



## Our Chairman's introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of our Newsletter, which gives a review of what we have been doing in the last twelve months, and sets out a few of our plans for 2015. Alongside this we have news from our volunteers, funders, plus regrettably an obituary of a long standing supporter of the Friendship Project, John Vallis. We have details of some new faces on the management team, and some great pictures giving a flavour of events in the last twelve months.

Importantly I would also like to say a big thank you to all our volunteers, supporters, trustees, funders, and employees on behalf of the disadvantaged children that we are involved with, helping to bring, with regular weekly contact, a little more fun and joy into their lives.

*Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman*

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

In 2015 our focus will be to increase our volunteer numbers, as we currently have 63 disadvantaged children on our waiting list for an "Older Friend". We will be looking for feedback as to how to widen our net to encourage volunteers, and will also be planning to meet with local organisations and companies to promote our volunteer opportunities, and organisation. We will also start to plan for our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, since foundation in 1986.



# Updates for Older Friends.....

## Safeguarding Review

The safeguarding of children has become a major issue in society following media coverage of a number of high profile cases. It has always been of central importance in the work of the Friendship Project but, in the present climate, our operation has been subject to even greater scrutiny.

All users of the Friendship Project but, in particular, the children and families it serves, must have confidence in its safeguarding practice. The Trustees must be able to demonstrate that the Project's safeguarding procedures are robust and fit for purpose.

As Safeguarding Officer, I am proposing to discuss our safeguarding arrangements with a range of people associated with the Project. You are welcome to contribute to this review either by telephone, email or by personal contact. We are interested to know what you think about our safeguarding provision.

*John Hancock , Vice Chairman of the Trustees*

Tel: 01926 513065, [john@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:john@friendshipproject.co.uk)

## Confidentiality

Just a reminder to all Older Friends that any information relating to your Younger Friends i.e. change of address, contact telephone numbers etc. is given to you in confidence and should not be disclosed to anyone. This is particularly relevant in cases where the child may be under the care of the local authority, in foster care or involved in a Child Protection case. If you receive a request for this information from anyone outside of the Project please contact your Area Coordinator for advice. Thank you

## Wedding Bells



One of our longest-serving Older Friends, **Emma** from Leamington, is getting married next spring and her Younger Friend from Stratford is going to be a bridesmaid. Emma has been taking her Younger Friend out for over 7 years - since she was 8 years old. The Project would like to say a special thank you to Emma for her commitment and also, of course, many congratulations on her forthcoming wedding!

## Younger Friends...

This is the report from Naomi's Older Friend. It is very heart warming to read.

### *News of Naomi –*

Naomi has transferred to Friday night, this started in September due to her hours at school being increased, she is almost full time at school now which shows how much she has achieved in this fairly short space of time. Naomi is keen to do well in her GCSE's which are this school year. In one of her recent exams (which count towards the overall mark) she achieved a "B" the actual score being only three points of qualifying for an "A". Naomi is keen to study at Stratford on Avon College which will enable her to take a drama based course. There have of course been some ups and downs over the summer and autumn but I believe Naomi is not being knocked back as much as in previous occasions. Naomi holds herself with more confidence and is looking to the future and I can pull her leg now (something which I felt uncomfortable about a few months ago). Playbox are pleased with her development in her acting and confidence. In the summer we joined an ad-hoc group of the Wednesday Playbox students and went to see "Pride and Prejudice together. It was great for Naomi to be invited to an informal group activity. Naomi was also invited to a sleepover (this was in relation to a school friend) these are great for her confidence as she had been out of circulation for around three years.

The progress she has made recently does not show as much as the previous months, but it's all there underneath I don't think she would have been back at school half as quickly without the Playbox sessions. Playbox has been a huge help in boosting her confidence and giving her the help to make the steps to where she is now and a window to the future.

*Older Friend to Naomi (names have been changed)*

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You're never too old, too wacky, too wild to pick up a book and read to a child.

Dr. Seuss

# What We've Been Up To.....

## Picnic in the Park

It was a lovely sunny day and our volunteers and their Younger Friends proved to be super sportsmen and women! A game of rounders was closely fought - and ended in a draw (13 rounders each) - and was followed by a lively game of football. After the picnic, the children were given tokens to spend on the rides and amusements in the Fun Park.



14 Younger Friends and their Older Friends joined Friendship Project staff for a fun afternoon of games and a 'Picnic in the Park' in Warwick, in June.

## Visit to the Guide Dogs, Leamington Spa (September 2014)



Another splendid visit was arranged in September to the Guide Dogs and all the Older and Younger friends who went enjoyed the day very much. Learning new skills including making jam sandwiches when blind folded, which was a particular hit. Many thanks to the Guide Dogs for the Blind organisation for hosting this event again.



## Get togethers

In May we held an Older Friends get together at the Leamington Tennis Club which was a very successful event as our volunteers were able to discuss various topics, and networking with each other and the Operations team, which is always beneficial.

