

NEWSLETTER

2019/20 - Issue 23



Chairman's Introduction

I was greatly looking forward to my introduction to our Newsletter with the exciting news of our Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which we were awarded in June 2019, and just recently being formally presented with the award at the end of February. It is the equivalent of an MBE for the charity, and acknowledgement of the great work supporting children in need in Warwickshire by our Volunteers, Operations Team, Trustees, Supporters and Funders, that we have collectively achieved this accolade.

Unfortunately, this has been dampened by the impact of the COVID-19 virus and the difficulties, and challenges this has caused for the community as whole. We have addressed our own approach in a separate part of this newsletter for your information, and any further suggestions are welcome.

We are fortunate to have had the second successive year where our fund raising has exceeded expectations. This means we have been able to increase our reserves, which has proven to be really important this coming year with the funding shortfalls becoming apparent within the charity sector and certain funders pausing their grant funding. This is usually a large proportion of our funding, plus lack of opportunity for collective fund raising/promotional activities to be held too.

You will see in our newsletter some snapshots from brighter times in the last twelve months, plus a feature on one of our longstanding volunteers and her Younger Friend. We have plans for various exciting events in 2020 and although postponed during the spring, it is hoped that these will still be able to be held later in the year. The calendar of events is to the rear of this Newsletter.

For the first time, we will be holding our AGM online. It would be great if you could join us on 3rd June at 7.00pm which is during Volunteers Week. Further details will follow.

I would just like to give a big thank you to our Older Friends, Group Supporters, Operations Team, Trustees, Volunteers, Supporters and Funders for their contributions to helping young people improve their self-esteem, confidence, and to have some fun when they would not otherwise have these opportunities.

Cheryll Rawbone - Chairman

For more information please contact:- cheryll.rawbone@friendshipproject.co.uk

A day at the rugby

A great day was had by our Younger (and Older) Friends watching **WASPS** on a chilly day in January 2019.

The children had a chance to not only watch the rugby but also be flag bearers and mascots! WASPS won against the Northampton Saints.

Thank you to **Gallagher** for making this day possible for us.



Kenilworth Fire Station



Thank you to the team at **Kenilworth Fire Station** for putting on a great event for us in May 2019. By the end of it most of the children were keen to follow a career in the Fire and Rescue Service!

Go Ape



Thank you to the NCS Team for organising a fabulous event for us at the newly opened **Go Ape** at Coombe Abbey in July 2019. Our Younger and Older Friends had a fantastic time in the treetops! The NCS spoke to over 100 potential volunteers the week before the event and, whilst the youngsters from there raised over £500 for us, unfortunately the company organising this failed, and funds unfortunately did not then reach us.



Moreton Morrell

A huge thank you to Friendship Project Trustee Michelle for helping to organise a wonderful outing to **Moreton Morrell College** in March 2019 to meet some of the animals there.

It was a beautiful sunny day and the Younger Friends, Older Friends, and Friendship Project staff enjoyed a really hands on experience.

We hope to repeat this outing at some point in the future as it was such a success.

Narrow Boat trips

I think we can safely say that our **2 Narrow Boat trips** in April and May 2019 were a great success – so much so that we already have 4 dates in the diary for 2020!

There were board games, tea, and some delicious fish and chips.

The best bit was watching the Younger Friends get involved steering, being look out at the front, helping with the ropes and generally enjoying themselves.

Thank you to Older Friend Chris for making the trips possible.



Craft Event

We met in September 2019 for our very enjoyable annual **Craft Morning** in Coventry. It's difficult to be thinking of Christmas at the end of September, but to get the Christmas card collage ready for the photographer and the printer, that's what we need to do!

Paper chains, friendship bracelets, hama beads, paper friends and wooden decorations were painted, plaited, cut out, dressed and coloured in. This year we had

also been given lots of Lego by an Older Friend which the Younger Friends gladly took home. Thank you to everyone who helped in so many ways, with a special thank you to our volunteer Sam who provided many of the ideas (and the materials).

Christmas Card

The idea behind our 2019 card was to use our Younger Friends handprints to create an impressive wreath. We're sure you'll agree that the finished article was very colourful and Christmassy!



Our thanks again to Andy at Avon Studios in Wellesbourne who always does a wonderful job of photographing the art work for us.

If you would like to purchase any cards nice and early for Christmas this year do please let us know. The cards are £4 for a pack of 5, with every penny going towards supporting The Friendship Project.

