



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

**Published in June 2022**



## Contents

Introduction	3
Chairman's Report	4-5
Safeguarding Report	6-7
Fund Raisers Report	8
PR & Marketing Report	9-12
Operations Team Manager Report	13
Area Coordinators Reports – Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth	14-16
Area Coordinators Reports – Stratford District	17-18
Area Coordinators Reports – North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth	19-21
Area Coordinators Reports – Rugby	22-23
Financial Statements & Audited Accounts	24-34

## INTRODUCTION

This report reflects our achievements during 2021 and our plans for 2022.

Our thanks go to the many volunteers, employees, funders, and supporters for helping children in need throughout the various challenges the Pandemic and regulation changes in the last twelve months, enabling them to still have some much-needed fun, aiding their personal development, confidence, and improving their self-esteem, and in particular coping with their new challenges.

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 would not 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 available advising the importance of early intervention to help both mental and physical health outcomes in later life, making our contribution in the sector extremely 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) Please also follow us on: – **@friendshipproj** on twitter and Instagram or on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren](https://www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren)

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My report is focused primarily on our activities and achievements in 2021, our last financial year, plus our plans for 2022. Last year was our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and although not possible to hold a celebratory event we were still able to organise outside activities for the children we support. Hopefully by the time we reach our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in four years' time we will be able to celebrate more.

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 1,500 children helped over this period.



I would particularly like to commend and thank our operations team for the way in which they have adapted to work with new conditions and continued to support our volunteers and vulnerable children in Warwickshire despite the additional challenges throughout the pandemic. We have been able to again hold collective events during 2021, though our focus has been on outside activities including fishing with BBQ, Den building at WWT at Brandon, and the Christmas light show at Coombe Abbey with over 100 attending this and kindly funded by Callum Design.

We have successfully recruited two new members of the operations team, Sarah Edge joined us in Rugby to replace Kelly Furness, who remains with the project as a volunteer. Additionally in early 2022 we have recruited for a new post of Operations team leader/manager, and Ruth Blunt started with us in April. Sarah has also recently taken responsibility within the Operations team for social media and marketing.

From a trustee perspective Louise Hasler has had to regrettably stand down, as unfortunately her two sons are facing significant health challenges. Louise is thanked for all the work she has done, and we hope that things become brighter for her and her family in the future. Louise is happy to do a handover once we have a new trustee in place with the portfolio of Risk, Compliance & Governance. Sarah Stallard has contributed greatly whilst with us but stands down at this AGM, as she has a new job with increasing hours and some evenings, so is not able to continue. Tina Chander (head of Employment law at Wright Hassell) is delighted to join us taking over the HR trustee portfolio, as a new trustee to be elected at this year's AGM. Gurmaj Dhillon has not been able to be involved as he had hoped owing to long term family commitments, so is not being put forward for re-election this year, though if things settle for him, then we would be happy for him to be re-engaged again.

Pat Miller has joined the trustee board as our new Older Friends' representative, replacing Jon Gibbons, who is no longer an Older friend following his move to Northampton. and he has kindly agreed to take on the mantle of Hon Secretary from Michelle Machin and remains on the board in this new capacity.

### The Highlights of what we have achieved in 2021 are as follows: -

- ✓ Continued to provide the invaluable 121 volunteer support and fun for disadvantaged children in spite of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, who continued to work, showing great care, resilience and adaptability throughout the year.
- ✓ We have helped 107 children directly during 2021, and many more in the wider family and school's environment
- ✓ Risk Assessments for COVID-19 and Q & A provided for volunteers and team have been regularly updated as regulations changed, to enable us to continue to function as the law allowed.
- ✓ When face to face was not permitted, we have continued to successfully pivot, so as to give online, telephone and pen pal support
- ✓ Our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year was lower key than we hoped, as it was not really the right environment or sensible to risk having a collective indoor celebration

- ✓ We held several successful outside events including fishing, Den building with WWT and Coombe Abbey Christmas Lights extravaganza, with over 100 attending the latter event
- ✓ Safeguarding training has been undertaken online, including refresher training.
- ✓ Our training for new volunteers has been refreshed with a new booklet produced to support the training given by our area Coordinators.
- ✓ Our volunteer application paperwork updated too, with an online option included.
- ✓ Our income achieved was £63,366, against budget £65,350, as expenditure lower than anticipated the carry forward to 2022 of £60,588, was slightly higher than in 2021, leaving us in a healthy financial position
- ✓ We have recommenced our journey for CIO status, as agreed at previous AGM, as have confirmation we can continue with our Queens Award in new entity.

### **In 2022 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 2021, though the quality is still more important than the numbers matched.
- ✓ Specifically, to increase the number of Older Friends as volunteers, particularly in North Warwickshire, Rugby, and Stratford upon Avon
- ✓ Our budget is to raise £65,000, with target income of 70,000.
- ✓ Recruit a trustee for Portfolio Risk, Governance & Compliance, also for Operations, and to identify a new vice-chairman too for future
- ✓ Continue work with our Trusted Charity project.
- ✓ Attend periodic networking events to increase the profile of the Friendship Project.
- ✓ Further improve our social media presence
- ✓ Organise regular sessions through the year for Safeguarding Training for volunteers, both as refreshers and also for new volunteers, online and face to face.
- ✓ Continue to hold periodic Older Friends get-togethers/training/support sessions.
- ✓ Complete the Procedures Manual including Trustees Responsibilities too, in "How to" format for contingency planning.
- ✓ Continue to encourage and support training for the operation team.
- ✓ Recruit additional Group Supporters, as required as our Older Friends increase

### **Trustee vacancies**

We are looking to recruit two trustees, one for portfolio Operations, and one for portfolio Risk, Governance, & Compliance, if you know of anyone who may be interested, please email below.

### **Big thank you.**

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, particularly through these most challenging times.

### **Cheryll Rawbone**

Chairman Email: [cheryll.rawbone@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:cheryll.rawbone@friendshipproject.co.uk)

# Safeguarding Report

Esther Jones – Email [esther.jones@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:esther.jones@friendshipproject.co.uk)

Safeguarding is and has remained at the heart of the work of the Friendship Project over the last year: promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is the very essence of the Project's purpose.

## Volunteer Training

Training our volunteers to understand their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding is an essential part of ensuring we are enacting our safeguarding duties. I have had the pleasure of delivering this training over Zoom, which has, to my surprise, presented positive opportunities to present the training in a different way. Sessions are delivered 3 times a year with a 'full session' and a 'refresher session'. The full session is delivered over 2 evenings and explores the Project's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in the first session and then gives volunteers a chance to apply this learning through the examination of a set of scenarios in the second session. The refresher session covers only the scenarios.

