



the friendship project  
for children

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

This report reflects our achievements during 2019 and our plans for 2020, though these may be subject to change owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our thanks go to the many volunteers, employees, funders, and supporters for helping children in need throughout Warwickshire in the last twelve months to have some much-needed fun, aiding their personal development, confidence, and improving their self-esteem, and in particular coping with their new challenges in supporting the vulnerable children during the lockdown.

Additionally, I would like to thank the contributors to this report which helps give an insight into the work undertaken by members of our Operations team, fellow trustees, plus importantly some case studies to help show the impact and difference that we and more importantly our volunteers are making.

The overall purpose of the Friendship Project is to improve the social and emotional well-being of children, aged 6-16, disadvantaged by virtue of their own or family circumstances. An Older Friend provides experiences lacking in the child's life, builds a trusting relationship and raises the self-esteem of their Younger Friend. Volunteers, over the age of 18, are drawn from Warwickshire communities and come from all walks of life. They are carefully vetted as to their suitability for this work, including DBS checks.

Volunteers meet with their Younger Friends weekly for between 2-3 hours to be involved in mutually enjoyable and jointly planned activities and visits. Examples include playing in the park, building dens, craft activities, cooking, fishing, bird watching, climbing, golf, sewing, library, swimming, cinema, growing vegetables etc. which, their school contemporaries take for granted.

Volunteers maintain that the 1:1 attention, with the capacity for the child to talk to a listening adult, is the most valuable aspect of the activity. Such activities are at the heart of what the Project does.

The average length of a friendship is 2.5/3 years and over time the Younger Friend gradually becomes more open and confident in discussing worries and concerns about family, school, friends and themselves. Older Friends offer support and, increasingly, guidance on more sensitive and personal issues. This has helped Younger Friends gain a better understanding of their problems; develop better relationships with family members; and cope more positively with challenging situations at school.

Positive feedback and encouragement, invariably missing in the child's life, is a constant feature of the weekly activities and of major importance in raising self-esteem. This usually results in the young people developing new interests and acquiring a wider range of skills.

Volunteers enjoy the company of their Younger Friends and going to places they wouldn't otherwise go to. They enjoy providing new experiences and knowing they are a trusted confidante but, above all, they gain satisfaction from seeing their Younger Friend develop socially and personally.

One-to-one befriending carries a potential risk in relation to child protection. Safeguarding procedures, in relation to recruitment, vetting, briefing, training and supervision of volunteers are given the highest priority and kept under constant review with Children's Services. The Friendship Project is an Associate Member of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board and an Assistant Head of Service acts as an Advisor to our Trustees.

There is quality research now available advising the importance of early intervention to help both mental and physical health outcomes in later life, making our contribution in the sector very valuable. We hope that you find this report of interest, and for further information please visit our website: [www.friendshipproject.co.uk](http://www.friendshipproject.co.uk) or follow us on: – **@friendshipproj** on twitter and Instagram or on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren](https://www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren)

## CHAIRMANS REPORT

My report is focused primarily on our activities and achievements in 2019, our last financial year, plus our plans for 2020, and how we are approaching the current COVID-19 challenges.

First and foremost, I would like to extend a big thank you on behalf of all the children (Younger Friends) that we are supporting and have helped, to all our excellent current and past volunteers, employees, benefactors/funders and trustees. Without whose dedication our small local charity could not continue to help the lives of children in need throughout Warwickshire. Since 1986, we estimate that there have been more than 1,200 children helped over this period.

In June 2019 we received exciting news that we had been awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, and I was honored to be formally presented with this by Tom Cox Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire on behalf of her majesty the Queen. This took place at a gathering of our volunteers, operations team, trustees, and supporters at Leamington Tennis & Squash Club, who kindly hosted the event and provided the refreshments. It is a tremendous accolade for us and a fitting tribute to tribute to all involved.

We have had stability in our Operations team in the last twelve months, which is really working together in a collaborative way, meeting regularly to support each other although more recently this has had to be online. Pauline Higginbottom has been a volunteer chair of the Operations team, and well as our DBS manager, from which she retired from in December, though is continuing to be an operations mentor. Pauline is thanked for her considerable contribution over the years. We have welcomed two new trustees, Angela Truman to take portfolio for Marketing and PR, and Esther Jones, as succession planning to take over the safeguarding portfolio from John Hancock who stands down at the AGM. He is thanked greatly for his long service and has kindly agreed to stay on as a mentor for safeguarding.

### The Highlights of what we have achieved in 2019 are as follows: -

- ✓ Continued to provide the invaluable 121 volunteer support and fun for disadvantaged children. Aim to increase the numbers supported and reduce our waiting lists.
- ✓ We received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service
- ✓ Earlier in the year we achieved the Midlands Service Excellence Award in the Community
- ✓ Our fund raising was again successful, and for the second year running we were able to achieve a surplus so that our reserves are improved, this will be very important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as fund raising will be more difficult.
- ✓ Our new treasurer, Ken Smith, started his first full year, having been appointed at the end of 2018, and we are receiving monthly reports relating to our financial position again.
- ✓ Two new trustees were appointed. Esther Jones was appointed from a succession planning perspective to take over the portfolio of safeguarding. She has been an Older Friend. and is responsible for safeguarding as part of her day job, plus has also contributed to our safeguarding training. Angela Truman joins us with 30 years' experience in Marketing and PR, plus she was previously an Older friend too, so has good understanding of the work of the charity.
- ✓ We have continued the roll out personal visits to YFs and their carer/parent for safeguarding and to validate worth/user feedback via the Operations team.
- ✓ Target was to have had 80 matches by year end, and during the year we exceeded this by supporting 98 children in total with 87 volunteers. Our year end going forward to 2020 has started with 67 matches, with others in the pipeline.
- ✓ Continued to hold periodic Older Friends get-togethers/training/support sessions
- ✓ Recruit additional Group Supporters, as required as our Older Friends increase
- ✓ Highly successful events for the Younger Friends and Older Friends have again been organised, including visit to Moreton Morrell, to the Animal Welfare Centre, Kenilworth Fire Station, and In conjunction with the National Citizen's Challenge we visited the Go Ape course at Coombe Abbey, plus picnic and garden games. Canal barge trips also featured and were great fun. Then another

- excellent craft event in the autumn, and a magnificent Christmas party, organised by Evelyn's wish, plus Escape Arts kindly brought Father Christmas to the event in his own grotto.
- ✓ Continued to promote the Friendship Project, throughout the County; this included attendance at various CAVA events including their AGM, where we were featured as part of the Queens Award. plus talking at WI, local Rotary, and Lions Clubs etc. plus attend local networking events.
  - ✓ Carried out refresher training for trustees on risk and safeguarding

### In 2020 our plans include the following: -

- ✓ Continue to provide the invaluable 121 volunteer support and fun for disadvantaged children. Aim to increase the numbers supported and reduce our waiting lists. Target to have 80 still matched by end of 2020, though the quality is still more important than the numbers matched.
- ✓ Specifically, to increase the number of Older Friends as volunteers, particularly in Stratford and district, Rugby, and North Warwickshire areas
- ✓ Our budget is to raise £65,000, with target income of £70,000
- ✓ Safeguarding continues to be of great importance, and Esther Jones will review our procedures and operations of this as part of her new role.
- ✓ Recruit a trustee for HR/Legal portfolio, or include as part of the compliance role, plus Operations and potential new Vice-Chairman
- ✓ Our Operations team are working on Trusted Charity and Investors in Volunteer accreditation, during the lockdown period, as they are not able to complete matching interviews, and we are keen to come out of the current challenges in a good strong position going forward.
- ✓ Continue the roll out of personal visits to YFs and their carer/parent to for safeguarding and to validate worth. To potentially to extend this to include anonymous case studies to support fund raising.
- ✓ Attend periodic networking events to increase the profile of the Friendship Project. Aim to be featured Charity of the Day for the Stratford Business Forums. Look at potential Awards opportunities to increase our profile and aid both fundraising and recruitment.
- ✓ Organise two more sessions through the year for Safeguarding Training for volunteers, both as refreshers and also for new volunteers.
- ✓ Continue to hold periodic Older Friends get-togethers/training/support sessions.
- ✓ Complete the Procedures Manual including Trustees Responsibilities too.
- ✓ Continue to encourage and support training for the Operation team
- ✓ Recruit additional Group Supporters, as required as our Older Friends increase
- ✓ Change to "CIO" status, has been put on hold, as we are awaiting confirmation that the Queens Award can be moved across to the new entity.
- ✓ Complete the review of publicity and marketing materials including the Queens Award logo

### Trustee vacancies

We are interested in adding to our trustee team, and if you have skills or knowledge in HR/Legal or Compliance/Risk or Operational Management then we would be delighted to chat with you about these portfolio trustee roles. If you would like a coffee to find out more, please get in touch

Whilst writing my report I would like to again personally thank both past and present the many Older Friends, Group Supporters, volunteers, operations team, employees and trustees, who give their time freely to help our Younger Friends have important 1-2-1 attention, emotional support, friendship and the opportunity to explore new activities and have some fun.

