



### **PALS' AGM Minutes – Wed 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

1. Present – Paula Elsley, Jane West, Helen Randall and Steph Carter.

Apologies – Vicky Blackett and Gill Waite

2. Minutes from last AGM – These were approved and signed by the Chair. No actions.

3. Manager's report – Helen presented her report (see below).

4. Chair's report – Paula presented her report (see below).

5. Financial report – Helen presented a summary of the finances.

6. Election of Officers – Chair - Paula Elsley, proposed by Jane West and seconded by Helen Randall.

Vice-Chair – Jane West, proposed by Paula Elsley and seconded by Steph Carter.

Treasurer – Vicky Blackett, proposed by Paula Elsley and seconded by Jane West. Secretary – Vicky Blackett, proposed by Paula Elsley and seconded by Helen Randall.

All Officers accepted their positions.

7. AOB – We discussed that we would like to have a quarterly newsletter, and that PALS would welcome any new committee members and trustees.

8. Date of next AGM meeting – This will be confirmed.

### **PALS Manager's AGM Report 2017**

Well, I think we have certainly had a busy year since our last AGM. I have tried to just pick out the highlights, or we could be here all night!

We have continued to run four sessions, the Fun Factory for the younger ones, The Rockets for 11 to 16 year olds, PYC for 16 to 18 year olds and the 18+ group. Numbers attending the Fun Factory are 7 children per week and up to five PALS attend The Rockets fortnightly. We are in the process of suspending the older PYC group, as our current members are turning 18 and transferring up to the 18+ group.

In the last year the activities for Fun Factory have included drama, messy play, crafts, cooking, themed sessions, planting and last term a trip to Newbury Fire station, which was great fun!

The Rockets and PYC activities have also been varied with a trip to Pizza Hut and The Watermill Theatre. We have had some sport sessions, lots of food, been grass sledging and visited Pets at Home for a hands on session.

In our younger groups, we were thrilled to receive a letter from the Queen thanking us for her birthday card. Last year we decorated babygro's for Uganda and this year we took part in Operation Shoebox and we made up 11 shoeboxes, which was a massive achievement. They have arrived safely in the Ukraine.

Our 18+ group meet monthly, and often enjoy a meal or drink at a local pub. Bowling and archery have also been a popular choice.

We have run over 60 sessions since the last AGM.

We have welcomed 6 new members to PALS in the last few months.

Our holiday sessions are very popular and we often have up to eleven members and siblings attending. We have enjoyed sport sessions, a Halloween party, gardening, climbing and bowling. Plans for this summer include climbing, a return trip to Englefield market garden, wheelchair basketball and pond dipping, as well as another joint stay and play session with Mencap, Swings and Smiles and Dingley's Promise.

Back in December we had our Christmas party and we even had a visit from Santa himself!!

We had a much bigger team at the Kennet Games this year with seven children representing PALS and there were another ten PALS taking part but representing their schools. Yet again we had a great day!

Four children had a very chilled trip to Ufton Court for a night earlier this month. We had great weather except in the evening, which put a halt to our campfire, but we enjoyed playing games, a movie and archery.

We have our second overnight experience at Ufton Court this weekend, and we have seven young people attending, with another two PALS joining us for part of the weekend.

We are off again to the PGL centre near Swindon in the middle of August for two nights, and have eight PALS attending.

Our links with Cheam School and Elstree School continue, even with a change in the head teacher at Cheam, but Mark and Catherine have continued to welcome us, for which we are extremely grateful. We enjoy half termly sessions at both schools, and activities have included a treasure hunt, golf, badminton, cooking, crafts as well as lots of snacks! Each school provides a small team of helpers at each session and it's great to see these children grow in their confidence with helping children who may be different from them in some ways. These sessions are very popular, and we often have up to eight of our members attending. I have recently attended a school assembly at Elstree to talk to the pupils in more detail about PALS and we were also presented with a cheque from one of the school governors who had completed a sponsored bike ride for us.

I must thank all our volunteers, without them, the sessions for the children would not be able to run. Our link with the local Lions club continues to grow, as they organise a scheme which recognises service completed by young leaders under the age of eighteen. At the end of last year, we were thrilled to see Amber B being presented with her gold award for completing over 100 hours of service to PALS and also Aggie who was awarded her silver award. We have another five young volunteers who are all well on their way to achieving service awards in the autumn.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Steph for all her help with our Facebook page, and Lizzie for all her work with our website. Our new website is up to date and now has a news feed from our Twitter account. Also, a big thank you to Sue, who continues to volunteer quietly behind the scene completing our payroll each month.

