

## **Message from Cath Witherington - Chief Officer**



As I complete my fourth month in post, I have been reflecting on what I have been doing and what I have achieved in the role so far. I thought it would be helpful to share with you all a summary of what I have achieved in my first 101 days at Voluntary Action Doncaster. I have:

- Secured free web hosting
- Set up free Google Suite Software
- Set up social media channels
- Launched the Doncaster Volunteer Hub
- Developed and submitted a bid for funding with the Inclusion and Fairness Forum to support awareness raising and engagement activity (Unfortunately we were unsuccessful)
- Compiled and issued fortnightly Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Newsletters and/or special updates
- Updated the Voluntary Action Doncaster Website
- Drafted a strategy document for consultation
- Represented the VCF Sector at a wide range of meetings with commissioners influencing strategically
- Joined the regional network of VCSE leaders
- Developed a draft Business Plan
- Recruited a Business Administrator
- Increased members from 26 to 41
- Delivered presentations introducing Voluntary Action Doncaster to the Chamber's first Charity Forum and Social Enterprise Group.
- Introduced Voluntary Action Doncaster to the local MPs
- Connected with Doncaster College and Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and agreed to work in partnership
- Consulted the sector on the Kickstart Scheme
- Facilitated the Board Nomination and Election process including the Open Talk sessions in September leading to the 9 appointments to the Board

- Developed and submitted a bid for Lloyds Bank Foundation Infrastructure Fund and we are waiting to hear the outcome.

I have focused on getting Voluntary Action Doncaster set up as an organisation and laying the foundations. As we have moved into October, I have been able to make more connections with the sector and wider partner networks. This led to a donation of 2 refurbished laptops which will soon be on their way to new homes supporting people in Doncaster (carry on reading to find out where!). As a result of generally raising awareness of Voluntary Action Doncaster and what we do, I am delighted to say that we are seeing a slow but steady increase in:

- Our reach through the growing reach through the newsletter and social media channels
- The number of volunteers and organisations who are registered on our Volunteer Hub and also opportunities to match them
- Our membership base

So thank you everyone for your support so far. Looking ahead, I want to make sure that we develop our services to provide the support and attract the resources you need to be successful.

## **COVID-19 Updates**

Remember, new Restrictions are now in place from across Doncaster as we are now in the **VERY HIGH** level of restrictions (Tier 3 of the new Covid system).

We all need to make sure that we understand the latest advice and must follow the new guidance in order to slow the spread across the borough:

- No household mixing indoors so keep to your own household or bubble.
- No mixing in private gardens outdoors.
- You can still meet outdoors in some settings (parks, public gardens etc) but the 'rule of 6' still applies. Remember hands, face and space rules are still important outside and should be followed
- Pubs and bars must close unless they operate as a restaurant within the guidelines.

There is an [FAQ](#) page on the Council website with more information about the current restrictions.

## **Talk Money Week**

Talk Money Week is an annual campaign devised by the Money and Pensions Service to get the nation talking about money and will take place on 9th - 13th November 2020.

Each November they encourage the UK to talk about managing money – from pocket money right through to pensions – and celebrate the work done by thousands of organisations to build financial wellbeing across the country. This week provides a platform to have a conversation about money between families and friends, at work or at school or any other walk of life. The goal is to turn talking about money from one of the UK's least favourite topics into something commonplace.

### **Why Talk Money?**

Talking openly about money is vitally important for our health, wealth and relationships. The effect of COVID-19 has made it more important than ever to start conversations about money.

Research shows that people who talk about money:

- Make better and less risky financial decisions
- Have stronger personal relationships
- Help their children form good lifetime money habits
- Feel less stressed or anxious and more in control

Through the week, they want to encourage more people to take action to improve their own financial wellbeing and the financial wellbeing of those around them – whether through accessing free debt advice, saving regularly, seeking out financial education or relying less on credit for everyday spending.

Download your [participation pack](#) and get involved!

