

Our Chairman's introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of our Newsletter, which gives a review of what we have been doing in the last twelve months, and sets out a few of our plans for 2016. Alongside this we have news about our operations team, trustees and funders.

Later this year we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary.



Charles Raeburn founded the Friendship Project in May 1986, having seen a similar project in Canada. I would like to start by saying an enormous thank you for the tremendous support that our Older Friends have given disadvantaged children across Coventry & Warwickshire in the intervening years, plus to our dedicated team of part time employees, trustees, and supporters that have helped to make such a difference to the lives of these children. We are planning a further Newsletter at the end of the year showcasing some of the events from this year, plus stories from our 30 year journey.

We established a new Safeguarding sub group this year, and as part of this John Hancock has extended his role to include personal visits to our Younger Friends and their families/carers, to assist with feedback, and also to make sure that we continue to meet the needs of disadvantaged children whom we support. John has written a small section for this newsletter about what he has found.

Our new Database project has been completed, and is fully operational, and it is hoped that this will help with our efficiency, and also be a valuable tool for monitoring, and helping to support our future expansion, with useful management information. Please make sure you send in your monthly reports these are vitally important for our monitoring, plus help support our fund raising activities.

We are again returning to active fund raising this year, as the legacy that we had from our past Chairman David Wright comes to its conclusion. We are still seeking additional trustees including one to take responsibility for Bid Fund Raising, and leading our funding team, along with other roles, which are detailed later. Email Cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk

Trustees News

It is planned later this year to change from a registered charity to Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status, as we believe this will give us greater resilience, an opportunity to continue to grow, and help us to attract additional trustees to our board in the future. It will necessitate a new company to be registered with the Charities commission, and for the assets and liabilities of the existing charity to be transferred to the new organisation later in the year, then the closure of the existing charity, at that time. This will be covered fully within the AGM papers, which will be provided well in advance of our AGM on 8th June. We are also taking professional legal advice around this.

Lois Hamson, Operations team chairman, and trustee, is going to launch the PQASSO quality accreditation process this year, with a view to having us fully accredited by 2017.

Our website has had a refresh courtesy of Chris Buck, who is also regularly posting news articles onto this, and if you have any suitable items then please forward them to Chris@friendshipproject.co.uk

Our new treasurer John Palmer has settled in well, and is making an excellent contribution to the trustee team. Richard Armitage has been co-opted to help support on day to day basis the CIO paperwork preparation. Our Honorary Secretary Valarie Wallace-Burrows, and Vice-Chairman/Safeguarding Officer, John Hancock, remain in place.

Any suggestions or material for our future Newsletters, or events, would be gratefully received, and should please be sent to SueFrost@FriendshipProject.co.uk, or please contact me on cheryll@friendshipproejct.co.uk

Welcome and Farewell

Jean Dennis

In late spring 2015 we said goodbye to Jean Denis who has been a long term supporter of the Friendship Project, firstly as an Older Friend, then trustee, and latterly Area Coordinator. Jean is planning on spending more time developing her massage service, jewellery designing, and has also become a member of the Ambleside Bowls Association.

Shawn Gladwin

In November Shawn Gladwin resigned as a trustee, owing to both work commitments, and needing time to take additional professional qualifications. We are indebted to Shawn for supervising and implementing the work to revamp our logo, and marketing materials, making them truly eye catching and also for his time over the last five years supporting local events and fund raising, and as a valued member of our trustee team. We wish him all the best for the future.

Deborah Roberts

We have recruited a new Area Coordinator, Deborah Roberts, who has previous experience within the volunteer sector. We are hoping that Deborah can increase awareness of the good work that we do and in doing so increase the number of Older Friends within Rugby and the surrounding area and so as to help more children.

What We've Been Up To...

Squash - Saturday 31st October 2015



The squash went very well on Saturday and all six of the Younger Friends enjoyed themselves very much. The coach Jonathan Peak (JP) has secured some sponsorship to fund junior membership at the Boat Club plus free coaching and supplying sports equipment for the Younger Friends.

Geoff Sault

What We've Been Up To... Picnic in the Park

On 19th July 2015 around 30 members of the Friendship Project enjoyed a lovely afternoon at St Nicholas Park, Warwick on Sunday 19th July, opening with hoopla, garden dominoes and other games, whilst waiting for everyone to arrive and set up camp for the afternoon. This was followed by a fun game of rounders, then a picnic tea, and cakes, before both Older Friends and Younger Friends took to the river on boats and pedalos to end a great sunny afternoon.



What We've Been Up To...