Recruiting of volunteers is always on our agenda, and I have attended a couple of events organised by the Volunteer Centre and have had some success. We have signed up seven new volunteers since

the start of the year, and we have two volunteers joining us for some of our summer sessions for work experience.

Training is important for our volunteers and we have offered manual handling, health and safety, first aid and safeguarding of children facilitated by Berkshire Youth or West Berkshire Council. We have also introduced a new induction programme and a volunteer's charter.

Behind the scenes, Paula and I have spent a lot of time reviewing our policies and procedures including health and safety, staffing, volunteer recruitment and retention, and we hope to have this task completed by the end of the summer.

Raising our awareness continues to be very important. Our Facebook page is regularly updated and we have just sent out our third newsletter. Our little PALS bears are being seen out and about, with one PAL, Faye, regularly sending photos of what she has been up to!

We have been to several events lately hoping to raise our profile, including Carer's week at Sainsbury's, Kidz to Adultz south show, local fetes, Thatcham Fun day and we have other events lined up for the rest of the year, including Newbury Carnival where we are taking part in the parade.

We have been busy fundraising in the last few months, and have been successful again with a grant from West Berkshire Council, but this will be the last year of transitional funding. We have had an amazing year with Sainsbury's and have with their help, raised over £6k. We are crossing our fingers that we will be successful for a second year.

The next year will be a busy one for PALS I'm sure. We will be continuing to review the programme to ensure that we remain relevant, and provide the best service possible. We will build on our links in the local community. Fundraising continues to be a major part of my work, and this will be more of a challenge as funding cuts impact on funding opportunities. We are also hoping to rebrand with a new logo and strapline.

I would like to take a moment to thank the committee, especially Paula, who spends many hours on the phone and email each week, supporting myself and the charity.

As the end of my second year with PALS draws near, I just wanted to end with how much I enjoy working for PALS, and I think that we have continued to make great progress over the last few months, and I'm looking forward to the next year!

Helen Randall

28th June 2017

### **PALS Chairman's AGM report – June 2017**

Since our last AGM our members have enjoyed a great variety of activities. We've also held residential at PGL in Swindon and at Ufton Court. Helen and her co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure that all age groups had great experiences.

We are continuing to make improvements to our web site and hope you agree that this is now looking great. Thank you to Lizzie for her work on this. We welcome feedback, so take a look and let us know what you think.

Our newsletter is looking very professional and again if anyone has any ideas or feedback we'd love to hear from you.

If you haven't already, have a look at our Facebook page, we welcome comments including any fundraising ideas you may have. Thank you to Steph for her help with our Facebook page.

The review of our policies and procedures will be completed in the next few months. We are very grateful to our HR Consultant, Gwyn, for all of her help with this.

Since our last AGM we've received donations totalling nearly £21,000. We've also been awarded a grant of £5,000 from West Berkshire Council.

Being voted Sainsbury's Newbury charity of the year has led to a total raised of just over £6,500, a fantastic amount and we are very grateful to Sainsbury's staff and customers for all their support and generosity. We've been shortlisted again this year and should hear if we've been successful soon.

As well as our continued affiliation to Berkshire Youth, Helen has continued the joint working with Mencap, Swings and Smiles and Dingley's Promise.

We continue to raise PALS' profile by having press releases published in the Newbury Weekly News and Advertiser. We've also had articles in the Local Observer, Roundabout, Buzz magazine and the Thatcham Town Council newsletter. For the first time PALS will have a float at the Newbury Carnival which we are really excited about and will be a great PR opportunity.

I would like to thank Helen for the energy, enthusiasm and drive that she brings to her role. She gives 110% to everything she does on behalf of PALS. The charity would not have moved forward as much as it has without her. I would also like to thank our coordinators and volunteers for all of their hard work.

I would also like to thank Elstree, Cheam and St Gabriel's for their continued support.

Thanks also to Sue, our bookkeeper, for giving her time to do our payroll.

Finally I would like to thank all of the committee for giving up their time and continuing to help move the charity forward. Chris, one of our committee members has recently left the committee and we would like to thank her for her work on behalf of PALS and wish her well for the future.

Paula Elsley

28 June 2017