

Our Chairman's introduction

Welcome to our 2017 Newsletter giving you a flavour of what we have been up to in the last twelve months, and our plans for 2017. Last year was the 30th anniversary of formation of the Friendship Project, initially a pilot project launched by Charles Raeburn in Warwick, and in the words of our longstanding President, Michael Coker in 1986, "it is a great idea but it will not last"! He is so pleased we have proven him wrong. It was great to present to Leamington Rotary around the time of our actual anniversary, in May last year, as along with our President one of their late Rotary members, John Vallis, had been a founding trustee of the Friendship Project.

Most importantly a massive thank you on behalf of all the disadvantaged children we support to our volunteers, employees, fellow trustees, and our funders/supporters, without your help we could not help our Younger Friends.



We re-launched our active fund raising in 2016, having been supported partially by a legacy for the previous couple of years. We raised almost £27,000 in 2016, though this year really needs to be circa £45,000, as reserves are reducing. We are still looking for a Fund Raiser lead/trustee, and if you know anyone please get in touch with me. Primarily bid fund raising, but looking to establish a team, so as to promote and organise events linking with publicity and marketing for improving our profile, and at the same time help with recruitment.

At our AGM in 2016 it was agreed that we would move to CIO status, and this is underway, and should be completed during the year. We have engaged with Ladders solicitors, charity team to assist us with this transition. It will mean a new charity registration number, along with reissue of documentation to reflect this once it is all concluded.

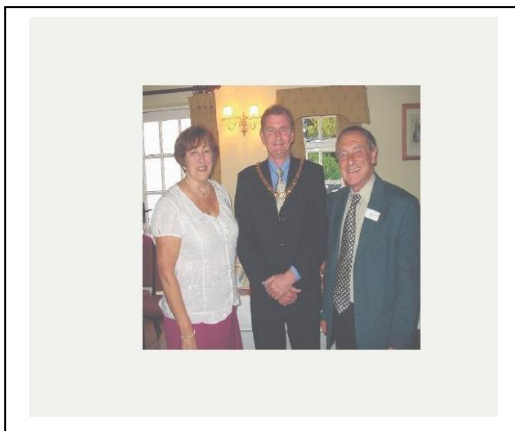
In the last twelve months we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a Summer Fayre, face painting, African drums, magician, fun activities, stalls and a BBQ with meat kindly donated by Aubrey Allen. See inside this newsletter for more photos of this event.

There are some exciting events planned for 2017, and do try and come along to as many of these as you are able. Any suggestions for the future are welcomed, and we have a few organisations willing to help us organise these too. We are also looking for ambassadors for the Friendship Project across Warwickshire, so any suggestions of people you think would be willing please let me know.

Any articles, stories, pictures or information for future newsletters should please be sent to SueFrost@FriendshipProject.co.uk, or please contact me on cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk

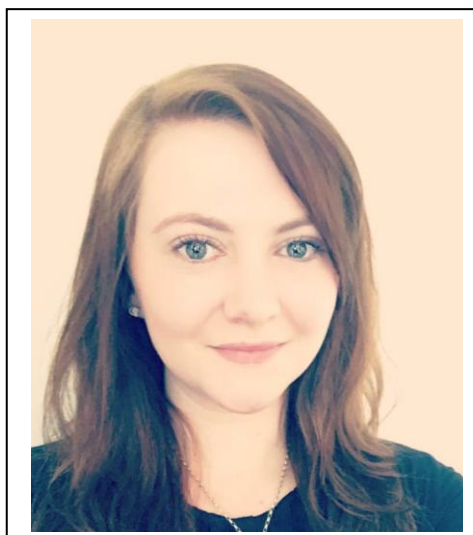
Trustees News - Welcome and Farewell

Valerie Wallace-Burrows has been our honorary secretary for 7 years, and prior to this supported the Friendship Project for many years, with administration support, and fund raising. She was tremendous help in preparing our up to date Employment contracts, and Employee Procedural Manual, and supporting information, along with updates to our Guidelines. We wish her all the best with their plans for long summers in Cephalonia.



