



the friendship project
for children

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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INTRODUCTION

This report reflects our achievements during 2022 and our plans for 2023.

Our thanks go to the many volunteers, employees, funders, and supporters for helping children over the last 12 months, enabling them to 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 Please also follow us on: – **@friendshipproj** on twitter and Instagram or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren

CHAIRMANS REPORT

My report is focused primarily on our activities and achievements in 2022, our last financial year, plus our plans for 2023. It has been a momentous year with the death of the late Queen, a new monarch, King Charles III, and regrettably continuation of the Ukraine war brings stress, disruption, and sadness to so many people. The current economic position has impacted all charities, and we are not immune to this, with referrals/need increasing and funds depleting.

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 also like to thank our operations team for the way in which they have continued adapted to work with the changes we have seen coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and on behalf of our volunteers who frequently commend the support and help they receive from the team, how they are integral to the Friendship Project and greatly appreciated.

It has been great that we have been able to resume our important face to face weekly meetings with our younger friends, and it is much appreciated the various initiatives that our Older Friend volunteers have supported whilst we pivoted to continue to support as many children as possible through the various COVID restrictions that have been in place in the last three years. The fortitude of our volunteers, operations team, and trustees to help us come through this period is greatly appreciated.

We have been able to return to again hold collective events indoors in the latter part of 2022, with our valued craft event in September being the first, which was also the last one to be organised fantastically by Pauline Higginbottom, who has sadly now retired from the charity after many years excellent service, and we now have a team in place for September 23rd 2023. We were also able to hold our first Christmas party for 3 years in late 2022, which was very exciting, and an energetic event held kindly at the clubhouse of Old Leamingtonians, with over 100 attending.

Since our last report we have said goodbye to Heather Shipley and Viv Kelsey, who are thanked for their loyal service. We have successfully recruited replacements, with Hannah Peattie new area coordinator for Nuneaton, Bedworth, and North Warwickshire, and Harriet Crawford in the same role for Stratford, Shipston and Alcester areas. Sarah Edge has reduced her hours, and we have recently employed Tarragon Kelham also on part time basis to help us with social media and marketing.

From a trustee perspective Angela Truman is standing down at the AGM, owing to increased work and personal responsibilities, though will continue to help periodically with promotional events. Angela is thanked for her service, constructive help and support.

Trustee vacancies

We are looking to further strengthen and improve diversity of our trustee board, and key skills identified as needed are social media, Marketing, QA/Compliance/Risk, Fund Raising Events, and Operations. If you know of anyone in these areas that would be interested, then we would be delighted to discuss further.

The Highlights of what we have achieved in 2022 are as follows:

- ✓ Continued to provide the invaluable 121 volunteer support and fun for disadvantaged children despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ We have helped 105 children directly during 2022, 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, and with more freedom in the latter part of the year.
- ✓ We have returned fully to face to face support during 2022.
- ✓ We held several successful outside events including craft event, and a Christmas party at OLRFC with over 100 attending the latter event.
- ✓ Safeguarding training has been undertaken online, including refresher training. Our policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated too.
- ✓ Our income achieved was £67,629, against previous year of £63,366, and with expenditure higher at £78,349, including Older Friends expenses up to £22,751, almost double the previous year, when there were more restrictions on going out.
- ✓ The carry forward to 2023 of unrestricted reserves £31,048 was significantly lower than in 2022, though still leaving us with the ability to continue, with some established funding in our pipeline, albeit with much lower reserves. We have restricted funds of £14,500 in addition.
- ✓ Our investment account has been closed, and monies moved to a lower risk deposit account from Charibond, owing to the economic climate.
- ✓ Our salaries have increased as we have now employed an Operations team manager, so as to remove the day-to-day responsibility for line management from the trustee board, which is good governance.
- ✓ We agreed to review our insurance provider and HR payroll costs in 2023, with a view to making savings in overheads for the coming year.
- ✓ We have also been kindly given free archive storage for 2023 at SSD in Stratford.

In 2023 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 85 still matched by end of 2022, though the quality is still more important than the numbers matched.
- ✓ Specifically, to increase the number of Older Friends as volunteers, particularly in Nuneaton, Bedworth & North Warwickshire, plus Rugby and district.
- ✓ Our budget is to raise £85,000, with anticipated expenditure to be £90,707.
- ✓ Identify additional grant funding and seek business nominations a charity of the year.
- ✓ Recruit additional trustees as identified in certain specific skill set areas and improve our diversity and representation.
- ✓ Recommence work with our Trusted Charity project, when we have trustee lead in place for this.
- ✓ Attend periodic networking events to increase the profile of the Friendship Project.
- ✓ Further improve our social media presence. Recruit part time person to support this.
- ✓ 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 Friend volunteers increase.

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

Safeguarding Report

Esther Jones esther.jones@friendshipproject.co.uk



As Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding, I'm proud to say that that safeguarding, and the ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of our younger friends has continued to be the most important priority in everything we do over the last year.

Ensuring our older friends are the right people for the role is something we take very seriously, so this year we reviewed our volunteer recruitment policy and induction process. There are numerous stages of the recruitment process and we have updated the policy by setting out the principles underpinning it, namely that the safety and wellbeing of our younger friends is the most important consideration in what we do and that the suitability of our volunteers will be the foremost consideration throughout the process. Our recruitment process has numerous stages from receipt of the application, home visit and interview to undertaking ID and DBS Checks, sharing of the project guidelines and reviewing the safeguarding agreement. It's only once these stages are complete that a Matching meeting can occur. We wanted to give our younger friends a stronger voice as part of the matching process we will ask the younger friend to identify a safe person they can talk to if they are unhappy with any aspect of their outings. If the safe person isn't present at the meeting, we will reach out to them so they know how to contact us and pass on any feedback or concerns raised by our younger friend. Following the initial matching, we will also undertake a check-in with the carer within the first 6 months, and then again after the 1st year to check-in on the friendship (as well as being available at any point in between these contact points.)

Another important part of safeguarding practice is knowing when to have a conversation with another agency to share any worries or concerns that have occurred. Area Coordinators usually receive these concerns and as Safeguarding Trustee, they may bring them to me for a second opinion. I'm always impressed by the team's focus on doing what is best for our younger friends' wellbeing. Having a conversation is such an important part of safeguarding and it's often the bit that didn't happen when things go wrong. This year we have introduced a change in policy so we are working in alignment with standard practice across children's services: where we have a concern that means we need to talk to the Front Door we will ring the parents of the younger friend first to let them know first, unless we are concerned that doing so might cause problems for the younger friend. If you are parent or carer reading this, we know this can sound like a really scary thing but please be assured that our priority is always the safety and wellbeing of our younger friends.

