



The Community Networking Forum for South Northamptonshire

**NOTES OF MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th MARCH 2017
AT 1.00 PM IN THE MEETING ROOM, SNVB**

Present: Karolina Zalewska - VOICE (Speaker)
Marion Turner – Granpart
Sheila Hartgrove - Granpart
Rachel Cave – NAB
Alison Sedgwick – Livability

SNVB Staff: Mel Bignell (Chair)
Richard Tomalin
Lorraine Salmons
Gillian Baird (Minutes)

Apologies: Vickie Zielinski – SNC/CDC Councils
Nick King – snvb Village Networks
Karen Bricknell – snvb School of Life

1. Arrival and Informal Networking

Mel welcomed everyone to LinkUp.

2. Speaker: Karolina Zalewska, Support Worker – VOICE

Karolina introduced herself to the group and explained that she is a support worker at the VOICE Partnerships and Volunteering Team. It was noted that VOICE is linked to Victim Support and is funded by the PCC. Karolina explained that VOICE provides a free, confidential support service to anyone affected by crime in Northamptonshire. She commented that the organisation has links with the Police but works independently of them. It was noted that VOICE is part of Victim Support and is organised to provide a single point of contact for clients.

Karolina explained that there were approximately 30 members of staff in the organisation and she is one of the three members of the Partnerships and Volunteering Team. VOICE also has a Witness Care Court Team who provide updates on the progression of cases, supporting victims and witnesses throughout the process and beyond.

Karolina commented that VOICE provide support with the psychological impact of crime on both victims and witnesses, working in partnership with other organisations such as the Police, Councils, GPs and Social Workers. They can offer emotional support for as long as the client needs. As well as offering listening and practical support, they can commission services such as counselling and advocacy.

Karolina stated that VOICE can offer support to crime victims regardless of whether they have reported the crime to the Police. People can self-refer to VOICE or can be signposted from other organisations. She confirmed that VOICE can liaise with the Police to obtain updates, but do not pass information from the victim on to the Police.

Karolina explained that the volunteers at VOICE usually receive four days training, but they require further training if they progress onto assisting victims of serious crime.

In response to a question, it was noted that volunteers gave 2-3 hours per week on average, but this was very flexible depending upon the case the volunteers were involved with. VOICE is open Monday – Friday from 8.00am – 8.00pm and 9.00am – 5.00pm on Saturdays.

Karolina confirmed that volunteers are supplied with mobile phones for their work with VOICE and their telephone numbers are not made available, as contact is usually through the office in the first instance.

In response to a question, Karolina confirmed that she is employed by Victim Support, but VOICE is an umbrella organisation for Victim Support and was set up by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2014.

The team from VOICE attend events to raise awareness and have literature in public places such as libraries, doctors surgeries, etc. Information is also available on their website (detailed below).

As well as offering support for current cases, it was noted that VOICE also support victims of historic abuse. Karolina explained that it is important to realise that the impact of crime varies dependent upon the person involved.

Karolina mentioned the Road Harm service, which supports people affected by Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) and those struggling to come to terms with the impact of this. VOICE also have specially trained experts who can offer support to young people and children as young as 3 years old.

Alison asked whether the service was accessible for people with learning disabilities and Karolina confirmed that VOICE works with all victims and can access help from other organisations to enable them to assist everyone.

In response to a question, Karolina stated that Victim Support have the contract and provide the funding for VOICE until September 2017, when the Police and Crime Commissioner will take over the funding of the service.

Karolina closed by saying that in the last year, VOICE had provided support to 14,699 people; made over 20,000 telephone calls supporting victims and provided almost 3,000 hours of practical support.

Further details are available via the website www.voicenorthants.org or by contacting Karolina and the Team on 0300 303 1965 Option 2 or by email karolina.zalewska@victimsupport.org.uk.

3. Information Exchange

- 3.1 Marion Turner of GranPart introduced herself to the group and explained that she had set up GranPart as a self-help support group for grandparents who were denied access to their grandchildren for various reasons.

Marion confirmed that the group has been running for approximately 15 months in Northamptonshire and they meet monthly at Manning Watts House in Harpole. Grandparents can meet to share their experiences and gain support in an informal setting, and can listen to occasional guest speakers from organisations such as Mind and the Samaritans.