Visit to the Guide Dogs Breeding Centre Leamington Spa, Saturday 10th September 2015

The trip to the breeding centre was a great success. The guides were extremely informative and the children loved hearing about how the puppies are bred and nurtured through their first few months of life. We split into three groups and were taken around the different areas of the centre. The favourite was where the puppies have their own playground full of toys! It would have been nice to have handled them but the breeding and training is so strict that this was not possible. The children were interested to hear that the guide dogs have very strict boundaries and rules too! A fun morning out for Older and Younger friends.



What We've Been Up To... Younger friends Enjoying a riding lesson



Cooking together

Sandra reports "we've had our own 'cookery school' here today!! Isla and I made a chocolate cake together, then she decorated it all by herself, she has taken it home for the family to share!! We had great fun!!



What We've Been Up To... Get together

Older Friends Get together at Leamington Tennis Club 11th Feb

I would like to thank the club again for letting us have this room for free (with the understanding that we buy drinks from the bar) - this came to £25 in total. Another really good evening informing our Older Friends of what is going on at the Friendship Project. A great opportunity for the Older Friends to get to know us and each other and share stories. Helen then compiled an information sheet from the evening which we then emailed to all Older Friends. It was attended by 7 FP staff and 10 OFs, we had 6 no shows!

Older Friends Get-together on 28th May 2015, Stratford

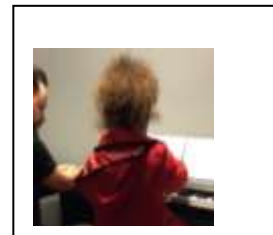
Anne and John Palmer kindly hosted a get-together in Stratford. Anne provided a splendid spread and our thanks to them. John is the Project's Treasurer.

What Others have Been up to for the Project...

The Recessionaires have supported a Younger Friend to enable her to begin piano lessons

Why I wanted to learn how to play the piano:

When I was at school I would see the other children playing on the piano. I like the sound the piano makes when it is played. But I never played on it. There were two pianos at school and H has one. When I went to H's house I saw the piano and I wanted to try it out to see what sounds I could make. H showed me how to play a tune and I was able to play it and I could remember it too. I'm not usually good at remembering. Learning the tune helped me to remember my left hand and right hand. I am really enjoying the lessons at Totally Rad and I have even learnt a Christmas song



Younger Friends...

Would you please forward my thanks to the volunteer who supports my young person J.

All of J's siblings have a disability and therefore this results in J missing out on a lot of experiences and opportunities in his life. J's family are unable to have family days out or to go on holiday. The trips that the volunteer and J undertake are very important in meeting this need. J's mother has expressed her pleasure that J now has these experiences to discuss at school, particularly when other children are discussing their holidays. J's volunteer is particularly adept at encouraging J to experience new things and broadening his horizons. Without these opportunities my fear is that J would have remained withdrawn, at home, in his bedroom.

Charity Fund Raiser at Lillington Club for local disadvantaged children

Lillington Club recently hosted their "Big" Quiz on 30th January to raise funds for Friendship Project. Pictured are the organisers Kim Morris, Secretary, Maria Brown, Steward, and Laura Morris, with Cheryl Rawbone, Chairman of the Friendship Project, receiving the donation on the Charity's behalf. The event saw 20 teams participating in a fun quiz evening, with Irish Bingo, and raffle, raising £270 for the friendship Project. The evening was sponsored by Coleman's Office Supplies, and David Lee Solicitors. The organisers from Lillington Club also held a quiz for us last year.



Future Events..

Saturday 23rd April – Farm Walk, Lambing, wool and nature event, at East Chase Farm, Chase Lane, Kenilworth, details have been circulated. For YFs and OFs.

Weds 8th June 2016 – AGM (7pm evening) – Venue to be confirmed.
All OFs welcome

Saturday 18th June 2016 – 30th Anniversary Celebratory Fayre, Old Leamingtonians Rugby Club, Leamington, starts at 1.30pm until 4.30pm – all welcome, including family and friends

August - we may be holding a Treasure Hunt for OFs and YFs in Warwick (date/venue to be confirmed) Likely date 13th August, further details follow

Friday 9th September (evening) – 30th Anniversary Quiz Night, Snitterfield Social Club – All OFs welcome

Saturday 24th September: Craft Day, 10am- 12pm (Theme: stars), at War Memorial Park, Coventry – For YFs and OFs

Training...

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR NEW VOLUNTEER OLDER FRIENDS AND REFRESHER COURSES FOR EXISTING OLDER FRIENDS.

The purpose of each session will be to clarify and re-enforce the Safeguarding Procedures and Guidelines as issued to each Older Friend.

Each session will include an introduction to Safeguarding and Protection for the Older Friend, together with an update on Child Protection and Safeguarding specifically relating to working with vulnerable children.

Training will be provided on each date by a combined team of Trustees, existing Older Friends and external professional advisors.