**Cheryll Rawbone**

Chairman

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## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The Safeguarding Officer's role is to have oversight of safeguarding procedures and to ensure that safeguarding practise is robust.

Since the last AGM 2 meetings of the Safeguarding Committee, chaired by the Safeguarding Officer (SO ), have taken place. The first meeting, took place in normal surroundings whereas the second meeting, held during the period of Covid-19, was held in a "digital setting". Cheryll Rawbone ( Chair of Project ); John Hancock (VC/SO ); Karen Hoy ( DBS Manager/Operations Administrator ); Esther Jones ( future SO ); and Calvin Smith ( LA representative with senior responsibility for safeguarding ) contributed to the meeting via phone or video link. This meeting provided the opportunity to discuss, how the Project and its members, were coping during " Lockdown". It also provided the opportunity for updating Calvin on the Project's developments and, conversely, on changes within the LA of relevance to the Friendship Project.

During Esther Jones' absence on maternity leave 2 safeguarding training sessions were jointly conducted by Heather Shipley (Area Coordinator of Stratford District) and Kelly Furness ( Area Coordinator of Rugby District ) and the sessions were well received by capacity audiences. The pair used their experiences with the Project and worked in tandem to present very professional training sessions. A visiting speaker from Warwickshire County Council addressed the Operations Team on cyber safety.

The Area Coordinator for Rugby District and I visited a potential volunteer to investigate a DBS disclosure. After careful consideration and, following a standard format, the volunteer was accepted as a potential Older Friend.

Family reviews have been conducted by Area Coordinators outside their districts and based on a standard format previously developed by the SO. An important role performed by the SO has been the day-to-day advice and guidance provided to Area Coordinators on a wide range of safeguarding issues.

During " Lockdown" it has been important to discover the nature of the contact between OF,s and YF,s. Whether this has been via phone, email or text and, to discover, which activities have been successful or not.

Esther Jones and I met to discuss the hand-over process. Already a Trustee she will take over my role of SO by the time of the AGM. I have served the Project for 30 years through good and difficult times. I was Chairperson for 9 years and will continue my connections as Safeguarding Mentor. Watch this space!

**John Hancock**

VC Trustees/and Safeguarding Officer

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## GRANT, TRUST & FUND-RAISING REPORT

I am very pleased to report that 2019 has been a very good year with total income raised of over £76,000.

The largest source of our income in 2019 came from grants and trust funders as we continued to apply to previous funders and find new sources. We were very grateful that the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner decided to continue funding our newly established work in North Warwickshire for another year, enabling us to grow our friendships and actively promote our work in that part of the county.

It has also been pleasing to see both our donations and local fund-raising events income increase in 2019. We were delighted to have been chosen by Croft Primary School as their charity of the year, resulting in £10,935 being raised for the Friendship Project, a magnificent result for which we are most grateful. We are thankful to all who contributed to our other fundraising activities in 2019 and provided our Younger Friends with complementary tickets to WASPS, Warwick Castle and canal boat trips.

We are extremely grateful to all our corporate and individual donors who have supported us through large and small donations and also for the ongoing support of Aubrey Allen and our grant funders:

- ✓ 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- ✓ Aubrey Allen
- ✓ Aviva Community Fund
- ✓ Aylesford Family Charitable Trust
- ✓ Balsall Common Lions
- ✓ Baron Davenport Trust
- ✓ Bewdley Charitable Trust
- ✓ Contract Scaffolding Ltd
- ✓ Coventry & District Cricket
- ✓ Coventry Building Society
- ✓ Croft Preparatory School
- ✓ Evelyn's Gift
- ✓ F C Stokes Family Trust
- ✓ Gallagher Ltd
- ✓ Garfield Weston Charitable Foundation
- ✓ BM & SJ Hall
- ✓ Heart of England Community Foundation
- ✓ Jarman Trust
- ✓ Ladies First
- ✓ Playground Games
- ✓ Masonic Charitable Foundation
- ✓ Meerstock Festival
- ✓ National Citizen Service
- ✓ Provincial Grand lodge of Warwickshire
- ✓ Recessionaires
- ✓ Rotary clubs of Kenilworth and Royal Leamington Spa
- ✓ Stratford Town Trust
- ✓ Southam Lions
- ✓ Southam Rotary donation
- ✓ St James's Place Charitable Foundation
- ✓ Tampon Tax Community Fund
- ✓ Terence Hague
- ✓ The Entertainer
- ✓ Three Spires Lodge
- ✓ Village Voices
- ✓ Warwick Boat Club
- ✓ Warwick Lions
- ✓ Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner
- ✓ Wesleyan Assurance Fund
- ✓ Whitestone Pub in Bedworth
- ✓ Woman Who Achieves Awards
- ✓ C Youell Family Fund

Thanks also go to Gallagher Insurance Broking Limited who continue to give administration support, postal mail shots and loan of equipment and to Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club for use of their meeting rooms.

We have continued to raise our profile, through social media, local press articles, Facebook, alongside attending local networking and promotional events and of course through our being awarded The Queens Award for Voluntary Service, for which we are delighted.

As we move forward through 2020 and the ongoing impact of the Corona virus upon our activity and fund raising, we are pleased to have ended 2019 with increased reserves, equivalent to approximately nine months expenditure. This means we can look forward with confidence, to continue our work across Warwickshire during the epidemic and to growing our friendships, supporting more disadvantaged children, once restrictions are lifted. Thanks go to the whole team for all their hard work in achieving this.

**Richard Barrett**

Trustee & Fund Raiser

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## PR/MARKETING

### Promotional Events

The Friendship Project attends many events throughout the year to raise awareness, recruit more volunteers and fundraise. These have included Business Shows at Leamington and Stratford, leaflet distribution outside supermarkets, stalls at Christmas and craft fairs, pre-arranged events at Leamington Tennis Club and a pub in Nuneaton to name a few.

Bodies and Co a Warwickshire based fitness organisation selected the Friendship Project as one of their chosen charities for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary fashion show. The show was held over 2 nights to approximately 1400 people. The Friendship Project was featured in the programme which everyone attending received. We sold tickets for the show and received a donation of £4000.

Village Voices choir held a Christmas performance at All Saints Church, Warwick in December. Several hundred people attended. The Friendship Project spoke to the audience about our work, sold Christmas cards and gave information at our stand out becoming an older friend. We received over £1000 from the event and gained an Older Friend.

The WI talks which we do are all well received, and a small donation is usually given for our time

### PR

A comprehensive list of local publications and radios has been produced and used as a guide with up to date contacts whenever there is a press release to be distributed.

Good coverage was received from the announcement of the Friendship Project receiving the Queen's Award.

The Area Coordinators have all sent out press releases to their own local press, particularly featuring case studies.

Local Radio has been very supportive of the charity, with several interviews being aired with Older Friends and Area Co-ordinators.

### Annual Newsletter

This has been written and prepared for distribution.

### Literature Review

Following the receipt of the Queen's Award the marketing materials like posters and leaflets have been reviewed and updated for print.

### Poster Distribution

Posters have formed a good source for recruiting new volunteers, so there has been a good push in all areas to keep displaying them in as many places as possible.