I look forward to another year with the Friendship Project and wish to pass on my thanks to all within the team for working with me to continually learn and improve what we do.

Grant, Trust and Local Fund Raising

Richard Barrett richard.barrett@friendshipproject.co.uk

It has been pleasing to see our total income grow by approximately 7% in 2022, but disappointing that our donations and fundraising income declined by 22%. The effects of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis impacted upon this income and at the same time our own costs rose significantly, resulting in a deficit of over £11,400 for the year.

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, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Stratford Town Trust, Aviva Community Fund, The Four Acre Trust and Warwickshire CrimeBeat. In addition to applications made to existing grant funders, we were also successful in applying to Warwick District Council and the Warwickshire Police Charitable Trust.

We were delighted to welcome The O'Brien Charitable Trust and Sumo Digital as new corporate supporters during the year and to continue our relationship with CR Callum Limited who also contributed to our fund raising during the year.

We are also thankful to The Warwickshire Police Cadets who raised £2,696 through a sponsored walk and to Nina Young who raised £1,810 through a Just Giving sponsored boxing event as well for all who raised money on our behalf or contributed to our other fundraising activities in 2022.

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
- ✓ Amazon Smile
- ✓ Anonymous donors
- ✓ Aviva Community Fund
- ✓ Balsall Common Lions
- ✓ Bravissimo
- ✓ Charities Trust
- ✓ Claverdon Field Charitable Trust
- ✓ Claverdon Monday Club
- ✓ Coventry & District Cricket Club
- ✓ CR Callum Limited
- ✓ Cubbington WI
- ✓ Dotshill WI
- ✓ Gallagher Ltd
- ✓ Georgina Rawbone
- ✓ BM & SJ Hall
- ✓ F C Stokes Trust
- ✓ Grendon WI
- ✓ Heart of England Community Foundation
- ✓ Just Giving
- ✓ King Henry VIII's Endowed Trust - Warwick
- ✓ Mr & Mrs. M Parton
- ✓ Mrs K Read
- ✓ Mrs L Hamon
- ✓ Mrs S Weetman
- ✓ NFU Mutual
- ✓ Nina Young
- ✓ Rowington WI
- ✓ Shipston Rotary
- ✓ Sophie Parker
- ✓ St Marys WI
- ✓ Stratford Town Trust
- ✓ Terence Hague
- ✓ The Four Acre Trust
- ✓ The National Lottery Community Fund
- ✓ Warwickshire CrimeBeat
- ✓ Warwickshire Police Cadets
- ✓ Warwickshire Police Charitable Trust
- ✓ Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner
- ✓ Women of Welton

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

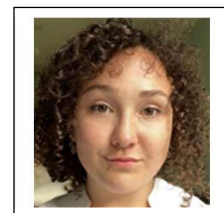
We have continued to raise our profile, particularly through social media, Facebook and our website, alongside attending networking events and speaking engagements. It has been pleasing to see how this activity results in volunteers coming forward to be Older Friends as well as raising funds for the Project.

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

Taggie Kelham tarragon.kelham@friendshipproject.co.uk



Social Media

NEWS AND UPDATES

AT A GLANCE

- New Marketing and Social Media Assistant
- New Initiatives
- Request for Help

New Marketing and Social Media Assistant

Taggie Kelham has recently moved back to Warwickshire from Edinburgh after completing her masters degree in Art History and Fine Art. Taggie is excited to utilise her years of experience of working as a Live Entertainment Publicity Consultant, specialising in running campaigns at the Edinburgh Fringe for clients including Nish Kumar, Milton Jones and Sir Ranulph Fiennes. Recently Taggie has been volunteering at Cherished, a charity in Sutton Coldfield dedicated to supporting children to feel safe, seen, soothed and secure. This voluntary work with children has motivated Taggie to engage with The Friendship Project and use her publicity experience to bolster the charity's online presence and develop The Friendship Projects social media and marketing strategies.

New Initiatives

- The aim is to create a cohesive message across all The Friendship Project's social platforms, where the consistent graphics and content hopefully encourage more likes and follows and clearly communicate what The Friendship Project does, and why it deserves the public's support.
- New regular posts like #FriendshipFridays where existing friendships are showcased every Friday in the hope that they will affirm to existing volunteers the value of their contribution and inspire new volunteers to join.



What we need from you

Your continued support!

Like, share and follow us at:-

[Facebook](#) / [Instagram @friendshipproj](#) / [Twitter @friendshipproj](#) / [The Friendship Project](#)

We need your **testimony, photos** and **videos** documenting your experience of The Friendship Project for us to share on social media and spread the message of the wonderful work the charity does.

For example, images of volunteers will feature in our #FriendshipFriday posts. Let us say a public thank you by sending in images/video of your fundraising efforts for The Friendship Project or if you're an older friend it would be really helpful if you could send in images/video of activities you've done with your younger friend. It doesn't need to be doing anything noteworthy, even a picture or some video walking the dogs would be great. Finally, testimony of your experience with The Friendship Project will help encourage other people to get involved or support the project with donations.

Please send testimony, photos and videos to tarragon.kelham@friendshipproject.co.uk

Operations Report for AGM

Ruth Blunt ruth.blunt@friendshipproject.co.uk



General

We have welcomed two new Area Coordinators to the Operations Team this year. Hannah Peattie joined us in January as the AC for Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire. She brings with her a wealth of experience in supporting families facing challenges. She has done lots of volunteering work and has 4 children of her own.

Harriet Crawford joined us in April as the new Area Coordinator for Stratford, Alcester and Shipston. Harriet has in-depth experience of working with children and families who have complex needs and challenges.

We have also appointed a part-time Marketing and Social Media Assistant to take responsibility for our social media and marketing content. Tarragon (Taggie) Kelham joined the Friendship Project in May. Taggie has wide-ranging experience of working in PR, Events and Marketing as well as experience of working in the charity sector supporting young people.

In order to ensure that our procedures are robust and clearly documented, we have recently reviewed our policies and procedures. We have updated our policy to reflect the need to inform the parent/carer before making any referrals to the Front Door. We have reviewed our Recruitment Process Guidelines to ensure that we are making all the relevant checks prior to matching a volunteer with a young person. We have updated and consolidated the Friendship Agreement Form and the Notes for Parents/Guardians Form. We now also have a standard New Friendship Form for details to be completed after every match meeting and sent to Karen for her records.