## **Home-Based Support from Avalon**

Avalon can offer community-based support for individuals in Doncaster who may need support in their own homes. They provide a variety of support to a broad customer base, including individuals with learning disabilities, mental health support needs, and physical support to be as independent as possible. This could include support around ADL's, accessing the community, or providing respite to carers with support sessions starting from 1 hour to 6 hour sessions per day, depending on support needs. They can provide support once a week, up to 7 days a week. If you

know of anyone who may find this service useful you can find more information or contact the Avalon team via their [website](#).

## **Enabling Support Project**

Live Inclusive is pleased to announce that it has received a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund and HM Government to deliver an Enabling Support Project.

The project will support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions who have become isolated during the coronavirus pandemic and may also need help and advice relating to independent living. The service will provide person-centred action planning to increase independence and choice for disabled people and reduce isolation.

In addition volunteers will be providing:

- Social contact through telephone calls
- Socially distanced walks or garden visits

Volunteers will be trained and supported by staff with a great deal of experience in delivering services to disabled people.

To refer someone for support, complete the [referral form](#) and email it to [jane@liveinclusive.co.uk](mailto:jane@liveinclusive.co.uk), or call 07954 428726 (Monday to Thursday before 3pm) or 01302 592400.

## **Kickstart Scheme**

We would like to help you access the Government's new **Kickstart Scheme**. Full details about the scheme are on the Government's [website](#). If you can create a new 6-month job placement - let us know. Please complete this short [Google Form](#). If you cannot complete the form online, give us a call on 01302 965459 to have a chat with us about your plans.

## **Heart Of The Community Website**

Get Involved UK recently secured funding from the UK Government body, Innovate-UK, to help communities respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. They have designed and built a website – [www.get-involved.uk](http://www.get-involved.uk) – which captures the sense of community spirit generated by the coronavirus pandemic, and encourages and inspires volunteers to plan, open and run their own community shop (or other entity).

The website is a free 'one-stop-shop' guide on how to set up a thriving community shop, run ONLY by local volunteers, to generate revenue and good-will for the benefit of their community.

Based on Church Fenton Community Shop, in North Yorkshire, which in 2017 was transformed from a failing Post Office into the thriving, profitable business it is today, the website can be accessed by any individuals seeking genuine practical information, and the steps required to open their own community business.

## **Job Opportunities**

### **Balby & Hexthorpe Community Engagement CIC (Voluntary Role)**

This organisation is looking to expand their team and have a great new role to help support their local community. The role will be working with the team to look at fundraising and events so they can raise funds to put on local activities which the community needs. Travel expenses and training costs will be covered. This is a volunteer role and they are asking for 8 hours minimum a month given to do this role.

Find more information [on LinkedIn](#).

### **Update to the NHS Volunteer Responders Scheme**

Following a number of requests from NHS organisations, NHS Volunteer Responders are now available to provide NHS non-clinical support. Examples of the type of support you can request are:

- Stewarding patients – supporting the safe movement of patients around the sites, both internally (e.g. within clinics/GP Surgeries/waiting areas) and externally (e.g. car parks/queues outside healthcare sites). They will be able to monitor patient numbers and ensure safe social distancing, as well as identifying patients who may need extra support.
- Signposting support – directing patients in hospitals through a specific route, ensuring social distancing and safe COVID-19 practices are adhered to.
- All existing support roles continue to be available, including patient transport to the vaccination sites

You can find more information about becoming an NHS Volunteer Responder or requesting the use of volunteers on their [website](#).

## **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

JRF are looking for an Employee Experience Lead who will be accountable for putting the employee experience at the centre and forefront of all the organisation's work with a consistent emphasis on improving engagement across their diverse staff groups, underpinned by their organisational values.

Find out more about the role and applying on their [website](#).

## **Funding Opportunities**

If you have not already seen it, you can access the latest [Funding Opportunities](#) newsletter compiled by the Council's Policy, Insight & Change Team.