**Angela Truman**, Trustee

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## OPERATIONS REPORT

I have to start by thanking all the Older Friends and Group Supporters who have, again, done such a great job. Each one goes above and beyond to make such a difference to the lives of our Younger Friends.

There have been no changes in the personnel of the Operations Team this year, but everyone has grown in developing their roles and rising to meet all the challenges thrown at them. Thank you, everyone.

We have had three safeguarding events over the year in March, June and October, ably led by Esther, Kelly and Heather. We are grateful to Henry VIII school for providing a venue. For the first time, the June session was held at Fillongley Scout Hut. Thank you to the committee for allowing us to use their building.

I have continued to attend the Trustees meetings and their training session which Cheryll led. Also the Safeguarding meetings with Calvin Smith from Warwickshire Children's Team.

The AGM at the Ricoh was excellent. To hear the stories of some of the Older Friends and one Younger Friend makes it come alive in a way that no number of reports can do. It's great that Older Friends are willing to share in this way.

I attended just two of the "Raising awareness" sessions at ASDA in Leamington and at the Priors shopping centre. They are so useful to meet all kinds of members of the public, many of whom have never heard of us!

Looking back at the calendar, I also attended a fun day at Whitestone pub, in glorious sunshine which both raised awareness of the Project and some money, the Folk Festival in Warwick in pouring rain to help with the Tombola, and the Village Voices Choir performance at All Saints Church at Warwick. Although these have brought in money for the Project, they also give us an opportunity to talk to many more people and often result in recruiting more volunteers.

The Craft morning went well and thanks have to go to all the Older and Younger Friends who joined in so enthusiastically, Sam Hall who organised and ran many of the crafts, the whole Operations Team, Cheryll and Georgina and this year we welcomed a friend of Judy's, Nola who helped on the day.

We reached another target by having Christmas trees in Warwick, Rugby and Ansley. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped both making decorations and dressing the trees.

The Christmas party was, again, a great occasion and rounded off a good year of events. The other events will be appearing in other reports.

I had been feeling for some time that I needed to shed some of my responsibilities to others. My husband fully retired in April 2019 and we are now free to do more things away with the family and my health has not enabled me to do as much as I would like to with the Project. After discussion with Cheryll, I handed over the DBS Manager role to Karen in October. It's in very safe hands. In December, I relinquished my role as Chair of Operations Team. It has been a privilege to work with the Friendship Project for 12 years. It's a GREAT charity and a GREAT Team of people to work with.

However, as you all know, it's very difficult to just walk away, so I am now acting as a mentor to the Operations Team. It's good to keep in touch with all that's going on.

I am writing this during lockdown because of the Corona Virus pandemic. Despite the fact that none of us are able to meet up, the Older Friends are continuing their support of their Younger Friends in the most imaginative ways. The Operations Team are supporting them with encouragement and ideas. Well done, everyone.

Special thanks must go to Cheryl . We all know a bit of what she does, but none of us see the whole picture. So, Thank You!

With my very best wishes for the future,

**Pauline Higginbottom**

Operation Team Mentor

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## **SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

### **Warwick, Leamington & Kenilworth Districts**

#### **Friendships**

*Active friendships 27 Current Older Friends 26 Matching in progress 3*

The last year has been a very full year, with 9 new volunteers joining and 7 who we have said goodbye too. In particular our thanks go to very long-standing volunteer of 14 years, JS and GS of 8 years. Such commitment is incredible and at the backbone of what we do. We have had some wonderful events that have been well attended and enjoyed by the Warwick District Older and Younger Friends, including the Kenilworth Fire Station, Morton Morrell agricultural college, Go Ape, the Craft event and Christmas party.

#### **Events and Workshops**

Get togethers for Older Friends include the following-

Star and Garter- Always popular and well attended. We had a cyber crime talk given by the council that was really useful to update Older Friends on what is "out there" online that the children are accessing and using.

Warwick Arms Hotel - CPR training for our volunteers and colleagues. This was organised by Evelyn's Gift. An invaluable skill was learnt as well as it being a fun team building event.

Art in the Bar - This was a new event at Leamington Tennis Club with local artists. We had a table at the entrance, with a raffle, cakes and a craft table. With donations and cakes sales we raised £360. This is going to be an annual event. Older Friend KW came with her Younger Friend S and helped run the cake stall. They have been friends for nearly 5 years and S wanted to give something back to the charity as it has really helped her.

Queens Award Presentation - Held at the Leamington Tennis Club, who donated prosecco and fruit juice for the event. We invited supporters and volunteers and had an excellent turnout. The Mayor of Rugby Bill Lewis, Major of Leamington Bill Gifford, CEO of WCAVA Kate Morrison were among our guests. Lord Lt Tim Cox gave us a fabulous address, along with 2 Older Friends who spoke about their friendships. I was very proud to be part of this momentous event and the Friendship Project Team.

#### **Working with other Charities**

Recessionaires - This amazing charity in Leamington continue to sponsor one of our Younger Friends. It has been some 6 years now that they have done this. £240 was donated towards a Younger Friend A, who has autism and lives with his mum and 2 of his siblings. His brother is in foster care and sadly they have all been in care before when mum couldn't cope. There was a lot of domestic abuse from his father and he is not allowed to see and he struggles with school and friendships. What he loves is acting up, so his Older Friend thought drama lessons would be a good way to channel his energy! His Older Friend has taken him to lessons and supported him by encouraging him to attend. He loves his weekly lessons at Playbox. Since joining Playbox his social worker and school have seen an improvement in his behaviour.

Kenilworth Rotary - For the 4th year running Kenilworth Rotary sponsored 6 Younger Friends to go on a summer holiday. This year was Collomendy in Wales holiday which is a week's residential. 3 OF's TP, HH and SJ volunteered to chaperone the children on the coach journey to Wales. This involved a whole day of travel to get there and back. SJ did it on both journeys at the beginning and end of the

week! An amazing commitment by these OFs. Rotary were very grateful and gave 2 additional Younger Friends holiday spaces, so we sent 6 instead of 4 children. They had great fun doing outward bound activities like high ropes, climbing, abseiling, rafting etc. Unfortunately, there were a couple of behavioural issues with one YF and another was home sick. These were both dealt with. It has been decided going forward that it is too much of a responsibility to support these residential holidays. Since Mablethorpe has closed down the new formats haven't been as successful. Going forward we are now working with Kenilworth Rotary to fund a couple of group events that all the Younger Friends can attend. A den building day at Brandon Marsh and Riding event at Shrewley. These are on hold for now.

Evelyn's Gift - A local charity to Warwick and Leamington continue to support us and funded the Christmas party and CPR training. In the summer activity packs were put together and given to us to distribute to our Younger Friends. They also donated a bike and helmet that had been gifted to them. This is now being used by an Older Friend to teach one of our young girls how to ride a bike.

### **Promotion**

This year I have attended a few more networking events. CAVA volunteers fair in January at The Royal Priors in Leamington. CAVA fair in Rugby in June and Kenilworth in September with Older Friends JS and CM helping. I went to several Family Networking meetings in Leamington and Stratford. One had a social media workshop that was especially useful. I have distributed more posters on local notice boards and recruited volunteers to help with this.

Touch FM interview – I was interviewed by Paul at Touch about the Friendship Project. It was then aired on the news and shared on social media. A short film was produced which has been useful to put on our website to give potential volunteers a snapshot of what is involved in becoming an OF.

BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Radio live interview – Along with OF TP we were interviewed at the Coventry office, live on C & W radio, which was quite nerve racking!

Big Breakfast Business Forum- in my last week before lockdown I went along to this. It is a great place to network and I made some good contacts. Little did I know that that was going to be the last event I would go to for quite some time!

### **Summary of the Warwick District**

A year of much activity. There was a pattern of volunteers applying and joining in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the year. I have a great team of Older Friends and Group Supporters, SH, HH, EF and TP. They are doing a brilliant job of supporting their Older Friends and in turn assisting me.

This summer I reduced my hours slightly from 18 – 15 hours a week which has been more manageable. Going forward in this time of lockdown the aim is to keep the friendships going and support the older Friends as much as I can. Thank you to all my volunteers who have helped make this a great year.

