

## Northstowe Community Networkers Minutes 13 December 2023 7pm

### Attendees:

Ellen Cox, South Cambs District Council  
Mihaela Stan, South Cambs District Council  
Sally Page, C CVS  
Maria Harrison, Sustainable Northstowe  
Josh Monteiro, Emmanuel Church

### Apologies:

Mari O'Neill, Northstowe Arts  
Beth Cope, Youth Hive and Pathfinder Church  
Sarah Freeman, Cambridgeshire County Council  
Petra Sawyer, Town Council

### Agenda:

1. **CCVS on volunteering**
2. **Future events by Northstowe Hub:**
  - **Mother Language Day**
  - **Northstowe Day**
3. **Group Updates**
4. **AOB**

### 1. Sally Page from C CVS on volunteering:

#### Volunteer Cambs

- [Volunteer Cambs](https://www.volunteercambs.org.uk) is a new website where you can create an organisation account and add your volunteering opportunities so that people can find out how they can help your good cause. [www.volunteercambs.org.uk](https://www.volunteercambs.org.uk)
- Volunteer Cambs aims to be your go-to online platform for volunteering. Whether you want to offer your time to support a local cause or if you're a community organisation seeking volunteers, it should help.
- Volunteer Cambs managed by Support Cambridgeshire, a partnership between [CCVS](#) and Hunts Forum.
- The website launched in October, and it is funded by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Resilience Forum and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System.
- It already has over 90 community organisations with an account. We have had almost 4,000 unique visitors to the website, 45 applications from volunteers and 11 applications accepted, which is a brilliant start.

- At the moment Support Cambridgeshire are focusing on raising awareness of Volunteer Cambs, within the Cambridgeshire voluntary sector. Then, in early 2024, Support Cambridgeshire will launch a tailored marketing campaign to the public, at a point when there will be plenty of choice on the platform.
- Having said that, as you can tell from the stats, the public are using the website, so, if you are adding volunteering opportunities, please do be prepared to respond to interest.
- Groups can create an account, and their volunteering opportunities, then the public can browse for volunteering opportunities through a search feature or quiz. Groups can also contact a volunteer directly via the volunteer pool.
- Webinars are being delivered by Support Cambridgeshire to advise step by step on how it works. [Find out more.](#) (this link takes you to a short recording of Sally introducing the platform)
- The organisations can explain what age the volunteer needs to be to take part when creating their advert.
- Within an organisation profile, various teams can be created so each team would look after different volunteering opportunities.
- Groups can also create a joint account with another group if they do not have enough people in their groups to manage all aspects of the account
- If you have a volunteer story that you would like to see featured on Volunteer Cambs, contact Sally. They are always looking to share the benefits of volunteering and the different ways that people can get involved in their community. [See stories already featured.](#)
- Also, when you are logged into Volunteer Cambs take a look at the [help centre](#), to guide you through the various elements of the website.
- CCVS under Support Cambridgeshire are happy to assist groups with setting up accounts and managing their profile.
- Please contact [info@volunteercambs.org.uk](mailto:info@volunteercambs.org.uk) for support.

### **Young Volunteers**

- If an organisation would like guidance on involving volunteers under 18 years, please contact CCVS for support via [enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk)
- Some Northstowe groups have already received some 121 advice from CCVS
- Children are classed as a 'vulnerable' group, so any organisation that takes on young volunteers must be careful to protect them. Legally a child is defined as someone who is under 18 years old.

### **As a minimum, best practice is to have the following in place:**

- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Statement.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Supervision policy should consider DBS checks for adults working with young people, with trained staff/volunteers only as supervisors. No young person can be left alone. It's good practice to have two adults overseeing at all times.
- Safer recruitment processes; interviews, references, training.
- Risk Assessment. Are the roles suitable and safe for under 18s? Undertake a full risk assessment of all volunteer roles, activities and settings. Identifying potential hazards, dangers and vulnerabilities and take action to mitigate or avoid these factors.

**Resources & Contacts – please contact CCVS if you need support but the below are the main sources of information that we use**

- [Young People and Volunteering, East Sussex Guide](#)
- NCVO, [practical areas to consider when engaging young people](#)
- [NSPCC](#) resources and training.
- Community First, [involving young volunteer's handbook](#).
- [CPD-certified Safeguarding](#) (Children & Adults) at low cost.
- [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)
- [What is regulated activity?](#) Government Guidance.
- [DBS Regional Outreach Advisors](#). Email: [Georgina.Mitchell1@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:Georgina.Mitchell1@dbs.gov.uk) – contact for advice on DBS checks
- [Student Community Action](#) arrange DBS checks but there are also online providers – the checks for volunteers are usually free but there is an administration fee (SCA charge £10 per volunteer).

## **2. Future events by Northstowe Hub:**

- **Mother Language Day**
  - This will take place on 24 February at The Cabin 2:30-5:30
  - It is a free event where all are welcome to come and learn some phrases in some of the languages spoken in Northstowe. This is to celebrate International Mother Language Day, which falls on 21st February each year.
  - JM will promote with Emmanuel Church
- **Northstowe Day** – the proposed date at the moment is Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May – due to low attendance, this can be discussed at the January meeting

## **3. Group Updates**

- **Sustainable Northstowe** organised a toy swap on 10 December. The event was very successful and saw 80 people through the door of The Cabin which the market holders appreciated
- It was requests to do another one, and the group are looking to have one in March, then one in June during the Great Big Gren Week, then potentially 2 more later in the year. The dates are to be decided on later
- This works well alongside the market
- More volunteers will be needed to run the extra sessions
  
- **Emmanuel Church**

- 50 people attended the wreath making workshop so it was a successful event; those who attended were mainly women and many people that usually come along to community events
- Carol service took place last Sunday
- Christmas around the world is new this year
- Christmas service expected to be quite so will be held outside
- Jazz Night in January – January blues
- Supporting the Cantonese speaking community in Northstowe to do the Chinese New Year, at least 100 speakers from about 50 households

## **5. AOB**

**Santa's costume** – this was previously owned by the Northstowe Social group, however it would be better if one group/organisation takes responsibility for it and the Town Council have offered to do so.

- All agreed that the Town Council will take ownership of this from now on

### **Next meeting:**

Wednesday 10 January – to discuss events/activities for 2024