



The Community Networking Forum for South Northamptonshire

**NOTES OF MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017  
AT 1.00 PM IN THE MEETING ROOM, SNVB**

Present: Kristy Old – Alzheimer’s Society (Speaker)  
Marion Turner – Granpart  
Robin Turner – Granpart  
Jo Painter – VOICE Victim & Witness Support  
Rachel Cave – NAB  
Chelsie Rimmer – NDAS  
Jane Morris – SNC  
Claire Green – NASS – OCS  
Leanne Buckingham – Northamptonshire Race Crisis (NCR)

SNVB Staff: Jeanette Hyde (Chair)  
Nick King – Village Networks (snvb)  
Lorraine Salmons  
Gillian Baird (Minutes)

Apologies: Cllr Karen Cooper - SNC  
Karen Bricknell – snvb School of Life

**1. Arrival and Informal Networking**

Jeanette welcomed everyone to LinkUp.

**2. Speaker: Kristy Old – Alzheimer’s Society**

Kristy introduced herself to the group and explained that she is the Volunteer Officer for the Northamptonshire Alzheimer’s Society, working across Northamptonshire to recruit, train and induct volunteers for the Side by Side project.

Kristy explained that the Side by Side Project is similar to a befriending scheme for people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. She commented that people often lose confidence and get anxious following their diagnosis, so the Project aims to pair clients up with a volunteer who can help with these issues. The volunteers are not responsible for any form of personal care with the client.

The Project aims to match clients with a volunteer who has similar interests and the time spent with the volunteer gives clients’ family members/carers some time to themselves.

Kristy confirmed that volunteering for the Project requires a minimum six month commitment. Volunteers are DBS checked, references are taken and they are

then trained by the Alzheimer's Society. Volunteers can be aged 16 years upwards (with parental consent) and Kristy confirmed that 60 volunteers are required to cover the Northamptonshire area.

It was noted that volunteers can support their clients with all kinds of situations, for example a visit to the local pub, or shopping etc. Volunteers can also contact their clients by telephone if they are unable to meet up personally.

Kristy confirmed that the Alzheimer's Society is always looking for fundraising volunteers as well as volunteers to work with their clients.

Kristy commented that the Alzheimer's Society also offer Peer Support Groups (led by Dementia advisors) and a Singing for the Brain service. The local Peer Support Group meets on the second Thursday of the month from 11.00am – 12.30pm at Towcester Library and the Singing for the Brain Group meet at Greens Norton Community Centre from 10.00am – 11.00am every Monday. Further information on these Groups is available by contacting the office on the number given below.

Kristy outlined the Society's new strategic plan to unite against Dementia and support every person currently living with it. She confirmed that the Society is investing a lot of funds into research to identify the cause and develop a cure, whilst also investigating how best to support those people living with Dementia.

In response to a question, Kristy explained that volunteers receive a thorough induction with the Society and have training in safeguarding, data protection and the lone worker policy. They are supported by a volunteering role manager and are offered supervision. The Society can offer individual training if it is not possible for volunteers to attend a group session and volunteers' have their travel and other expenses reimbursed.

Further details about the Project and the work of the Alzheimer's Society are available via the website [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk) or by contacting Kristy on 01832 736670 or by email [kristy/old@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:kristy/old@alzheimers.org.uk).

### **3. Information Exchange**

**3.1** Marion Turner of GranPart introduced herself to the group and explained that she formed the group GranPart as a self-help support group for grandparents who were denied access to their grandchildren for various reasons. She commented that over one million grandparents in the UK alone are denied access to their grandchildren.

Marion set up the first GranPart group in Shenley, Milton Keynes and has since formed another group in Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire group 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 is actively attempting to engage with MPs to try to change the law regarding access rights for grandparents. She stated that currently grandparents have no rights and going to court to achieve access is prohibitively expensive.

Further details are available on the website [www.granpart.co.uk](http://www.granpart.co.uk) or from Marion directly: [marion.turner@granpart.co.uk](mailto:marion.turner@granpart.co.uk) ; telephone 01604 830070.

**3.2** Rachel Cave of Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB) circulated some leaflets outlining the work of NAB and explained that she is the Volunteer Co-ordinator covering the South Northamptonshire area and Northampton town. 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 324 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 and she receives around 20 referrals each week (mainly from NGH Eye Department or GPs, but some are self-referrals).

Further information about NAB is available from Rachel via email [Rachel@nab.org.uk](mailto:Rachel@nab.org.uk) or by visiting the website [www.nab.org.uk](http://www.nab.org.uk)

**3.3** Claire Green introduced herself to the group and explained that she is based at the Riverside Centre in Towcester, working on the LIVE programme – Learning, Independence, Volunteering and Employment – which aims to support people with a learning disability into employment or volunteering opportunities.