#### **Fiona Roche**

Warwick District Area Coordinator  
South Warwickshire

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## Warwick & District Case Studies

### Case Study 1

It's now 5 years that M & I have been friends. She is now at secondary school and she is growing up very fast. We have done lots activities together over the years. Her favourite thing to do is to go ice skating. So as a Christmas treat in 2019, I arranged for M & I to go ice skating at Warwick Castle. The previous year I had used the Friendship project Christmas allowance to buy M her own set of ICE Skates! Which she absolutely loved. Skating at Warwick Castle would not usually be an option for M however because she is part of the Friendship Project, she had to opportunity to experience this event.

Although M is growing up fast, she still enjoys the simple things that our few hours a week together offers. Recently we have been going to Costa coffee, she has a fruit smoothie and a cookie. We than play cards for a couple of hours. We both love playing snap, clocks, patients & a new game called 'Go Fish' with usually ends up with me holding nearly the full deck of cards. 😊

M has become a lot more talkative as she has grown older, she is definitely more inquisitive now. She absolutely loved the group activity at Go Ape, she has asked if we can arrange a group activity at 'Jump In' she also really enjoyed the trip to the Fire Station last year. She loved it so much that she no longer wants to work at Tesco she now wants to be a Fire Fighter and is interested in how she can get fitter.

M now has a mobile phone. She can now text me and be in contact more freely with me. During lock down we have been sending Snap Chats to each other with funny face filters. I have noticed that her spelling has improved too. I have attached a picture that M sent to me saying this is how I describe you! I asked her to talk me through the picture, and she said;

"Lipstick nails bit crazy funny - Running - Good at driving - Has a sense of humour - Your own fashion, and always looks nice - Oh & an Excellent sandwich maker!"

She said even though I'm old, I'm still her best friend. "Lo!" - I corrected her and said 44 is not old!!

I told M that I was going to put something together for the AGM about our friendship and asked her if she wanted me to include anything from her she said no! I asked her if the friendship project has helped her in anyway or what does she like about the Friendship Project. She said that she laughs all of the time, but she doesn't always know what she is laughing at, she thinks that it might be because she feels happy. The Friendship Projects helps her when she's in a mood!

Recently M has started to mention that she is working with school to help her with dealing with frustration & anger. M has started to slowly open up and talk about her feelings, and her mum has asked me to encourage M to do this. In January M told me that she love's her mum, but she hasn't told her mum that yet. . . . .

M and I really enjoy our time together and I'm so happy that she wants to continue with our friendship. We both would like to thank the team at the Friendship Project for making our friendship possible.

### Case Studies from an Older Friend who has volunteered for 14 years (\*names changed)

I started with the Friendship Project back in 2006 the same year I got married. Every other week (Sunday afternoons preferable) I would meet up with my young friend. Suggested visits eg Guide Dogs visit, Nature Reserve Dragonfly Day Cinema or Pottery Painting (dependent upon the weather)

**My First Younger Friend** \*Imogen - This young girl was diagnosed with ADHD, she came from a very busy household with a young brother, sister, parents that worked and grandparents. She had lots of friends but often got up to mischief at school, but clever, articulate, and ambitious. We had lovely outings and sang songs in the car together; she was very chatty. Her favourite trip out was to Animal Sanctuaries and Redwings where the horses graze. Unfortunately, the family moved to Banbury which was further to travel and she didn't like car travel.

**Younger Friend No 2** \*Serin. This young girl was from a large travelling background family, her sisters also used the Friendship Project (J, from The FP also took out her sister at the same time which was good because we could swap stories) she had a larger than life father figure with underlying illnesses and a mum who was a reformed alcoholic. I remember taking her to hospital one day to see her mum. All her sisters did their chores at home. It was good to get her away from the local area, where she was often found causing trouble with local kids.

The first outing we had she was 9 years old and she told me about her 'boyfriend' which was quite a surprise to me! Boys didn't interest me till I was mid-teens.

The one trip out that stands out over the years was to Leamington Lawn Bowling Club, they had an open day and we were passing, they welcomed us with open arms. Amazingly she excelled at bowling, we had a lovely 'unusual' afternoon. Another time I volunteered us both to do a sponsored walk with 'Myton Hospice' and that was both challenging but very enjoyable around Leamington.

She was very caring with younger children, and always chatted to them especially at the swimming baths. I decided to stop the friendship as I felt the FP was expected and there was never any THANK YOU at the end of it.

**Younger Friend No 3** \*Esther - Always pleased to be coming out, very beneficial for her to get out as her dad had sole charge and moved into a high-rise block in Leamington. Happy to just go swimming (keeping me fit). She didn't like to try new things, Swimming mainly! Newbold Leisure Playground, and ice-skating

I wanted to teach her to swim properly as she just splashed about and played but unfortunately she wasn't a good pupil so I suggested to the FP maybe swimming lessons would be a life changer for her and she did really well, but left alone didn't finish the course. She is a much stronger swimmer now though.

Her brother died (mentioned often) and she had 11 older brothers and sisters but didn't live with them, one brother in particular was continuously causing problems by staying over and police were called out on occasions.

She had a very big attitude and every time she came out she had something new to wear. I had to be quite strict about buying things and explaining that presents were for Birthdays or Special Occasions. I did manage to introduce her to Leamington Football Club one day and she was tasked to help the youngsters play in the holiday club. I think after an initial reluctance she did benefit from an afternoon of being Miss Bossie.

We had a note book in the car which we filled out with things she would like to do, which helped me to pick places (I could afford) some activities were just financially unachievable.

She was offered the chance to go on the 2017 Rotary Club Summer Camp but sadly she let them down at the last minute. Another little girl got the chance to go though. But I don't think my friend appreciated what she had missed out on.

She decided that during the summer we would stop seeing each other, but she did get back in touch and the change was just amazing after not seeing her for a spell. Too much had changed and we never properly got back on track.

That in a nut shell is my 14 years Older Friend to The Friendship Project  
'Happy Times'  
2006 – 2020

## STRATFORD & DISTRICT AREA COORDINATORS REPORT

**Current Older Friends:** 10  
**YF's** 11 (AD has 2 YF's)  
**Pipeline:** 4

RA is ready to be matched. AH – we are waiting for her DBS check and 2<sup>nd</sup> interview. TK – waiting for him to complete DBS and 2<sup>nd</sup> interview. AT – to interview.

### General

Another busy year supporting current volunteers with their friendships and any issues they may have; as well as communicating with referrers and families. I have 10 focussed and dedicated volunteers who are caring and consistent.

With the other main focus of marketing for new volunteers and PR via social media, delivering posters, attending networking meetings, volunteer recruitment and generally working within the Stratford District charity community.

### COVID-19

During the lockdown, I have been communicating with our parents to let them know our position and to support them during this time. The feedback I have had is very positive they are very pleased that their friendships have continued. The volunteers are communicating with their Younger Friends via online media, letters and cards, books sent via the post, growing potatoes together and recording chapters of books to send to their Younger Friends. I am so pleased that my volunteers have continued in this way.

I have been working through an online Digital Media course to help with our presence on social media.

Working with Karen and Kelly on Trusted Charity status. We have started working through one of the standards, gathering information and will be having a weekly Zoom call to review progress.

### Events I have attended: -

- Cyber Safety training 11<sup>th</sup> September – working with Kelly to present
- Collecting cheque from The Croft School with Cheryl – 14<sup>th</sup> September
- Craft Event 28<sup>th</sup> September
- Foundation House Hub Fun Palace 6<sup>th</sup> October
- Taking LR (YF) to FP Xmas Party
- Victorian Christmas Fayre at Stratford Town Hall 7<sup>th</sup> December
- Attended The Queens Award event on 27<sup>th</sup> February
- Safeguarding Training 8<sup>th</sup> October
- Networking Events with The Family Network 15<sup>th</sup> October
- Stratford Volunteers Get Together 7<sup>th</sup> November

### Case Studies

- Added more content to JS and C's case study with their help.
- Currently working with PM to put together a case study of her friendship with C. PM was part of Big Brother, Big Sister in the USA and spoke about her experiences at The Queens Award event in February.

### Safeguarding Reviews

I have met with three families in the Warwick District to complete their Safeguarding Reviews. I really enjoy meeting with families and seeing how our volunteers are making a difference.