An Older Friends get together was held in June at the Novotel in Coventry. It was well supported by the OF's from the North and South of the area, and it was a great opportunity for OF's to exchange rewarding experiences with their YF's. We raised £57 from the raffle and we were so lucky to have the Bedworth Singers who kindly gave their services free to entertain us, they even had us all joining in!! Also a big thank you to the Novotel who kindly donated an excellent buffet. I hope we can meet up again early in 2015.

## Christmas Events

### Bowling in Coventry

On the 7<sup>th</sup> December we held the first of our Christmas events, Ten Pin Bowling in Coventry. Over 30 Older and Younger Friends came along. They had a really fun time, the games were followed by a meal and all the Younger Friends went home with a selection box. This event was kindly sponsored by The Recessionnaires.

### Pantomime Visit December – Belgrade Theatre



Can you find Santa?!

An excellent time was had by all who went to see an exciting yet traditional production of Aladdin, with some great sing along songs. Ice cream treats in the interval, followed by afternoon tea, and a visit from Father Christmas, hidden here by enthusiastic Younger Friends.



# What We've Been Up To.....

## Promoting the Friendship Project



### Leamington Peace Festival (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> June) and Stratford River Festival (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> July)

We shared a stand with other charities at the Leamington Peace Festival and at the Stratford River Festival we had our own stand which proved very successful. It is felt that having a presence at these large local festivals raises our profile. We are always trying to think of ways to promote the Project and to extend our volunteer base.



### Warwick Folk Festival (27<sup>th</sup> July)

The organisers kindly gave us a free stand in the charity section of the Market Square to support the Friendship Project, and we held a book stall raising funds and seeking new volunteers.

### Kenilworth Festival (14<sup>th</sup> September)

To try and raise awareness of the Friendship Project and also recruit more volunteers, we had a stand at the Kenilworth Festival 'Party in the Park'. This event is now 12 years old in its current form and an established fixture in Kenilworth's calendar of events. Party in the Park was a one day family festival fun day, with live music, food, stalls and rides plus entertainment and shows.



### Dickens Night, Atherstone (29<sup>th</sup> November)

Another excellent evening, this event is always so well attended, such a great family evening, with the whole of Atherstone town centre packed with stalls. Again the Friendship Project was situated in the town square, and we successfully raised £130.40 through a raffle. Prizes were kindly donated and we also had a 'find the treasure map' which the children really enjoyed. Already Lois has set plans in motion for an adult version next year!



# What Others have Been up to for the Project.....

## Stratford Hotel

The Stratford Hotel (part of Q Hotels), chose The Friendship Project as their nominated charity for 2014 and raised £800 from their first event: the Stratford Half Marathon, in April 2014, in which five members of staff took part.



Photo shows the opening of the Hotel's new garden, with Mayor of Stratford Cllr Ian Fradgley presenting the cheque to Cheryll Rawbone, Chairman of the Friendship Project

## Bedworth Singers

**Bedworth Singers Fund Raising - Carol Singing at Hatton Country World**



On Sunday 13th December the Bedworth Singers were invited to sing at Hatton Country World. They kindly offered to take collection boxes on behalf of the Project and raised the sum of £45. We would like to say a very BIG thank you to all the singers especially as they were singing outside..... brrr!

## Donations Gratefully Received to the Project 2014

Aubrey Allen  
BBC Children in Need  
Bedworth Relief Fund  
Bewley CT  
Chamberlain Club Charity  
Dianne Surgery/Summer Yoga class  
F C Stokes FTW  
Godfrey Payton Trust  
Heart of England Stratford  
Heart of England - 29th May  
Heart of England – Tom's Fund  
IOE Coventry Branch  
Jarman Charitable Trust  
Kenilworth Lions  
Las Iguanas – toys for Christmas 2015  
Las Iguanas – toys for Christmas 2016  
Maggie Bartmanis  
Mr & Mrs J Harding  
One Stop Warwick  
Q Hotel  
Recessionnaires - Xmas Bowling event  
Recessionnaires - Y/F Theatre fees  
Rotary Club of Leamington  
Southam Lions  
Stratford Town Trust  
St James Old Milverton PCC  
Terry Hague  
The Aylesford Family FT



Also a big thank you to Shawn, his team and volunteers, for their fundraising and promotional activity this year.

We are always looking for support in volunteering, organising events and fundraising. If you know of someone who can help support or assist the Project or someone with skills to join the Trustees, then please contact the Chairman.

[Cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:Cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk)



## Trustees News

At Trustee level we are launching a new Safeguarding Group which will be led by John Hancock. This will involve a review of training, and feedback from our Younger Friends, Volunteers and their families/carers, and Children Services, and periodic reviews throughout the year.

We will be investigating with the help of local solicitor Richard Armitage, from Field Overall, who is being co-opted onto our management group for this purpose to support a review and potential transition to Charity Limited by Guarantee status, as permitted by the Charities Commission. We believe this will help with future recruitment, and give longevity to the help we give to local children in Coventry and Warwickshire.

