

MINUTES OF THE 38th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDSHIP PROJECT

Thursday 12th June – 7.00PM-7.30pm

HELD BY ZOOM CONFERENCE

Attendees: Michael Coker, Cheryl Rawbone, Cath Errington, Richard Barrett, Maja Todd, Ken Smith, Esther Jones, Pat Miller, Ruth Blunt, Chris Buck, Jessica Marks, Kerry Williams, Fiona Roche, Elizabeth Browne, Karen Hoy, Lucy May, Alan Jelley, Chris Lukehurst, Nishi Mehta

1. **Introduction** – Michael Coker, President opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Once a year he has the honour to be our president. Before we were formed Mr Coker went to our very first meeting. He believes it's an honour to be involved. He believes in family and what we do can in some cases be a substitute for families that don't have the influence that all children need. Mr Coker could see this straight from the beginning, 40 years ago and can see that we are getting stronger despite funding pressure.

2. **Being an Older Friend** - Contributions from Older Friends of their experiences.

Lucy May – Lucy has been with her Younger Friend since he was 9, He will be 17 next month. Lucy was taller than him once! It's been a real journey. They've done crazy golf, walks, climbing trees, making cakes and all sorts of other activities. He's now getting on well at college. Lucy still gets to see him every month, although sometimes he is now busy with friends. They will still stay in contact. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Chris Lukehurst – Chris met his Younger Friend aged 10. He quickly learned he was sensitive and intuitive. It was mainly sporting activities he enjoyed - football, tag, swimming, walking, cycling. Chris always made time to talk though which Chris felt that was what his Younger Friend was looking for. As they got to know each other better, he learnt that his Younger Friend had a very small comfort zone and was easily triggered when he didn't get his own way. This showed as sulky and stubborn behaviour. This would turn to violence at school. Chris has tried to steer him to think about what he wanted to be when he grew up. At times it felt like he didn't really listen, but a few weeks later he would hear his own words being repeated back and that he had actually taken his advice on something. Chris realised their conversations did have an effect. His Younger Friend was 17 in April. Their relationship got stronger as time went on. They haven't seen since it's stopped but have messaged and will definitely see each other again. Chris now has a new 7 year old Younger Friend who is very different, and he starts again.....

Jess Marks – Jess has been with us for 9 months. Her Younger Friend was 7 when they met and is now 8. They've both learnt a lot. He's having new experiences, as he didn't get out much before. They've done ice skating, been on a ferris wheel, had Christmas and Halloween outings, been to soft play (where Jess got stuck which he found very funny!). They just have fun and she can see the joy on his face. He always talks about things they've done together and is very vocal. He's come out of his shell and likes to teach Jess about reptiles and pokemon which she never thought she'd know anything about. They have a really good bond. Jess enjoys it as much as him. It's a privilege.

3. **AGM**

- **Apologies for absence** – Older Friends Brian Cuttell, John Holroyde, Niki Graske, Judy Sims and Julia De Araujo send their apologies. Registered, but unable to attend on the evening - Calvin Smith, Arianna Piani, Clare Ollerenshaw, Leanne Norris, Tonia D'Bras.
- **Review and approve Minutes**, of the last AGM held on 6th June 2024 - approved
- **Presentation of the Annual Report**
- **Recommendations:-**
 - a) That the Report be accepted and adopted, as circulated - approved
 - b) That the Accounts as of 31 December 2024 be accepted and adopted, as circulated - approved
 - c) Election of Examiner, Paula Wilson, MAAT - approved
 - d) Confirm the appointment of the Hon Treasurer, Ken Smith – approved

Friendship Project for Children

www.friendshipproject.co.uk

Registered Charity No: 517684

Registered Office: Myton Park, Myton Lane, Warwick, CV34 6PX

e) That the Main Committee for the coming year shall be in addition as follows - approved

- **Trustees:-**

Cheryll Rawbone	Chairman
Richard Barrett	Vice Chairman, and Trustee portfolio Fund Raising
Vacancy	Honorary Secretary to be appointed
Nishi Mehta	Trustee - Operations
Chris Buck	Trustee - IT/ Webmaster
Pat Miller	Trustee - Older Friend Representative
Esther Jones	Trustee - Safeguarding
Tina Chander	Trustee - HR

- **Other:-**

Calvin Smith	Co-opted Member from Children's Services
Ruth Blunt	Ex-officio – Operations Team Manager

f) That the Main Committee be empowered to co-opt other members as required during the year - approved

4. **Upcoming Events** – Karen Hoy provided the following dates of events and asked anyone to contact her for further details.

5/7 – Wizard of Oz theatre production at The Ben Hall, Rugby

5 & 6/7 – Cream Teas hosted by Area Coordinator Fiona Roche in Ufton, Leamington Spa

12/7 – Lucky Tail Alpacas in Hurley, Atherstone

13/7 – Charity Fun Day hosted at a Volunteers farm in Corley

11/9 – Volunteer Get Together in Leamington

29/9 – Annual Craft Event at War Memorial Park, Coventry

30/9 – Volunteer Get Together in Rugby

24/11 – Zoom Volunteer Get Together

There will also be a Christmas Party, but this is not yet booked.

5. **Any other business** – Nothing raised

6. **President - Thanks** – to Volunteers, Operations Team, and Trustees. Mr Coker says that thanking everyone is not difficult. Having read the report and accounts it's clear to see we're raising a fair amount of money in difficult times. We still work hard at this. We're still supporting a large number of children - around 2000 over the years. All these children have benefited from the work everyone puts in. All children need support which is terribly important. Anyone can be justly proud of their involvement in the charity. Thank you and please keep doing what we do as it's very important and will only happen if we continue. I hope to see you next year.

Cheryll confirms Mr Coker has recently had his 90th Birthday and thanked him for taking the time to take an interest in the Friendship Project for almost 40 years.