

NEWSLETTER

2022/23 - Issue 26



Chairman's Introduction

The last twelve months have indeed been momentous with the death of Her Majesty after over 70 years in service for the country, and new King Charles III coming to the throne. Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine is still with us, and our sympathies go to the Ukrainian people who are suffering such atrocities not of their own making, and we think of the impact on the children particularly. In the UK as the nation starts to come to live with the post COVID era, there are indeed challenges to our children here particularly with resultant increases in mental health difficulties. Indeed, we are seeing an increasing number of referrals from local schools and social services. Recruitment of extra volunteers is one of our key focuses for 2023, and any way you can give publicity to this would help.

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 were able to again run our valued craft event in September, which has been organised fantastically by Pauline Higginbottom

who has sadly now retired from the charity after many years excellent service. 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.

Our newsletter has some great stories, and photos from our volunteers demonstrating the valuable work they do and the fun they have been able to have alongside helping their younger friends to improve their self-esteem, and confidence.

From a financial perspective we have had to use some reserves in 2022, and this result is us having less to carry forward for 2023, though we are still just within our reserves policy, for funding for six months. Our biggest drop is from fund raising events, and corporate donations. Like many charities we are seeking to cover this via additional targeted grant applications. We are very keen to develop partnerships with local business, from both a recruitment of volunteers, and CSR/fund-raising perspective, and if you know of any that would be interested please let me know.

For the last three years we have held our AGM and Volunteers Get Together on Zoom with a much higher attendance than previously when face to face, and it is planned to do this again this year, on Wednesday 7thth June at 7.00pm. Please contact karen.hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk to register to attend, and you will be sent a Zoom link.

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

Cheryll Rawbone – Chairman

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

The children that we support

Our Younger Friends are referred to us via a professional body, such as their school or social worker. This can be for a variety of reasons ranging from having a limited friendship group, or perhaps coming from a very large family where it's difficult for them to have one to one time. Our volunteer Older Friends take them out regularly for friendship and fun! Often, our Older Friends say that their outings become just as important to them as their Younger Friend as it's a way of exploring new things to do. It is very rewarding for them when they can see first hand when the child flourishes during the time that they befriend them. We have regular Safeguarding check ups with the Younger Friend and their family/carers which is a wonderful way of finding out how their friendships are making a difference to them.



A memory book that a Younger Friend made with her Older Friend to record their adventures together.

On a recent Safeguarding check up to the home of a Younger Friend, the Younger Friend got the book out to show it off as she was so proud of all the things they've done.

Feedback from some Younger Friends and Carers

"Going out with my Older Friend is the highlight of my week."

"I have been happier since I've been going out with my Older Friend, and I listen more."

"My Older Friend is a nice person, and is a good friend to me."

"When I come back from seeing my Older Friend I am always smiling."

"Going out with my Older Friend has helped me appreciate that life is more interesting than I thought it was."

"A always gets excited when she's due to see her Older Friend."

"R always looks forward to going out with his Older Friend. He's always asking when they are next going out together."



Younger Friend Numbers

The number of children that we support is constantly changing. We currently have 76 children aged between 6 and 16 that have an Older Friend.



2022 Events

As always, we had a full calendar of events throughout the year for both Older Friends and Younger Friends.

January

- Volunteer Get together Zoom

February

- Tree planting event

March

- Safeguarding Training Zoom

April

- Fishing event
- Rugby event Wasps vs Worcs

May

- Moreton Morrell animal event

June

- AGM zoom
- Safeguarding Training Zoom
- Pony event

July

- Volunteer Get together

September

- Safeguarding Training
- Craft event
-

October

- Volunteer Get together

November

- Volunteer Get together
- Christmas Party



Tree Planting

On a chilly February morning we went Tree Planting for a children's forest at Leasowe Farm, just outside Radford Semele. We sat round a little fire, made a wish, sang a tree song, planted lots of different trees in the forest and then did a tree planting dance! It was all very relaxed, and fun in the fresh air. There have been several opportunities since then to go back and tend the trees.