Claire confirmed that LIVE Team clients take part in various activities, including volunteering at Ridgeway House in Towcester, helping on snvb's Garden Buddies Project, taking part in litter picking in and around Towcester and participating in bag packing in Tesco to raise money for charity. Claire commented that she is always looking for volunteering opportunities for her clients to participate in.

Further details on the LIVE programme are available from Claire (Tel: 01327 359252) [claire.green@nass.uk.net](mailto:claire.green@nass.uk.net)

**3.4** Nick King of snvb briefly outlined the work of the Village Networks project and tabled the latest tour leaflets outlining which villages the Rural Information Centre (RIC) would be visiting. This information is all available on the snvb website (address below).

The RIC offers a chance to drop in and pick up advice on benefits, debt, job-seeking, reducing household bills, volunteering opportunities and much more. The project commissions experts from organisations such as Community Law, SNC and CAB, to give advice on a wide range of issues.

He informed the group that Village Networks also offers computer training, particularly to the elderly. Nick has now engaged a group of volunteers who visit the client in their own homes to give one to one training.

The project also has a minibus which is available for hire by local community groups and can also be used to take isolated people and those without transport to access services.

Nick encouraged organisations to book a place on the RIC (Rural Information Centre) which tours villages in the South Northants, Daventry and Cherwell areas. The RIC vehicle and trained driver is available for organisations to hire to help get their message across to people in the rural areas of the county.

Further information is available from Nick [nick@snavb.org.uk](mailto:nick@snavb.org.uk) or on the website [www.snavb.org.uk](http://www.snavb.org.uk) or by telephoning 01327 358264.

- 3.5** Jane Morris introduced herself as the Employment Support Advisor for South Northants Council (SNC) and informed the group that she attends the Job Club, which is held weekly, alternating between Towcester and Brackley. Jane can offer help with producing and updating CVs, as well as liaising with snvb to offer volunteer opportunities, which can help people in the transition into work for the first time or to gain valuable experience when looking to change careers.

Jane can be contacted on 01327 322195 or by email: [jane.morris@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:jane.morris@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk) and further information about the Job Club is available on the SNC website [www.southnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk).

- 3.6** Chelsie Rimmer explained that she works for Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service and is the Targeted Support Worker for South Northamptonshire, offering emotional, legal and general support for victims of domestic abuse.

The Service currently run a drop-in session on Tuesdays from 1.00pm – 4.00pm at the Forum in Towcester and Chelsie is hoping to set up more drop-in sessions at local GP Surgeries soon. The Service also offers an appointment service outside of the drop-in times. Clients can be referred from a number of different agencies.

Chelsie drew attention to the NDAS Freedom Programme which is designed for people who have been, or are still in, an abusive relationship. The 10-week course raises awareness of ways that people can protect themselves and their families from harm.

Further information is available on the website [www.ndas.co](http://www.ndas.co) or by telephoning 0300 0120154.

- 3.7** Jo Painter explained that she works for VOICE Victim and Witness Support. VOICE offers support to adults aged 18 and over who have been a victim of crime, using a team of paid specialist case workers and support workers and a team of specially trained volunteers.

Jo confirmed that the majority of referrals to the Service come from the Police and clients are offered all kinds of assistance, including emotional support and practical support such as supplying door alarms, as well as signposting clients to other services where necessary. VOICE also provides long-term emotional support and clients can still access the service for support historically, if they are affected by a crime from their past.

It was noted that VOICE have various different support services on offer, including Restorative Justice support, where the harmer and the harmed are brought together, and the Road Harm Service for victims of road accidents.

Further information is available from Jo [joanne.painter@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:joanne.painter@victimsupport.org.uk) or from the website [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk).

**3.8** 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@snavb.org.uk](mailto:lorraine@snavb.org.uk).

**3.9** Leanne Buckingham explained that she works for NRC (Northamptonshire Rape Crisis) and has been in post since May 2017, covering engagement and project work.

It was noted that NRC have hubs throughout the County and an office in Northampton, but Leanne commented that it is difficult to find space to operate the service in Towcester without paying for expensive room hire.

Other members of the group suggested hiring the Sawpits Centre (the old Library) or a room at The Forum in Towcester.

Further information on the work of NRC can be found on their website: [www.nricc.co.uk](http://www.nricc.co.uk) or by contacting Leanne: [leanne\\_buckingham@nricc.co.uk](mailto:leanne_buckingham@nricc.co.uk).

**3.10** Jeanette explained that snvb is the Local Infrastructure Organisation for South Northamptonshire and is funded by South Northants Council (SNC) to deliver these services. Jeanette 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@snavb.org.uk](mailto:richard@snavb.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.snavb.org.uk](http://www.snavb.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 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 1.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.12pm.