Feedback from attendees included:

Most Useful	Least Useful
<i>"Understanding the roles and responsibilities of an older friend"</i> <i>"The practical examples were most useful and make it easier to remember how to handle a particular event".</i> <i>"It was reassuring and good to hear that if you have any concerns at all you can call your Area Coordinator."</i> <i>"How to deal with any difficulties with your YF and the support that is there to help. Having the support network is great and the flowchart is very helpful."</i>	<i>"Reading off the screen or others dominating the conversation"</i> <i>"Personally, identifying different forms of abuse, however this is only due to previous training I have had and think it is still important as apart of the training sessions"</i> <i>"Found session 2 a lot more helpful. Maybe session 1 could be shortened to allow session 2 to be at a slower pace."</i>
Other Comments	Other Training
<i>"I appreciate we were under time pressure to finish but it would be nice to have gone through the case studies and maybe even do a roleplay example of a child disclosing"</i> <i>"Very informative &amp; also good to see the faces of other Older Friends on the zoom meeting"</i> <i>"I would like to thank Esther for running such a well informed and easy to understand safeguarding refresher training session. Also Heather for her advice and reassurance that any concerns we have, we can talk to our area coordinator."</i> <i>"The training is good and helps to reinforce how to manage any situations where you may need to take action and escalate. It gives you confidence about how to interact with your YF."</i>	<i>"Would like to see resources for trips that have been used before"</i> <i>"Maybe a short list or checklist of possible vulnerable situations that have come up in the past and the best way to deal with them. I appreciate this a million different scenarios but generally they will boil down to a few main groups of examples."</i> <i>"As it is brought up in the training, active listening skills and what exactly this entails."</i> <i>"Once you start being an older friend do we have "a catch up" every now and then with our co-ordinator and other older friends to see if we have any questions or things we might be able to help each other with?"</i>

For 2022/23 we will be delivering a mix of virtual and face to face training sessions.

### **Updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedure was reviewed in February 2022 with minor updates to reflect staff changes.

A Mobile Phone Usage policy was created and updated to provide guidance for volunteers to understand what is 'ok' with regards to using their mobile phone to contact their young friend. The Project recognises that as this is how people communicate the Project should provide guidelines to ensure safe boundaries were in place for both older and younger friends.

### **Safeguarding Concerns Raised**

Over the year there have been a range of concerns brought to me by the Area Co-ordinators. There have been 2 emerging themes to these concerns: Volunteers overstepping boundaries and becoming 'too involved' and the younger friend's situation becoming too complex or even unsafe for the Older Friend to manage

I remain impressed by the Area Co-ordinators approach to managing these concerns: seeking out advice, provision of support to their older friends, reflecting on what could be done differently or better to prevent the same thing happening again, tracking down appropriate professionals, working with social workers and being tenacious in ensuring concerns are responded to by the appropriate professional, where required.

My thanks also needed to be given to the Older Friends who have discharged their safeguarding responsibilities by doing what we ask: sharing their concerns.

### **Other Activity**

We have continued to meet with Calvin Smith from Warwickshire County Council, who provides updates and guidance on the local safeguarding agenda and who has been a helpful source of information and advice on more specific issues.

I had the pleasure of being part of the new(ish) Area Co-ordinators induction: we met on a number of occasions to identify safeguarding training opportunities and ensure Sarah felt comfortable with the safeguarding responsibilities for the role.



## Grant, Trust and Local Fund Raising

**Richard Barrett** May 2022. Email: [richard.barrett@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:richard.barrett@friendshipproject.co.uk)

In 2021 our total income grew by 13% as all the main sources of our income partially recovered from the low point of 2020, when our overall income fell by 25% due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

We are very grateful for the continuing support of existing grant funders, The Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, The National Lottery Community Fund, The King Henry VIII's Endowed Trust, The Heart of England Community Foundation and the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1961 Charitable Trust. In addition to applications made to existing grant funders, we were also successful in applying to new funders Warwickshire CrimeBeat and The Four Acre Trust. The latter provided us with a fantastic opportunity for matched funding of new donor income which in total raised £16,454 for the Friendship Project.

We were delighted to welcome new corporate supporters Alsters Kelley Solicitors and Countryside Properties who along with the Claverdon Fields Charitable Trust and a new private donor, contributed to the success of the matched funding appeal referred to above. It was also good to develop our relationship with CR Callum Limited who also contributed to our fundraising during the year.

We are thankful to David Eaton who raised £856 running the Milton Keynes Half Marathon and to all who raised money on our behalf or contributed to our other fundraising activities in 2021.

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 all our grant funders:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust        | ✓ King Henry VIII's Endowed Trust -   |
| ✓ Amazon Smile                          | Warwick                               |
| ✓ Anonymous donors                      | ✓ Leamington & District Rotary        |
| ✓ Aviva Community Fund                  | ✓ Masonic Provincial Grand Lodge      |
| ✓ Bravissimo                            | ✓ Mr & Mrs. M Parton                  |
| ✓ Charities Trust                       | ✓ Ralph Heeley                        |
| ✓ Coventry & District Cricket Club      | ✓ Ruth Bowie                          |
| ✓ CR Callum Limited                     | ✓ Shipston Rotary                     |
| ✓ Crowdfunder                           | ✓ Sophie Parker                       |
| ✓ David Eaton                           | ✓ Terence Hague                       |
| ✓ Froggle Parties                       | ✓ The Four Acre Trust                 |
| ✓ Gallagher Ltd                         | ✓ The National Lottery Community Fund |
| ✓ Georgina Rawbone                      | ✓ UK Corona Virus Resilience Fund     |
| ✓ BM & SJ Hall                          | ✓ Village Voices                      |
| ✓ F C Stokes Trust                      | ✓ Warwickshire CrimeBeat              |
| ✓ Heart of England Community Foundation | ✓ Warwickshire Police & Crime         |
| ✓ Just Giving                           | Commissioner                          |

Thanks also go to Gallagher Insurance Broking Limited who continue to give administration support and to Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club for use of their meeting room, and SSD for their archive storage.

We have continued to raise our profile, particularly through social media, Facebook and our website, alongside attending local networking events, virtually and in person when permitted. It has been particularly pleasing to see how this activity has resulted in growth in the numbers of volunteers coming forward to be Older Friends.

As normality returns following COVID, we look forward to continuing our work and to growing our friendships, supporting more disadvantaged children. This will require us to raise further funds as our costs grow, but we are confident that we can continue to grow our income through the support of our donors and grant funders.

Fundraising is a team effort and thanks go to the whole team for all their hard work in supporting our fundraising.



