



The Community Networking Forum for South Northamptonshire

**NOTES OF MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2011
AT 1.00 PM IN THE MEETING ROOM, SNVB**

Present: Bex Mezzo – Alzheimer’s, East Midlands
Les Rolfe – South Northamptonshire Council
Paula Wray – Northamptonshire LINK
Clare Findlay – NCC Portage Service, Adult & Children’s Services
Sara Robinson – Bromford Support
Karen Roberts – Extended Services, Salcey Cluster
Jenny Richardson – Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB)
Rosemary Blake – RCV Northamptonshire
David Gaughy – NCC, Riverside Resource Centre

SNVB Staff: Melanie Bignell
Amanda Harris
Gillian Baird (minutes)

Apologies: Felicity Drake – Northamptonshire Sport
Tracey Davidson – Vision Café
Alexis Rich – Northamptonshire Skills & Learning Consortium
Justin Donne – Prince’s Trust
Lyn Ashford – Service Six
Sue Feasey – Home-start
Paula Taylor – Magdalen Cluster

1. Arrival and Informal Networking

Melanie welcomed everyone to LinkUp.

2. Welcome and Introducing New Members

Those present briefly introduced themselves.

3. Amanda Harris – School of Life Co-ordinator, snvb

3.1 Amanda Harris introduced herself as snvb’s School of Life Project Co-ordinator outlining the main focus of the project, as a skills exchange programme between younger and older people, involving the under 25’s and the over 50’s age group.

Amanda informed the group of some of the activities planned for the forthcoming year, including the “Knit a Square” challenge, which aims to encourage knitting in the under 25’s age group across the whole of Northamptonshire. All the squares knitted will then be collected and made into a large wall mural for display.

The iTea and Biscuits project will take place on 24th September 2011 between 10.00am and 3.00pm in Towcester Library. This is a free event where young volunteers will help the over-50's to get to grips with the use of their laptops, cameras and mobile phones. This event ties in with AgeUK and Digital Unite's iTea and Biscuits week. Amanda requested that anyone interested in taking part should contact her to register for the event. It was noted that BT had donated a number of giveaway items including memory sticks and a flip camera for the free prize draw taking place on the day.

Amanda also gave details of a Creative Arts project in which a professional artist, Shashi Chana has volunteered to give two days in the October half term holiday to run an art project, exploring a number of different mediums such as glass painting and ceramics. The items created will then be displayed at the Sponne School Christmas Fair.

Amanda mentioned some ideas for other potential projects such as music projects, a dance group, quilting skills and possibly even an outward bound course.

A discussion then ensued regarding various organisations that may be able to offer support for such activities. Amanda informed the group of In Kind Direct, which is an organisation that redistributes surplus goods from manufacturers and retailers to UK charities working at home and abroad. Registration with this organisation is free and further details are available on their website www.inkinddirect.org.

During the discussion, it was noted that CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) offered free training to professionals on how to keep children and young people safe online. Their website is www.ceop.police.uk

Anyone wishing to find out more about the School of Life Project should contact Amanda Harris on 01280 841250 or 07546 404883, or via email on Amanda@snyb.org.uk. Further details on the project are also available on the snyb website www.snyb.org.uk.

4. Information Exchange

4.1 Karen Roberts of Extended Services informed the group that she was working on the forthcoming Art Project, where South Northants Homes were bringing a group of tenants together with pupils from Roade Primary School to participate in the project. It was hoped that this would create a good relationship between the two groups which might also benefit the gardening club. Karen also mentioned the other activities that she had been involved in relating to the School of Life project, including a cookery school and the cookery recipe collection that had been produced as a result of the different generations working together.

It was noted that any organisation offering services and activities for the under 25 age group or for parents of the under 25's can register their details with the Families Information Service (FIS). They can be contacted on 01604 367935 or via email on fis@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

Karen can be contacted on kroberts@ews.northants.sch.uk.

4.2 David Gaughy of Riverside Resource Centre introduced himself and briefly outlined the work of the Centre, which seeks to integrate adults with learning difficulties into the community. David stated that he was awaiting news of potential funding for a proposed gardening project and that Riverside already ran an outreach project in Daventry, where it was hoped to expand the gardening side of this project.

Karen Roberts suggested that links could be forged with local schools and there could be opportunities for tending school gardens during the school holidays.

Other suggestions included applying to South Northants Homes Community Fund for potential funding, approaching local Scout and Guide Groups regarding help with fundraising and contacting Northampton Volunteer Centre and Daventry Volunteer Centre, both of whom already have similar schemes in place and may therefore be able to give valuable advice.