Christmas Tree Decorating



Each year we decorate some Christmas Trees in local churches throughout the County. Christmas 2019 was no exception, and we decorated 3! Our tree at St Mary's Church in Warwick was beautifully decorated by these two Younger Friends! Some of our September craft morning decorations made it as decorations, with extras made too for our other trees in St Andrews, Rugby and Ansley Church.

Christmas Party

In December 2019 we gathered for our annual Christmas Party. With over 50 children in attendance it was certainly fun! We had games, dancing, food and even a visit from Father Christmas in his travelling grotto! Thank you so much to everyone that made this such a special party for the children – Leamington Cricket Club for the venue, Escape Arts for their travelling Santa, Nicky's Fancy Faces for the entertainment and Evelyn's Gift for the presents and food.



Older Friend Kathryn's Story



I came to hear about the Friendship Project (FP) in 2015 through a friend. Each time we'd meet for a coffee I felt so inspired by hearing about her friendship as an Older Friend (OF) to her Younger Friend (YF). 2016 was a year of changes for me in my outlook on life and, having not had any children of my own with my husband, I found that I was being drawn towards that direction via a slightly different route.

Having made enquiries to see if the FP extended as far wide as Rugby, I sent my details in and started the application process. At the same time, I was looking towards working with children and families in the area on a professional basis too.

It all just felt right, and it still does.

The FP are very careful when matching you with a YF, so that it gives you a great starting point to your friendship. We shared common interests which have continued and developed as she has got a little older. She was just turning 8 when we met, but is now a livelier, bigger 11 year old, facing the start of 'big school' this year.

When the weather allows, we try to get out and about for some exercise and fresh air. I always have wellies ready for us both and walks are good as we spot wildlife and find things to play with and explore, whilst we chat away. We bake together, create cards or pictures for her family and enjoy making themed arts/crafts for Halloween or Christmas. The cinema or a meal out together are good for rainy, cold or dark times that we might meet up. Our soft play days are nearly behind us so we are now finding new things to plan together.

Typically, we spend 2 or 3 hours together but I often have time to spend longer with her. We go out usually at the weekend, or sometimes on an evening. In school holidays I try to also do a full day trip with her. We have been to the Sea Life Centre and the Think Tank in Birmingham on separate trips, and recently went to the Space Centre in Leicester. We have also had day trips to Charlecote Park followed by a splash in the playpark outdoor pool in Warwick, plus an exciting day out at Warwick Castle last year. The FP group days out are amazing, getting all the OFs and YFs together... annual craft events, Twycross Zoo and Go Ape (goodness me, my poor old body - ouch!).

When I have needed advice or support from my Area Coordinator or other support members of the FP, their help has been amazing and very professional. You feel fully supported as an OF when any situations arise where you may feel uncertain. The regular safeguarding training we receive is always valuable as well as guidance on subjects such as online safety and cyber bullying.

I can see her confidence and personality growing and maturing and I always try to encourage her to form her own opinions on matters. As she approaches that 'huffy' age, she will face physical changes as well as educational and emotional changes. I hope that our friendship continues in the same trusting, fun and sometimes rather challenging way that we have enjoyed so far. Volunteering as an OF has meant a great deal to me, I like to think that my YF also feels the same way.

Younger Friends

The number of children that we support is constantly changing. As of 1st April 2020 our figures are:

12 in North Warwickshire
17 in Rugby
11 in Stratford
27 in Leamington/Warwick

A Carers Thanks

Some positive feedback that we recently received from a carer:-

"Lucy is having a great time with Sue. She looks forward to seeing her and the activities they do together. Sue is showing her that adults can be consistent and caring and are true to their word. I think Sue is amazing and long may it continue"

Since the project was established in 1986 our volunteers have provided over £1.5 million of support to children

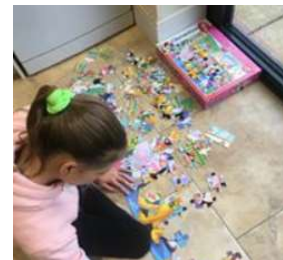
Younger Friends activities



Having fun at the Motor Museum.



We always receive lots of photos of the wonderful creations made by Our Younger Friends with their Older Friends!



It is often the simple things that can bring so much joy.

Could you be a volunteer for us?