# Marketing Report for AGM on 16th June 2022

Angela Truman – Email [angela.truman@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:angela.truman@friendshipproject.co.uk)

## Social Media

The past year has seen 2 people try to give more dedicated to raising our social media presence and following, firstly Michelle Machin as a volunteer and now Sarah Edge as an additional part of Area Coordinator role. It has proved a success and new Older Friend volunteers have come forward and donations being made after seeing our posts. It is definitely an important part of our marketing and we see our following continuing to grow.

## Male Volunteers

We have made a concerted effort to recruit more male volunteer Older Friends, so this has been a theme in our press releases, case studies and social media posts, which has paid dividends and we have seen our male numbers increasing.

## Local Businesses

Callum Designs, a prestigious car design and engineering company business based in Warwick, donated £1000 to fund an outdoor Christmas event as many people were still nervous about attending an indoor gathering. This was a great success and was held early in December at the Coombe Abbey light trail, where everyone admired the stunning lights along the trail and got to enjoy toasting marshmallows and a hot chocolate too. It was well attended by 45 children and 43 adults made up of Older and Younger friends from across the whole county along with employees from the Friendship Project and Callum. Each child also received the gift of a selection box.

There were sufficient funds remaining from the Christmas event that Callum's donation also funded an Animal Welfare visit to Morton Morrell College in May. This was attended by 15 children along with their Older Friends.

The relationship with Callum continues, and it was particularly nice that they brought their own children along to the light trail at the Christmas event.

The Friendship Project were the chosen charity for 2021 for Alsters Kelley law firm in Leamington Spa. In September they held a fantastic bingo evening at the Bulldog pub in Whitnash and raised £1727. It was well attended and great for raising awareness of the work of the Friendship Project as well as raising funds. We were fortunate that the event fell in September and therefore qualified for match funding from the Four Acres Trust.

All donations and partnerships with the Friendship Project have been celebrated in the press and across all social media platforms.

## PR

We have received good PR coverage in the local press over the last year. Our coverage included articles on:

Our Bank Life Fishing events which were hailed as a great success by our Older and Younger Friends.  
The increase in community spirit since the pandemic hit, resulting in more volunteers for the charity.  
Alsters Kelley successful bingo night for the Friendship Project.  
The need for more male volunteers.

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

Below is an article which was printed in the Stratford Herald in January this year. Having seen several press releases from the Friendship Project, they took the time to arrange an interview in order to gain a greater understanding of our work and produced this detailed article:

## **Charity brings friendship and fun to children and adults across Stratford, Alcester, Shipston, Warwick and Leamington**

By Craig Gibbons [cgibbons@stratford-herald.com](mailto:cgibbons@stratford-herald.com)

Published: 12:32, 22 January 2022

DESPITE the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a county charity which matches children who are in need with adults for friendship and fun has seen a record number of volunteer applications.

Now in its 36th year, the Friendship Project will be providing support to 100 youngsters across Alcester, Atherstone, Leamington Spa, Kenilworth, Nuneaton, Rugby, Shipston, Stratford, Southam and Warwick – up from 70 before the coronavirus crisis hit.

The charity, which is based on the Big Brother – Big Sister movement in the United States, provides young friends with older friends who provide the children with regular fun activities, attention and an ongoing friendship for a few hours each week.

Often the activities which they enjoy together are things the children wouldn't otherwise get to experience. It can be as simple as a walk in the park or baking cakes together, or more of a treat like a trip to the cinema, swimming or wall climbing.

This simple concept has seen the children's self-esteem grow and even improved their attainment and behaviour at school and in the home.

To date the charity has supported around 1,500 children, who are all referred to the Friendship Project by children's services.



**The Friendship Project volunteers support children for two to three hours a week for friendship and fun. (54165606)**

What's more, given how Covid-19 restrictions have limited how the project can operate, marketing trustee Angela Truman told the Herald that the volunteers had gone above and beyond to ensure they kept in touch with their young friends at a time when face-to-face contact was virtually impossible.

"What we found in Covid-19 is that while the charity struggled financially and did not raise the £35,000 it hoped to last year, we saw that people wanted to give something back to their community," she said. "We had an increase in volunteers and that's why we're able to support more children at one time than we have ever done before."

“Pre-Covid we had about 70 children and now we’re up to 100, so that’s a massive increase for us. Covid-19 hit very hard and it still does today because the rules have not allowed the Friendship Project to operate as it should.

“The idea is our volunteers spend two to three hours a week together with children and pick them up in their car, but that was a no-no when the pandemic hit.

“Instead people wrote to each other and the older friends sent their young friends word searches and quizzes. Some of the children were keen to do that and others weren’t. She added: “Some maintained relationships by FaceTiming. Some of our older friends sent seeds in the post to the children and planted them together and watched sunflowers grow over FaceTime. Some children don’t have the technology to communicate like that or the privacy to do it because they’re in a busy household.

“The older friends worked really hard to try to maintain those friendships. It was hard and it still is with the new variant. We are constantly reviewing what we can and can’t allow the friendships to do as we might have volunteers who are vulnerable or live with vulnerable people, likewise with the children.

“You have to take your hats off to the volunteers, though, as they have done an amazing job trying to build friendships through other means during the pandemic.”

Although the support ends when a child turns 17, Angela told the Herald that some friendships have gone on to last for many more years.

“We’ve had some fantastic stories,” she said. “Although the friendships end on the 17th birthday, the volunteers and children often stay in touch because they have become a part of each other’s lives.

“Two years ago we got the Queen’s Award for voluntary service and we had a few older friends that were speaking, and one of them is now a godparent to her young friend’s children which is just lovely.

“We also have another lady who is an American living in Stratford and she was part of the Big Brother – Big Sister project in the USA. She moved to the UK and is still an active member with the Friendship Project.

“We also have some adults who were young friends that now act as ambassadors for us, as they’ve gone through the Friendship Project and want to give something back.”

The hope for the Friendship Project is that 2022 will enable them to operate to as close as normal as possible, whilst also raising much-needed funding.

Angela also told the Herald that the charity is on the lookout for more volunteers, in particular men.

“Our eldest older friend is well into their 80s while others are just past the age of 18,” she said. “We have men and women older friends, but we could do with more men because more women come forward to volunteer.

“We feel men are a little bit worried about how it looks taking out a child that isn’t theirs because of how society is today.

“We assure men there is a lot of safeguarding training and that we have support for them from area co-ordinators.



**Getting crafty. (54165602)**

The charity does some fantastic work across the county and it's all about providing children in need with that much-needed attention others take for granted.

As Angela points out, pretty much any activity goes: "It has been proven that by just having a few weeks of undivided attention for that child boosts their self-esteem," she said. "Under-performing or misbehaving children at school have been shown to improve because their confidence grows by having an older friend.

"We tend to match older and young friends who have like-minded interests – we would not put an 84-year-old with a 13-year-old who wants to go rock climbing."