## Social Media/Marketing Events

Continuing to add content to our Twitter and Facebook pages. I have been using hashtags and following other users to spread our reach and gain new followers. During lockdown, I'd like to be able to collate all relevant information and write content so that our posts can be scheduled in advance.

### Marketing Events I have attended: -

- Bell Court in Stratford were looking for a Charity partner. I met with them and told them about our Charity. They choose Escape Arts as they are able to put on workshops within Bell Court to bring visitors into the shopping centre.
- Meeting with Fran Donnelly, Foundation Charity Hub Manager – to see how we can work together.
- Awareness event at Stratford Library 10<sup>th</sup> December
- Collecting cheque for £500 from Make Good Grow 9<sup>th</sup> January. I entered an online competition and won the prize! Make Good Grow hope to open a charity hub in Leamington in September.
- Arranged Meet and Greet sessions at Foundation House on 15<sup>th</sup> January and 11 February to meet potential new volunteers.
- Attended WCAVA Royal Priors Volunteering event with Fiona 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

### Funding

- Meeting with Richard and James McHugh at Stratford Town Trust to discuss how we could improve our funding application.

### Heather Shipley

Area Coordinator

Email: [Heather.shipley@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:Heather.shipley@friendshipproject.co.uk)

## Stratford & District Case Studies

### PM Case Study

Once I retired I found I had some extra time on my hands and saw an advertisement for the Friendship Project. I remembered how much I enjoyed my time with my Little Sister and what a huge difference it made to her life so I decided to volunteer. It is much more structured and organised than when I volunteered previously, and that's a really positive change for me. There is frequent contact from the caseworker, someone at the end of the phone if I have question, organised events for myself and my younger friend and lots of encouragement. I can also claim mileage and some of my expenses so I'm not out of pocket, which is great for me as being retired I have limited funds.

I met my Younger Friend nearly a year ago, and already I can see lots of positive changes. In the beginning she could barely speak to me, but now she greets me with a smile when I collect her and chats away about her latest news at school and her friendships. We have done lots of cooking together, and she made her first cake on her own a couple of months ago including making icing and decorating. When we first started cooking I couldn't persuade her to break an egg to add to the mixture, and when I managed to get her to try the egg went everywhere. I laughed and said "that's how we learn, we all make mistakes, and then learn from them". We cleaned it up and I persuaded her to have another go, which was successful. When we finished and put the mixture into the oven, this little voice said "I learned from my mistake, and added the eggs to the cake mixture", so I was able to agree and tell her what a good job she had done – I think that memory will stay with me for a very long time.

Over the summer we went on lots of picnics to local playgrounds, which my Younger Friend really enjoys. She is also a keen reader, so I took her to the local library and encouraged her to get a library card, then enrolled her in the summer reading scheme which she completed successfully (and even got a medal!). Now, a regular part of our routine is a weekly trip to the library for new books. At first, she stuck with books and authors she knew from school, but now she is branching out a bit and trying new authors, which is great. In the winter, I discovered she loved playing games and puzzles so often we cooked and then played together while our efforts were in the oven. We also went to the local pantomime as she had never been to the theatre, which was quite an experience! I don't think she knew what to expect, and certainly didn't shout out at the "baddie" but there were lots of smiles and it got a "thumbs up" at the end of the evening.

At the moment, we can't see each other due to the lockdown but I have tried a few things to make sure my Younger Friend knows I am thinking about her, and we will get back to normal as soon as we get the all clear. I sent her a letter with a self addressed and stamped envelope so she could write me if she chose, and asked for a wish list of books. I have send two books from a new author that combines a bit of adventure and cooking, which I thought we might enjoy. She has a weekly post card or letter from me as well, and last week we used Messenger to have a video chat. I waited for her to initiate this, as she has little privacy at home, and I wasn't sure if she would be able to speak freely on the phone. We had a nice chat, and talked about what we would do as soon as we could go out again. We also talked about this year's pantomime, which she is keen to see. I have already booked the tickets, so she has something to look forward to and will feel reassured that we will see each other as soon as things are back to normal.

A bonus for me is that I'm finding I'm really enjoying our time together. As well as making a positive difference for my Younger Friend, the relationship is growing in a very satisfying way and we have lots of fun together. I look forward to our cooking sessions (and that little voice that asks "are we going to be messy?" – YES), and hearing all about her news. It's wonderful to watch her grow and learn and feel

that I am an important part of that. I would highly recommend this project to anyone interested in children who would like to make a difference.

### **My Younger friend & me**

I have now been friends with my younger friend for 18 months. We have met regularly and always plan ahead to what we're going to do the following week. We really enjoy doing that as it gives us something to look forward to and we enjoy the brainstorming process. My younger friend always has plenty of ideas herself, which makes things a lot easier, we sometimes have to write a list as there are lots of activities we want to do! We've both encouraged the other one to try different things too, for example she has tried new foods which she hasn't had before and I've been trampolining which I haven't done for many years!

We try and do something different every week, but as our friendship has progressed, we've discovered a mutual love of cooking, going out for coffee and/or brunch, playing board games and swimming in particular. My younger friend has become very comfortable in my kitchen and can get all the equipment and ingredients ready without any prompting now. She really likes loading the dishwasher and then making herself a hot chocolate and toasting crumpets. We enjoyed going to the charity shop at our local recycling centre and buying 10 games and jigsaws for just £5! We've also done a variety of craft projects including making Christmas decorations, designing and painting 'fairy doors' and jewellery boxes and even making our own lip balm. We've also had trips out to Mary Arden's farm, the cinema and the Welcombe Hills for a dog walk. However, a particular highlight was going to see 'The Boy in the Dress' at the RSC. I managed to get discount staff tickets and took my friend for her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday. We even met the cast afterwards and she absolutely loved it. She'd never been to the theatre before and apparently didn't stop talking about it for several days afterwards!

As time has progressed, we have got to know each other quite well. We know what the other one finds funny and we know what we both enjoy. There seems to have been a transition between simply volunteering with a disadvantaged child, to becoming real friends. My younger friend always tries to extend our sessions and seems to really enjoy everything we do. We both seem to get a lot out of our time together.

Lockdown has proved quite a challenge and my younger friend is finding it quite difficult. She struggles to concentrate on our conversation and there are a lot of distractions in the background. I've tried playing all sorts of games etc. with her, but it hasn't been easy. She said last week 'it's not the same', which I totally understand. We've decided to chat every other week at the moment, but will top up with letters in the meantime.

## AREA COORDINATORS REPORT FOR THE RUGBY & DISTRICT

### Rugby & Southam

This year has been a positive year of growth for the project in the Rugby and Southam area.

I am still really enjoying the role and have enjoyed being busy with getting to know and match our new Older Friends as well as supporting them and existing friendships. I feel the whole team continue to have positive working relationships and enjoy working with other professionals, sharing knowledge and doing our very best to support the young people in the project. Unfortunately, there have been some issues with the potential matches for some of our new Older Friends and I would have planned to have successfully matched them before now.

**Number of current friendships:** 16 (including 1 Warwick)

**Friendships ended '18 – '19:** 3

(1 friendship the child no longer needed the friendship – OF may look to be rematched in the future and 2 friendships ended due to OF's circumstances but YF has now been rematched).

**New OF recruited:** 9 (since April 2019)

**Older Friends to be matched:** 4

**Older Friends in Interview Process:** 3

**On hold -** 1

### Interviewing

This year has been a busy year for interviews within excess of 12 being completed. I enjoy interviewing new Older Friends as I like meeting new people, especially those looking to make a difference in their community and assessing they will be suitable as an Older Friend. We have been extremely lucky to have excellent quality new Older Friends. One was interviewed and DBS checked withdrawn prior to matching due to health issues, but many of the rest are matched and doing a wonderful job as Older Friends.