We have reviewed and downgraded our COVID-19 policy. This will be reflected in the updated version of our Guidelines. We will keep the old version on file.

I have completed audits on the team's files, which were mostly comprehensive and well-organised. Where detailed information was lacking, I have requested that the information is updated.

We continue to receive numerous referrals for children and young people needing support. We have had to end some friendships where the relationships between the OF and their YF, or the YF's family, have become too complex. We also had to end a friendship when an AC and OF received abusive messages from a parent. The majority of our friendships are well-established and continue to run smoothly. Our volunteers do an amazing job and are very well supported by the Group Supporters and the Area Coordinators. The feedback we continue to receive is that giving the young person some quality 1-1 time away from sometimes difficult home situations, really does improve their confidence and self-esteem. It is also hugely rewarding for our volunteers, knowing that they are having a positive influence and making a difference to a child's life.

Current Friendships

Warwick and District – 27

Stratford and District – 22

Rugby – 13

Nuneaton, Bedworth, North Warwickshire – 11

Total number of current friendships – 73 (with a further 12 awaiting interview or awaiting matching)

Training

Dealing with Difficult Situations/Being Assertive (Internal) – September 2022
Workplace Wellbeing Forum (C&W Chamber of Commerce) – September 2022
Health and Safety Essentials (Nimble) – October 2022
Volunteers and the Law (NCVO) – February 2023 (RB only)
Equality and Inclusion / Transgender Awareness (EQulP) – March 2023
Safeguarding (Internal) – ongoing
Restorative Practice (Warwickshire County Council) – December 2022/June 2023
Myers Briggs Training (Internal) – July 2023
Wellbeing That Works (Auburn Coaching) – ongoing (RB only)

Events

13/02/23 – OF get-together (Zoom) Warwick District
4 and 11/3/23 – Motionhouse Event
16/3/23 – Midlands Service Excellence Awards – FP nominated finalist
3/6/23 - Moreton Morrell Event
14/06/23 – OF get-together Warwick District
1 or 8/7/23 – Kenilworth Fire Station Event
23/9/23 - Craft Event
October – Potential Train Outing (Community Rail Partnership)
December 2023 – Christmas Party (tbc)

Marketing and Social Media

We have now appointed a part-time Marketing and Social Media Assistant who will be responsible for managing and developing our social media and marketing content. We haven't previously been able to dedicate enough time to marketing and social media so having someone who can focus on promoting the Friendship Project to raise funds and recruit more volunteers is essential so that we can continue to support more children and young people throughout Warwickshire. This is particularly important in Rugby and the North of the county where we need to boost our volunteer numbers.

AGM Report April 2022-23

Fiona Roche – Area Coordinator for Warwick,
Leamington & Kenilworth
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Older Friends: 25
Younger Friends: 27
Pipeline: 7

In General

Another very busy year. My year has been mainly spent matching new volunteers and ending friendships. Looking after new friendships, monitoring and sorting out small issues and larger safeguarding warnings. I worked closely with Heather to support friendships over the South of Warwickshire. Organised Face to face get-togethers which are back, but zoom get togethers are still popular as well. I have helped with some training for Ruth and our 2 new Area Coordinators.

A special Thank You to Joan Bolton who volunteered with us for 26 years and 4 Younger Friends. She also takes the record for our oldest volunteer leaving us at the age of 87! She would still be happy to take on a new Younger Friend if the right one is referred to us!

2 other notable thank you's go to Claire Morris who was with us for 11 years and Laura Holloway 13 years. It is amazing to have worked with these lovely ladies for all my 9 ¾ years at the project.

Friendships

Friendships matched 15

It is great that we have had lots of new volunteers join and become Older Friends. Sadly a few of these have ended already due to reasons below. I have some fantastic new friendships that are going really well. I have had to request from children's services and schools some younger referrals as most of them are secondary school age children. Younger referrals did come in and these were all matched.

Friendships ended 16

2 friendships ended before they got going, 1 due to mothers' anxieties about letting her child go and the other because the YF was 6 and felt after a couple of outings didn't want to leave her mother.

8 for natural reasons eg, reached 17, become independent teen.

5 safeguarding concerns eg OF wasn't following our procedures and guidelines, family problems were escalating and OF didn't feel comfortable taking the YF out. Concerns were raised with MASH who then spoke to the mother. OF and myself then got abusive messages, so ended immediately.

1 Older friends work diary and family illness meant she felt she no longer had time to take her YF out.

Pipeline 7

I am busy arranging new matches, currently in the process of matching 5 Older Friends. I have a couple to interview and 1 Older Friend to rematch later in the year when she is back from holidays.

Events attended

- Team Away day
- Cava volunteer fair
- Christmas Party
- Motionhouse event
- Zoom get togethers
- Face to face get togethers
- Presentation to WI
- Attended Midlands Excellence award

Radio

I went on CW Radio at the beginning of the year and took part in Snake Escape which was a first! It gave me an opportunity to talk about the Friendship Project.

Rotary Holiday to Whitemoor lakes

I organised for 4 Younger Friends age 11-13 to go on a Rotary Holiday. I would say it was mixed success. The holiday was fully funded by the Rotary Charity and the District to the tune of £360 per head. Unfortunately, I had to pick up 2 of the YFs on the first evening as one had got upset causing his sister to also get very upset. One YF made it through half the week and the last did the whole 5 day week. The concept and place was amazing. There was a lake with water activities, climbing wall, zip wires, fencing, and more. 3 hot meals a day and a tuck shop. The organisers did in fact say that half the children who attended went home early, which was down to homesickness. The effects of Covid certainly showing here of separation anxiety. All 4 children and their parents were extremely positive and grateful for the opportunity. Staying away from home for 4 nights was a bit too much for 3 of them. The time that they were there they did in fact enjoy themselves in the main.

Summary

I put a lot of time into looking after my friendships. I feel it is very important to make sure the Older Friends feels supported and valued. My Group Supporters, Tim Proudler, Elaine Freeman, Kerry Williams, Gilly Dale and Rosie Goy are fantastic and a great help to me.

I am very sad that Heather has left the project. We had a great working relationship and I will miss her a lot. I was pleased to be in the interview panel for the new AC for Stratford - Harriet, and am looking forward to working with her. Hannah for North Warwickshire has fitted in really well to the team and I am enjoying her being part of it. It is great having Ruth as our manager to support the operations team.

I feel pleased to have nearly reached 10 years working for the Friendship Project and I continue to enjoy being part of this amazing charity.

