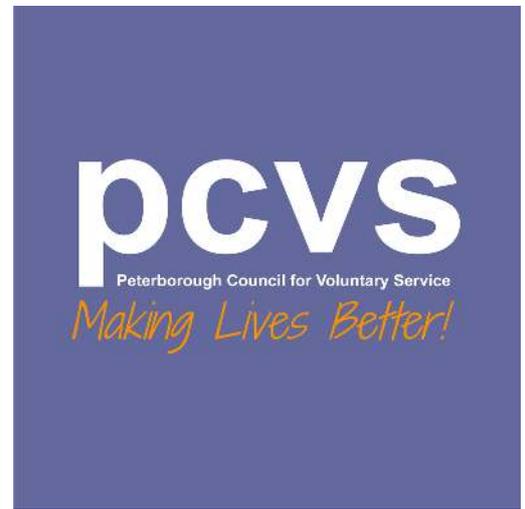


# PCVS Newsletter

November 2021



[A sincere, brave and heart warming introduction from our CEO this month:](#)

Originally I asked Kalai to give me a pass out from writing the editorial this month - I was scared that what I wanted to say may be upsetting, unmotivating and unhelpful at a time when voluntary sector communities, I imagine, are desperately needing to hear words of cheer, comfort and hope. Today, however, moved by the voice of a colleague in the community earlier in the day, I feel an urge to speak. If these words appear on the front of our monthly newsletter then my piece has passed inspection by Kalai, our wonderful communications manager, and PCVS Trustees. I want to thank them all for bravery in allowing me to share my recent times.

Before the summer something changed in me. I didn't know what or why other than I suddenly found myself struggling to make decisions. I lost creativity, was unable to take responsibility and, previously willing to push boundaries, suddenly felt straitjacketed. I could not move forward. Paralysed when faced with anything new; information, ideas, conflict, risks....I was completely unaware at the time that I was disconnecting from the world and had begun to shut down....I was burned out.

I imagined it was due to the pressures of Covid, working hard to support and care for many in this time of overwhelming need. I wondered if I just needed a break from the day to day duties of a CEO and chance to settle into my new life on a narrowboat. Time to breathe and once again find my energy, the love for my amazing job and joie de vivre to continue as I have for years supporting communities in Peterborough.

When the opportunity for 3 months Furlough arose in July, I grabbed it with both hands. Plenty of time to re-charge the batteries, have some time out and get myself sorted and back on track. I'd return with bounce - ready to take on the world.

I imagined it to be a wonderful chance to explore the world I live in free of work interruptions, quality time with family and friends to experience life outside of the worries of my working day. Finally I get to spend time learning about myself really getting to know 'Leonie'. What a fantastic once in a lifetime opportunity. Yes. Time out. That's what I needed.

However, slowing down – stopping, not serving or ‘rescuing’ others, not being needed or having someone or something else to focus on has been very painful. I had no idea how to be me when my roles were removed. All my life I have been ‘doing’. Many days over the Summer I just sat numb, disconnected from the world. Who am I? What am I here for? If I am not helping or caring for people what is the point of my existence? Frightened I would never feel ‘normal’ again, instead of practicing my age-old adage of reaching out for support, I withdrew. A lifetime of focussing on others, worryingly, I had nothing left for me. I was burned out.

3 months later and still feeling the effects of exhaustion, the Trustees have been incredibly supportive and I am currently on a slow phased return to work. This period of time away has enabled me to learn and experience, who, and how I am. Still healing now with fantastic therapy, friends, family and colleagues, some of my most healthy time is spent alone in contact with the environment. Being with the most important person in my world, me.

Without night we would not know day, despair allows us to experience hope. From the ashes of burn out I rise in the glow of unconditional love for myself. Through the flames of your compassion, and mine – I am, finally, understanding what it is to be fully alive in contact with the world.

Take care, you're precious. Because you are You.



Leonie  
Her/She

Leonie McCarthy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Peterborough CVS

*"What is this life, if full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?"* excerpt 'Leisure' WH Davies.



# PCVS Projects and Updates

## Annual General Meeting

A note from our Chairman, Dave Ellis on our recent AGM:

We held our Annual General Meeting last month which was the opportunity for us to let you know what we have been up to over the year but more importantly for you to have your say about how we are doing. Disappointingly, not enough of our members engaged in this process which meant that we were not quorate and so were unable to complete some of the required business.