She added: "One of the nice things which is phenomenal about the older friends is the sheer variety of what they do for their young friend. We had one child who wanted to be a member at Warwick Hockey Club, so his older friend took him there after school and also took him to matches.

"Whenever there was no hockey on due to the weather or it was out-of-season, she did different activities with him.

"There's always food involved too and I know some of our older friends do baking with the children or teach them how to make a full English breakfast.

"If a young friend is struggling with reading, the volunteer will help them and go through it together.

"There was also one man who had a bike in bits and his young friend helped him build it back together and they now go bike riding together.

"Some children just want to go for a walk, go swimming, go to the cinemas or have a McDonald's. Whatever is on that child's wish list we try to give them."

For more information about the charity, visit <https://friendshipproject.co.uk>.

## Operations Team Manager AGM Report May 2022

Ruth Blunt - [ruth.blunt@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:ruth.blunt@friendshipproject.co.uk)

I joined the Friendship Project in March 2022 as the Operations Team Manager. I am responsible for leading the Operations Team and my role is to promote the interests of and contribute to the effective running of the Friendship Project.

Working closely with the Operations Team to ensure that the Project's processes and objectives are met, implemented, and maintained at a local level. It is also my responsibility to provide guidance, supervision, and support to the Operations Team.

I have been made to feel very welcome by everyone at the Friendship Project and it is great to be part of a team where it is clear that everyone really cares and is passionate about what they do.

I have been out on visits with the Area Coordinators to sit in on some of their interviews and have carried out their 6-monthly one-to-one meetings.

Looking forward to working with the team over the coming year and getting more involved in the Project's activities.



## AGM Report April 2021

Fiona Roche Warwick District email [Fiona.roche@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:Fiona.roche@friendshipproject.co.uk):

**Older Friends:** 24  
**Younger Friends:** 26  
**Pipeline:** 8

### In General

This year has seen us go from Covid restrictions back to some sort of normality and face to face outings. It has been a challenge for OFs and YFs to get back to a routine of seeing each other after so long. Positive covid tests and a lot more colds have cancelled numerous outings.

We have had a steady flow of new OFs apply. We are seeing more younger people volunteer and I believe this is because we have a bigger presence on social media, as well as the pandemic changing the way people look at their life. With more home based working it has given people more hours to use to volunteer.

### Friendships

Friendships matched 14

5 of these only lasted 1-6 months but the rest are going strong. 10 girls and 4 boys were matched. Many of our volunteers are female hence a lot of them do like to be matched with girls. We have had a big push to recruit more male volunteers via social media/press and male OFs speaking at get togethers. A few more males have applied, and we will continue to try and recruit them.

Friendships ended 18

7 natural end - the YFs have matured into the older teens and either reached 17 or no longer needed an OF.

4 safeguarding reasons – changes in circumstances have created more complications and it has been felt that the friendship should end for safeguarding reasons. Esther has been extremely supportive with these, as they have been challenging endings.

3 illness – unfortunately ill health of the OF or a family member has meant it has ended.

4 Change of personal situation ie job/relocation – a special mention to Gemma who joined us as a student at 22 and went on to be a fabulous friend to a young girl for 5 years, but is now relocating with a work promotion! For another OF covid restrictions in her job as a carer meant she had to stop volunteering for us.

### COVID-19

The extra paperwork with Covid has felt huge. We have had Risk Assessments, Carer guidance, car forms to fill in for each friendship existing and new friendships. It has changed several times through the year, this has then needed updating.

Matches have been delayed with either the family or volunteer getting covid. Some schools haven't wanted us to do matches at school, but in the last 6 months this has been easier as restrictions have got less and less.

Referrals of children have been a lot more complex and so sadly I haven't been able to accept and match these children. I have been trying to find less complex referrals but it does seem that services and schools are very stretched at the moment, so they haven't been easy to come by.

### Events attended

- Team Away day
- Cava volunteer fair
- Christmas Illuminated Event

- Zoom get togethers
- Face to face get togethers
- Presentation to WI Leamington Lillies
- Met with Warwick Councillor Terry Morris

## Radio

I have spoken on CWR several times in the last year. It has been good to speak to a different audience via this media. On one occasion I organised for male OF Gary Larnar to come on the interview with me to try and reach out to more males to come forward and volunteer. It was great to have his input and speak about his experience of being an OF in the Friendship Project.

## Duchess of Cambridge Carol Concert

I put forward and received tickets for one of my Older Friends and their Younger friend for this amazing opportunity. It was all very last minute and hush hush! This friendship had been going for 5 years. They had a brilliant time, please do read the write up in our newsletter written by the other OF who went along.

## Summary

It has been great to welcome our new AC for Ruby, Sarah and Ops Manager, Ruth. The year has held a few challenges which I have over come with the support of the team and the trustees. I continue to feel passionate about my role at the Friendship Project and look forward to the next year.

## Case Study

Over Christmas 2020 I started to think about the year ahead and what it would bring, we had just had a year of the pandemic and like everyone I was reflective on what life was all about.

I am a Marketing Manager of 55 years old and have been very lucky to have a comfortable life. I am single and don't have any children. I have 2 nieces, 2 great nieces and a great nephew, who I love spending time with. I thought it would be great to get involved with other children in the community, so I did a Google search – and found the Friendship Project.

I made contact by email and got a reply very quickly from Fiona Roche (Area Coordinator for Warwick and Leamington region). She was so supportive and encouraging so I thought I would love to become an Older Friend. I sent all my paperwork, had an Enhanced DBS check and attended safeguarding sessions on zoom. Heather Shipley (Area Coordinator for Stratford region) came round to see me – in the garden, as we weren't allowed to go indoors at the time. I was all ready..... then in May I was matched with my Younger Friend who is 15 years old. I am sure this is happening much quicker now, but it was a strange time with COVID. My Younger Friend and I met for the first time on Zoom. Then, my Younger Friend, her Dad, Fiona and one of the teachers at School met in the playground in person and we signed our commitment contracts.

Since we met, my Younger Friend and I have had so much fun, I love our time together. At first, I wondered what a teenage girl would want to do – but we soon got to know each other, and I got a feel for what she likes to do. I think I've got it right as she wants to come every week without fail. We have great conversations about what's been going on in her world and how she feels and most importantly do new fun things together.

So where have we been – well....badminton, swimming, lunches and dog walks are in the always in the mix.

We've also been to Blenheim Palace (at Christmas when the Nutcracker exhibition was in the house) and Baddesley Clinton, Stoneleigh Abbey, the Herbert Museum and The Box at Fargo Village – as my Younger Friend is very interested in history.

