



PALS NEWSLETTER FEB 2016

Welcome to our first PALS newsletter!

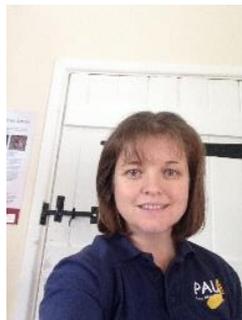
Who are PALS?

PALS stands for "Partners for Active Leisure Scheme" and our motto is "Every step an achievement". We are a local charity, based in Englefield, although many of the leisure and recreational activities we run are based in the Thatcham and Newbury area. We support children and young people from the age of five up to the age of twenty five, who have either physical disabilities, or hearing or sight impairments.

Our mission is to work towards breaking down barriers and changing attitudes to enable young people with disabilities to gain in confidence and self-esteem and achieve their potential in every aspect of their lives.

A message from our manager

I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself properly for those of you I haven't met yet. I can't believe that I've now been in post for nearly six months, the time has just flown by. In my past I have done a lot of work with adults with disabilities, and also run local youth groups. I am certainly enjoying the new challenge of working with children and young people with disabilities, and am looking forward to an exciting 2016! I hope that you enjoy reading our latest news. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our PALS, their families, volunteers, staff and the committee members for everything they have done in the last year.



Regards, Helen

Introducing our new staff team

We would like to introduce some new faces in PALS and also say goodbye to an old face.



We sadly said farewell to Luke back in September. He has been a massive part of PALS for the last four years and we thank Luke for everything he has done. We know that the members of PALS will miss him, but we all wish him well in his new position, supporting children who have been victims of domestic abuse and no doubt that we will see Luke about in 2016, as it often is a small world!

We have recruited some new co-ordinators, who will help staff some of the groups and activities we run. We welcome Holly (many of you will know Holly, who was one of our longest serving volunteers, but she has been successful in becoming a co-ordinator with us), Lauren (some of you may have met Lauren at PGL in Weymouth last year. Lauren will only be with us for a short period of time before she heads back to PGL for another season, but she will be back at the end of the year). We also welcome Jess and Fiona. And here they are!



Fiona, Holly, Lauren and Jess

News from PALS

In May several of our members took part in the Kennet Games, a sports



tournament which is now in its 35th year. The competitors came from schools in West Berkshire and beyond including Kennet, Brookfields School in Tilehurst, Charters School in Sunningdale, All Saints School in Wokingham and Speenhamland School in Newbury,

and of course PALS! Events during the day included boccia, table skittles and skittles, wall/floor darts and beanbag throwing. Trophies were presented to the winners by Kennet's head teacher, Mr Dick. Amber was awarded the "Best Senior standing competitor for outstanding effort". Owen was also presented with an award, although on this occasion he was representing Speenhamland School. Well done to Amber and Owen!

We had our annual BBQ at Cheam School in July, and a big thank you to Jane and Mark for allowing us the use of the school (and of course the swimming pool!). Although the weather was a little chilly, we had a great afternoon, eating, swimming and catching up with everyone.

During the summer holidays, Fun factory (5 to 12 years) and PALS Youth Club (12 to 18 years) had trips to Legoland, Thorpe Park, Marwell Zoo and Bealieu Motor Museum. Locally, PALS enjoyed a BBQ, bowling, a picnic and a chance to feed the ducks at Thatcham discovery Centre.

The highlight of the summer was a residential trip to the PGL centre in Weymouth.



PALS had a fantastic time, despite having the wettest weather in August, the children enjoyed fencing, climbing, abseiling, zip wiring and a visit to the sea life centre.

Plans are already underway for more residential experiences this year.

In the autumn we had lots of fun and below is a taster of some of the things we have done!



The Fun Factory welcomed "The Farm to Fork" ambassador from Tesco in Newbury, who ran a cooking session and the PALS went home with stuffed peppers for their tea and a goody bag.

We have had some great activity mornings at Cheam School in Headley and Elstree School, in Woolhampton. A big thank you to both schools for their continued support of PALS.



Both the PYC group and the Fun Factory enjoyed some drama workshops facilitated by The Watermill Theatre, and here the younger ones are putting on their own production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Our older group have had a movie night and enjoyed a meal out for Christmas.



We had a little stall at the Thatcham Christmas event, and thank you to the PALS from PYC who helped to run the stall, as we raised £51.11 with our raffle and magic reindeer food.



We had a fantastic Christmas party and the children enjoyed a visit from Father Christmas and some great cakes from Costa in Parkway, Newbury!

Fund Raising Update

A massive well done and thank you to Rob, who took part in the UK's first ever paratriathlon at Eton Dorney Lake in August and raised an amazing £1181.07!

Rob, who attends the 18+ group and has been a member of PALS for 17 years, swam 400 metres, cycled 10kms and ran 2.5kms to raise money for PALS. Rob completed the paratriathlon in a good time and was supported during each section by Sean Cryans, who designed his training programme, Ben Taylor, who rode the tandem with him, and his brother Laurence who ran the track alongside him. Rob said "I wanted to get fit and make money for PALS. I am nearly too old now for PALS, it has been great fun. I like swimming and cycling on my tandem".



The year ended with our carol singing event at Sainsbury's in Newbury. We covered classics including Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Jingle Bells and raised £266.89.



**Also a big thank you to the following people/organisations
for their support:-**

All our volunteers

Catherine and Peter Haig

Lady Illiffe

The Englefield Charitable Trust

Cheam School

Elstree School

The Starting Gate pub's quiz team

Phoenix International Charity

Newbury Town Council

The Lambert Charitable Trust

Waitrose

Chareun family

West Berkshire Council

Does your workplace have a "Charity of the year"? If so, please consider nominating PALS so that we can support even more families in 2016!

Lauren and Helen have booked to do an abseil down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth on the 25th March, and will be looking for sponsorship.

Getting In Touch

Helen Randall, PALS Manager, The PALS Office, Mayridge Farm, Englefield,
Berks, RG7 5JT

0118 9323799 / 07887 871112

helen@palsweb.org.uk

Paula Elsley

Chairman 07443 582984

Registered Charity Number 1083150