However we want to thank our members that took the time to attend and those of you who had input in to our recent strategic review. Our board is committed to learning from the outcomes of this and map out the next 5 years travel for PCVS. If you would like to get involved in making decisions like these that will have an impact on Peterborough's communities and Voluntary and Community sector as a whole, we are looking for new trustees.



A note from our Vice-Chair, Mandy Thompson on our recent AGM:



I became a trustee several years ago, after a discussion with Leonie (CEO) when I questioned why PCVS were running a certain project. In response Leonie challenged me to become a member of the board, to find out more and use my experience to support the organisation.

The events of the last couple of years have come as a huge challenge to all of us. PCVS was in a good position to respond quickly. The role of an organisation such as PCVS has never been clear-cut, but without the strong links PCVS already had with hundreds of community groups in Peterborough, the city's response to the pandemic would not have been as successful as it was.

Where do we go from here? The world does not stand still, and PCVS can't either. We are putting together a strategy for the next five years based on our stakeholders' views on how PCVS can best support them to bring about change in Peterborough. If you have experience and expertise that you could contribute, perhaps you could consider becoming a trustee of PCVS.

*If you are interested in becoming one of our Trustees have useful skills and expertise that you would like to bring to the table, please contact Dave Ellis on [chairman@pcvs.co.uk](mailto:chairman@pcvs.co.uk)*

# Infrastructure Training and Support

Thanks to Peterborough City Council and our new infrastructure support budget, we are offering group sessions on topics from Governing Documents and how to write them to Business Planning Basics. Each session is a mix of theory and lively group discussion from our member organisations.

We have already had some fantastic feedback being told that they are “Very Useful Sessions”, helping to improve understanding as different groups have different organisational structures and practices and give a great introduction to the VCS sector in Peterborough. Having feedback from our groups directly also enables us to take on board what is most needed for local organisations and be flexible with our topics.

So far many groups have attended our sessions and already we are making a huge difference. For example, the Romanian community in Peterborough who with the guidance received, has become a constituted group. This is fantastic news as it will enable them to apply for grant funding to ensure their future is viable. We look forward to helping other organisations in this way, delivering the vital support they need to run their entities whilst ensuring that Peterborough’s voluntary and charity sector thrives.

For details of the support sessions we provide including confidential 1-2-1 sessions, please keep checking our website for upcoming dates - [Click Here](#)



Romanian Community Launch Event



## Health Xchange

We are delighted to announce the launch of the fourth round of Health Xchange funding thanks to the National Lottery who have allowed us great flexibility in how we have funded groups during and after the lockdowns throughout 2020 and 2021.

This funding is open for groups to apply for **until December 10**. Applicants must email [healthexchange@pcvs.co.uk](mailto:healthexchange@pcvs.co.uk) to obtain an application form. For more information please [click here](#) or read the full press release by [clicking here](#)

*Here is a round up of some of the activities that Health Xchange has funded recently:*

Last month we were fortunate to attend the wonderful dance sessions that the Russian Community Association in Peterborough were holding and the inspiring activities of High Heritage. Both sessions epitomised what it means to really understand your community, to identify a need, and to work hard to meet that need. For instance, the Russian Community Association in Peterborough were using their Health Xchange funding to deliver educational activities and dance sessions for young people in Peterborough. This helped them learn about their Russian heritage through dance. Elena Belorus, the groups organiser highlighted how she felt proud to not only give these young people the chance to learn about their heritage, but proud of the dance instructors and teachers who were also able to give back to their community through sharing their cultural knowledge.



As you may know, October was Black History Month in the UK, an event that has been celebrated nationwide for more than 30 years. The month was originally founded to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to the UK over many generations. High Heritage, one of the groups funded in the latest round of funding (Summer 2021) have celebrated the month with a variety of activities. They have been making videos, playing music in residential homes, doing community litter picks, having a celebration (with the mayor in attendance!), and they also delivered one of their Health Xchange Community sessions.