Rugby – WASPS vs Worcester

In April we gathered at the Coventry Building Society Arena for the chance to watch WASPS play Worcester. Some of the children also had the fabulous opportunity to be mascots. The outing was sponsored by Gallagher Insurance.



Fabulous Fishing!

In April, after the surprise success of our fishing events in 2021, we once again took the children on a fantastic fishing experience at Old Oak Farm Fisheries in Rugby.



Moreton Morrell Animal Welfare Unit



With grateful thanks to CALLUM who supported us again this year by sponsoring a visit to the wonderful Moreton Morrell Animal Welfare Unit. We were treated to a quiz, tour and then being able to handle many of the animals there. The event was such a success that we have already booked to return next year!

Craft Event



Our craft event featured slime making, hama beads, glass jam jar painting, biscuit decorating, photo frame decorating, modelling balloons and the design of this years Christmas card, which was created using the technique of iris folding. This was Pauline Higginbottom's last craft day that she organised as she has now fully retired from The Friendship Project. We will try our best to live up to her amazing craft day legacy next year!

Pony Experience Day

A fun time was had by all at the RDA Training Centre in Shrewley. It was a hands on day which included grooming, and riding Charlie the mechanical horse!



Christmas Party

With thanks to Old Leamingtonians RFC for allowing us to use their venue, and to entertainer Mark Traversoni for performing a wonderful show for us. NFU Mutual gave us 60 presents for the children, plus £200 towards costs. Free Cakes for Kids made us 60 wonderful cupcakes! Father Christmas even made an appearance!



What others have been doing for us



Nina Young raised a whopping £1810 for us when she decided to compete in a boxing match to raise funds for us. She chose us because she says *"not all kids are as lucky as I was growing up."*

We would like to say a HUGE thank you to The Rotary for an amazing opportunity to take some of our Younger Friends on an activity holiday at Whitemoor Lakes Activity & Training Centre. G said *"The week was fun, the activities were great, I really liked the compass course and abseiling. Thank you."*



The Warwickshire Police Cadets did a sponsored walk for us in May and raised a huge £2,696 for The Friendship Project. They completed 444 miles over a 24 hour period with the cadets taking shifts!



Free Cakes for Kids, continue to make the most beautiful themed cakes for many of our Younger Friends. They also made us gorgeous decorated cupcakes for our Christmas Party.



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

Louisa and Larissa organised a huge toy collection for Christmas and gifted them to us.



NFU Mutual gave presents at our Christmas party, plus partially funded it.



£75 donation, and breakfast from the Ufton Breakfast Club.



Leamington Lillies WI chose us as their charity of the year and raised £319.



Morrisons Leamington Spa Community who donated items for our Christmas party.

Leycester House care home book donation.

www.sumo-digital.com gave a monetary donation.

The Queen, 1926-2022



Our Chairman Cheryl Rawbone had the honour of meeting The Queen in 2019 at The National Council for Voluntary Organisations' 100th anniversary. It was a reception held at Windsor Castle for 200 representatives from the charity sector.

We have also had the pleasure of visiting Buckingham Palace a few times over the years for various events.

In the same year that the Queen died, we also had happier times and celebrated her Platinum Jubilee. We ran a competition for the best Jubilee themed art creation, of which the Older Friends got their Younger Friends fantastically involved. Here are just a few of the wonderful competition entries.



With grateful thanks to those who donated in 2022

All donations are greatly appreciated.

Below are our donations for 2022. We would also like to thank cash donors, plus any donations not listed.

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
BN & 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
Stratford Town Trust
St Marys WI
Terence Hague
The Four Acre Trust
The National Lottery
Community Fund
Warwickshire CrimeBeat
Warwickshire Police Cadets
Warwickshire Police Charities
Trust
Warwickshire Police Crime
Commissioner
Women of Welton

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

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

SSD in Stratford Upon Avon for storing our archiving free of charge.

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

Charities Trust

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

Payroll Giving

Sponsorship – Online Fundraising – Sponsor Me

Match Funding

One off Card donations

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

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

Chris's Older Friend Story



It was my first time, I was completely new to the idea of becoming an Older Friend. I was told that the 10 year old boy that I was befriending had ADHD and lots of energy, had problems with authority figures and had had an Older Friend before but it had not really worked out. I was then introduced to a quiet, subdued young man, quite small for 10 years, who immediately struck me as really wanting to be liked.