Lois Hamson (pictured far left) has served first as an Area Coordinator, and then in recent years as trustee, and Chair of the Operations Team, which she stood down from in March 2017. Lois has extremely valuable knowledge of our procedures and day to day operations. She is moving to start a new chapter of her life in Leicestershire, with her family, though will continue for the time being as a trustee, with specific responsibility for our QA, PQASSO project. Her dedication and support for the Friendship Project is gratefully acknowledged.

We are just finalising the appointment of our new Honorary Secretary, **Michelle Machin** (pictured right), who will also be responsible for expenses payment and our PAYE shortly, in addition to her honorary secretary duties. Full details of when this will change from John Palmer will follow in due course. This allows John to continue as our honorary treasurer. He has recently had increasing work commitments both in London and overseas, which has meant he is not as available on a day to day basis, as previously.



We are also looking to appoint two further trustees who are in the pipeline, firstly **Gemma Allardyce**, whose day to day role is “Head of Customer and Brand” at The Co-operative Childcare, The Midcounties Co-operative, and will be taking on trustee responsibility for marketing and PR. **Helena Harpham** as Older Friends representative, and **Esther Chamberlain**, who is a Strategy Manager – Parenting and Family Support for Leicestershire County Council, and delivers our tailored safeguarding training, and has also been an older Friend, will take on trustee responsibility for training. It is hoped to conclude these appointments for the AGM, on 24th May 2017.



The other post that we really need to recruit for is **Bid Fund Raiser/Team leader/Trustee** – to lead our fund raising efforts, and take responsibility for bid fund raising. Training can be given. If you or you know anyone who may be interested please contact our Chairman, Cheryll Rawbone, who will be pleased to talk about this in more detail. Email initially to Cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk

What we've been Up To... Events

Kenilworth Farm Visit 23.04.2016

We had a great visit to East Chase Farm in Kenilworth. Special thanks to Cheryl and Fiona for organising (they even managed to organise sunshine!), and Charlie & Louise Weetman of East Chase Farm for hosting the visit, and



providing a farm walk to a wood with bluebells.

It was lovely to see the 20 Younger Friends enjoying themselves,

splashing in the stream (falling in, on more than one occasion), 'fishing' with their nets, going through mud, collecting leaves, feathers and all sorts in their collecting bags, chatting and laughing with each other, running in the meadows and through the woods and holding and feeding the lamb! Visiting The Wool Shed and learning about spinning and crafts made from the wool from the sheep, before having a picnic lunch in the barn on the straw. Much fun was had by all.



30th Anniversary Summer Fayre & BBQ 18.06.2016

We are extremely grateful to Old Leamingtonians for allowing us to hold our event here free of charge. The rain held off though it was rather gloomy overhead, this did not dampen the spirits, and both our volunteers and Younger Friends and supporters had a splendid afternoon. There was entertainment with an African Drum band, which the children were able to play too, followed by Magician & Punch & Judy, and Playbox Theatre kindly gave a circus skills workshop too. We had a BBQ, cakes and refreshments, plus face painting and Pirate Bouncy Castle and Inflatable slide alongside games, and stalls, including plants, cakes, books, cards, and tombola. Our thanks again to the many organisations that supported this event, and are listed later in this newsletter.

Pictured below are circus skills and some volunteers and Younger friends trying their hand at drums



Craft Event – 23rd September 2016

Pauline Higginbottom along with help from our Operations team organised an excellent session in the Memorial Park centre where Christmas preparations started early. We held a craft morning in Coventry for all the children on our scheme and together with their



volunteer helpers, (and with the help of lots of glitter and glue, stickers and sequins!) we produced hundreds of beautifully decorated homemade

stars for the children to take home to decorate their own trees.

Plus various craft fun activities, and games. The brightest of these stars was used to produce this year's Friendship Project Christmas Card, which everyone contributed to by sticking their favourite decorative items of the day on the star. We then successfully sold the cards to raise awareness of what we do alongside additional funds, so that we can continue to help disadvantaged children in Warwickshire.