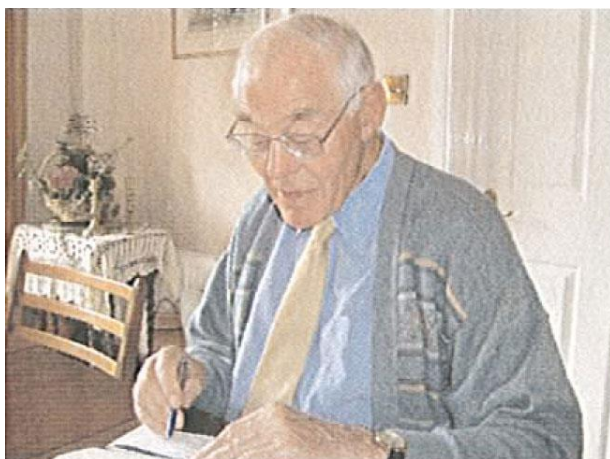
We will be rolling out additional training under the guidance of Lois Hamson, who has access to information from the Mentoring and Befriending Organisation. Following our project for introducing a Procedures Booklet, we will also be considering options for audit and quality assurance accreditation.

Shawn Gladwin and Chris Buck are investigating an update of our website, and will be seeking feedback and ideas from across all roles within the Friendship Project. It would be great to have this in place for 2016.

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### In Memoriam: John Vallis

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of John Vallis, a long standing supporter, fundraiser, retired trustee, and retired chairman of the Friendship Project. John died on Wednesday, 3rd December, aged 91, after a lengthy illness, and we are all relieved that he is now at peace.



Whilst not actively involved in the last few years he was maintained a strong affinity with the Friendship Project since its inception in 1986 and has been interested to receive regular news of what has been achieved over the intervening years.

John was greatly admired for his integrity and other personal qualities and was one of our most influential Trustees. His funeral took place on Wednesday 17th December, followed by a Thanksgiving Service

celebrating his life, was held at his local church St Mary Magdalene, Lillington, Leamington Spa. We send his wife and family our best wishes.

# Trustees - Welcome and Farewell

## Alan Marshall

Following retirement as a Business Accountant, Alan joined the Project in 2010, initially as a Fundraiser then, in 2011, as Treasurer. Since then he has taken the role to a new professional level with the Project's accounts demonstrating great detail and clarity. Financial systems have been established and payments made directly into member's bank accounts. He has conducted annual audits and satisfied HMRC and the Charity Commission's regulations.

As a Trustee, Alan has taken an interest in all aspects of the Project and has been an excellent colleague to work with. He currently needs more time to spend looking after grandchildren, supporting his elderly mother in Derbyshire and watching his beloved Derby County go all the way to the Premier League.

Alan will be greatly missed and, we are hoping that sometime in future, he might return to the Project in some other capacity.

*John Hancock*

## John Palmer

A warm welcome to John Palmer, who is being co-opted as Hon Treasurer to replace our previous long standing treasurer, Alan Marshall.

John's wife Anne is an Older Friend, and his family have been actively involved with the Friendship Project for some years, so he has a good understanding of what the Project does.

He lives in Stratford upon Avon, undertook his accountancy training at Arthur Anderson, Chartered Accountants, before moving into the commercial sector, and until recently was Finance Director of T Systems Limited, and is now Operations Director of a subsidiary of Deutsche Telecom. He is ably qualified to undertake this role, and we have received excellent references as to his abilities. We are looking forward to working with him for the future.

## Dates for your Diary.....

### Training

#### **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR NEW VOLUNTEER OLDER FRIENDS AND REFRESHER COURSES FOR EXISTING OLDER FRIENDS.**

The purpose of each session will be to clarify and re-enforce the Safeguarding Procedures and Guidelines as issued to each Older Friend.

Each session will include an introduction to Safeguarding and Protection for the Older Friend, together with an update on Child Protection and Safeguarding specifically relating to working with vulnerable children.

Training will be provided on each date by a combined team of Trustees, existing Older Friends and external professional advisors.

**Dates for Training (all held at 11 a.m. to 1p.m. at Queens Road Baptist Church, Coventry)**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

### Annual General Meeting (Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June)

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Venue: Queens Road Baptist Church, Coventry.

Please come along and meet Trustees and Supporters, and learn more about the Project.

## Contributions for next time...

We're always on the look-out for news surrounding the activities of our Older and Younger friends. If you've got a news item you'd like to share with us, please drop us a line at [suefrost@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:suefrost@friendshipproject.co.uk) and we'll get in on the website and the next newsletter!

**GET  
WRITING**



**Friendship Project for Children**

[www.friendshipproject.co.uk](http://www.friendshipproject.co.uk)

Registered Charity No: 517684

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



the  
friendship project  
for children

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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

(Volunteers must be aged 18 or over and preferably with transport)

Friendship at the right time can give children  
the confidence they need.

*"Make a difference to a child's life"*

For more details and an application form, please contact

**0845 838 2098\***

email: [info@friendshipproject.co.uk](mailto:info@friendshipproject.co.uk)

twitter: @friendshipproj

or visit our website

[www.friendshipproject.co.uk](http://www.friendshipproject.co.uk)



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Registered Charity No. 2117444

\*Calls to this number from a UK landline will be charged at standard national rates. Calls from mobile phones will be charged at a higher rate. Calls from outside the UK will be charged at a higher rate.