We have many more children on our waiting lists needing an Older Friend. It could be you helping one of them! Please contact: Karen.Hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk for more information.

If you are thinking of volunteering for us, here are some words from current Older Friend Clare to inspire you:-
"I find the Friendship Project such a professional charity to volunteer with. The support they offer to volunteers and the systems they have in place are really second to none. Given the nature of the work with young people, this gives me so much confidence to get out there and have fun with my Younger Friend."



What others have been doing for us

We reached the end of our 2 year fundraising from **The Croft Preparatory School** in Stratford, after having been nominated in 2017 as one of their chosen charities to support.

Heather and Cheryl went to the school on a beautiful Summers day to be presented with a cheque. They were staggered to gratefully receive an astonishing amount of £10,935! We had

also previously received an earlier cheque direct from one of the parents too.

We cannot thank them enough. This huge amount will make such a difference.



Without donations – we would not be here today – thank you!

Many thanks to the **Women's Institute** at their various locations, for regularly asking us to come and talk at their meetings about the work we do. They always give us a donation and provide us with wonderful tea, cake and company!

Here we are at Ridge Lane WI in November 2019.



Thank you to the **Whitestone pub in Nuneaton** for holding a charity fun day for us in June.



Heather Shipley collecting prize money from 'Make Good and Grow'. Thank you!

We cannot list everyone that we need to thank on here, but we are grateful to every one of you that helps us out in any way.....

Tri Recruitment kindly funded 2 free passes to Warwick Castle for our Younger Friends which have been well used. They also presented us with a cheque for £358.35 which was made up from percentages donated from their employment placements.

Thank you once again to **Older Friend Maja** for organising a lovely classical concert on Mothering Sunday in March 2019 in aid of the Friendship Project. The music, tea and cake were all wonderful.

Village Voices held a Christmas concert for us in Warwick in December 2019.

Many thanks to **Playground Games**, a Leamington based computer games studio, whose staff chose and voted for us as their charity of the year. We received £6,000 from the company as part of their support for children in the community ethos.

Recessionaires have funded lessons at Playbox Theatre, we have had **free & reduced rate Martial Art classes** from G Force in Rugby, and **Kenilworth Rotary** funded a week away in Wales for 6 Younger Friends.

We are always very grateful for the delicious cakes that **Free Cakes for Kids** make for so many of our Younger Friends on their Birthday.

We have still been working closely with **Evelyn's Gift**, and thank them for all their support.

Donations over £1000 made to The Friendship Project in 2019

With grateful thanks to those that have donated any amount, our Funders and Fundraisers/Event organisers for 2019, who included the following:-

- Stratford Town Trust
- The Tampon Tax Community Fund
- Heart of England Community Foundation
- Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Playground Games
- Aviva Community Fund
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Balsall Common Lions
- Contract Scaffolding Limited
- Woman Who Achieves Awards
- Croft Preparatory School
- Aubrey Allen
- The Entertainer
- Garfield Weston
- Bodies & Co (early 2020)
- Youell Family / Harry Payne Fund

Thanks also to **Gallagher** – Insurance Risk Management and Consultancy, for their ongoing support in providing postage, office services, photocopying, mail shots, printing, plus meeting facilities free of charge.

Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club regularly allow us to use their meeting space free of charge – thank you.

Like all charities, The Friendship Project relies on donations from the general public for a significant amount of its income. If you can spare even just a pound or two, or perhaps help to organise a fundraising event to help towards our valuable contribution to society, then please do feel free to contact our trustee Fundraiser, Richard Barrett (richard.barrett@friendshipproject.co.uk).

CharitiesTrust

The Friendship Project have partnered with The Charities Trust, a leading donations management company established in 1987, in order to provide opportunities for payroll giving, sponsorship, and credit card payments. Our website, www.friendshipproject.co.uk/fundraising includes details of the following, via partner

Payroll Giving

Sponsorship – Online Fundraising – Sponsor Me

Match Funding

One off Card donations

Shopping on Amazon Smile and selecting us to receive money on each purchase you make.

Cheques can be made payable to The Friendship Project for Children and posted to:

Cheryll Rawbone – Chairman, c/o 20 Northumberland Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6HA.

We would like to say a huge thank you to those individuals, companies, and other organisations – some of whom are annual donors – who have given and continue to give so generously to The Friendship Project to support our valuable work in the community.

