



The Community Networking Forum for South Northamptonshire

**NOTES OF MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th June 2017
AT 1.00 PM IN THE MEETING ROOM, SNVB**

Present: Louise Mullen – Medical Detection Dogs (Speaker)
Julie Luvaglio – NHFT/NHS
Karolina Zalewska - VOICE
Rachel Cave – NAB
Karen Cooper – SNC
Debbie Larkins – British Red Cross

SNVB Staff: Richard Tomalin (Chair)
Lorraine Salmons (Minutes)

Apologies: Sally Munday-Webb – Brackley Town Hall Restoration Project
Nick King – snvb Village Networks
Karen Bricknell – snvb School of Life
Gillian Baird - snvb

1. Arrival and Informal Networking

Richard welcomed everyone to LinkUp.

2. Speaker: Louise Mullen, Volunteer Co-ordinator – Medical Detection Dogs

Louise introduced herself to the group and explained she has recently begun employment as Volunteer Co-ordinator and is currently supporting and managing 571 nationwide volunteers, which include 10 regional support groups; these groups decide their own ways to Fundraise and organise their own events with support from headquarters, there is a group in Northamptonshire. Louise said that they are looking to establish a national network of groups, and that the charity has about 400 corporate organisations as supporters including M&S.

Louise informed the group that the charity began in 2008, saying that for many years stories had been appearing around the world from people, reporting that their pet dogs could smell cancer.

Louise explained the research area of the organisation the Bio Detection Dogs are trained to identify the odour of cancer from breath or urine samples, they do not detect cancer on people. The cancer dogs have the capacity to provide 2nd line diagnostic support for cancers that are difficult to diagnose reliably such as prostate cancer. There is also continuing research to assist scientists into the development of electronic systems that mimics a dogs nose to assist in the early detection of cancer through cheap non-invasive tests, and additionally looking

into the possibility that the dogs can detect a number of other cancers and diseases including: Bowel cancer, Malaria and Parkinson's Disease.

Louise said the other area of the charity the Medical Detection Dogs are trained to help people with life-threatening health conditions e.g. Diabetes, by identifying odour changes associated with their conditions and alerting them to an impending medical emergency, either by sitting up & barking or jumping up onto the persons shoulders about 20/30 minutes before a potential hypo so the person can take action, the dogs are also trained to fetch kit bags.

Richard asked what volunteering roles were available. Louise replied that there are many roles including, Collection Box Coordinators, Leaflet Distributors, Puppy Socialisers, Regional Support Coordinators, Drivers (to collect/pick up samples, clients and their dogs to and from the centre). Louise added that they have 52 paid staff, including dog trainers. Lorraine informed the group that the appropriate volunteer forms had been sent to Louise to enable promotion of the roles; Louise replied that she would pass details of all the roles to Lorraine after the meeting.

Karen asked if GP's supported the charity, Louise replied that they are presently contacting surgeries and have contacts within MK University Hospital and some London hospitals. Debbie asked if people can self-refer, or if they are referred by their GP. Louise confirmed that people can self-refer by application form, and once the completed application is received the waiting list is between 18 months and 3 years, depending on individual requirements and the severity of the medical condition. The Dogs that are placed with children who have chronic life threatening health conditions, are known as 'Team Dogs'. Louise added that Medical Detection Dogs are accredited by Assistance Dogs UK, Assistance Dogs International and Assistance Dogs Europe, and currently there are 78 dogs placed throughout the country.

Louise informed the group that they have now outgrown the space at the Great Horwood headquarters and have been granted planning permission to add more buildings; Louise referred to the Fund the future page on the website for details.

Karen asked where the dogs come from. Louise replied that Dogs can be donated by members of the public, breeders, other assistance dog charities, (often Guide Dogs) and rescue centres. They are initially tried as Bio Detection Dogs working for about 20mins a day for a positive reward. Training can take between 5/7 months though often they can tell within 3/4 weeks whether a dog is suitable, so far only 2/3 dogs have had to be re-homed. Louise stated that the Charity receive no government funding and rely entirely on donations from Trusts and the public.