Christmas Events -

Decorating a Tree at St Mary's Church, Warwick

A small group of OFs and YFs decorated a Christmas tree with stars in St Mary's, Warwick, as part of their Christmas tree festival for local organisations. The star theme was carried through from our Craft meeting. The next craft morning in September will also produce the blueprint for the Christmas card for 2017, and our tree decorations.



Christmas Party – 10th December 2016

We are extremely grateful to the Childcare Team at West Mercia Cooperative Society, who organised a fantastic Christmas party at Leamington cricket club, who had kindly provided the facility without charge. The team had fund raised then worked extremely hard to create a magical Christmas atmosphere at the venue, complete with Santas grotto, and loads of decorations, and several Christmas trees. Disney Characters to steer everyone in the right direction and greet the guests both young and not so young! Additionally they organised an excellent entertainer who played lots of fun games and some disco music for the Older and Younger Friends! They also prepared and served hot dogs/burgers (veggie ones too) plus plenty of other lovely party food for everyone. Father Christmas appeared at the end of the party with excellent presents for the children, including some great glove puppets. Everyone entered into the Christmas spirit dressed with lots of sparkle, joining in the games, and activities, and had a thoroughly memorable afternoon.



Our Featured Volunteers

Joan Bolton

Pride of Warwick Citizen of the Year 2016

Touch FM Awards

Pictured from the left are Fiona Roche, Friendship Project area coordinator for Warwick/Leamington/Kenilworth and Southam, alongside Joan Bolton receiving her award at a gala evening.



Following on from this Joan was then awarded the **Meritorious service award for children's "friend"** from the Rotary Club of Warwick presented its annual Meritorious Service Award to Joan Bolton at their meeting on Wednesday January 4th in recognition of her 20 years support to children in Warwickshire.

Rotarian Jackie Crampton introduced Joan to the club as one of our "unsung heroes". Joan is a local lady who joined the Friendship Project as an "Older Friend" when she retired from teaching in 1997. The Project matches an Older Friend to a Younger Friend – a child between 6 & 16 referred by Social Services, or identified by the education authority, as needing support. The child may have problems, or be in a difficult situation, and the older friend will provide care and interest for 2 or 3 hours every week with the aim of developing the child's personality and confidence.



President John Taylor and Joan

Over 20 years Joan has spent time with many children, letting them talk, encouraging them to try something new, and making visits to the countryside, canals, and cycling. She is a quiet, modest lady who has spent a huge amount of time supporting children in the local Picture of President John Taylor with Joan Bolton

community, and responded to the citation by asking for more people to come forward and give time to support the work of the project.

President John Taylor expressed admiration for Joan's patient service and energy on behalf of the children of Warwick and presented her with a framed certificate and a cheque for £200 towards the work of the Friendship Project for Children.

If you think that you could spare 2 or 3 hours every week to befriend a young person, (DBS checks apply) please visit our website www.friendshipproject.co.uk or call 0845 838 2098 for more details. We are also Twitter on @FriendshipProj and on Facebook www.facebook.com/TheFriendshipProjectForChildren/ so please do follow us too



Terry's Story

Fiona remarked that I had led quite an unusual life and would I like to tell everyone about it, and explain why I became a volunteer with the Friendship Project, so here goes.

Brief synopsis -. Twenty-two years in the Army, overcame my fear of heights and became an antenna rigger. Several overseas postings and two years in Northern Ireland on covert operations which involved climbing towers in the dead

of night and providing Comms for forthcoming SAS operations. Demob. Two-year contract with London Underground as a Trainer then I was out of work and on benefits for the next twelve months. Felt my experience in Northern Ireland was different enough to write the book, so I wrote the book, and got it published. Job offer in the Midlands training engineers to programme and maintain robots. Knew nothing about robots but when you've been unemployed for a year, DO you say NO! Several years in the field of robotics then decided to move on and spent seven years integrating homeless persons and ex-offenders back into society.