The Community session on the 30th of October was attended by 37 young people and we were lucky enough to be involved! The session was challenging at times, but inspiring throughout, as every child's uniqueness and differences were celebrated. We discussed racism and the need to speak to someone about it when people experience it. It was difficult to hear the lived experience of racism experienced by the young people who attended. They spoke about the negative narrative that they have faced and came up with new positive narratives they want to be associated with, which included;  
*BLACK is Beautiful, Rich, Amazing, Unique, Powerful, Happy, Strong, Progressive, Cool, Wonderful, Important, Kind, Divine, Children of God, Lovely, Great, Superb, Successful, Educated, Interesting, Pretty, Cheerful and Special.*

## VCS Recovery Project

We are delighted to announce that we have secured National Lottery funding to aid recovery within communities in Peterborough most adversely impacted by the pandemic.

The funding, from The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK, has enabled the set up of a Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Recovery programme aimed at improving the lives of those most impacted by Covid and poverty, building a stronger more resilient VCS empowered to tackle current and future challenges and addressing local poverty issues through grassroots connections.

Helen Bushell, Senior Head of Regional Funding for London, South East and East of England at The National Lottery Community Fund, said: "It is clear that communities up and down the country continue to feel the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular pressures on personal finance and the impact on mental health this can have. Thanks to National Lottery players, projects like Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service play a huge part in providing the vital support networks needed to help individuals and communities begin building a better future for themselves."

The funding will enable PCVS to continue to run the already established forums that have proven to define overarching issues, tackle these locally whilst identifying these nationally and work to avoid duplication and potentially attract larger scale funding to Peterborough. [Click here](#) to read full press release.

# Forums Update

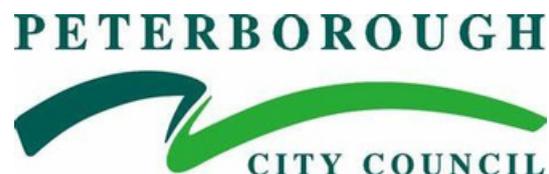
The new season of **Domestic Abuse Forum** meetings was launched with a specialist awareness and training event by Karma Nirvana. Over twenty community workers from Peterborough were able to attend the session which highlighted honour based abuse. You can read more about in the press release by [clicking here](#).

The response was very positive and many who attended are taking their learning further. The forum followed up with a planning meeting for the next few months. Next full meeting will be **Friday 19th November at 10:30am** Anyone wanting to attend or join the forum, can do so by contacting [gill.benedikz@pcvs.co.uk](mailto:gill.benedikz@pcvs.co.uk) . Agenda items include 16 days of action campaign, which is a campaign aimed at organisations to support them to take action against domestic abuse and violence and ensure the health, safety and well-being of their employees.

The **Mental Health Forum** continues to build a calming and supportive community of practitioners. The most recent meeting had guest speakers, Susan Davidson from How Are You Peterborough (HAY) updating on progress. And new forum member, Anna Tukes who discussed the development of the Co-production Collaborative. The open discussion around the talks highlighted issues of diversity and inclusion (and the challenges to this). And the issues around short term funding and planning meaning that building trust with new groups is very challenging.

We have been looking into **Digital Inclusion** as an issue and possible new forum area. If you have been working in this area, or find that digital exclusion is an issue for the community you work with, and you'd like to talk this through with colleagues in the sector, please let us know, by contacting [gill.benedikz@pcvs.co.uk](mailto:gill.benedikz@pcvs.co.uk)

## Covid Project



The PCVS community coordinators team is now complete and working across the city of Peterborough. We are delighted to have onboard some of the city's most experienced, knowledgeable community minded people to lead our efforts in keeping you safe.

Working closely with Peterborough City Council which funded the project, we attended over 24 events during October, engaged with 100s of our residents in person, addressing vaccination concerns, providing help and support with official, scientific and factual information whilst also assisting with practical measures such as accessibility solutions not only with vaccinations but with advice on prevention for home, shops and community venues and events. Our team of coordinators have also been assisting our communities by signposting individuals to other available non Covid related services in the area.

We have further reached 1000s with in our city through our social media channels as well as local media and radio channels. Our combined efforts has made a positive impact with the uptake of the vaccination, however with the winter arriving at our doorstep and the reported cases on the rise, it is really important to comply with the guidance provided to support our community and minimise the effect on our services.

Please consider vaccination if you haven't been vaccinated as yet.