Lorraine asked what breed of dogs are used. Louise replied all dog breeds have the capability, dogs are mostly a mixture of Labradors and working spaniels, though any breed has the potential to be trained if under three years old. Louise continued that sometimes a pet dog that is showing signs of alerting its owner to a particular condition can be considered for own-dog training if less than three years old, and owners will receive support with the training.

Louise's contact details are louise.mullen@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk telephone 07885 625 934 details also available via the website www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

3. Information Exchange

- 3.1** Karolina Zalewska of VOICE Northants introduced herself to the group and explained that she is a support worker 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. Karolina explained that VOICE provides a free, confidential support service to anyone affected by crime in Northamptonshire. She continued that Victim Support have the contract and provide the funding for VOICE until September 2017 when the PCC will take over the funding of the service and it will become a company limited by guarantee. Karolina said that the service provided will not be affected, and information is available on the PCC website.

Karolina can be contacted on 0300 303 1965 / 101 ext. 343051 or by email karolina.zalewska@victimsupport.org.uk. Further details also available via the website www.voicenorthants.org.

- 3.2** Julie Luvaglio introduced herself as one of two outreach workers with the Sexual Health Team, offering Chlamydia screening at various venues for young people. The team also carry out training for youth clubs, schools, college staff, pharmacies and health workers to enable them to provide items such as condoms. Julie explained they can also supply test kits by post and encourage regular screening (well tests), and she is now trained to take blood for screening and sending off to the lab for testing. Julie added they are always looking for access to young people, especially in the Brackley area, and had been in contact with the Brackley health centres. Julie mentioned they were aware of snvb's Rural Information Centre vehicle (RIC) having hired it recently. Karen informed Julie that her role involves contact with young people in the Brackley area, where she holds one to one sessions.

Further information about the Sexual Health Outreach Team is available from Julie julie.luvaglio@nhft.nhs.uk or www.gettalkinggettested.com

- 3.3** Rachel Cave of Northamptonshire Association For The Blind (NAB) explained that she is the Volunteer Co-ordinator covering South Northamptonshire and Northampton town. Rachel advised the group that there are 4000 registered blind/visually impaired people in Northamptonshire, and she currently manages 332 volunteers, covering all aspects of volunteering for NAB, including volunteer drivers, home visitors/befrienders and Charity Shop volunteers.

She stated that NAB provides a variety of services and aids for clients which includes a Local Talking Newspaper Service sent as a MP3 file to clients. Rachel also informed the group that NAB are currently setting up a monthly walking group and have recruited 10/12 volunteers to partner clients on a one to one basis. Rachel added that NAB had recently been contacted by a lady who had offered her allotments as a place for a small group of 5/6 people to meet socially.

Rachel can be contacted by email Rachel@nab.org.uk or by visiting the website www.nab.org.uk

- 3.4** Karen Cooper introduced herself as South Northamptonshire District Councillor for Harpole and Grange ward, which consists of 5 villages and about 5000 residents. Karen explained that her role as Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Wellbeing includes supporting the elderly, young and socially isolated, other responsibilities include customer services. Karen is also a snvb Trustee.

Karen's contact details 07753 638 180 or karen.cooper@southnorthants.gov.uk

- 3.5** Debbie Larkins of British Red Cross informed the group about the First Call Service which is a short term for up to 8 weeks service, for people being discharged from hospital to an empty home, and is available to any adult. The service can support with everyday tasks such as shopping and can provide a befriender on a short term basis; they also provide bereavement support when needed.

Further information is available by contacting Debbie dlarkins@redcross.org.uk

- 3.6** Richard explained that snvb is the Local Infrastructure Organisation for South Northamptonshire and is funded by South Northants Council (SNC) to deliver these services. Richard informed the group that snvb's accredited funding advisor Mel Bignell had now left, and interviews were taking place shortly to find a replacement.

Lorraine added 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.

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 Thursday 7th September 2017 at 1.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.57pm.