SO! Why did I become a volunteer with the Friendship Project? Because I read the findings of a government body that stated children who have an unhappy childhood are the ones most likely to suffer from mental health issues later in life, and I felt I had to do my bit.

The Friendship Project for Children is a local Warwickshire Charity and their aim is to improve the emotional and social well-being of disadvantaged children who are referred to us by Children's Services. I have now been a volunteer for many years, and currently take out two boys every week, and help them to experience some fun, alongside learning that there are boundaries in life to learn. Reports from their school say how much they have benefited and behaviour has improved.

What We've Been Up To...

Younger Friend goes to Click and Climb



Quote from Older Friend
"I was so proud of her as she really pushed herself.
She enjoyed herself so much she's asked me to take her again!"

What we've been Up To... Volunteer Get togethers

Older Friends Get togethers at Leamington Tennis Club

We would like to thank the club again for letting us have this room for free. There were several Get Togethers held in the evening giving a great opportunity for our OFs to exchange their experiences, and for us to outline what is going on at the FP. It also is an excellent forum for those thinking of volunteering to meet members of the team and other volunteers. There were 30 people at the first one in 2017 earlier this year.

What others have been up to for the Project....

Recessionaires

Recessionaires have again sponsored a YF for music lessons to the tune of £250 for 2016/17

Asda

Thanks to Asda and all their customers who voted for us with their shopping tokens. It has resulted in a cheque for £500! Fantastic, this will cover one child "Younger Friend" expenses for nearly a year's worth of weekly outings.

All because the tokens were put in our pot.
Thank you to Jo Butler, Asda Community Champion for organising this. Jo also came and helped out at our BBQ



Waitrose



Waitrose in Alcester kindly donated their tokens, and many thanks to their customers too and here is Terry Hague collecting the cheque for £500, from their manager.

Photo cards Sale

Pauline and Richard Higginbottom are thanked for the sale of their photo cards at various events that they have attended through the year.

Charity Fund Raiser at Lillington Club for local disadvantaged children



Lillington Club recently hosted their "Big" Quiz on 30th January to raise funds for Friendship Project, which supports disadvantaged children with 121 support in Warwickshire. Pictured are the organisers Kim Morris, Secretary, Maria Brown, Steward, and Laura Morris, with Cheryl Rawbone, Chairman of the Friendship Project, second from the right receiving the donation on the Charity's behalf. The event saw 20 teams participating in a fun quiz evening, with Irish Bingo, and raffle, raising £270 for the friendship Project. The evening was sponsored by Coleman's Offices Supplies, and David Lee Solicitors. The organisers from Lillington Club also held a quiz for the local charity last year.

Quinton Primary School

Helen went to the assembly at Quinton Primary School to thank the children for their donation. They raised over £1800 from their sponsored walk around the school fields and chose 3 local charities to split the money between - the Friendship Project, Riding for the Disabled in Stratford and the Stratford Hospice - and there were representatives from the other 2 charities at the assembly too. We have been given 2 cheques totalling **£634.18**. The school council had organised the whole assembly (the photos are with the school council) and the 180 children also sang a song. It was really lovely.



Halloween Quiz Night

Our inner child came out!! At the Midcounties Cooperative Halloween quiz. Organised by Rachael Murray and her team who raised over £535 for our charity! This is paying for the children's Christmas party that they are also organising for us. So a HUGE thank you to you all. The FP team "Pumpkin Pals" came 4th out of 10 teams, so we were pretty happy with this result. Luckily we had Mary, Helena, Eileen and Trudy on the team! And Dave who also won the prize for the best Halloween outfit.....not sure why!