We attended a fishing trip organised by the Friendship Project which was a great hit as my Younger Friend loves to fish with her Dad. She earned the silver award with her skills for casting, putting bait on her line and catching fish. The coach she had on the day was so patient and encouraged her no end.

We went to The Coombe Abbey light trail funded by Callum Design which was another great experience. My Younger Friend got to bring her sister with her, and we all had a lovely evening with the other 50 children who attended. It was a very special event.



Craft is something my Younger Friend loves, and she has made cakes, lunches for the two of us, baubles for the Christmas tree at St Mary's Church, a Christmas wreath, a silver ring at a ring making workshop and painted stained glass.

One of the highlights for my Younger Friend recently, has been going to Six the Musical in Wolverhampton. She knows all the words to the songs and was beaming the whole time we watched the show. We booked in September and went in February – she looked forward to it and gave her something to spur her on during her GCSE mock exams.

One trip I really enjoyed was taking my Younger Friend to Warwickshire College to the open evening, so she could learn about the hairdressing course. She was so animated and excited about the course, it's given her a reason to get her GCSEs, as she wants to do an apprenticeship. She has been working on Saturdays in a local hairdresser since she was 13, so she has a real passion for hairdressing. I am sure she will be a very talented hairdresser.

I have enjoyed every outing with my Younger Friend, she is great, and when people say 'ooh you are good for taking her out' I say 'no I love to see her, we do some great things together.'

I am so glad I found the Friendship Project and I would recommend anyone who has some spare time to join.



## AGM Report May 2022

Heather Shipley Stratford District - Email [heather.shipley@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:heather.shipley@friendshipproject.co.uk)

<b>Older Friends:</b>	27
<b>Younger Friends:</b>	17
<b>Matched:</b>	17
<b>Pipeline:</b>	10

### In General

A roller coaster of a year, coming out of lockdown, handing the Rugby area over to Sarah with lots of friendships starting, ending and having issues! We are seeing that our referrals are becoming more and more complex since COVID. In talking with other professionals, they are having the same issues. We have had some complex safeguarding issues – and thank you to the Team, Esther and Ruth, for their support.

### Matchings

I had 17 friendships that have been matched for a while and are stable relationships working well. One of these may end towards the end of the year as the younger friend is now a teenager (they have been friends for over 4 years) and is testing the boundaries of the friendship. Steve is matched with a 15 year old boy and it has been difficult to start a routine of meetings as the young man had detentions at school and he was not communicating well with Steve. This has now improved and Steve is supporting him with his transition from school to college. Sandra was matched with a 13 year old girl for a few weeks and the younger friend decided they did not want a volunteer anymore. Sandra has now been matched with an 8 year old girl who is CIN. The friendship is going very well. Sandra has over 20 years of experience working with young people and was not phased by the CIN and has built up a lovely friendship with her younger friend in a short time. Three of my friendships stopped on the same day as one of the children was taken into care and the Dad of the other two children was not happy with them having volunteers. He was very abusive to myself and the referrer on the phone, so I finished the friendships due to our volunteers safety. Unfortunately, two of these Volunteers do not want to be matched again. Luckily, the other volunteer is a Deputy Head at a Primary School and is well used to these sorts of issues, so is happy to be matched again.

### Group Supporters

Pat is Group Supporting three OF's and I will be Group Supporting all the other OF's.

### Interviews

5 full interviews for Older Friend applications and 7 2<sup>nd</sup> interviews for Fiona.

### Events attended

- Online Get Together's for new and current Older Friends
- Bi-monthly Ops Meetings
- Regular meet ups with other AC's
- Regular online Safeguarding Training with Esther (plus second session training with volunteers who were not able to attend the second date with Esther)
- Restorative and Relational Practice Zoom workshop
- Shipston Area OF's Get Together October and January
- Face to Face OF Get Together Leamington October
- Face to Face OF Get Together Stratford November
- Coombe Abbey Light Tour December

## Community

I have attended both face to face and online workshops with local networking groups and Foundation House in Stratford. I am having conversations with the Community Team at the RSC to see how we can work together moving forward.

## Other

- Mentor to Sarah Edge in the Rugby area.
- Review of Interview Forms for the Ops Team
- Proof reading of Guidelines
- Working with Sarah to update social media
- Putting together press releases and case studies
- I am currently training in Advanced Clinical Supervision for my counselling role.

## Case study



I am a 46-year-old man with one son (6yrs).

I have always enjoyed a simple life, a gifted life really. I had a great home life growing up, I had a good school life, a fun teenage time, an action-packed 20s, an adventurous 30s, and then hit my 40s and realised I could give more to others as I had been focusing on myself for so long. Actually, I really enjoy helping others and realised that was not a weakness as I had thought for 40 years, but a strength, so maybe I could do it in a more useful way than just doing some DIY for a friend, or picking up some shopping for a neighbour.

I saw a post on [www.neighbourhood.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.co.uk) not long after a charity walk. I completed it and it really hit home for me that I could support a local kid that for whatever reason needs a helping hand through their school years.

My first meeting with the Dad of my then possible friendship match was a nice meeting in the Younger Friend's school and it went well. The Dad was behind the project and could see how it might help his son. When I think about it, I would have loved having a friend with a car that wanted to do fun stuff with me one day a week too!

So, 6 months into the friendship and it's going great. We have walked, talked, swam, explored, jumped, paddled, created, bowled, sewn, built, ran, dined, shopped and had Birthdays.

I thought it would be a hassle and that I would not have time, I mean, one night every week, that's a lot to ask, isn't it? I have a son and run my own business, how will I be able to make the time? But actually, when it's in the diary, you just make space for it and it becomes the new normal very fast and easy, just like a 'curry night' or a weekly meeting at work. The difference being, you have someone who is really looking forward to seeing you and spending time with just you and you are making a positive difference in their lives and your life at the same time!

They say "givers gain" and I totally get it now.

I have learnt so much about myself and my Younger Friend who is a wonderful kid, with a real passion for creativity and storytelling, so much so that we are trying to make a comic together when we have quieter meetings and don't go and do the bigger stuff. We have a great time planning, drawing and writing sat on a park bench looking over the river in which is one of our favourite places as there is always something going on which helps the creative cells keep flowing.

The Friendship Project is a gift for a younger person but also for you, their family and the community all rolled into fun times out!

## AGM Report April 2021

Viv Kelsey, Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire – email [viv.kelsey@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:viv.kelsey@friendshipproject.co.uk)

**Older Friends:** 12  
**Younger Friends:** 13  
**Pipeline:** 2

### In General

it has been a busy period firstly maintaining friendships through the pandemic and slowly getting the Older Friends back on outings with their Younger Friends. Most of the first activities were outside to help reduce the Covid risk.