Case Study

I moved to Leamington Spa in September 2019 knowing very little about the activities in the town. I soon got to meet plenty of people of a similar age through the seniors section of The Warwickshire golf club, but did not know any other people in the area. I wanted to make a contribution through volunteering, and went along to a volunteer fair at the Royal Priors shopping centre.

My preference was for doing something with young people. At the fair I met Fiona Roche and Heather Shipley and was pleased to hear that I was not too old to be considered as an Older Friend with the Friendship Project. After going through the necessary checks, I went on the induction training session in March 2020, just 10 days before the first Covid lockdown.

Because of the Covid restrictions, it was not until November 2020 that I first met C and his Mum at his school. We arranged a first meeting in early December and walked down to St. Nicholas Park in Warwick. C was quiet to begin with, but after a while, he suggested that we played Pooh Sticks in the stream running through the park, and from then on we have enjoyed a variety of activities together.

C is happiest doing something outdoors. Our standard activity is to kick a ball around in his local park, and sometimes that is all we do. Usually, we add a drink and a snack somewhere, which gives an opportunity to talk through how things are going for him, as well as important news items such as who Chelsea have lost to this week. Over the months we have tried out other sports – basketball was an early favourite, as well as tennis, golf and frisbee.

We have also explored other places locally – Charlecote Park and the welly walk at Packwood House are favourite examples. We have been to local festivals together such as the Food and Drink festival in Leamington.

I meet C after school some weeks, and in winter this limits our options, but last winter we found that we enjoyed going to the Dice Box Café in Leamington and playing their extensive selection of board games whilst enjoying our drinks.

We have taken full advantage of some of the activities that the Friendship Project arranges for us. We went to the light show at Coombe Abbey Park, the group visit to Moreton Morrell Animal Unit and a chance for C and other young friends to form a guard of honour at a Wasps rugby game in Coventry. Last week C and I were lucky enough to be able to use two tickets to see Coventry City that had been offered to the Friendship Project by a donor. C doesn't like noisy environments, but he was fine in a raucous 30,000 crowd there!

At our meetings, C is relaxed and well behaved. He goes back to his Mum happy but sometimes tired out (so am I!). I get regular feedback which indicates that the friendship is working well, and C and his Mum appreciate the time we spend together. I enjoy being with C and the exercise he gives me!

After 2 ½ years of meetings we are still enjoying each other's company, and I hope we will still be meeting for some time to come.

Case Study

My involvement with the friendship project started 13 years ago and feels like it went in the blink of an eye! I had time to spare and the involvement with the project was flexible enough to fit around my working week. What really attracted me was the simplicity of the concept and the opportunity to have some fun along the way. It did not disappoint!

For the first 8 years I was paired with my younger friend T; who over the period went from shy and quiet to an opinionated, funny (and tall) teenager! This time was not without its challenges; some weeks he would not want to leave the house with me, which sometimes just resulted in sitting at the dining table and having a quick chat before leaving and returning the following week to try again. Over time we built up trust and even came to laugh about these instances; and I learned to understand his thinking more and what might constitute a bad day for him – and more importantly what was most likely to persuade him to venture out! Usually this involved pizza, or our mutual love of animated and marvel films, and our equally competitive nature when it came to bowling. Over time we got more adventurous with climbing walls (him climbing, me watching) and days out – including some fabulous trips and events run by the project. One thing that always made me smile was T's simplistic and straight to the point view of the world. I will never forget ordering a fresh mint tea when we were out, only for him to declare to the waitress that it was a 'rip-off' to charge for some leaves in hot water. I genuinely still smile about that every time I have a mint tea now!

My friendship with T came to a natural end as he got older, and soon I was paired with S. She was the complete opposite in some ways; couldn't wait to go out and always had a long list of all the things she wanted to do. S's sibling was also in the project and after a while of unsuccessful pairing we evolved into a trio. This was with S's agreement that we could sometimes still have 1:1 outings, which we did and she would choose the activity on those days. Pizza and cinema was again a favourite with both; with the biggest ice cream sundaes known to man for birthday treats. S & R were always up for an adventure; trampolining (which my back did not thank me for) and even convincing me to join them on the climbing wall (making me feel bad for the encouragement to get to the top that I had always given T from the sidelines) – it's a lot harder than it looks! While both had difficult periods during our friendship, they never failed to make me laugh. S has said that she likes my sense of humour – we're quite similar in that respect - and R never stops talking or asking questions. It has been an absolute pleasure to watch them both grow over the last five years. COVID was difficult but we sent letters, treats and pictures in the post and as S got her own phone it was easier to keep in touch over Whatsapp. She would often send me ideas for outings once restrictions had lifted!

Over both friendships I always had good relationships with parents and schools and it was always nice to receive feedback that the friendship was having a positive impact on the children. I put this down not really to any part I played other than providing a space to talk and be listened to, but mostly an outlet to just have fun. R said that outings mean he can 'get away from things for a while'. It really is as simple as that. I'd be lying if I said there hadn't been tears as well as the laughter, but the Friendship Project supporters and staff have always been accessible and unwavering in their support. What a fantastic job you all do!

It is with a heavy heart that after 13 years I am stepping away as an older friend – due to relocation and increased work commitments. I hope to still be involved with the project in some capacity and will forever be a great supporter of this wonderful charity. I plan to still see S & R too when time allows! If you are reading this and you have the time to commit to being an older friend, please do it – I can honestly say I have never once regretted it. I feel like it has given me so much more than I have given back.



AGM Report March 2023

Heather Shipley/Harriet Crawford
Area Coordinator for Stratford District
harriet.crawford@friendshipproject.co.uk



Older Friends: 23
Younger Friends: 23
Pipeline: 1

In General

A busy year recruiting, matching and rematching volunteers. Our referrals continue to be complex with many young people with ASD/ADHD diagnosis' needing support. We have had a few safeguarding issues that have been managed appropriately within the Operations Team, Esther, Children's Services and referrers.

There continues to be a lack of new volunteers in the Stratford town area. This is a historical issue and other charities are also experiencing the same issue with recruiting volunteers in the town.

PR/Marketing

Throughout the year, I have been working within the community to spread the word about the Project with the aim of recruiting new volunteers. Attending networking meetings, WI talks and promoting our friendships via social media. Putting up posters in supermarkets, cafes and notice boards. I have attended meetings with the RSC to see how we can work together and the RSC has sent us tickets for RSC shows for volunteers to use.