### Referrals

Despite having an influx of new Older Friends and some referrals being closed due to having been on the waiting list too long and some no longer needing an Older Friend but now have in excess of 28 referrals and as I also cover Southam there are a number of children waiting for an Older Friend there too. I feel the increase in Rugby referrals is because we have continued to make very successful matches and we have become victims of our own success. I am open with referrers about the current number of children waiting and the likelihood of matching and I am careful to only accept referrals which I feel fall within the projects remit. February was particularly busy for referrals as I received 9 during the month. Inappropriate referrals continue to be made due to lack of local resources, but I continue to encourage referrers to talk to me if they are unsure about making a referral and then we can discuss our criteria and the current waiting list. I have over 20 males waiting for an Older Friend and so I am particularly encouraging referrals for girls under 12.

I have attended various Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection Meetings for six of our children, as well as liaising with SENCO's/Pastoral Care in the following schools/professionals on a regular basis: Rugby Free Secondary School, Harris C of E Academy, Henry Hinde Junior School, Rokeby Primary School, Family Support Workers and Social Workers in local Children's and Early Help Teams. I have again had some of safeguarding issues to deal with this year and working as part of a team with

other professionals has been important to ensure the Older Friend has the information they need and to promote the welfare of the Younger Friend.

### **Recruitment, Marketing and Promotion**

- Leaflet drops around Central Rugby and displaying of postcards, posters, and leaflets in libraries, cafes, churches, colleges, supermarkets, and community buildings in Rugby and Southam areas. This is to be continued after lockdown when time allows
- Articles in Rugby Advertiser in March 2020
- I have joined 35 Facebook groups in the Rugby and Southam area and submit recruitment posts to these groups 3 times per year with no posts in 2020 and this has resulted in 12 enquiries and 8 new Older Friends
- Free article and advert in Rugby Register which lead to 3 enquiries and 2 Older Friends.
- Attending Rugby Community Networking and WCAVA events.
- I have considered possible events to attend to promote the need for Older Friends in the Rugby and Southam area and this year had decided to target Dunchurch Fete as this is a large community where we don't have any Older Friends currently but it is unlikely this will go ahead this year so will plan to attend next year.

### **Group Supporter Role**

I have one Group Supporter who along with others supports 2 of my Older Friends and Judy Sims provides support to two others. I support the other 12 myself and would be keen to recruit another Group Supporter in the future. I have someone who is interested but they haven't got the time currently.

### **Events and Activities**

I continue to enjoy attending the regular Area Co-ordinators and Operations Team meetings and these are an ideal place to discuss common problems, support each other and take project issues forward.

I have enjoyed attending project events including Go Ape and the Christmas Party. A big thank you to Karen and Cheryl for all the hard work she has put in to organising these events and I thank trustees for the contributions they make organising these.

### **Safeguarding Training**

I continue to run the projects Safeguarding for Older Friends training 3 times per year and have made some recent updates based on feedback from attendees. This is a lovely way to meet more Older Friends and try to give them some reassurance about their role when there are any safeguarding concerns. Heather Shipley joined me as trainer for the first two and I have now recruited an old colleague Jeanette Mainwaring who trained alongside me in March 2020 and will continue to do so.

### **Safeguarding Reviews**

I have not been allocated any reviews to complete this year as the project is more up to date with them and I have been busy with new Older Friends but when colleagues have completed them for my friendships I enjoy learning about the experiences of Younger Friends and their Families and what the friendship through the project means to them. Being able to share this positive feedback with the Old Friends is really valuable as often they are unaware of the positive effect the friendship is having.

## Trusted Charity Work

I am looking forward to working on this with Karen and Heather during the next few months whilst other project activities are quiet due to the pandemic and I think it will be a positive exercise to show us what we are already doing well.

I continue to love my work with the Friendship Project and I am so please I have been able to expand my friendship numbers this year and I am keen to match and interview my remaining new Older Friends once the situation with the pandemic is calmer. Once these are matched, I will continue to try to recruit more Older Friends in the Rugby and Southam area to provide further matches for Rugby and Southam Children and young people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Operations Team and Trustees for their continued support.

### **Kelly Furness**

Area Coordinator – Rugby & District

**Email: [Kelly.furness@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:Kelly.furness@friendshipproject.co.uk)**

## Rugby & district Case Studies (names have been changed)

### **Kylie**

Kylie aged 11 was referred to the project via Early Help and was matched last Summer. Her older sister had had an older friend for 6 months. Kylie was referred as dad is a single parent and she suffers with anxiety and worries a lot about her family. It was hoped a friendship would give her a female role model and give her time away from her family and worrying and to have some fun. Susie and Kylie hit it off straight away when they met as Kylie likes to chat. They have done a variety of active activities including bowling and climbing and enjoy Arts and Crafts and having a hot chocolate and a chat together. Kylie's dad and her school feel the friendship has been good for her and as she has been going through a difficult time emotionally has come at the right time for her. When I have seen Kylie, she has told me how much she enjoys going out with Susie and how much fun they have together. Kylie's dad feedback that Katie is always talking about what she and Susie do together and their plans for their next sessions. Kylie's dad feels reassured now Kylie has Susie in her life that she has someone to talk to outside of home who is just for her and that she has some extra support. Outcomes have included Katie feeling less stressed at home and school and having higher self-esteem from having a special adult to talk to outside of her family.

### **Deana**

Deana is aged 13 and was referred to the project via Early Help and was matched in October 2018. Deana has health issues that mean she must be careful when out in the community and has a low immune system. The family had had a difficult couple of year prior to the match as their older child had had problems with aggression and violence in the home which resulted in Deana and her brother often feeling unsafe and having to stay with friends or relatives. Parents have their own health issues which meant it was difficult for them to give each child quality one to one time. A referral to the project was made so that Deana could have the opportunity to try new experiences, to be a child and to have an extra person in her life to provide support. Deana is quiet until you get to know her and was matched

with Louisa in October 2018; they hit it off right away as Louisa suggested going to the local dessert parlour for their first session. The match between Deana and Louisa was excellent as they both enjoy arts and crafts, animals, shopping and baking. Deana enjoyed spending time at Louise's home where they would do activities and Deana would enjoy the peace and quiet without her brothers and often wouldn't want to go home. Deana has had a lot of issues with bullying and her family have dealt with this effectively at school, but she also felt better having chat to Louisa about this. Feedback from Deana's parents as always been positive about Louisa and they have been grateful that Louisa has given Deana a lot of new experiences particularly as neither parent can drive ; visiting the zoo, a cuddle day with animals, visiting the safari park and going to the beach for the day. They have always said that the time Louisa spent with Deana has been supportive to both her and them and gave them time to spend with their sons. Positive Outcomes included Deana becoming more confident and happier because she had another adult in her life to give her one to one attention and have fun with. Sadly Louisa had to end her friendship with Deana recently due to changes in her life but happily we were able to match Deana straight away and this friendship will get up and running when Older Friends are able to have face to face contact with Younger Friends again.

### Jason

Jason is 10 years old and was referred to the project via Early Help and with matched with Mary in October 2019. Jason is Dean's younger brother and was referred to the project for the same reasons and as Deana has health problems he is also classed as a young carer. A referral to the project was made so that Jason could have the opportunity to try new things, to be a child and to have an extra person in his life to provide support. Jason and Mary hit it off straight away at the matching meeting and at their first session he was having so much fun he didn't want to go home so with mum's permission they stayed together longer and did a Halloween treasure hunt. Jason was referral and description from his family said he wasn't active but with Mary he enjoys walking her dog, running around and has by choice asked to walk the full 7 miles around Draycote Water on more than one occasion much to his parents surprise. Jason is always asking his mum when he is seeing his Mary again as he adores her. The family have found the friendship helpful as it gives them more time with their Older child who has had anger management issues and feel that Jason's self-esteem has grown because of the friendship. The family said they worry less about Jason now he has an Older Friend. Jason benefits from trying new things, doing more active activities and having someone outside the family to talk to. Before Christmas Jason had a difficult time at home with his brother and at school and mum let Mary know and Jason talked to Mary about how he felt and they talked through coping strategies and now positively all has improved at home and at school. Mary thinks a lot of Jason and her feedback is that she gets more out of taking him out than Jason does and she enjoys their time together so much. It provides a good respite for her from busy areas of her life and gives her the opportunity to have fun and try new things too.