There has been a lot of Friendships finish as the children reached their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was sad to say goodbye then to some of the Older Friends, they had all done a fantastic job with their Younger Friends. The families were all grateful for the friendships that had been and the positive impact on their child's lives.

Facebook is still proving to be the biggest area to recruit new volunteers for this area. The posts asking for volunteers has generated a lot of interest with between 30 and 40 enquiries about what is involved. 5 new Older Friends have now been matched. We have interviewed more, but for a variety of reasons they have not continued.

We also attended a volunteer fair in Nuneaton which resulted in 2 applications being submitted and recruiting one new Older Friend. We are planning on attending a similar event again later this year.

One Older Friend has had to finish her friendship with her Younger Friend due to health issues making driving at this time difficult. However, I am delighted that she wanted to continue to be part of the The Friendship Project and is continuing as a Group Supporter to the Older Friends.

### Events attended

Bank Life fishing is a family run fishing clothing company who are passionate about fishing. They contacted me as they wanted to give something back to the community, as Matt had found memories of Nuneaton as a child they wanted to collaborate with us to offer the children working with the Friendship Project the opportunity to experience the joys of fishing. Working together we organised a fishing trip for 12 children with their Older Friends on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021. It was so popular with more friendships than places asking if they could attend. After discussions with Bank Life they then offered a 2<sup>nd</sup> date which again was fully subscribed. The event was beyond any of our wildest expectations. The friendships arrived at 10am ready for a day's fishing. They were matched with a fishing expert to take them through the ropes and help them for the day. Lunch was provided, burgers and hot dogs along with the fishing tales and lots of happy faces and laughter. The day was supposed to finish around 3 – 3.30, we were dragging the children, Older Friends and their fishing coaches off the lake around 4pm telling them they had to go home!

Following these two successful dates, a further date was added before the colder weather arrived. Bank Life are hoping to offer regular monthly or bi monthly fishing events for children in 2022. The first event has been organised for 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 and the Friendship Project has been offered and filled 7 places. It has been a wonderful experience for the Younger Friends and their Older Friends not only enjoying the new experience of fishing but being outside, making new friends and having lots of fun. None of this would be possible without the support of the fishing family, the bait shops and tackle shops providing bait and fishing tackle free for the children to use, the supporters of Bank Life buying raffle tickets and contributing towards the fund raising to make these events happen and of course to the lovely Matt and Hannah for the initial idea and contributing a proportion of their sales to the events. Last but not least to the fishing coaches who have willingly given up their time to help the children showing them how to fish. The benefits have been not only the expected enjoyment of the children and their Older Friends but also the coaches who had not realised how much pleasure they would get from this experience. A huge thanks to everyone involved and here is to a continued enjoyment of this new sport.

The Riding for the Disabled National Training Centre, Shrewley, Warwickshire are reorganising a pony event for The Friendship Project following the cancellation of a proposed event before lockdown. They are looking to introduce the children to ponies, brushing, handling and spending time with them before then having a wonderful experience on 'Charlie' their mechanical horse.

We are speakers for the WI and have attended meetings in and around the area giving talks about what The Friendship Project does.

### Case study 1

C is in foster care with his brother from a young age. Both boys have different father's. His brother's father wanted to take the children on and the children were returned to his care. However, the circumstances were not good, the father's parenting skills were not good and he lacked the understanding of how to care properly for the children. They were then returned to the foster care family. C felt a bit abandoned, the experience had not been a very happy one. His Foster Care family are very supportive and get on very well with both boys. C's brother has additional needs so can take more time from the family. It was felt that C would benefit from his own special friend to do activities with. Our Older Friend is a lovely male who has lots of experience working with children. He and C spend lots of time together doing fun activities. C can sometimes feel overwhelmed and not want to go out. His Older Friend understands this and doesn't pressure him when he cancels a visit. C has had covid and was isolating, this meant that he had to cancel his trip out with his Older Friend. However, his Older Friend was very thoughtful and made up a treat bag for him and dropped it at the door.

The family say the Older Friend is a wonderful, caring person who never complains if they have to cancel at short notice. He is always there when he says he will be and the two of them have some great trips out together. The Older Friend tried to take C and his brother to the local firework display in November, however there was a huge traffic problem so they never actually got to the official display. Not to be outdone by the traffic, they watched the fireworks in the sky from lots of small local events. C said that it was great fun and they really enjoyed the trip out even if it wasn't quite what was planned.

### Case study 2

I first became aware of the Friendship Project for Children (FP) back in 2006 when I saw an article about the charity in my local newsletter. At that time I could not commit to a regular weekend day so decided it was best not to take it further.

In January or February 2018 I saw another plea from FP in my local newsletter and thought, "I now have the weekends free" and decided to enquire further. Before doing so I had noticed two references were required which wasn't a problem. So, I phoned the number, spoke to a very nice lady and arranged for her and another lady to come round to my home to have a chat about the charity and its aims. It was also a check by them to see if I was suitable.

From that chat I decided to go ahead with the training and hopefully become an OF.

The training, a safeguarding course, was very informal but very thorough and, surprisingly, enjoyable.

Meeting fellow, prospective OF's and experienced OF's doing a refresher course gave me the chance to chat and learn more about the charity. The next step was an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. This is a necessary check to make sure I have no criminal record. The check is also done on people living in your house too.

So, having passed the DBS checks in early April I was sent an e-mail with three children's names and a very brief history of their life and situation. I was to choose one from the three which was extremely hard to do. I finally selected a thirteen year old boy.

The final stage was to meet the parents and the boy in mid April to see if they and he were okay with me being his OF. I was glad that a representative of FP was there and she knew all the right questions to ask. All went well at the meeting and, as normal, a six month probation period was set to see how things would go.

In late April 2018 I took my Younger Friend (YF) to Astley Book Farm. It was a little awkward, but we decided to continue. It is now nearly four years since that first meeting.

From that day onwards we have been the best of friends.

I can honestly say that we have never had a cross word and the fun and enjoyment we have both gained with our friendship has been wonderful.



Some of our adventures include Frisbee Golf, Ten pin bowling, Snooker, watching football and during the lockdown period lots of walks. Also visits to Bosworth Battlefields, The Space Centre, The Black Country Museum, Hartshill Hayes Country Park and many more.

He has achieved ten GCSE's and is now in his second year of 6th form studying for three 'A' levels.

He has been provisionally accepted by five universities, provided he gets the grades of which I'm sure he will. Now that he is seventeen and doesn't qualify for FP I hope to be looking for another YF when he finishes 6th form this summer.

The pleasure of seeing a young, troubled boy developing into a pleasant, kind and respectful young man is something I can't put into words.

I would say to anyone thinking about becoming an OF, if you can give the time then do it.

The sense of pride in helping a young person turn their lives around is priceless.

## AGM Report May 2022

Sarah Edge - Rugby – email [sarah.edge@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:sarah.edge@friendshipproject.co.uk)

**Matched OF** 15

**Waiting matching** 5

**Waiting first interview** 1 – completing on 18/05

**Waiting second interview** 2

**Total** 23

### In General

Well, I have now been with the FP for 10 months and it has been fantastic! A few ups and downs along the way but I am learning every day and really enjoying my role.

I have had a great mentor in Heather and all the team have been so welcoming and supportive.

Since January we have had a influx of volunteers coming forward for Rugby which has been great but also a learning curve in me being super organised.

### Matchings

When I first started, I had 13 friendships that were quite established so making contact and keeping communication going with the OF was key in keeping these going and making sure everyone was happy. We have lost a few along the way due to some reaching 17 and also a few safeguarding issues, as well as some children pursuing other activities so a mutual agreement to end was made.

The new friendships that have started are going well and it has been lovely to hear about outings and having updates from the parents of how happy the children are and what an impact it has had not only on the child but also the carer and the volunteer.

One friendship had to end after the first meeting due to the child no longer interested but I am hoping that Tracy our OF will be re-matched as she is going to make such a great OF with lots of experience and a great love of arts and crafts!

### Group Supporters

Judy and Kelly are my Group Supporters as well as myself looking after some OF's.

### Interviews

9 interviews for new applicants since I started.

### Events attended

- Bi-monthly Ops Meetings
- Regular meet ups with other AC's
- Safeguarding Training in person with Heather
- Bank Life Fishing Event x 2
- Wasps vs Worcester flag bearing event
- Away Days with the team
- Attended Rotary Club dinner for International Women's Day

### Community

I am making contact with the 'Circles Network' to talk about their services for our OF to possibly book on individually – activities include horse care, arts and crafts and outdoor activities.

Planning more outreach and networking events to promote and market our charity not only to recruit more volunteers but also to find sponsors and donors where we can.



## Other

- Increasing my hours to make sure our social media channels are getting traffic and we are posting regular updates. (thanks to the team for the content)
- Ruth is looking in to some training/support on learning more about the referral/assessment system through Children's Services.

## Case study

I heard about The Friendship Project through a family member who thought it may be something I would be interested in. I was working in a childcare setting and have always been passionate about working with children and helping others out, so I applied straight away. I had a meeting with Kelly (who was the Rugby Area Coordinator then) and Cheryl (the Chairman). They said they had found me a match with a little boy who needs someone who enjoys being active and can keep up with him. Initially I was a bit worried but once I met R who was 8 when we first met, I knew we would be a great match just as they had said.

My first meeting with him was at his school, I got to meet him and his Mum and some of his siblings. He seemed quiet at first but also really keen to be part of The Project himself.

With R being the eldest of 5 it was great for him to be able to get out and have some time for himself and enjoy things without the responsibility of being "big brother".

For our first few outings we went to the cinema and swimming. R likes films, and being active so we always try to do something that will keep him busy and entertained. That was in 2018. I would try to have R every weekend. We would either go to the park, soft play, swimming or a planned event provided by The Friendship Project. In Jan 2019 I fell pregnant with my son but still continued my outings with R. He was so excited and happy for me to be having a baby and both him and his Mum were so understanding. I was certain I wanted to continue with The Project both during my pregnancy and after. When my little boy was born, I took a little break while I settled into the life of a parent. R came to visit me and my little boy and I was relieved at how happy he was for me. I continued taking R out, going swimming, taking him to the park and soft plays and then Covid hit. I was in regular contact with R and his Mum and ordered a sunflower growing kit for something that we could both do together whilst being apart. This was a great activity as it gave R something to focus on during lockdown. R is quite a reserved boy and doesn't really talk much about himself or any worries he may have, so I always like to make sure that he knows where I am should he need anything. R's Mum on occasion has asked me to speak to him regarding his behaviour as she feels that he listens to me more, as when we go out, it is a treat for him and he needs to behave for these to continue. During the lockdown I welcomed my second child and again R and his family were happy for me. I went and visited them on the door step a few times once we were allowed just to catch up and see how they were getting on and took him a present for his birthday.

Once the lockdown had been relaxed, The Friendship Project organised a fishing activity. R had often spoken about fishing with his Dad and I saw this as an opportunity for him to really do something I know he feels passionate about. He was really hands on and wanted to get involved straight away and was a lot braver than I was when it came to handling maggots and fish! We can't wait to attend another outing like this and it is lovely to see him come alive in a situation like this, and I also realised that it was something I enjoyed too.

Over the 3 years that I have been R's Older Friend I have seen him grow and change in himself. He is a confident and fun loving little boy who has a lot of love for not only his own family, but my 2 boys that he has got to know throughout our journey. I enjoy the time we spend together, and he will always hold a special place in my life as I hope I will in his.



# **The Friendship Project**

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

### **for the year ended 31 December 2021**

#### **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 despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ We have helped 107 children directly during 2021, and many more in the wider family and school's environment
- ✓ Risk Assessments for COVID-19 and Q & A provided for volunteers and team have been regularly updated as regulations changed, to enable us to continue to function as the law allowed.
- ✓ When face to face was not permitted, we have continued to successfully pivot so as to give online, telephone and pen pal support
- ✓ Our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year was lower key than we hoped, as it was not really the right environment or sensible to risk having a collective indoor celebration
- ✓ We held several successful outside events including fishing, Den building with WWT and Coombe Abbey Christmas Lights extravaganza, with over 100 attending the latter event
- ✓ Safeguarding training has been undertaken online, including refresher training.
- ✓ Our training for new volunteers has been refreshed with a new booklet produced to support the training given by our area Coordinators. Our volunteer application paperwork updated too.
- ✓ Our income achieved was £63,366, against budget £65,350, as expenditure lower than anticipated the carry forward to 2022 of £60,588, was slightly higher than in 2021, leaving us in a healthy financial position

**The Friendship Project**  
**Trustees' annual report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2021**

**Financial Review**

The charity made an unrestricted deficit of £786 in the year with net unrestricted reserves of £48,795.

The Trustees have reviewed the financial position of the charity in light of the impact of COVID 19, the current economic environment and costs upon its operations and fund raising. They believe that with the funding commitments made and plans for 2022, it has the necessary funding to continue providing its services for at least the next 12 months. The trustees review this at each of their quarterly meetings.