Summer Fayre – raised £2,056



Many thanks to Barclays Bank for their matched funding £648.62, pictured is Adam Peachy from Barclays, helping Sue on the cake stall. Aubrey Allen for providing the sausages and burgers, Tesco's for the rolls, Sainsbury's and Morrison's for vouchers for BBQ fuel, and plates cutlery and sauces etc, with Vintees and The Larder providing cakes and scones, alongside our supporters and volunteers. Additionally we are very grateful for local companies who provided sponsorship for the entertainment, Magician, giant inflatable's, and face painter, these included Alsters Kelly, Murphy Salisbury, Harrison Beale & Owen and Arthur J. Gallagher. John Hancock kindly sponsored the African Drums. Plus Playbox Theater provided theatre skills

workshop free of charge. In addition we are extremely grateful for organisations that provided raffle prizes, and items for our stalls including, Linda Scammell Photography, Smiths Nurseries, Hinton's Nurseries, Star & Garter, The Beauty Rooms, Sweet As, as well as supporters and volunteers who kindly donated prizes for the raffle too, and their time on the day, and purchased raffle tickets, and cakes, plants, cards, books, tombola, and food on the day.

Bravissimo

Thank you Dee for nominating The Friendship Project for children for the donation of £200 raised by the staff at Bravissimo and Pepperberry. We decided to go for a photo shoot in front of a yellow wall instead of a back drop of some of the Bravissimo and Pepperberry models! Pictured are Fiona Roche, Area coordinator for Leamington, Warwick Kenilworth & Southam, and Dee from Bravissimo



Snitterfield Sports Club Quiz

Helen, Area Coordinator for Stratford, Alcester and Shipston supported by her family and friends organised a very successful quiz night and supper at Snitterfield Sports and Social Club, raising £485.20. Also pictured are our quiz masters for the evening, Helen and friend, alongside some of our quiz attendees, both Older Friends, and Supporters, alongside locals from the village.

Updates for Older friends...

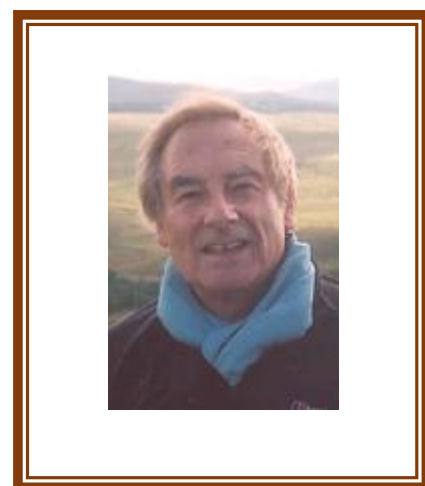
Safeguarding – John Hancock (safeguarding officer)

Since the beginning of April 2015 fourteen reviews have taken place with families which the Project serves. Initially, OF's are contacted and the review process explained to them. Arrangements are then made to visit families to speak with parents and children (YF's).

The interviews are based on 10 questions asked of parents and 5 questions discussed with their children. For example, parents are asked whether the OF collects and returns the child at the correct time and, another, asks whether other children in the family are involved in the friendship activities. YF's are asked which activities they like best and whether there are things that they don't enjoy. There are opportunities for both parents and children to voice their disapproval about the Project's operations.

The interviews take, on average, about 15-20 minutes. In addition to answers relating to safeguarding, lots of positive comments have been received about the work of our volunteers. Following the meetings the answers are written up and forwarded to the appropriate Coordinator for information, action and filing. The Project Administrator is also informed about the calendar of reviews.

Finally, the OF's are contacted and given feedback from the review meetings. Overwhelmingly, this has been a very positive and rewarding part of the process for Volunteers, Operations Staff and Trustees.



The nitty gritty bit!!



Could we please just take this opportunity to remind all our Older Friends to keep us updated with any new contact details, mobile phone numbers etc – not only yours, but also please let us know if the details for your younger friend change. That way, our database will stay completely up-to-date!

If we could also please remind all our Older Friends to remember to submit their expense claim forms to Sue Frost before the 10th of each month latest.

Even if you don't incur or claim any expenses in a particular month, we need your reports anyway, so that we can monitor the sorts of outings our Older Friends are making. This gives us not only a clearer idea of how the project is running, when it comes to bidding for funds, this sort of detail helps our case too.