## AREA COORDINATORS REPORT FOR NUNEATON, BEDWORTH & NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

### **Current Friendships: 12**

Two new Older Friends – DBS in and currently on 'hold' due to current situation

### **Recruitment**

This year has been quite busy with new volunteers, unfortunately I had two that didn't work out, the Older Friend on one wasn't getting enough from the relationship and finished, the other, the child was getting a lot out of the relationship but unfortunately it impacted on his behaviour at home and the family stopped it.

Since Christmas I have interviewed 4 new volunteers, one didn't complete the DBS and therefore we didn't continue. One was a retiring foster carer, we were ready to match when he was unable to continue as he felt a duty of responsibility to his previous foster child who wasn't settling in his new placement, therefore he decided to take the child back and continue to foster him. I think its great that he is still able to support a child, unfortunately not for The Friendship Project.

### **Marketing & Promotion**

We attended a volunteer fair run by CAVA in Nuneaton from which we had two further volunteers contact us and are interested in becoming Older Friends. Both have completed DBS checks and we were in the process of matching when Covid-19 brought everything to a halt.

Additionally, I have attended some local WI meetings to promote the Friendship Project, and ASDA store in Nuneaton where we had a stand.

I have been in contact with Dairy Crest who are now owned by a company called Saputo Dairy UK. I was scheduled to go and give a talk to their staff in April to tell them about The Friendship Project and see how they can help us promote the charity. They had collected Easter Eggs for us for this year, these eggs I believe are currently being stored for us and they plan to give them to us once lockdown has been lifted.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

Lockdown has caused our face to face activities to come to a halt. A lot of my Younger Friends are older, during the first few weeks there wasn't much contact between the Older Friends and their Younger friends, however there does appear to be some of the Younger Friends now finding they want to contact their Older Friends. I have sent out some packs of activities for the children to do but not sure on the uptake of the information.

### **Support for Volunteers**

I have a high percentage of Older Friends that are single and currently living alone, I have called and kept in touch with my Older Friends on a two to three weekly basis with a phone call. Judy Sims is my Group Supporter, she and I work the group between us, swapping who calls who to ensure they feel supported and to give them a different person to speak to each time.

### **Viv Kelsey**

Area Coordinator

**Email: [viv.kelsey@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:viv.kelsey@friendshipproject.co.uk)**

## Case study for Bedworth, Nuneaton, and North Warwickshire

My new Older Friend was matched with his YF in the summer of 2019. The reason for the referral: the child came from a family where the father had health conditions and limited mobility. The OF was happy with the match. The YF was in his last year of primary school. The match was done at school with the father a few weeks prior to the end of the school year.

The OF had his first meeting with the family when he collected his YF from his home address. The OF struggled with his first outing saying that the YF wasn't very talkative. I suggested that rather than asking him what he wanted to do that he suggested something to him. This seemed to work better.

I feel the OF struggled with the YF and his quiet nature, he often responded to questions with 'I don't know' and never really said whether he enjoyed anything or not.

After a couple of months the OF friend said that the family had said to him that they wanted to go to two weekly visits as the YF wanted to spend time with his older brother who had returned from working away. The OF wasn't particularly content with this as he had always wanted to commit more time to a relationship. I spoke with the family, they were quite happy for visits to continue weekly with a view that some weeks they would cancel as they possibly had other things to do. Both parties were happy with this arrangement.

During the summer holidays there was limited visits due to holidays.

Once school restarted the OF indicated that this relationship wasn't for him, he was struggling with a connection with his YF and felt that he wasn't going to be able to continue to support him. I spoke at length with the OF, offering him suggestions of how to work with his YF. Judy also spoke to him, I felt with her experience as an OF it may help.

Unfortunately, the relationship for the OF was not working, he was feeling that he wasn't getting anything from the friendship, he felt miserable after outings with his YF and felt that he wasn't doing anything good.

The OF agreed to take his YF to the Christmas party, it was after this event that he told his YF that he was unable to continue due to new work commitments.

I spoke with the family after the relationship had finished. Mum said that the YF had really enjoyed going out with his OF and had been sad that it had finished.

In hindsight, I think the OF was looking for a more 'needy' family, he didn't actually see that although his YF was very quiet he was actually having a good time just going out with him. I feel that possibly the OF could have communicated to the YF a bit more about how he wasn't sure that the YF wanted to come out with him and whether he was enjoying the outings.

**The Friendship Project**  
**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 517684**  
**Financial Statements**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2019**

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**The Friendship Project**  
**Trustees' Annual Report**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2019**

<b>Full Name:</b>	The Friendship Project
<b>Other names:</b>	The Friendship Project for Children
<b>Registered charity number:</b>	517684
<b>Principal address:</b>	Myton Park, Myton Lane, Warwick, CV34 6PX
<b>Trustees:</b>	Cheryll Rawbone, Chairperson John Hancock, Vice Chairperson Ken Smith, Honorary Treasurer Chris Buck Richard Barrett Michelle Machin Jon Gibbons Angela Dawn Truman, appointed 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2019 Esther Jones, appointed 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2019
<b>Honorary Treasurer:</b>	Ken Smith
<b>Bankers:</b>	Lloyds TSB, Stratford upon Avon
<b>Independent examiner:</b>	Paula Wilson, 2 Hickman House, Hickman Road, Galley Common, Nuneaton, CV10 9NQ

**Governance & management**

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 12<sup>th</sup> May 1986 as amended 7<sup>th</sup> September 1993, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1995 and 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

Overall management of the charity is the responsibility of the trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the constitution. Day to day management is carried out by paid staff and/or volunteers.

# **The Friendship Project**

## **Trustees' annual report (continued)**

### **for the year ended 31 December 2019**

#### **Aims and objectives**

To provide facilities for the social and physical training of children particularly disadvantaged children between the ages of 6 and 16 years who by reason of their social circumstances are in need of developing social skills by such means as the project thinks fit including the organisation of contacts between such children and reliable older persons able to help them develop such skills.

#### **Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit**

With developing confidence and enhanced self-esteem, gained from the friendships, the young people are more prepared to develop new interests and achieve a wider range of skills. They grow personally and socially enabling them to forge better relationships with peers and family members. Generally, they are more settled at school but, above all, they develop a greater sense of self-worth. This is priceless and will have a positive impact on every aspect of their lives.

#### **Summary of the main achievements during the period**

- ✓ Continued to provide the invaluable 121 volunteer support and fun for disadvantaged children. Aim to increase the numbers supported and reduce our waiting lists.
- ✓ We received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in June 2019
- ✓ The Midlands Service Excellence Award in the Community was awarded to us in 2019
- ✓ Our fund raising was very successful, and for the second year running we were able to achieve a surplus, so that our reserves position is strengthened, which in the current climate of COVID-19 pandemic will be very important for continuity of our service.
- ✓ Our new treasurer, Ken Smith, started his first full year, having been appointed at the end of 2018, and we are receiving monthly reports relating to our financial position.
- ✓ Two new trustees were appointed, Angela Truman and Esther Jones.
- ✓ Regular safeguarding Training Sessions have been held for volunteers
- ✓ We have continued the roll out personal visits to YFs and their carer/parent for safeguarding and to validate worth/user feedback via the Operations team.
- ✓ Target was to have 75 matches by year end,
- ✓ Continued to hold periodic Older Friends get-togethers/training/support sessions
- ✓ Recruit additional Group Supporters, as required as our Older Friends increase
- ✓ Our reserves policy has been updated
- ✓ We have worked in partnership with various local charities, and organisations to improve delivery of service

**The Friendship Project**  
**Trustees' annual report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2019**

**Financial Review**

The charity made an unrestricted surplus of £15,123 in the year with net unrestricted reserves of £53,595.

The Trustees have reviewed the financial position of the charity in light of the impact of the Corona virus upon its operations and fund raising. They believe that with the funding commitments made and plans for 2020, it has the funding to continue providing its services for at least the next 12 months.

**The charity's policy on reserves**

In line with the guidance provided by the Charities Commission the Friendship Project has reviewed and revised its policy on the holding of financial reserves.

The majority of our monthly expenditure relates to the salaries and expenses of our staff and the expenses of our Older Friends.

As our income varies considerably month by month it is important that in order to provide continuity of support for our Younger Friends that we have sufficient financial resources in place for the timely and regular payment of salaries and expenses.