Volunteer Events

I have enjoyed attending our regular online and face to face events for volunteers, as well as our activity days for both volunteers and younger friends.

Volunteers

I have a stable base of volunteers who are doing an excellent job of being volunteers for us. The majority of my current volunteers live in the surrounding villages of Stratford.

I also look after some of Fiona's volunteers in Warwick/Harbury. I have attended various 2nd interviews for Fiona to ensure we both feel the volunteers are suited to the Project.

Leaving

It is with sadness that I am leaving the Project. I have so loved working with you all over the last (nearly 6 years). I will really miss you all and our work. You have been a great team to work with.

I have written notes for each OF in their files for the new AC. I have sent Ruth details of which referrers/social workers for the new AC to contact. I have already given to Fiona OF's files from the Warwick/Harbury area and a couple of OFs who would benefit from a call to check all is going well. Majority of Stratford OFs are established in their friendships and do not usually need a lot of support – unless there is a Safeguarding issue!

Here's wishing the new AC all the best with the role, they will certainly have a supportive, friendly and lovely team to work with. My thanks to Cheryll, Angela, Ruth, Richard, Esther and Chris Buck for all their support.

Case Studies

Volunteer 1 (female) - Matched with E (female) on 1/12/21. YP is 8 years old. Referred by SS and school. YP's brother has complex needs and takes up Mum's time. Also 2 half-siblings in the house. Single Mum. Required outcome: for E to benefit from focussed 1:1 time with a trusted adult and the opportunities to engage in her chosen activities.

Comment from Mum from safeguarding review: E and her volunteer have a special bond and it's time just for E.

Comment from E - E thinks she is more confident too and that she has fun with her volunteer. E is always asking her Mum when her volunteer is coming to get her.

Volunteer 2 (Male) – Matched with A (male) on 8/7/22. YP is 11 years old. Referred by Shipston Primary School. YP Dad's is very ill in hospital. Half-sister has complex needs which impacts on family life. Parents were made redundant. Mum suffers from anxiety. Required outcome: for A's self esteem to grow and for him to find happiness in a hobby. A's volunteer (male) has a small holding with animals, a car workshop and many acres of land. They enjoy building dens, looking after the animals and making light sabers together!

Volunteer 3 (female) – Matched with C (female) on 27/6/2019. YP was 10 years old. Referred by Parenting Project in Stratford. YP lives in a busy household with 1 brother and 3 sisters ranging from 2 – 20 years old. Her sister takes up most of Mum's time due to her behaviour. Required outcome: for C to benefit from 1-2-1 time with a trusted adult.

Comment from Mum - YP enjoys seeing her volunteer and it's making a difference to her, it's her time out. YP especially enjoys baking/cooking with her volunteer.

Volunteer 4 (female) – Matched with H (female) on 27/10/2021. YP was 7 years old. Referred by SS. YP has a brother who is awaiting a diagnosis of ADHD/ASD and has a younger sister 4 years old. Due to brother's behaviours the YP may lose out on everyday things and activities of her interest. Required outcome: for the YP to benefit from time away from home and enjoy things that interest her.

YP and volunteer enjoy: going to the theatre, disc golf, butterfly farm, Moreton Morrell visit.

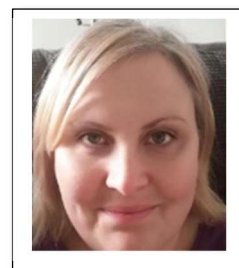
Volunteer 5 (female) – Matched with A (female) 12/08/2020. YP was 9. Referred by Shipston Primary School. Both parents suffer from poor mental and physical health. They find it hard to engage in activities that A might like to do. A tends to worry and can become obsessive about certain things. Required Outcome: For A to be able to have a happy and relaxed experience on a regular basis. YP and volunteer enjoy: walking the dog, cooking, baking, theatre, National Trust houses. Prior to this YP, this volunteer had another YP from age 7 to age 9.

A note from new Area Coordinator Harriet Crawford

I live in Stratford with my husband and two children. My professional background has been mainly in Operations and Managing a support team for a large health care charity. I was elated when I was offered the position as the new Area Coordinator for the Stratford district. I know I have big shoes to fill taking over from Heather, but I am excited to bring my professional experience and knowledge to help continue to support and assist the project.

AGM Report 2023

Hannah Peattie – Area Coordinator for North, Nuneaton and Bedworth hannah.peattie@friendshipproject.co.uk



Older Friends: 12
Younger Friends: 13
Pipeline: 2

In General

I joined the Friendship Project in January this year – its been a fantastic few months so far. I have really enjoyed getting to grips with the role. Everyone on the team has been so supportive. I have recently interviewed and matched my first friendship from start to finish with a volunteer and that has been great. It's been fantastic getting to know some of the Older Friends we currently have and hearing from the parents and carers how much of a difference they are making to the children's lives.

Events attended

- Safeguarding Training (Jan and May)
- Bi-monthly ops meetings
- Socially Shared monthly meeting
- Volunteer event at Rugby Library
- Saints Coffee Mornings for Retirees

Friendships

There was already some well established friendships when I joined. I have spent a fair amount of time cultivating relationships with the existing older friends to ensure that these relationships continue and that everyone is happy. I have had a few friendships end over the last few months. Some due to the time commitment changes for the volunteers, and some because of the child has got older and wants to see own friends and do other things at weekends. There have been a few safeguarding issues to report from OF but these friendships have been able to continue. I currently have 2 new older friends in the pipeline, and I hope these will go through and be matched in the next few weeks.

Referrals

I have received a lot of referrals recently. It is really good that schools have now heard about the service and seem to be using us more. Some of these have needed a higher level of support and so I couldn't take them but in general they are children that will really benefit from the service.

Marketing

Due to the high level of referrals its vital to be finding new volunteers. I have done a few press releases. One in the Colehill Post and one in the Bedworth and Bulkington Local magazines. Both of these have said they will be willing to print something for us on a regular basis- so these are good contacts. I have attended a few local coffee mornings and events for retirees in order to set up a stall and get our name known. I have done some posting on social media and this is something that I will be putting more time into.

Group Supporters

Judy Sims and Stephanie Wade have been group supporters in the North for a while. We have also recently recruited a new Group Supporter- Kay Aldersley who together with myself look after the older friends. This has given me vital support- especially as I was learning the role.