Awards



March 2019 was a busy month for us! We were delighted to win the award for 'In the Community' at the **Midlands Service Excellence Awards 2019**. The awards recognise, reward and celebrate those individuals and companies that provide very high levels of service excellence across the region. With thanks to our volunteers & operations team for the great job they do.

We were also delighted to be announced as one of the winners of the **Aviva Community Fund** and presented with a cheque for £5000! Pictured are Richard Barrett and Cheryl Rawbone of The Friendship Project receiving the cheque, and also Richard receiving the award for community service to charity. We are very grateful to Gallagher for once again giving us a broker supported application to Aviva.

Cheryll Rawbone was also a finalist (for the 2nd time) in the Charity Category of '**Woman Who**'. She went onto win a **Women Who/FSB Special Award 2019** for her longstanding charity service. Congratulations Cheryl!!



We were lucky to have 2 visits to Buckingham Palace in May 2019, as well as one visit to Windsor Castle in April courtesy of the **NCVO 100 year celebration** invitation event, where Cheryl was fortunate in being introduced to Her Majesty the Queen.

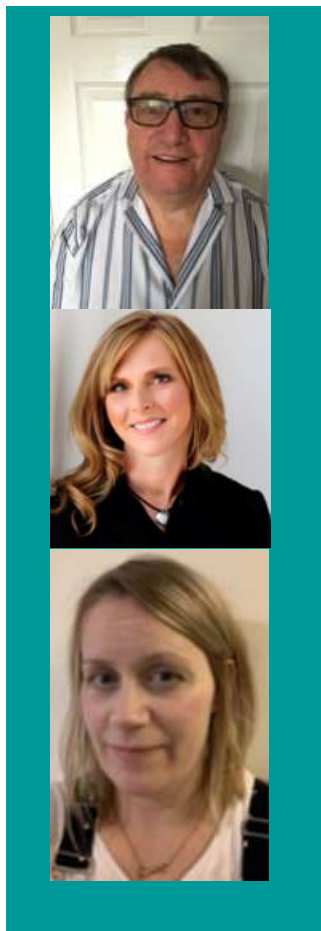
WCAVA were proud to host their award ceremony in June 2019. Congratulations to John Hancock for being awarded the Long Service award and Pauline Higginbottom who made it to the shortlist of the Unsung Hero. Area Coordinator Kelly Furness and her team in Rugby also received a special recognition award for our work in Rugby. Well done everyone!

We were delighted to announce on 2 June that The Friendship Project had been honoured with the **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**, the highest award a charity can receive. Tim Cox, the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire presented us with our Award in February 2020 and commented that, 'It is an honour to present the award on behalf of Her Majesty, and recognise a charity run predominantly by Volunteers, helping children within their community for over 30 years'. We would like to thank Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club for allowing us to use their newly refurbished bar and café area for our Presentation evening and also providing us with Prosecco and Juice, our speakers for the evening who gave us a wonderful insight into the life of an being an Older Friend – past and present, everyone who came along to support us, and all of our wonderful Volunteers.



Trustee News

2019 was again a tremendous year for us in terms of fundraising and thanks to Richard Barrett for all his hard work in achieving such a magnificent total. Our volunteer numbers are constantly increasing, and this has been supported by our Operations team. Michelle, our Hon Secretary, has efficiently helped make sure that our expenses and salaries have been paid. Ken Smith, Angela Truman and Esther Jones are valued new members of the team.



Ken Smith joined us as our Treasurer in January 2019. He had recently retired from the post of Financial Director at an engineering company in Milton Keynes after 15 years. Prior to this he worked for Rothmans International for 22 years in a number of financial and management roles. He is married to Heather, has two sons and Boris the cocker spaniel 9!

Angela Truman joined us as a Trustee in April 2019 taking overall responsibility for Marketing. She originally joined the Friendship Project in 2012 as an Older Friend. Her career, accounting for more than 30 years of marketing experience, has predominantly focussed on the business sector, working within the corporate environment, yet has developed latterly to provide direct consultancy services for consumer and community organisations. Whether vocational or personal, she has always pursued an involvement with fundraising and active support for many local charities. Her business experience, coupled with a drive to give something back locally and make a difference to a disadvantaged child makes her passionate about The Friendship Project.