Our first trip out was to the local park with a football, which we kicked around for a while and then sat on some logs and talked about him, me and what we each enjoyed doing. I was left with the impression of a sweet, sensitive boy who loves his mum and his sisters (most of the time). We then had some running races and played tag around the park proving that he certainly did have boundless energy.

Our friendship gradually grew as we fell into a habit of about 90 minutes of some sort of activity each week either football or tag in the park, swimming, cycling (another Older Friend gave us a bike that their young friend had grown out of) and then a trip to McDonald's or KFC which would give us the opportunity to sit and talk for half an hour while he ate.

I knew we were doing well when his behaviour started to deteriorate. He was sufficiently relaxed with me to sulk when he didn't get his way, primarily when I said it was time to go home, or when he tried a trick on his bike but could not pull it off. We gradually learnt how to deal with each other. Sometimes I would buy him the extra drink or sweets he wanted, but he also learnt that a sulk was never going to persuade me to his point of view.

My work often takes me away from home. I send him postcards from wherever I go. He loves to browse the photos on my phone when we get back together again. At first, he had no interest in the different places I visit but did want to know about the people I meet and the animals in the different countries. Just recently he has started to ask more about the different countries and the world as his horizons are moving beyond Leamington.

COVID and lockdowns were challenging. A weekly facetime call when we are not allowed to meet. Invariably he was playing on his X-box while we spoke, leading to some prolonged periods in which our conversation went nowhere. But I soon realised that he was never keen to finish the call even when neither of us had anything more to say. Just seeing each other and me being there while he played seemed to be important.

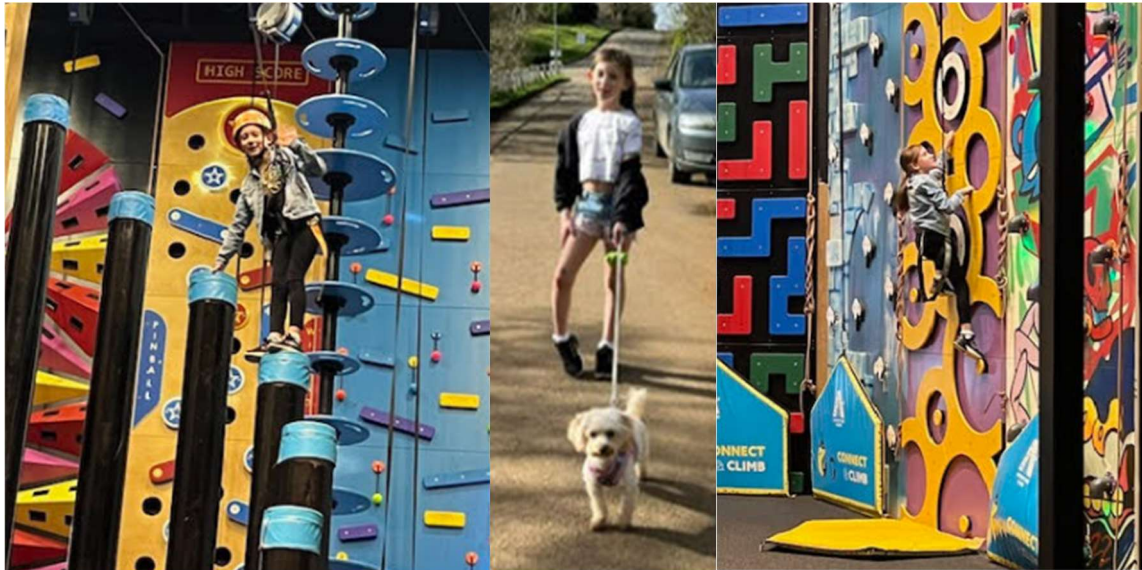
When we could meet, but not go in a car together, we were restricted to walking or cycling from his home. It worked out well in the summer months, we even had a few evening swims in the river. But things got harder as the evenings drew in and we found ourselves out in the cold and dark.

He has just turned 15. No longer the small 10-year-old I met 5 years ago. The bike that was a little big for him is now ready to be passed on to another Older Friend. He has grown significantly in stature and in himself. I am constantly racking my brain now to think of new activities to do with a teenager rather than a young boy. I was wondering if he might outgrow our relationship, but it does not seem to be so.

Sometimes when I pick him up he emerges from the house with his hood up and grunts a greeting if I am lucky. He then sits in the car playing on his phone and doesn't speak to me. But it normally only lasts until we get out of the car and set off upon whatever today's activity is. He then relaxes, engages and is good company.

I have to say, I am proud of him, about how he is developing as a person and how he is learning to harness his energy and control his temper. I would also be lying if I didn't say I get a bit of a boost myself when I think that I may have had a small part to play in that.

Michelle's Older Friend Story



I came across the Friendship Project about 18 months ago when I was looking for a volunteering opportunity. Having done some volunteering in the past with Coventry and Warwickshire Mind when I was working with parents with small children, I realised I wanted to work directly with children themselves. I have a very absorbing job as the Managing Director of a law firm but it's good to be able to focus on something completely different and make an impact on an individual basis. My two children were at university, so I felt I had the time, energy and experience to offer friendship to a young person through the Project.

As you'd expect I went through the usual interview and vetting process to make sure I was suitable for the role. Following a couple of face-to-face meetings with Heather, the Area Coordinator for my area at the time, we spoke about potential matches. A local 8-year-old girl had been put forward for an Older Friend and I had no hesitation in saying "yes."

Our first meeting was in her school playground and things have gone from there. I really enjoy spending time with her, and we have fun. I always allow her to choose the activities as I think it's important to give children some autonomy and it's always interesting to see what she'll pick.

Following an initial period where visits were organised through the Project, I now arrange visits directly with my Younger Friend's mum, who seems very happy with the arrangement we have.

In our time we've been bowling and to the cinema and she's enjoyed soft play and wall climbing while I've watched! I have a small dog, Codie, who loves my Younger Friend and I think the feeling is mutual. They wear each other out running around the park.

Whilst the activities are fun we have some great quiet time too – our chats are always illuminating. We've touched on everything from God and religion to politics and Father Christmas. There's never a dull moment. A testament to the success of this kind of project is the fact my Younger Friend nags me about when she'll see me again. That's got to be a good sign – right?

Could you be an Older Friend?

We have many more children on our waiting lists needing an Older Friend. It could be you helping one of them!

If you are thinking of volunteering for us, here are some words from current Older Friend Clare to inspire you:-

"I find the Friendship Project such a professional charity to volunteer with. The support they offer to volunteers and the systems they have in place are really second to none. Given the nature of the work with young people, this gives me so much confidence to get out there and have fun with my Younger Friend."

Please contact: Karen.Hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk for more information.

Laura's Older Friend Story



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.

Helena's Older Friend Story



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:

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.

the friendship project
For Children

Volunteers Wanted

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

For more details and an application form, please contact:

0845 838 2098*

email: info@friendshipproject.co.uk
www.friendshipproject.co.uk

Facebook/ Instagram/ Twitter@friendshipproj

Make a difference to a child's life!

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*Calls to this number from a BT telephone line will be approx. 2p/min daytime and 8p/min evening (exclusive of VAT) Calls from mobiles and other operators may vary

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Registered Charity No.517684

www.friendshipproject.co.uk <https://www.facebook.com/FriendshipProj> @FriendshipProj

Trustee and Operations Team News

Our volunteer numbers are constantly increasing, and this has been supported by our Operations team. Hannah Peattie, Harriet Crawley and Taggie Kelham are valued new members of the team. Tina Chander joins the Trustee Team.



Hannah Peattie – Area Coordinator for Nuneaton, Bedworth & North Warwickshire

Hannah has been at home with her own 4 children for the last few years. Previously she has worked in early help services supporting families with parenting, routines, mental health and other challenges. She has also done lots of volunteering for various churches. She loves working with children and families and knows how vital a charity like the Friendship Project is to change lives, and give much needed support to those involved. Hannah is originally from Eastbourne on the South coast, but waved goodbye to the seaside and ventured to the Midlands 4 years ago where she is now settled in Nuneaton, as a family.



Harriet Crawford – Area Coordinator for Stratford, Shipston and Alcester

Harriet lives in Stratford with her husband and two children. Her professional background has been mainly in Operations and Managing a support team for a large health care charity. Prior to this she worked in a dental surgery as a Treatment and patient Coordinator assisting clinicians and patients. Since having children she has been working in a Nursery helping pre-school aged children and their families. Harriet has a HND in counselling and has used these skills in all aspects of her professional career. She especially enjoys working with children and their families when they have complex needs and challenges, to make life a little easier with extra support and guidance. She also enjoys walking, baking, and going on holiday in the sun with her family. Harriet is really looking forward to working with The Friendship Project, children and volunteers, to help support the children who need their smile back.



Taggie Kelham – Marketing & Social Media Assistant

Taggie 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.



Tina Chander – HR Trustee

Tina is originally from Shropshire, where her heart and many of her family still reside. Professionally, she is Partner and Head of Employment Law for the Warwickshire law firm, Wright Hassall. Tina looks after a team of employment law specialists, helping to ensure they are supported in their career development and personal goals. Tina has joined the Friendship Project as HR Trustee, and is looking forward to supporting the Charity to continue reaching its goals and to ensure it remains HR compliant.

Viv Kelsey, Heather Shipley, Sarah Stallard and Gurmaj Dhillon said farewell to The Friendship Project. **Pauline Higginbottom** also said a final goodbye to us after having been a mentor to us last year. We thank them all for their hard work and commitment to the charity.



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

Safeguarding

The last year has flown by and I continue to feel privileged to be involved with the Friendship Project as Trustee with responsibility for ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of our Younger Friends is at the heart of everything we do.

The Operations Team continue to be our first port of call where there are safeguarding concerns, and I remain impressed by their dedication to refining and continually improving how we do things. Where concerns have occurred, we always use it as a learning opportunity and reflect on what we could be doing better and how we might have prevented it. This has led to the changing and tweaking of procedures and the development of some brand new guidelines. We introduced new guidance on mobile phone use between Older and Younger Friends in recognition of the fact that mobile phones are now the primary method of communication for most people. If you are a current volunteer and haven't read these guidelines yet, please do! They are available on our website under Documents / Older Friends.

An aspect of my role that I particularly enjoy is the delivery of the Safeguarding training to our Older Friends. It is the responsibility of all organisations working with children to ensure that their staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding but we can only truly do this if our volunteers engage on this topic. I must pass on my thanks to our volunteers for not just giving their time to simply attend the training, but for truly engaging in it: I really enjoy answering the questions and engaging in discussions.

Over the next year I plan to review our recruitment procedures to ensure they align with best safer recruitment practice. I'm particularly interested in how induction processes prepare our Older Friends for their role. If you have any thoughts or feedback do get in touch!

Esther Jones – Safeguarding Trustee.

Future Events

We really hope to see you at some of these events this year!

We are always adding new events, so we will be sure to communicate these with you when we do.

If you have any questions with regards to these events, or ideas for future events, please feel free to contact:-

karen.hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk

Younger Friend Events:-

4 March – Motionhouse event session 1
11 March – Motionhouse event – session 2
3 June – Moreton Morrell event
1 July – Kenilworth Fire Station event
15 July – Motionhouse event – session 1
22 July – Motionhouse event – session 2
23 September – Craft event
October – Train event TBC
December – Xmas Party TBC

All events which are not yet booked will be communicated as soon as they are booked.

Volunteer Events:-

12 January – Zoom Safeguarding training part 1
19 January – Zoom Safeguarding training part 2
26 January – Zoom Safeguarding refresher training
13 February - Zoom Volunteer Get Together
18 May – Zoom Safeguarding training part 1
25 May – Zoom Safeguarding training part 2
7 June – Zoom AGM, 7pm
14 June – Volunteer Get Together, Royal Pug, Leamington