Case study

J is a farmer with a passion for all things outside. He was keen to volunteer for the friendship project to share his passion with others and inspire them to live a more outdoors lifestyle. His farm has many animals including cattle and horses. J's own children are more grown up now and J was excited to become a volunteer and make a difference in children's lives. C started meeting with J at the farm on a weekly basis in April 2021 and has been thoroughly enjoying it. C confidence has increased so much and his foster carer says that he looks forward to visiting the farm every week. He is learning so many skills whilst on the farm. Including the empathy and responsibility that comes from looking after animals. He has even learnt how to lead horses. In March 2023 J took on a second younger friend who also attends the farm weekly. W has got really stuck into the farm and has been learning some really practical skills from his time there. His foster carer says he is more helpful at home and looks forward to every weekend. He has gained confidence in what he can do and has recently erected a greenhouse by himself for his foster mum with the skills that he has learnt at the farm. He was extremely proud of his achievement. He has also got more interested in plants and growing things. Both boys have had the opportunity to fix up bikes whilst they have attended the farm which they can now use during their visits. The visit to the farm is the highlight of both of the boys' weeks.



Case Study

At the age of 59 I was introduced to the Friendship Project by a friend who was already an Older friend. I never had children but always did lots of things with nieces and nephews so was perfectly at ease with young people.

The FP seemed to be such a worthwhile charity and I felt/hoped I could make a difference to a young person's life.

After the initial interview and vetting process I was matched with L, a young boy who lived quite close to me. Our initial meeting was at his school, who I believe had referred him to the FP as he found it difficult to make friends and needed some 1 to 1 time with someone outside of the family.

First impressions of L were that he was very intelligent, remembered every small detail and loved pushing the boundaries of doing risky things!

He didn't like loud noises or any physical contact at all and several years later was actually diagnosed with ASD and anxiety for which he is receiving medication.

He was always very happy to see me and loved our trips out. There were many days where on his return home he told his mum he'd had 'the best day EVER'!

For the first couple of years we saw each other almost every weekend.

It became more difficult during the Covid period, but we did what we could within the rules.

So, what did we do...this is by no means an exhaustive list but I tried to vary our outings!

We went to

Jump xtreme

Cycling at Kingsbury water park and on cycling trails near Ashby.

Climbing wall at the Snowdome

Narrowboat trip (FP)

Motorbike museum

Classic car show

He loved steam trains so we went to Statfold Barn railway several times where there is a steam train museum and you can ride on the trains. We also did the North Pole Xmas experience here.

We did the Bosworth steam train (Battlefield line) several times and one day just stood at Tamworth railway station and watched trains!

His favourite car was a Lamborghini Eventador, so I arranged for him to go to the Lamborghini garage at The Fort Birmingham and they allowed him to sit in one, and gave him gifts too! This was free!

He liked feeding goats and small animals so we went to Hoar Park farm and Ash End Play barn to do this.

We went to Thinktank Birmingham science museum and also did the Bear Grylls adventure at Resorts World

He loved fishing and FP arranged 2 fishing days which he absolutely loved!

Somedays we just got in my car and went on a mystery tour. He would be in charge of whether we turned left or right at each junction. We occasionally went round in circles but usually managed to get somewhere we'd never been and then stopped at a McDonald's on the way home!

Our final trip had to eclipse everything we had done so I booked him a junior super car driving experience. Yes he got to actually drive a Lamborghini on a race track, something he will never forget.

Quite early on in our friendship there were reports from his parents and his teachers of the difference in L. He was far more engaging with people and so full of stories of what we had done together.

I've loved this experience and I know I've made a difference to this young man's life

He is now 15 and even though I'm not seeing him anymore I took him a birthday card last week. He hugged me.....quite an emotional experience.



AGM Report May 2023

Sarah Edge – Area Coordinator for Rugby

sarah.edge@friendshipproject.co.uk



Older Friends: 14
Younger Friends: 14
Pipeline: 3

In General

A good year for new friendships and established friendships blossoming! We had a great number of volunteers join us last year and they are all still going strong and have made wonderful connections with their younger friends which is great to see.

I was sad to see Heather moving on to pastures new as she has been a great mentor and guide to me, and we have now got two new fantastic AC's who are becoming a lovely addition to the team.

Matchings

I have a solid 14 matches at the present time, this number has gone up and down with either children becoming too old for the project or circumstances changing at home, and some even just needing that support for a short amount of time but all the while making a difference.

I currently have 3 new people to interview and hoping to complete these in the next month which will then enable us to match a few more children.

Group Supporters

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

They both do a fantastic job and have both recently taken on a couple more for me which helps enormously.

Events Attended

- Bi-monthly Ops Meetings
- Regular meet ups with other AC's
- Volunteer Recruitment Fair in Rugby through CAVA
- Away Days with the team
- Due to attend Napton Cidery Summer Fayre
- Police Community Day – TBC

I have made contact with my local Tesco Superstore who have advised us to apply online for the Community Fund where we can receive a donation through the coins that people put in after they have shopped.

I have also been doing outreach in my local area with posters going up in shops, etc.

Case study

I began my friendship with my Younger Friend aged 7 in May 2022. He is very quiet & thoughtful, doesn't say much but he is clever & asks questions about all sorts of things. He is the youngest of 3 children. He speaks French & attends French classes as well as swimming & drama. We have visited many places together such as Caldecotte Park, Rugby Library for the Lego club, swimming, Draycote Water, Ryton Pools, the Adventure Zone & Par n Bar.

He also likes to eat McDonalds & Pizza, we sometimes go out for tea. We add things to his scrap book, like the scorecard from Par n Bar or photos I've taken. He loved the Pumpkin Patch where there was a maze made from hay bales, we also bought Pumpkins.

We went to the Xmas party where the Magician made great entertainment. My young friend was trying to work out how the magician did his tricks!

He is quite a serious boy with me but I think he enjoys my company & I enjoy his. Recently we have met up with an Older & Younger Friend & I see a child who is happy & confident playing with a child his own age.

We are looking forward to going to an Art Gallery & Museum to see an Underwater exhibition.

Case Study

Ever wondered what an 'Older Friend' is or how it works – well I'm now almost a year in & here's my newbies introduction to it.

In my simplistic words, being an Older Friend, is to help a 'Younger Friend' experience things that they wouldn't normally do. Now there are many things that can be included into this 'experience'; 1-1 adult focus, conversation, being listened to, having fun, do something new or just doing something & I'm sure the list goes on.

For me I liked the idea of helping to guide/change/support a young person, showing them & doing things with them which they wouldn't ordinarily get to do & so I bit the bullet & reached out to find out becoming an Older Friend. The process started in April/May time & it's now the end of July & tomorrow my Younger Friend & I are meeting for our 4th outing.