Dates for Training:

Evening Session 20th April 2016 at the Novotel, Junction 3, M6 - 7.30 pm – 9.00 pm
Morning Session Saturday 9th July 11 am – 1pm at the Memorial Park, Coventry
Morning Session Saturday 10th September 11 am - 1pm at the Memorial Park, Coventry

Twitter.....



We have re-launched our twitter page, ably assisted by Helen Yendall, Area Coordinator for Stratford, Shipston and Alcester

Please find us at

[TheFriendshipProject](https://www.thefriendshipproject.org.uk)

[@FriendshipProj](https://twitter.com/FriendshipProj) FOLLOWS YOU

Children's charity. Our volunteers support and guide children in need (aged 6 - 16), by increasing their self-esteem, widening interests & having fun!

Trustee/management Team Vacancy

We are looking for someone to help with marketing/promotional/events and the like and if you know of anyone who may be interested please contact our Chairman

cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk to discuss more details

What We've Been Up To... Christmas Events

Decorating a Tree at St Mary's Church, Warwick



Here's us decorating the tree last night. It put a lump in my throat. The tree looked amazing in the crypt, it is one of the most beautiful churches I have been in. We had lots of homemade decorations and we didn't need to use any shop bought ones!

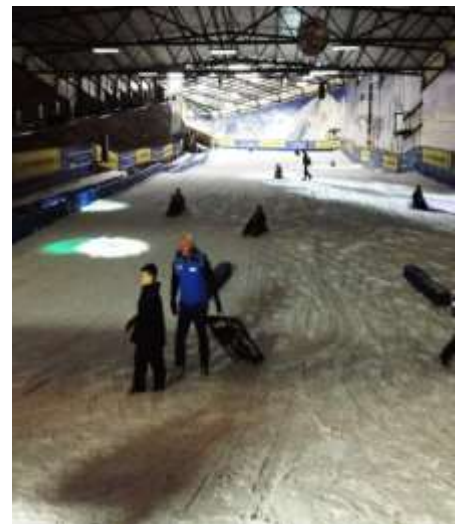
Snowdome at Tamworth

Sunday 29th November 2015

Snow, sledging and Santa were the order of the day at the Friendship Project's Snowdome Christmas event in November.

Over 40 of our Older and Younger Friends from all over Warwickshire dressed up warmly to join in the fun. Taking the traveller to the top of the 170 metre slope and then whizzing down on toboggans through the snow was great for building confidence and getting in the mood for Christmas.

Once the sledging was over, everyone enjoyed a tea party and a surprise visit from Santa himself!



Theatre Visit - Saturday 19th December 2015



Younger Friends and Older friends went to see the Christmas show *The Three Musketeers* at Playbox, Warwick. The visit was enjoyed by all and the Younger friends were following the performance treated to a behind the scenes visit and a question and answer session, with the young stars of Playbox. The play was followed by a tea and a visit from Father Christmas, with presents funded by donations from Las Iguanas.

Updates for Older friends...

Safeguarding



John Hancock, Safeguarding Officer reports that since the beginning of April 2015 fourteen face to face reviews have taken place with families which the Project serves. Initially, OF's are contacted and the review process explained to them. Arrangements are then made to visit families to speak with parents and children (YF's).

The interviews are based on 10 questions asked of parents and 5 questions discussed with their children. For example, parents are asked whether the OF collects and returns the child at the correct time and, another, asks whether other children in the family are involved in the friendship activities. YF's are asked which activities they like best and whether there are things that they don't enjoy. There are opportunities for both parents and children to voice their disapproval about the Project's operations.

The interviews take, on average, about 15-20 minutes. In addition to answers relating to safeguarding, lots of positive comments have been received about the work of our volunteers. Following the meetings the answers are written up and forwarded to the appropriate Coordinator for information, action and filing. The Project Administrator is also informed about the calendar of reviews.

Finally, the OF's are contacted and given feedback from the review meetings. Overwhelmingly, this has been a very positive and rewarding part of the process for Volunteers, Operations Staff and Trustees.

THE NITTY GRITTY BIT!!

We are pleased to report that we have recently upgraded the Friendship Project database. With this in mind, could we please just take this opportunity to remind all our Older Friends to keep us updated with any new contact details, mobile phone numbers etc – not only yours, but also please let us know if the details for your Younger Friend change. That way, our database will stay completely up-to-date!

If we could also please remind all our Older Friends to remember to submit their expense claim forms to Sue Frost before the 10th of each month! Even if you don't incur or claim any expenses in a particular month, we need your reports anyway, so that we can monitor the sorts of outings our Older Friends are making. This gives us not only a clearer idea of how the project is running, but when it comes to bidding for funds, this sort of detail helps our case dramatically. We know you are doing an excellent job – but we need to show our funders this too!