**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 08.06.2022

Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman

# **Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of**

## **The Friendship Project**

### **Year Ended 31 December 2021**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2021, 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: 08.06.2022

**The Friendship Project**

**Statement of Financial Activities**

**For the year ended 31 December 2021**

		<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>2021 Total Funds</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>Note</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Grants	2	12,894	27,357	40,251	34,900
Donations	3	14,377	-	14,377	13,042
Fundraising donations/events	4	8,047	-	8,047	6,998
Gift Aid	5	-	-	-	-
Investment income	6	691	-	691	938
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>36,009</b>	<b>27,357</b>	<b>63,366</b>	<b>55,878</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Salaries, NI	10	14,101	21,323	35,424	35,953
Staff expenses		2,734	274	3,008	4,231
Volunteer expenses		11,072	714	11,786	8,419
Insurance		3,230	-	3,230	3,101
Events/Christmas parties		861	-	861	115
Other expenditure	11	4,446	499	4,945	3,034
Independent examination fee	13	350	-	350	350
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>36,795</b>	<b>22,810</b>	<b>59,605</b>	<b>55,203</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>		<b>(786)</b>	<b>4,547</b>	<b>3,761</b>	<b>675</b>
Gains & (losses) on investments		(1,343)	-	(1,343)	259
Total funds brought forward		50,924	6,953	57,877	56,943
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	9	<b>48,795</b>	<b>11,500</b>	<b>60,295</b>	<b>57,877</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 2021

	Note	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Investments	6		37,871		39,215
<b>Current assets</b>					
Cash at bank and in hand		25,274		16,348	
Accrued Income	7	-		1,950	
Insurance prepayment	8	270		259	
Debtors		-		1,338	
		<u>25,544</u>		<u>19,895</u>	
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Accrued expenses	9	(3,120)		(1,233)	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			22,424		18,662
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>60,295</u>		<u>57,877</u>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>					
General Funds			48,795		50,924
Restricted Funds			11,500		6,953
<b>Total Funds</b>	10		<u>60,295</u>		<u>57,877</u>

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 08.06.2022

Cheryl Rawbone, Chairperson

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### For the year ended 31 December 2021

#### 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 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner	-	7,713	7,713	7,500
Heart of England 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	3,000	-	3,000	3,000
King Henry VIII Endowed Trust	-	3,750	3,750	3,500
L&Q Foundation	(333)	-	(333)	3,900
Heart of England Community Foundation	-	4,335	4,335	-
National Lottery	-	8,559	8,559	-
FC Stokes Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Four Acre Trust	8,227	-	8,227	-
Warwickshire CrimeBeat	-	3,000	3,000	-
Allan Edward Higgs Grant	-	-	-	4,000
Heart of England Community Foundation Harry Payne	-	-	-	2,000
Heart of England Community Foundation Coronavirus	-	-	-	3,000
National Lottery Community Fund / Covid 19	-	-	-	7,000
	<u>12,894</u>	<u>27,357</u>	<u>40,251</u>	<u>34,900</u>



**The Friendship Project**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2021**

**3. Donations**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Callum Designs	1,500	-	1,500	-
Masonic Charitable Foundation	1,000	-	1,000	-
Bates Trust Claverdon	1,000	-	1,000	-
Countrywide Builders	5,000	-	5,000	-
Leamington SW	1,000	-	1,000	-
Anonymous Donor	1,000	-	1,000	-
Anonymous Donors x 3	-	-	-	3,000
Village Voices	-	-	-	1,350
Bodies & Co	-	-	-	4,000
BDW Trading Barrett Homes	-	-	-	1,000
Donations under £1,000	3,877	-	3,877	3,692
	<u>14,377</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,377</u>	<u>13,042</u>

**4. Fundraising Events**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Alsters Kelly Solicitors	1,727	-	1,727	-
Fundraising Events under £1,000	6,320	-	6,320	6,998
	<u>8,047</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,047</u>	<u>6,998</u>

**5. HMRC Gift Aid**

Gift Aid received £0, (2020 - £0)

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

### For the year ended 31 December 2021

#### 6. Investments

Market value of surplus funds is invested in the Charibond Charities Fixed Interest Common Investment Fund ("Charibond") with M&G Investments. Investment income 2021 - £691 (2020 - £938).

#### 7. Accrued Income

	2021 £	2020 £
L&Q Foundation	-	1,950
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,950</u>

#### 8. Debtors

	2021 £	2020 £
Insurance Prepayment	270	259
Other Debtors	-	1,338
	<u>270</u>	<u>1,597</u>

#### 9. Creditors

	2021 £	2020 £
Volunteer Expenses	1,853	859
Staff Expenses	41	24
Independent Examination Fee	350	350
WPCC underspend to be returned	687	-
Oasis	189	-
	<u>3,120</u>	<u>1,233</u>

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2021

### 10. Movements in Funds

	Opening Balance £	Incoming Resources £	(Resources expended) £	Gains & Losses £	Transfers £	Closing Balance £
<b>General funds</b>	50,924	36,009	(36,795)	(1,343)	-	48,795
Designated funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total General Funds	<u>50,924</u>	<u>36,009</u>	<u>(36,795)</u>	<u>(1,343)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>48,795</u>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>						
Warwickshire P&CC	-	7,713	(5,738)	-	-	1,975
HoECF Coronavirus Resilience	-	4,335	(3,251)	-	-	1,084
National Lottery	-	8,559	(4,993)	-	-	3,566
King Henry VIII Endowed Trust	-	3,750	(1,875)	-	-	1,875
Warwickshire Crimebeat	-	3,000	-	-	-	3,000
Warwickshire P&CC	1,657	-	(1,657)	-	-	-
National Lottery CF Covid 19	1,346	-	(1,346)	-	-	-
L&Q Foundation	1,950	-	(1,950)	-	-	-
HofECF Coronavirus	1,000	-	(1,000)	-	-	-
HofECF Harry Payne Fund	1,000	-	(1,000)	-	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	<u>6,953</u>	<u>27,357</u>	<u>(22,810)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,500</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u><b>57,877</b></u>	<u><b>63,366</b></u>	<u><b>(59,605)</b></u>	<u><b>(1,343)</b></u>	<u><b>-</b></u>	<u><b>60,295</b></u>

### 11. Staff costs and numbers

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages	35,424	35,953
	<u>35,424</u>	<u>35,953</u>

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

The average weekly number of part time employees during the year was 5 (2020: 5)

# The Friendship Project

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2021

### 12. Other expenditure

	2021 £	2020 £
Storage of documents	454	185
Telephones	540	543
Printing, stationery & advertising	46	996
Database / IT	694	-
Payroll	1,246	1,213
CIO accreditation	1,800	-
Sundries	165	97
	<u>4,945</u>	<u>3,034</u>

### 13. 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 £3,230.

The management committee and other trustees did not receive any remuneration during the year (2020: nil).

### 14. Independent examination and accountancy services

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

### 15. Controlling parties

The charity is under the control of the management committee.

### 16. 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.