Book your booster as soon as you are eligible to do so.

Follow all safer behaviours to keep Covid-19 from spreading.

Remember, a well ventilated room can reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection by 70%.

Our community coordinators are on hand to support you, your family and your communities, please get in touch.

Paston Farm Community Foundation

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GLADCA - Yasmin Ilahi <https://gladca.org.uk/>

PARCA - Moez Nathu <https://parcald.org/>

PCC has also provided two dedicated community engagement specialists:

Asta Kavaliauskaite [Asta.Kavaliauskaite@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:Asta.Kavaliauskaite@peterborough.gov.uk)

Nisha Beg-Khan [Nisha.Beg-Khan@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:Nisha.Beg-Khan@peterborough.gov.uk)

# Wonder Women

“Wonder Women”, is an empowering project initiated by PCVS' Women's forum that supports women to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 period, build confidence, meet with others, grow self-esteem and improve financial literacy. It is funded through the Thriving Communities Fund, delivered by Arts Council England (ACE) on behalf of the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP).

PCVS partnered with Living Sport, Metal, Arts & Minds, The Green Backyard, and Primary Care Network (Thistlemoor), are supporting and delivering this project to help women across Peterborough recover from COVID-19 through the power of social prescribing. This will enable health care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

So far women across Peterborough have enjoyed various Wonder Women events that have taken place such as the growing and environment workshops hosted by The Green Backyard. Here participants engaged in activities such as making herbal tea concoctions, seed infused greetings cards and weaving wreaths or wall hangings made with yarn, materials and seasonal flowers and plants.



Metal Peterborough have hosted some fantastic art workshops over the past months where participants have loved “making art without pressure”, “being playful, seeing how other people do things” and “being creative and having time to relax”. They have dabbled in various art forms from block printing, paper quilling to creating collaborative mandalas and doodles.

The good news is that Metal is hosting another event at the Allama Iqbal Centre (Gladstone Connect) on Tuesday (23rd of November) from 12.30pm – 2.30pm. The workshop will be run by artist, Sa’adah who will be taking inspiration from some of the techniques people have explored in previous sessions, creating collages for a collaborative piece with shapes, words, and sentences. If you haven’t joined before, no worries you are still welcome to come along and be creative and share your ideas! You can book by emailing [sarah@metalculture.com](mailto:sarah@metalculture.com) or through Eventbrite\* - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wonder-woman-workshop-at-gladstone-with-artist-saadiah-khan-tickets-211179101377>



# Volunteering

Since the launch of our new website and [Facebook volunteering page](#), potential volunteers have been able to find out about a variety of opportunities in the local area and also contact us more easily about suitable volunteering opportunities. We aim to respond within 5 working days.

We are also holding monthly sessions for potential volunteers on zoom, the next one is the **6th of December at 10am**, where anyone can come along and ask about volunteering. Every month we have a different member organisation attend to talk about any specific opportunities that they have available. On the 6th we will be joined by Care Network, a charity whose ethos is to help people to stay healthy, independent and in touch with their community (<https://care-network.org.uk/>). To sign up please [click here](#) and fill in the "contact us" form and add "would like to join monthly volunteering session" in the further comments section.



## eMploy-ABILITY

### Introduction to Macrame

(covid 19 secure)

**Tuesday 7th December 2021**

**10am– 12.30pm**

**Paston Farm Community Centre**

**Freston, Paston, Peterborough PE4 7XB**

**FREE All materials supplied**

**Learn new skills, meet new people and improve  
your life and work chances.**

**Come along and find out how our  
project can help you.**

**Booking is essential :**

Contact Amanda to book your free place or to find out more

Email: [awalls@cpltrust.net](mailto:awalls@cpltrust.net) Tel: 07813 811742

[www.cpltrust.net](http://www.cpltrust.net)

\*Items may vary \*mobile rates apply



eMploy-ABILITY is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion. For more information please visit [www.communitieast.co.uk](http://www.communitieast.co.uk)

[www.communitieast.co.uk](http://www.communitieast.co.uk)





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If you would like more information, please call 0116 251 6205 between 9.30am-4pm Monday-Thursday and 9.30am-12.30pm Friday.

You can also send an email with any queries to [admin@givingworld.org.uk](mailto:admin@givingworld.org.uk).