Special Offers From Attractions



Compton Verney

Compton Verney (re-opens on 19th March, 9 miles from Stratford) is a great place to take your YF and they have lots of children and family activities. They offer great value 'Collection and Park' annual tickets: £9.50 (or £8.50 concs) for adults. This includes unlimited entry to the collection, park and activities such as drop-in workshops for 12 months.

Exhibition day ticket: £15 or £14 concs. All of the above plus one off admission to an exhibition.

Children (5 – 15yrs): £3. Same price regardless of what admission price the adult pays. This will also be an annual ticket for the collection, park and activities.

Hatton Country World

Hatton have kindly renewed last year's special offer. Phone Sara Carson on her direct line: 01926 844339 and mention The Friendship Project to order a £10 ticket for you and your YF. If you have 2 YFs, it will be possible to buy another ticket (so it's £5 per head). The ticket will be valid until 1/3/2017. It will exclude entrance during October half term and to Santa's Grotto at Christmas. You will need to pay for the ticket over the phone and then it will be sent to your address.



Warwick Boat Club & Leamington Tennis Clubs

Tennis and squash offers:

Coaches at Warwick Boat and Leamington Tennis clubs are offering free squash and tennis coaching for our Younger Friends.

They will even help out with equipment, if required. For more information, please contact Fiona Roche: fionarochefriendshipproject.co.uk



Cheryll Rawbone named 'Local Community Hero' for 30-year Charity Commitment

Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman of Arthur J. Gallagher's Coventry branch, has been recognised as its 2015 'Local Community Hero' for her contribution to children's charity, The Friendship Project - securing a £1000 donation to further support its invaluable work.

Cheryll was nominated for the internal company award by multiple colleagues and, despite strong competition with more than 100 individuals put forward across the UK, it was felt Cheryll's 29 years of dedication to the charity, enthusiasm and passion to help others set her apart.

Cheryll started working with the charity in 1986, after the late founder – one of her clients at the time – asked for administrative help. She soon became the Honorary Secretary – a role she held for 25 years – before becoming Vice Chairman, and then Chairman in 2013. Cheryll was replaced as Honorary Secretary by her fellow Arthur J. Gallagher colleague Valerie Wallace-Burrows, who was able to bring her valuable HR and organisational and administrative skills to the role.

As Chairman, Cheryll continues to have a very hands-on role, juggling her responsibilities at the charity with her job, often working on weekends and evenings. She not only manages the employees, promotes volunteer recruitment and formal aspects, such as guidelines and procedures, but also works tirelessly in fundraising, promotion, and helping with organising events for the children.

Cheryll said of her win: "It is great to receive this award, and for the charity that I have been closely involved with for just over 29 years to benefit from this donation. It will be used to help support interesting and fun visits for the almost 50 disadvantaged children we support in Warwickshire, and will mean approximately 100 visits being possible for disadvantaged children accompanied by our volunteers."

"My thanks to my colleagues for nominating me, and also their ongoing practical help and support for The Friendship Project."



Donations to the Project 2015

Grateful thanks to our Funders and Fundraisers/Event organisers for 2015, which were as follows:

- Terry Hague
- Lillington Parish Church Collection (In memory of John Vallis)
- J Sault
- Warwickshire Masonic Charitable Trust
- Cheryll Rawbone
- Estate of David Wright
- Kenilworth Lions
- Quiz Night Donations
- Easy Fundraising.org - anon
- Aubrey Allen
- Arthur J Gallagher Ltd
- Leamington Spa Swimming Club
- D Williams
- P Blackwell
- Recessionaires
- For the Maltings No 9 Limited*
- Mrs E Preston*
- Mr M Wilkinson*
- Chris Reynold*
- Leamington Spa Rotary Club
- Bewley Charitable Trust
- Warwickshire County Council Resources staff
- Rotary of Southam
- FC Stokes Charitable Trust
- Ambleside Bowls Club
- Ladies First Christmas Raffle
- Lillington Social Club

* These donations were also in memory of the late John Vallis

Thanks also to Arthur J Gallagher for their ongoing support in providing postage, office services, and meeting rooms.

Vacancy: Trustee Fundraiser

Voluntary Bid Fundraiser (Trustee) Vacancy

Aims and Objectives

- Primary aim to raise funds through approaching larger charitable organisation sources
- Good existing database of organisations and track record of success
- Liaise and attend Funder events
- Liaise with treasurer as to bid status
- Attend linked training events
- Linked with www.easyfundraising.org.uk

To apply for this role please send a covering letter and CV to our Chairman, Cheryll Rawbone at cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk