

## Foreword and comment from the Friendship Project's new Chairman John Hancock



"Long experience working with young people and their families has left me in no doubt that lack of friendship, poor self-esteem and confidence are amongst the biggest handicaps in life. My interest in the Friendship Project stems from these observations and my intention is to serve the Project in whatever ways I can to help youngsters overcome such formidable barriers and I will use my professional experience for the benefit of the Project.

The Friendship Project is currently in transition preparing for some significant developments. New Trustees are needed to face the challenges ahead and to replace some of our long-serving members who are wishing to stand down after providing admirable service to the Charity.

Following research into the operation of the Project, coupled with the introduction of a Quality Assurance

System, a three year strategic plan is being prepared to assist those developments and attract additional funding and human resource. One of our aims is to recruit a Project Manager who will play a lead role in all the major functions of the Charity. We would also wish to enhance the role and remuneration of our Area Coordinators who are central to the success of the project.

Whilst retaining a degree of independence we are seeking to build stronger partnerships with Social Services (our main ally) and also with other agencies/organizations such as 'Positive About Young People', CVS, Leisure and Amenities Departments of District Councils and the University of Warwick.

Our operation at the University has been resurrected and is progressing well under the umbrella of Warwick Volunteers. Students at a recent recruitment fair showed considerable interest in our Project. Some of these same students will be befriending youngsters referred to us by Charter Primary and Sherbourne Fields Special Schools in addition to specific Social Worker teams in Coventry.

In September we held our first Annual Conference (reported in this issue) which provided the opportunity for Trustees, Coordinators and Older Friends to work together. With the expertise and commitment shown by these people and by others unable to attend, the Project can look forward to suc-

these people and by others unable to attend, we can look forward to successfully building on the good practice which has accompanied the Project over the past 18 years.

I look forward to working with you all in the future, and as Chairman would hope to be approachable to individuals, pro-active and responsive to the needs of the Project."

**John Hancock**  
**Chairman**

### EDITOR'S COMMENT

"Welcome to our second Newsletter! Thank you to all of you who commented on our first Newsletter about the things you liked, and the things you didn't! Your input is of great value as this communication aims to represent the Project and all its members. Keep your comments and ideas coming please.

There are lots of new initiatives in plan, (see our Chairman's comment this page) with work on Quality Assurance already begun (see article on page 4).

September saw the Project hold its first ever annual conference which was very well supported by our volunteers. John Hancock, our new chairman, gives his overview of the conference on page 2. On behalf of the charity, a big thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to making the day such a success".

**Gina Worrall**  
**Editor**



**An Introduction to some of the Trustees and Coordinators**

In the first edition of this Newsletter we introduced you to some of our Trustees, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a few more members of the Project.

**Jean Dennis** has been involved with the Friendship Project for over three years as an Older Friend and became a Trustee in early 2004. She is also currently a volunteer caseworker for SSAFA a charity that assists ex service personnel. Prior to that Jean was a volunteer with CCHA Extra Care Charitable Trust assisting in the fund raising and helping to organise entertainments and activities for the residents. Jeans role as a Trustee will be in the areas of Public Relations and advertising as she becomes involved in developing the profile of the charity. She is currently looking at enhancing the ways in which we recruit our volunteers.

**Brian Rush** has been working for the Project for over 10 years and throughout this time says he has been impressed by the hard work of all concerned with this valuable work. Brian was initially involved with the Stratford and Warwick branches and later became a Trustee on the management committee. During his time as Trustee his role has been that of Fund Raising. Brian is a retired architect with offices in Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon and since retirement has remained a Consultant to the Practice.

**John Hancock** has been Chairman of the Friendship Project since May 2004, his involvement with the charity goes back 14 years. Prior to his retirement John was Head teacher of Campion School, Chair of the Warwick District Area Community Education Council and Advisor to the Basic Skills Agency. His educational

tional background and leadership experience is of great value to the Project.

**Jean Ellis** took over the coordinators job in Warwick in April this year. Her previous experience of working with children includes setting up a Youth Club for young people in Warwick. Through feedback from Older Friends, Jean says she has realized just what a difference a friendship can make to a younger friends life, and says she finds working within the Project very rewarding.

The Friendship Project is always looking for people who can help us in our valuable work in all areas, from volunteer Older Friends, to coordinators and people willing to take on a Trustee role. If you feel that you have particular skills or interests that could be of benefit to the charity then please contact us in the first instance by ringing **John Hancock on 01926 513065**

**Projects first Annual Conference**

Our first ever Conference was held on Saturday 25th September in the Business/IT Centre of Campion School which proved to be an excellent venue.

The day provided an opportunity for Trustees and Coordinators to meet and work with Older Friends and for members from different parts of the County to share experiences. People went away feeling good about belonging to the Friendship Project and having had an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

We had an investigative approach to Child Protection led by Vic Tuck who is the Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee Development Officer and bespoke trainer for the Friendship Project. This topic is clearly of great importance to us for our work.

Also important, however, for the future success is our Quality Assurance system—a view not necessarily shared

by everyone! The input and demonstration led by Gina Worrall went a long way to dispel fears that PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for small organisations) is not OFSTED in disguise! In the afternoon we had inputs from project members and also shared best practice in initiating, developing, sustaining and ending, friendships. Throughout the day we successfully used small discussion groups, facilitated by Group Leaders, which encouraged members to participate and have their views heard.

In the evaluation of the conference, the refreshments provided by the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre received high praise. We also gained some good ideas for improving the arrangements of the day. Overall

there was an emphatic view that we should make the conference an annual

event. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend and contribute to the day, I look forward to continuing our work with you all.

**John Hancock**

Below are some of the general comments made about the conference by some attendees.

- "Worth giving up my Saturday for"
- "Very informative"
- "A very enjoyable and interesting day"
- "As a new starter the day was very useful in getting a full picture of how the organisation functions"
- "Small group sessions worked very well"
- "Every person was encouraged to give their views and listened too"
- "Get more people to attend,"
- "Good atmosphere, good participation"
- "Acoustics were difficult"



## Volunteers share some of their experiences

"I have been an Older Friend for over three years, becoming interested through a newspaper article. My first friendship was with a young girl aged 11; she has a younger sibling with a debilitating illness, she was a great help to her mother and our friendship gave her some time for herself. We would often go shopping, visit craft fairs or go for a meal. She is now of an age that she spends more time with her school friends so the friendship has more or less finished although I am still in contact with the family.

My current friendship is with a six year old boy who again has a sibling with a complicated medical condition that requires much care and attention, also, his father is not around at the moment. We try to go out every Sunday and I am trying to teach him how to swim (which is proving more difficult than I thought!). I have secured a close bond with the boy and his mother is very happy with the friendship. One thing that I found very touching was when we were out eating pizza one day he put his hand over mine and said "You're my friend aren't you"? Surely that epitomizes what the Friendship Project strives to achieve".

**Jean**

"I have recently become an Older Friend to a 12 year-old-girl whose parents both have mental health problems. She has an older brother and a sister who has taken on the role of carer for the whole family. So far we have enjoyed numerous outings including swimming, walking and best of all talking. She is now attending our local church youth club and is learning the ancient art of campanology. As well as these outings I have been able to assist her with her schooling as she has been excluded from school for retaliating to taunts about her family".

**Pete**

"I have been a friend of Amanda's for one year. She is ten years old. We have done several activities together, but right from the start she showed an interest in pony riding. We have had our ups and downs with various ponies but she has coped with the difficulties well. Her first pony unfortunately died just after she started and this was difficult for her. Her second pony was a winner. She entered a fancy dress as Little and Large, the pony is black and white and my little dog is black and white. Amanda, smartly dressed, rode the pony and the dog had a doll rider on his back. To Amanda's amazement she was first and won a bright red rosette! Encouraged with this success she then undertook pony care to win a brownie pony care badge. We have been to the Butterfly Farm and on lots of country walks with three dogs.

At first Amanda did not interact well with other children preferring adults and dogs but in the last few weeks she seems to be opening out. Amanda is a great artist and she has drawn pictures of all the horses and has made a plaque to go above her pony's tack. Yes she has fallen off two or three times but has always clambered back on".

**Pam**

"For 31 years as a Speech and language Therapist I chose to work predominantly with children. I have none of my own. In 1988, I bought a house with a garden and planned to adopt or foster children. After attending introduction meetings for both, I concluded, reluctantly, that I had not got the stamina nor emotional strength to cope with either on a 24/7 basis.

Then I saw an advertisement for the Friendship Project and since 1990 I have enjoyed sharing outings and activities with 4 younger friends, three girls and a boy."

**Judith**

"I started meeting up with my 13 year old younger friend just over a year ago and we got along instantly. Our initial outings consisted of bowling, ice skating, Brush and Bisque' It, live music, dinners and cinema.

She confides in me regarding her mum's health, her fears that she may have to go back into care and her family ups and downs in general. At the moment she has just started 'going out' with a boy from a local school and so is ecstatic. It is strange being privy to all that goes on in a 13 year olds mind but an education none the less. All in all I think she really appreciates the time we spend together and she is a pleasure to take out".

**Anna**

*"I am a Social Worker in the Rugby Short Term Team and regularly make use of the Friendship Project for a diverse range of children in terms of their age, circumstances and their need. In this sense the Friendship Project is extremely useful as the volunteers are flexible and can offer a service to the children in the way it best suits the family. I have observed friendships working well for most families and in some cases making a key contribution to helping children and their families make positive changes".*



**Fundraising Facts**

The Friendship Project is largely operated by volunteers, but there are considerable costs to meet and these have to be met by fund raising. Office costs, insurances, expenses of Coordinators and Older Friends along with advertising and publicity are expected to be in the region of £30,000 in the current year.

The small team of fund raisers, John Newbery, John Vallis and myself Brian Rush, meet regularly to review the progress of income. Appeals are made

to Trusts, Charities and local firms as well as individuals. We have been fortunate to receive support from Lloyds TSB, Stratford Town Trust, Noel Buxton Trust, Alan Edward Higgs Charity, John Vallis, Kenilworth Sporting Club, King Henry VIII Endowed Trust, BBC Children in Need as well as many others to whom we are very grateful. The fundraising work to support the important work of the charity is both essential and worthwhile.

**Brian Rush**

**Quality Assurance**

Quality is about continuous management, but on understanding and fulfilling our customers needs, requirements and expectations. The best in terms of the services that we as a charity offer, and also the best in terms of the way in which we operate as an organisation.

Achieving a Quality Standard like PQASSO involves a process of continuous improvement aided by self-assessment. Because PQASSO covers all aspects of the charities organisation it will enable us to focus not just on our legal obligations in governance and

From our initial self-assessment of the 12 Quality areas outlined by PQASSO we now have a good idea of how far we meet the standards laid out.

Our next step will be to prioritise which areas and issues we want to work on in order to get the most benefit.

**Gina Worrall**

**Useful Contact Details**

**Social Services Duty Officers**

(24 hours a day)

**WARWICK 01926 412294**

**LEAMINGTON 01926 33411**

**COVENTRY 02476 832222**

**STRATFORD 01789 269391**

**RUGBY 01788 541333**

or **07788 570011**

**NUNEATON, BEDWORTH and ATHERSTONE**

**Normal hours 01926 410410**

**Outside normal**

**Hours 01926 886922**

**N.B. These numbers are to be used if you encounter a major issue such as suspected child abuse and are unable to contact the relevant social worker.**

**Branch Contact Details**

**WARWICK & LEAMINGTON**

**JEAN ELLIS**

Myton Park, Myton Lane,  
WARWICK, CV34 6PX  
01926 414826  
Monday 10:00—12:00  
Thursday 10:00—12:00

**STRATFORD**

**ALISON GREEN**

185a Drayton Avenue,  
STRATFORD UPON AVON  
CV37 9PS  
01789 552382  
Monday 09:30—11:30  
Thursday 09:30—11:30

**RUGBY**

**JULIE RAMEZANI**

Oakfield Park, 32 Bilton Road,  
RUGBY, CV22 7AL  
01926 413226  
Monday 14:30—16:30  
Friday 10:30—12:30

**NUNEATON**

**MAUREEN QUINN**

Warwick House, Wheat Street  
NUNEATON CV11 4AJ  
01926 413076  
Friday 10:30—14:30

**ATHERSTONE**

**CLIVE BARNES**

Arden Hill, 55 South Street,  
ATHERSTONE, CV9 1DZ  
01926 413513  
Tuesday 10:15—12:15  
Thursday 10:15—12:15

**WARWICK UNIVERSITY**

**KELLY POLLIT & SARAH THOMSON**

Warwick Volunteers  
University of Warwick,  
Coventry, CV4 7AL

We would be grateful for any comments you may have about this Newsletter. We would particularly welcome any suggestions from you about any issues or items you would like to see covered in the next Newsletter.

**Gina Worrall** Email: GTWORRALL@AOL.COM

Find us on the web at

[www.warkcom.net/friendshipproject](http://www.warkcom.net/friendshipproject)