You are doing an excellent job – but we need to show our funders this too, plus the reports form part of our monitoring process so are very important to us too. Thanks.

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. Latest training event took place on April 5th 2017. Details of the next training events later in the year will be published. Our best wishes to Esther, our trainer, who is expecting her first child at the end of April.

Special Offers from Attractions/Clubs

Compton Verney

Compton Verney (re-opens on 19th March, 9 miles from Stratford) is a great place to take your YF and they have lots of children and family activities. They offer great value 'Collection and Park' annual tickets: £9.50 (or £8.50 concs) for adults. This includes unlimited entry to the collection, park and activities such as drop-in workshops for 12 months. Exhibition day ticket: £15 or £14 concs. All of the above plus one off admission to an exhibition. Children (5 – 15yrs): £3. Same price regardless of what admission price the adult pays. This will also be an annual ticket for the collection, park and activities.



Warwick Boat Club & Leamington Tennis Clubs

Tennis and squash offers:

Coaches at Warwick Boat and Leamington Tennis clubs are offering free squash and tennis coaching for our Younger Friends.

They will even help out with equipment, if required.

For more information, please contact Fiona Roche:

fionarochefriendshipproject.co.uk



Hatton Country World

They have again confirmed their offer of 2 for £10.00 when pre-booked. Any queries please speak to their marketing manager, Sara Carson tel no 01926 843411.



If you have any other contacts that can give us concessionary rates then please let us know and provide an introduction, so that we can publicise this.

Donations to the Project 2016

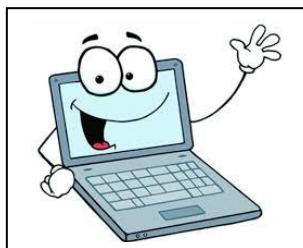
Grateful thanks to our Funders and Fundraisers/Event organisers for 2016, not mentioned elsewhere within this newsletter for the specific donation that has been given: -

- Mathew Roche – Sharegift
- Terry Hague
- Warwickshire Masonic Charitable Trust
- Cheryll Rawbone
- Easy Fundraising.org - anon
- Aubrey Allen
- Arthur J Gallagher Ltd
- Shipston Rotary
- Chris & Helen Meeke
- Shawn Gladwin
- Royal Leamington Spa Rotary Club
- Recessionaires
- Mrs D Vallis
- Aylesford Family Trust
- AMMCO Charitable Trust
- Bewley Charitable Trust
- Austin Edwards Trust
- Swan of Avon RAC Account
- Ambleside Bowls
- Children in Need
- Heart of England
- Stratford Town Trust
- Baron Davenport Trust

Thanks also to Arthur J. Gallagher for their ongoing support in providing postage, office services, mail shots, preparation of AGM paperwork, and printing of guidelines, and other documentation.

Future Events planned.....

- ❖ Brandon Marsh event (for 20 YFs/OFs). Saturday 6th May 1.30 -3.30pm, with Survival/ Den Building, nature event and lunch – remember your wellies!
- ❖ AGM followed by Cheese & Wine, Wednesday 24th May 7.30pm to 9.00pm facilitated kindly by King Henry VIII School, Warwick Road, Coventry, CV3 6AQ
- ❖ Territorial Army hosting event for Y/F's age 10 and over, and their Older Friends on Saturday 3rd June, at 11.30pm, to be held at Canley, including various activities
- ❖ Treasure Hunt, Saturday 12th August 2017 starting at 11.30am at Hill Close Gardens in conjunction with National Citizens Service Challenge, who are organising this fun event
- ❖ Craft Morning: Sat 30th Sept, 10am – 12.30pm, Memorial Park Visitor Centre, Coventry (as last year). Theme to be 'the natural world' so Christmas cards may be robins or hedgehogs. Stones are required for painting, so if anyone visits a beach, please bring one or two back!



Any suggestions for future articles or information/ pictures will be very gratefully received. Please contact Sue or Cheryll by email at

suefrost@friendshipproject.co.uk

cheryll@friendshipproject.co.uk