Once I was accepted as an Older Friend, I met with our Regional Coordinator a few times & we talked about what I like to do/my interests, this allows the team to find matches that have similar interests. We then met again to talk about some potential matches & from those 2 or 3, there was 1 match which I felt a connection with. (Be it a name, a similarity to someone you know, something that you've experienced, it could be anything but something that just says 'yeah' that's the one.) A meeting was arranged at the school with the Young Friend we talked a bit about what the project means & suggested that the Young Friend has a think about what they like to do, it was also my opportunity to ask what they like to do & say what I like to do & if everyone agreed we'd move forward & start our friendship. For our first Outing, we went for a Hot Chocolate & I'm not sure if it was the Hot Chocolate, going out or just being with someone but my Younger Friend was very excited. They had thought about the meeting at school & came with a whole list of ideas of what they'd like to do, was very talkative & not shy at all. The list of things to do included; Go Ape, Trampoline Park, Exploring, Ten Pin Bowling, Swimming, Boating.

For our 1st few outings I was trying to do things where we could look around & discover things. Thankfully, it was the summer, so we had plenty of outside adventures to work on. We went exploring along the canal & did a Scavenger hunt, who could see something Red first & whoever got it, then chose what the next colour or shape was. Visited Ryton Pools & had a walk around; counted 6 Dragon Flies, lots of butterflies, 5 swans & wrote our name in the path using bits of grass. We're going to go back at some time & hire Bicycles as you can also ride around the park. We're off out for dinner too to celebrate them finishing Primary School & that was all last summer.

With winter & the darker nights & as I work Full Time we started to think about some 'inside things' to do. We've been bowling a few times, after the 1st game they soon picked up their technique & almost beat me. (I must try harder next time!). We've also had a few games of Table Tennis & I found a book on the rules, so that in our next time we may actually have a game & start to score, rather than just see how higher a rally we can achieve. I have found that he likes to cook, coming from a busy household there isn't much time to help mum in the kitchen & so we've done some baking. I started with the cheat pre-made mixes & made Brownies, Cookies & Tray Bakes. We then ventured into making dinner for the 2 of us & Fajitas were a winner & we have Pizza making on our list. At Christmas I found that friends from 'down south' were coming up to Warwick Castle to do the light trial & after talking/checking with the charity we met up with them & had a great late afternoon/early evening in Warwick Castle &

then found a great Pizza restaurant for Dinner. We went to the SnowDome in Tamworth & went Tobogganing. (I'm sure the sight of an almost 50, overweight lady falling into a blown up rubber-ring tyre & going down the slope made plenty of people smile but it we both really enjoyed it & that's what counts.

As we've started to come out of winter, we done some 'Rock Painting' 1 week, & then went & planted the rocks in the woods the following week & we even went & tried Air Rifle Shooting, which was very good fun & I can highly recommend it. I was pretty useless myself, but my Younger Friend soon got his eye in & was shooting at a bell at the end of the range.

The people there were extremely friendly & helpful & they even gave us some 'target's which when hit explode in Smoke.

With summer approaching, I'm sure we'll revisit Ryton Pools & hire some bikes & we may even go further afield with a picnic somewhere.

I myself am enjoying finding all these different activities to try & am starting to learn that my Younger Friend, likes the bits that we have to concentrate on – they seem to get some 'peace' from the focus of the mind. I am also enjoying trying these new activities myself, or reminding me of my childhood holidays playing table tennis with my brother in Spain. It's also great seeing their confidence grow & in getting them to try 'new' things. These are all experiences that they wouldn't be able to do without the help & support of the Charity & the volunteers. I can thoroughly recommend it & I haven't looked back since.



The Friendship Project
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 517684
Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2022

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5	Independent examiner's report
6	Statement of financial activities
7	Balance sheet
8 - 12	Notes to the accounts

The Friendship Project
Trustees' Annual Report
for the year ended 31 December 2022

Full Name:	The Friendship Project
Other names:	The Friendship Project for Children
Registered charity number:	517684
Principal address:	Myton Park, Myton Lane, Warwick, CV34 6PX
Trustees:	Cheryll Rawbone, Chairperson Ken Smith, Honorary Treasurer Jon Gibbons, Honorary Secretary Chris Buck Richard Barrett Angela Dawn Truman Esther Jones Patricia Miller, Ashima Rani Chander, appointed 16 June 2022 Sarah Stallard resigned 16 th June 2022 Gurmaj Singh Dhillon, not put forward for re-election at AGM on 16th June 2022
Honorary Treasurer:	Ken Smith
Honorary Secretary:	Jon Gibbons
Bankers:	Lloyds TSB, Stratford upon Avon
Independent examiner:	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 12th May 1986 as amended 7th September 1993, 6th March 1995 and 11th 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 2022

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 ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ We have helped 105 children directly during 2022, 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, and with more freedom in the latter part of the year.
- ✓ We have returned fully to face to face support during 2022.
- ✓ We held several successful outside events including craft event, and a Christmas party at OLRFC with over 100 attending the latter event
- ✓ Safeguarding training has been undertaken online, including refresher training. Our policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated too.
- ✓ Our income achieved was £67,629, against previous year of £63,366, and with expenditure higher at £78,349, including Older Friends expenses up to £22,751, almost double the previous year, when there were more restrictions on going out.
- ✓ The carry forward to 2023 of unrestricted reserves £31,048 was significantly lower than in 2022, though still leaving us with the ability to continue, with some established funding in our pipeline, albeit with much lower reserves. We have restricted funds of £14,500 in addition.
- ✓ Our investment account has been closed, and monies moved to a lower risk deposit account from Charibond, owing to the economic climate.
- ✓ Our salaries have increased as we have now employed an Operations team manager, so as to remove the day to day responsibility for line management from the trustee board, which is good governance.
- ✓ We agreed to review our insurance provider and HR payroll costs in 2023, with a view to making savings in overheads for the coming year.
- ✓ We have also been kindly given free basic archive storage for 2023 at SSD in Stratford.

The Friendship Project
Trustees' annual report (continued)
for the year ended 31 December 2022

Financial Review

The charity made an unrestricted deficit of £13,770 plus a loss on investments of £3,977 in the year, ending the year with unrestricted reserves of £31,048.