Esther Jones began volunteering as an Older Friend for the Friendship Project in 2006 and in more recent years has delivered safeguarding training to her fellow volunteers. She stepped back from her role as an Older Friend in 2017 when her Younger Friend of 11 years turned 17 and she took maternity leave. Keen to stay involved with the charity, she was delighted to be appointed as a Trustee in November 2019. Esther's career has focussed on children, young people and families and the organisations working with them by teaching English as a foreign language to children and adults in Japan, supporting young people not in employment, education or training, providing advice, guidance and advocacy for voluntary organisations working with families, delivering safeguarding training to voluntary organisations, volunteering for the Leicester City Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service and since 2015 and managing the 'Troubled Families' Programme for Leicester City Council. Outside work, Esther loves sewing, baking, gardening and being outdoors. She is married, has two boys and a beautiful black Labrador.

Suzee Laxton was Compliance QA & Accreditation Brief for us and left in April 2019. We would like to thank her for all of her help and we wish her all the best for the future.

John Hancock will be standing down as at Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding in June this year and will be succeeded in this role by Esther Jones. We say farewell to **Pauline Higginbottom** as Operations Advisor to The Trustees. We are very lucky however, to have both John and Pauline still available as 'Mentors'. Their many years of volunteering for us have been invaluable and we are so very grateful for their dedication. We wish them all the best for the future and we will of course be keeping in touch.

Safeguarding

John Hancock has been involved with the Friendship Project for 30 years. Currently, as Vice Chair of Trustees, he carries a specific responsibility for safeguarding within the project. At the 2020 AGM on 3 June 2020 he is due to step down as Safeguarding Officer. His place will be taken by Esther Jones. Esther is well equipped for this role and will also be a member of the Safeguarding Committee, which is responsible for shaping safeguarding practice.

A recent change in practice has been more regular safeguarding reviews of the friendships being carried out by the Area Coordinators which is supported by the Ops Team.

Whilst coming to the end of his time with The Friendship Project John has gained valuable experience, coupled with being a head of a Secondary School for many years.

John is proud to still be available in his newly created role of Safeguarding Mentor.

COVID - 19

In March of 2020 the Trustees took the extremely difficult decision to suspend face to face visits with our volunteer Older Friends & Younger Friends for an initial period of twelve weeks from 18th March 2020. We are providing ongoing support and our volunteers are being regularly updated. They are being encouraged to interact with their Younger Friend remotely via online, telephone, or indeed in certain cases "snail mail". Our Area Coordinators remain in contact with them, the families and referrers. Our Operations Team are looking at increasing their marketing efforts, and potentially making progress working on Trusted Charity and Investing in Volunteers Accreditation whilst they are temporarily not arranging new volunteer and child matches, though still monitoring ongoing work. They can do part of the administration work in recruitment of new volunteers with provision there will be a delay in start time for when people are no longer under restrictions outside of their homes, and interviews and training can then be completed.

Future Events

We hope to see you at some of the events that we have already set for this year. We do often add more events too as the year goes on. **We have unfortunately had to cancel/postpone some events from March onwards, but we very much hope to be able to reschedule these later in the year if we can.**

If you have any ideas for future events, or would like more information on the current events planned please feel free to contact:-

karen.hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk

Younger Friend Events:-

29 March – Riding Event
25 April – Narrow Boat trip
2 May – Narrow Boat trip
23 May – Narrow Boat trip
11 July – Den Building
22 August – Narrow Boat trip
26 September – Craft Event
6 December – Christmas Party

Older Friend Events:-

27 February – Queen's Award Presentation & Get Together
14 March – Safeguarding Training
24 March – Get Together (Rugby)
3 June – AGM
23 June – Safeguarding Training
9 Sept – Get Together (Leamington)
7 November – Safeguarding Training

Registered Office:-

Myton Park

Myton Lane

Warwick

CV34 6PX

Registered Charity No: 517684

Visit us at:-

Website: www.friendshipproject.co.uk

Twitter & Facebook: @friendshipproj



the friendship project for children

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Would you like to be an 'Older Friend' to a child for weekly outings of just 2-3 hours?

(Volunteers must be aged 18 or over and preferably with transport)

Friendship at the right time can give children
the confidence they need.

"Make a difference to a child's life"

For more details and an application form, please contact

0845 838 2098*

email: info@friendshipproject.co.uk

twitter: [@friendshipproj](https://twitter.com/friendshipproj)

or visit our website

www.friendshipproject.co.uk



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