Marion confirmed that she and other members of the group had attended the recent Lobby Day at Westminster, with the aim of raising awareness amongst politicians of the need to recognise the rights of grandparents. She is also advertising in magazines and attending events during the summer to raise awareness of GranPart. Information about the group is also advertised in snvb's ebulletins/newsletters.

Marion explained that she is actively fundraising for the group and has received funding from Shenley PC, Milton Keynes Community Foundation (she also runs a group in Milton Keynes) and Bugbrooke PC, as well as taking part in the Waitrose Green Token Scheme. It was noted that following support from Mel, snvb's Development Worker, Marion was awarded funding of £2,000 from NCF.

Mel informed the group that South Northants Homes have recently re-launched their grant programme offering funding of up to £500.

Marion's contact details are marion.turner@granpart.co.uk ; telephone 01604 830070 and details are also available on the website www.granpart.co.uk.

- 3.2 Rachel Cave of Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB) explained that she is the Volunteer Co-ordinator covering the South Northamptonshire area and Northampton town. Rachel confirmed that NAB is based in Northampton but covers the whole county. Clients of NAB can be self-referred, or referred by their GPs or the Hospital Eye Department.

She stated that NAB provides a variety of services and aids for clients, as well as offering emotional support where necessary. NAB has a community team to visit clients in their own homes, with the aim of reducing isolation and loneliness. They also run social groups to take clients to social events.

Rachel currently has over 300 volunteers on her books, covering all aspects of volunteering for NAB, including volunteer drivers, the talking books service, home visitors/befrienders and Charity Shop volunteers. Rachel commented that there are over 3600 people registered blind/visually impaired in Northamptonshire.

Mel informed the group that one of NAB's clients, Harriett, had recently undertaken some case studies for snvb and now regularly attends the snvb offices to teach braille to other visually impaired students. Mel commented that this has significantly boosted Harriett's confidence.

Further information about NAB is available from Rachel via email

Rachel@nab.org.uk or by visiting the website www.nab.org.uk

- 3.3** Alison Sedgwick informed the group that Livability is a National Christian Charity, providing home-based support for adults with physical and learning disabilities, ranging in age from 18 – 75 years old. They offer all aspects of care and community support, including personal care, help with finding voluntary or paid work and signposting to further education opportunities.

The programme operates in Northampton, Daventry, Kettering, Wellingborough and the South Northants area, as well as Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Livability have an office and a Day Care Service in Brackley as well as five residential houses offering 24 hour care in Northamptonshire.

Alison stated that Livability now have another property in Brackley housing 7 people who are supported by the service, and a training flat.

Alison commented that clients from Livability also really enjoy working on the snvb Garden Buddies project, where volunteers undertake gardening work, under the supervision of the project worker, for people who are unable to tend their own gardens.

Livability are always looking for more volunteers to help deliver the service.

Further information on the work of Livability is available on by contacting Alison asedgwick@livability.org.uk or via the website www.livability.org.uk

- 3.4** Lorraine Salmons explained that she is the Volunteer Co-ordinator at snvb and anyone looking to recruit volunteers for their organisation can contact Lorraine on 01327 358264 or email her lorraine@snvb.org.uk.

- 3.5** Mel Bignell explained that snvb is the Local Infrastructure Organisation for South Northamptonshire and is funded by South Northants Council (SNC) to deliver these services. Mel is also an accredited funding advisor and so is qualified to help groups with funding applications.

snvb also produce fortnightly e-bulletins and bi-monthly newsletters containing the latest local news for the voluntary and community sector. Anyone wishing to promote their organisation or events in this way can contact Richard at snvb via email richard@snvb.org.uk or by calling 01327 358264.

Further details of all snvb's projects and activities, including Brackley Area Volunteer Car Service, Village Networks, School of Life, Garden Buddies, Charity Crafts and the volunteer brokerage service, can be found on the website www.snvb.org.uk or by calling the Towcester Volunteer Centre on 01327 358264.

4. Date of Next LinkUp Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 14th June 2017 at 1.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.15pm.