana "they have made a really big difference to my life". Candi and Diana are now **Community Friends** – they still belong to the project community but have a real friendship outside of the project so can swap numbers and do not need to report on their visits. "It's fantastic that this match worked so well" said Rohini "it's a win-win-win for the client, volunteer and project".



Local info **Young @ Heart** Roman Way Day Centre first Wednesday each month 2.15 - 3.45pm relaxed friendly gathering for over 60s. Call Richard or Pippa 07577 719839 for details

Joan's Coach Outings daytrips throughout the year, call Jill Mann 01858 461572 or Sandra Ward, 01858 410224 for details

NGage Social Drop in, The Cube Symington Rec Ground St Mary's Road Thursdays 1-3pm games/chat, refreshments 60p call Nic 07534 263093 for details

Celebrating Volunteers VASL volunteers recently attended the Leicestershire County Council Chairman's dinner. This is held to thank all volunteers from across the county. Alan (pictured with Kim) reported "We were greeted by the Chairman, Mr Ozzy O'Shea and his wife and given drinks, in the beautiful setting of Beaumanor Hall and its extensive gardens. He then gave a short speech thanking Volunteers from all over Leicestershire, whom he totally supports in his term of office. A buffet lunch was then served and we had the chance to network with other volunteers".



New Volunteers 11 people attended new volunteer training in January – a nice mix of people who want to become telephone volunteers, Pen pals and Community Champions visiting people at home. Feedback was excellent: 'Communication was clear and confident – I learnt a lot'. 'Great delivery with full engagement and interaction'. 'Enjoyable day, good content, well-presented'. We also had a suggestion about giving people more information about the project before the training which we will action. We are now matching all these enthusiastic new volunteers. Our next volunteer training will be on Weds 10 April – please tell us if you know of other people who would like to become volunteers.