David's email is dgaughy@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

4.3 Clare Findlay of NCC Portage Service outlined the work of the Portage Service, which is a countywide home visiting service offering teaching, support and advice to families with pre-school children with special needs. Clare stated that the Service had 70 portage visitors throughout the county and a large number of volunteers who supported the Service. The Portage Service is a part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team at Northamptonshire County Council and provides support until the children reach pre-school age.

Clare can be contacted via email cfindlay@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

4.4 Jenny Richardson of Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB) explained that NAB was now working differently and had become more community orientated. Workers are now area based and Jenny supports visually impaired people in the South Northants and Daventry area of the county. Jenny stated that she was in contact with Age Concern regarding concerns over the social side of life for visually impaired people living in rural areas, where isolation is a major problem.

Jenny's email address is jenny@nab.org.uk.

4.5 Rosemary Blake of Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers Northamptonshire informed the group that RCV give people with a physical disability the opportunity to enjoy leisure or learning activities. Rosemary recruits volunteers over the age of 17 to assist disabled people with the leisure activities of their choice. Rosemary confirmed that the organisation was undertaking a large volunteer recruitment drive at present and would be providing a volunteer training course in October 2011.

Discussion ensued regarding the problems of transport for isolated people living in rural areas.

For further information on the work of RCV Northamptonshire, Rosemary can be contacted via email: rosemary.blake@rcv.org.uk.

4.6 Bex Mezzo introduced herself as the Volunteer Officer for Alzheimer's East Midlands and explained that the organisation supports people caring for Alzheimer's sufferers, as well as supporting the sufferers themselves. Bex gave an overview of the "Singing for the Brain" Group for people with dementia and their carers – it was felt that singing provides a way for people with dementia to express themselves and socialise. She also outlined the benefits of Dementia Cafes, which helped carers feel less isolated and gave them contact with people who understand the pressures of caring for people with dementia.

Further information is available from Bex: Rebecca.mezzo@alzheimers.org.uk and the Alzheimer's website: www.alzheimers.org.uk.

4.7 Les Rolfe introduced himself as Financial Services Inclusion Officer at SNC, which is a post that is part funded by South Northants Homes to promote and improve financial capabilities of people struggling to manage their finances. The main project currently involves working with Northampton Credit Union to extend the Credit Union into the South Northants area. This would give affordable access to credit for people on low or fixed incomes.

Les confirmed that he would also be working on setting up a Financial Inclusion Partnership within the district. His contact details are: les.rolfe@southnorthants.gov.uk

4.8 Paula Wray informed the group that Northamptonshire LINK would be changing its name to HealthWatch from October 2012. The organisation is responsible for ensuring people's views are heard regarding issues with health and social care across the county.

Paula drew attention to their forthcoming Open Day held in conjunction with East Midlands Ambulance Service. It will be held on 13th October 2011 from 9.30am – 1.30pm at Northampton Saints Rugby Ground and places can be booked by calling 0116 286 9378 or emailing gulnaz.katchi@emas.nhs.uk.

Further information on the work of Northamptonshire LINK is available by emailing Paula on paula-wray@northamptonshire-link.org.uk.

4.9 Sara Robinson of Bromford Support informed the group that traditionally Bromford Support had visited people in their own homes to offer support, but they had recently started to hold regular drop-in sessions at Towcester Library on the first Friday of every month between 10.00am and 2.00pm. They are also holding a drop-in linked with the Towcester Job Club in Towcester Town Hall on the first Tuesday of every month between 11.30am and 1.30pm and a drop-in at the Brackley Job Club on the middle Thursday of every month between 10.00am and 12.00 noon in Brackley Town Hall.

Sara also stated that Bromford Support had recently started a walking group which meets fortnightly and it was suggested that Colin Hull from SNC may be a useful contact, as he organises regular health walks in South Northants. Colin can be contacted via email: colin.hull@southnorthants.gov.uk or further information is on the website: www.southnorthants.gov.uk.

Sara can be contacted on sara.robinson@bromford.co.uk.

- 4.10** Mel Bignell from snvb outlined details of a new project called Shared Reading, which offers a chance to listen to reading, read aloud if you want to and join in a discussion regarding the literature. The reading groups meet in care homes, day centres, schools and work places. Further information is available from Jenny on 01327 353321 or via email: reading@snyb.org.uk.

Mel also briefly informed the group of another new project which would be starting in the New Year called Village Networks which seeks to improve services in rural communities in South Northamptonshire. The project will require input from service providers to promote their services in the villages. The project will also have a minibus available to offer transport to residents in rural communities.

5. Date of Next LinkUp Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 15th December at 1.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 14.20pm.