In order to ensure our ability to achieve this, the trustees believe that it is essential to hold financial reserves, excluding restricted funds, of a minimum of six to nine months forecast expenditure. A proportion of these funds is invested on an interest earning basis with M & G Charity Investments and is repayable on demand.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed 

Date 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman

**Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of**  
**The Friendship Project**  
**Year Ended 31 December 2019**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2019, which are set out on pages 6 to 12.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Signed:  
Paula Wilson, MAAT

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**The Friendship Project**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2019**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2019 Total Funds £	2018  £
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Grants	2	18,000	21,618	39,618	56,848
Donations	3	22,762	-	22,762	15,817
Fundraising donations/events	4	13,171	-	13,171	5,130
Gift Aid		300	-	300	5,184
Investment income	5	315	-	315	366
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b><u>54,548</u></b>	<b><u>21,618</u></b>	<b><u>76,166</u></b>	<b><u>83,345</u></b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Salaries, NI	9	15,640	19,517	35,157	30,350
Staff expenses		1,675	2,404	4,079	5,183
Volunteer expenses		12,671	8,230	20,901	18,696
Insurance		2,825	-	2,825	2,944
Events/Christmas parties		435	-	435	657
Other expenditure	10	5,829	-	5,829	5,168
Independent examination fee	12	350	-	350	300
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b><u>39,425</u></b>	<b><u>30,151</u></b>	<b><u>69,576</u></b>	<b><u>63,298</u></b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>		15,123	(8,533)	6,590	20,047
Gains & (losses) on investments		216	-	216	(534)
Total funds brought forward		38,256	11,881	50,137	30,624
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	8	<b><u>53,595</u></b>	<b><u>3,348</u></b>	<b><u>56,943</u></b>	<b><u>50,137</u></b>

Expenditure is allocated between Unrestricted and Restricted funds on the basis of actual expenditure incurred along with an element of judgement on indirect items of expenditure.

# The Friendship Project

## Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31 December 2019

	Note	£	2019 £	2018 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Investments	5		13,956	13,740
<b>Current assets</b>				
Cash at bank and in hand		47,248		40,823
Prepayment	6	251		229
		<u>47,499</u>		<u>41,052</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Accrued expenses	7	(4,512)		(4,655)
<b>Net current assets</b>			42,987	36,397
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>56,943</u>	<u>50,137</u>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>				
General Funds			53,595	38,256
Restricted Funds			3,348	11,881
<b>Total Funds</b>	8		<u>56,943</u>	<u>50,137</u>

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Cheryll Rawbone, Chairperson

# **The Friendship Project**

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

### **For the year ended 31 December 2019**

#### **1. Accounting policies**

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts and with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

#### **Incoming Resources**

All material incoming resources have been included on a receivable basis – ie they are included if the date receivable falls within the period covered by these accounts.

#### **Resources expended**

These have been analysed using a natural classification.

## 2. Grants

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	2018 £
Aviva Community Fund	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner	-	7,348	7,348	6,098
Heart of England Tampon Tax Community Fund	-	5,200	5,200	-
Stratford Town Trust	-	7,070	7,070	-
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
Masonic Charitable Foundation	5,000	-	5,000	-
Heart of England C Harry Payne Fund	-	2,000	2,000	-
Garfield Weston	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
St James Place	-	-	-	2,500
St James Place	-	-	-	5,000
Heart of England Youell Family Fund	-	-	-	4,550
Heart of England Coventry Building Society	-	-	-	2,000
Heart of England Wesleyan Fund	-	-	-	7,550
Warwick King Henry VII Endowed Trust	-	-	-	3,000
Wates Foundation	-	-	-	4,500
FC Stokes Trust	-	-	-	500
Jarman Trust	-	-	-	150
FC Stokes Trust	-	-	-	500
The Sheldon Trust	-	-	-	3,000
Heart of England 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	-	-	-	1,000
Alan Edward Higgs Grant	-	-	-	4,000
Anthony Bourne Foundation Grant	-	-	-	2,500
	<u>18,000</u>	<u>21,618</u>	<u>39,618</u>	<u>56,848</u>

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2019

### 3. Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	2018 £
Aubrey Allen	2,500	-	2,500	2,500
Playground Games	6,000	-	6,000	-
Balsall Common Lions	1,200	-	1,200	-
Heart of England Co-op	1,500	-	1,500	-
Contract Scaffolding	2,000	-	2,000	-
Woman Who Achieves Award	1,683	-	1,683	-
Heart of England 29th May 1961 Fund	1,000	-	1,000	-
Retailers Donation Pennies Grant	1,000	-	1,000	-
Anonymous Donor	-	-	-	5,000
Star Turtle Disc World	-	-	-	5,000
Donations under £1,000	5,879	-	5,879	3,317
	<u>22,762</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>22,762</u>	<u>15,817</u>

### 4. Fundraising Events

	Funds £	Funds £	Funds £	£
Croft Preparatory School	10,935	-	10,935	-
Warwick Boat Club	-	-	-	1,725
Fundraising Events under £1,000	2,236	-	2,236	3,405
	<u>13,171</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,171</u>	<u>5,130</u>

### 5. Investments

Market value of surplus funds is invested in the Charibond Charities Fixed Interest Common Investment Fund ("Charibond") with M&G Investments. Investment income 2019 - £315 (2018 - £366).

### 6. Debtors

	2019 £	2018 £
Insurance Prepayment	<u>251</u>	<u>229</u>
	<u>251</u>	<u>229</u>

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2019

### 7. Creditors

	2019	2018
	£	£
Volunteer Expenses	2,532	2,126
Staff Expenses	228	302
Independent Examination Fee	350	300
Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner	1,402	1,250
Equipment	-	350
Pimms in the Garden Event	-	74
Web Hosting 2018	-	100
Sundry Creditors	-	152
	<u>4,512</u>	<u>4,655</u>

### 8. Movements in Funds

	Opening Balance £	Incoming Resources £	(Resources expended) £	Gains & Losses £	Transfers £	Closing Balance £
General funds	38,256	54,548	(39,425)	216	-	53,595
Designated funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total General Funds</b>	<u>38,256</u>	<u>54,548</u>	<u>(39,425)</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,595</u>
Restricted funds						
Warwickshire P&CC	2,165	7,348	(7,665)	-	-	1,848
HoECF Youell Family Fund	2,730	-	(2,730)	-	-	-
HoECF Coventry Building	155	-	(155)	-	-	-
HoECF Tampon Tax Fund	-	5,200	(5,200)	-	-	-
Stratford Town Trust	-	7,070	(7,070)	-	-	-
HoECF Harry Payne Fund	-	2,000	(500)	-	-	1,500
Other	6,831	-	(6,831)	-	-	-
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<u>11,881</u>	<u>21,618</u>	<u>(30,151)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,348</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u>50,137</u>	<u>76,166</u>	<u>(69,576)</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,943</u>

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

### For the year ended 31 December 2019

#### 9. Staff costs and numbers

	2019	2018
	£	£
Wages	35,157	30,354
	<u>35,157</u>	<u>30,354</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

The average weekly number of part time employees during the year was 6  
(2018: 4)

#### 10. Other expenditure

	2019	2018
	£	£
Storage of documents	152	150
Telephones	531	552
Bond arrangement fee	-	336
Printing, stationery & advertising	1,016	1,743
Database / IT	1,938	260
Payroll	1,378	516
Write off	-	879
Sundries	814	732
	<u>5,829</u>	<u>5,168</u>

#### 11. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

During the accounting period, the charity obtained insurance cover including Public Liability, Employer's Liability, All Risks for Assets, Personal Accident for volunteers and younger friends and Trustee Indemnity Insurance for a total of £3014.57.

The management committee and other trustees did not receive any remuneration during the year (2018: nil).

#### 12. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the examination and accountancy services was £350.

# **The Friendship Project**

## **Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 December 2019**

### **13. Controlling parties**

The charity is under the control of the management committee.

### **14. Glossary of terms**

Restricted funds:	These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.
Debtors:	These are expenses paid in the year with some of the benefit arising in the following year
Creditors:	These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.