The Trustees have reviewed the financial position of the charity in light of the current economic environment and the forecast costs of its operations and fund raising. They believe that with the funding commitments made and plans for 2023, 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 held in an interest earning deposit account. Investments with M&G Charity Investments were sold during the year.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed 

Date 16/05/2023

Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of
The Friendship Project
Year Ended 31 December 2022

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022, 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: 16/05/2023

The Friendship Project
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 December 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	2021 £
Incoming resources					
Grants	2	7,500	41,975	49,475	40,251
Donations	3	12,707	-	12,707	14,377
Fundraising events	4	4,759	-	4,759	8,047
Gift Aid	5	-	-	-	-
Investment income	6	688	-	688	691
Total incoming resources		<u>25,654</u>	<u>41,975</u>	<u>67,629</u>	<u>63,366</u>
Resources expended					
Salaries, NI	10	18,498	24,464	42,962	35,424
Staff expenses		2,949	995	3,944	3,008
Volunteer expenses		9,285	13,466	22,751	11,786
Insurance		3,616	-	3,616	3,230
Events/Christmas parties		1,137	-	1,137	861
Other expenditure	11	3,589	-	3,589	4,945
Independent examination fee	13	350	-	350	350
Total resources expended		<u>39,424</u>	<u>38,925</u>	<u>78,349</u>	<u>59,605</u>
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		(13,770)	3,050	(10,720)	3,761
Gains & (losses) on investments		(3,977)	-	(3,977)	(1,343)
Total funds brought forward		48,795	11,500	60,295	57,877
Total funds carried forward	9	<u>31,048</u>	<u>14,550</u>	<u>45,598</u>	<u>60,295</u>

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 2022

	Note	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
Fixed assets					
Investments	6		-		37,871
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		47,692		25,274	
Debtors	7	304		270	
		<u>47,996</u>		<u>25,544</u>	
Current liabilities					
Creditors	8	(2,399)		(3,120)	
Net current assets			45,598		22,424
Net assets			<u>45,598</u>		<u>60,295</u>
The funds of the charity					
General Funds			31,048		48,795
Restricted Funds			14,550		11,500
Total Funds	9		<u>45,598</u>		<u>60,295</u>

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 16/05/2023

Cheryl Rawbone, Chairperson

The Friendship Project
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2022

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 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Warwickshire Police & Crime Commissioner	-	8,000	8,000	7,713
Heart of England 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	-	-	-	1,000
King Henry VIII Endowed Trust	-	3,900	3,900	3,750
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	-	-	-	3,000
National Lottery Community Fund	-	9,650	9,650	8,559
L&Q Foundation	-	-	-	- 333
Heart of England Community Foundation	-	-	-	4,335
FC Stokes Trust	-	-	-	1,000
Four Acre Trust	-	-	-	8,227
Warwickshire CrimeBeat	-	-	-	3,000
AVIVA Community Fund	5,000	-	5,000	-
Stratford Town Trust	-	6,000	6,000	-
Warwick & District Council	-	12,500	12,500	-
ITF O'Brien Trust	2,500	-	2,500	-
Warwickshire Police Charitable Trust	-	1,925	1,925	-
	<u>7,500</u>	<u>41,975</u>	<u>49,475</u>	<u>40,251</u>

The Friendship Project
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2022

3. Donations

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Bates Trust Claverdon	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
Anonymous Donors	2,000	-	2,000	1,000
FC Stokes Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Charities Trust	2,400	-	2,400	-
Callum Designs	-	-	-	1,500
Masonic Charitable Foundation	-	-	-	1,000
Countrywide Builders	-	-	-	5,000
Leamington SW	-	-	-	1,000
Donations under £1,000	6,307	-	6,307	3,877
	<u>12,707</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,707</u>	<u>14,377</u>

4. Fundraising Events

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	£	£	£	£
Warickshire Police Cadets	2,696	-	2,696	-
Anonymous	1,000	-	1,000	-
Alsters Kelly Solicitors	-	-	-	1,727
Fundraising Events under £1,000	1,063	-	1,063	6,320
	<u>4,759</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,759</u>	<u>8,047</u>

5. HMRC Gift Aid

Gift Aid received £0, (2021 - £0)

6. Investments

Our Investment Account with M&G Charibond has been closed, due to increased investment risk in the current economic climate. Monies were moved to a lower risk deposit account with Lloyds Bank.

The Friendship Project

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2022

7. Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Insurance Prepayment	304	270
	<u>304</u>	<u>270</u>

8. Creditors

	2022 £	2021 £
Volunteer Expenses	1,836	1,853
Staff Expenses	213	41
Independent Examination Fee	350	350
WPCC underspend to be returned	-	687
Oasis	-	189
	<u>2,399</u>	<u>3,120</u>

9. Movements in Funds

	Opening Balance £	Incoming Resources £	(Resources expended) £	Gains & Losses £	Transfers £	Closing Balance £
General funds	<u>48,795</u>	<u>25,654</u>	<u>(39,424)</u>	<u>- 3,977</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,048</u>
Total General Funds	<u>48,795</u>	<u>25,654</u>	<u>(39,424)</u>	<u>(3,977)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,048</u>
Restricted Funds						
Warwickshire P&CC	1,975	8,000	(7,975)	-	-	2,000
HoECF Coronavirus Resilience	1,084	-	(1,084)	-	-	-
National Lottery	3,566	9,650	(3,566)	-	-	9,650
King Henry VIII Endowed Trust	1,875	3,900	(4,800)	-	-	975
Warwickshire Crimebeat	3,000	-	(3,000)	-	-	-
Warwick & District Council	-	12,500	(12,500)	-	-	-
Stratford Town Trust	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-	-
Warwickshire Police	-	1,925	-	-	-	1,925
Charitable Trust	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	<u>11,500</u>	<u>41,975</u>	<u>(38,925)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,550</u>
Total Funds	<u>60,295</u>	<u>67,629</u>	<u>(78,349)</u>	<u>(3,977)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>45,598</u>

The Friendship Project
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2022

10. Staff costs and numbers

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages, NI & Pension	42,962	35,424
	<u>42,962</u>	<u>35,424</u>

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

The average weekly number of part time employees during the year was 6 (2021: 5)

11. Other expenditure

	2022	2021
	£	£
Storage of documents	672	454
Telephones	469	540
Printing, stationery & advertising	388	46
Database / IT	26	694
Payroll	1,307	1,246
CIO accreditation	-	1,800
Sundries	727	165
	<u>3,589</u>	<u>4,945</u>

12. 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 £3,218.

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The management committee and other trustees did not receive any remuneration during the year (2021: nil).

The Friendship Project
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2022

13. Independent examination and accountancy services

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

14. Controlling parties

The charity is under the control of the management committee.

15. 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.