



PALS' AGM Minutes – Wed 27th June 2018

1. Present – Paula Elsley, Helen Picken, Henry Bankes, Helen Randall, Gill Waite, Ben Jones and Ian Waters.

Apologies – Vicky Blackett and Jane West.

2. Minutes from last AGM – These were approved and signed by the Chair.

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, proposed by Helen P and seconded by Henry.

Vice-Chair – Jane, proposed by Paula and seconded by Henry.

Treasurer – Helen P, proposed by Paula and seconded by Henry.

Secretary – Henry, proposed by Paula and seconded by Helen P.

All Officers accepted their positions.

7. AOB – Ian very kindly offered PALS any help he could with transport and a model for Father Christmas and made a suggestion of someone who could help with our website. A new venue for our youth group was discussed and suggestions given, Henry to speak to the PDR unit at Kennet School. Ben raised getting involved with the Crafty Craft next year.

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

PALS Manager's AGM Report 2018

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 three sessions, the Fun Factory for the younger ones, The Rockets for 11 to 16 year olds and the 18+ group. Last year we decided to suspend the PYC group due to a lack of regular attendees aged from 16 to 18, but these members have been offered The Rocket sessions where appropriate, which some of them have taken the opportunity and attended. Numbers attending the Fun Factory have been as high as nine children per week, but this has fluctuated this year, as several of our younger ones have had some additional health needs and have spent some periods of time in hospital. Our fortnightly Rockets group six to seven members attend.

In the last year the activities for Fun Factory have included drama, messy play, crafts, cooking, themed sessions, planting and having visitors come and run session for the children, enhancing the experiences that they can access.

The Rocket's activities have also been varied with a trip to Newbury Fire Station and The Watermill Theatre. We have had some sport sessions, lots of food, been grass sledging and just popped to the park to throw a football about.

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 can have up to ten members at each session.

We have run over 60 sessions since the last AGM, which is on par with 2017.

We have welcomed 5 new members to PALS in the last few months.

Our holiday sessions are very popular and we often have up to eleven "PALS" attending. We have enjoyed sport sessions, gardening, climbing, wheelchair basketball, pond dipping and bowling to mention a few of the activities that we have been able to facilitate. Plans for this summer include climbing, a return trip to Englefield market garden, pond dipping, indoor sky diving and a day at PGL as well as further joint stay and play sessions with Mencap, Swings and Smiles and Dingley's Promise.

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

Seven children had a very chilled trip to Ufton Court last month. We had great time and enjoyed playing games, a movie and archery. Again for some of our younger ones, this is their first opportunity to be away from family, a big step for them and their parents!

We have our second overnight experience at Ufton Court next weekend for the older children, and we have seven young people attending.

We had a great trip to PGL last August for two nights, but sadly this year we are not able to facilitate this trip due to a lack of funding, but we are off to PGL for a day and we will try and find additional funding sources for next year in the hope that we offer this trip again.

Our links with Cheam School and Elstree School continue, 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 ten of our members attending.

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. Back in the spring we were thrilled to see five of our young volunteers being presented with their silver award for completing over 50 hours of service to PALS. We have another volunteer who will achieve his award in Sept and this will be hopefully be a gold award with him completing over 100 hours of service for PALS in a year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Steph for all her help with our Facebook page, and Alice, for setting up our Instagram account and managing that for us. Emma has been fantastic in helping to fundraise for PALS, and she found us Roc 10K. 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 five new volunteers since this time last year.

Training is important for our volunteers and we have offered first aid and safeguarding of children facilitated by Daisy First Aid and Berkshire Youth. We have also enrolled with an on line training provider and there are numerous courses available for staff, volunteers and our trustees.

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. We are in the process of updating parent and member's handbooks and producing our first glossy annual report.

Raising our awareness continues to be very important. Our Facebook page, twitter and Instagram accounts are regularly updated and I'm about to send out our next newsletter over the summer. 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, local Christmas and summer fetes, Thatcham Funday and the highlight last year was our float in Newbury carnival. Wow, what a day that was!!!! We even won a prize for our float!

We have been busy fundraising in the last few months, and have been successful again with a small grant from West Berkshire Council, but this will be the last year of funding. We have had an amazing year with Sainsbury's and have with their help, raised over £15k in the last two years. Our partnership ends this week with the store and I for one will truly miss them, as will some of the PALS and I believe that they will also miss us! We have a fantastic relationship with the store and I think we will be invited back regularly to take part in opportunities where we can.

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 continue to impact on funding opportunities. We are also working on our rebrand and are awaiting for a design of new logo ideas.

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 third 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

27th June 2018

PALS Chairman's AGM report – June 2018

I'm delighted to say that the last year has been another very successful one for PALS.

Helen, our co-ordinators and our volunteers have worked hard to ensure that all age groups had great experiences. The charity has been able to continue offering a fantastic range of activities for all of our members. As well as residentials at Ufton Court and PGL last year.

In order for our provision to remain relevant we've regularly reviewed our programme so that we can offer the best possible service.

We've also continued with an important area of our work in building links with the local community through networking with other organisations and groups and joint working with West Berkshire Mencap, Swings and Smiles, Dingley's Promise and Friends of Castle School.

Our management committee have focused on several key areas which included governance, review of training for trustees, staff and volunteers, preparing for GDPR, raising the charity's profile in the local media, an ongoing programme to recruit new trustees and fundraising.

As well as raising our profile using our website, newsletter, Facebook page and Twitter account, we now have an Instagram account. We've had articles published in a number of publications including the Newbury Weekly News and Advertiser.

The review of our policies and procedures has been an ongoing project which is nearing completion. We hope to have this finished by the end of the summer.

Since our last AGM we've received donations totalling £26,021.52. We've also been awarded a grant of £1750 from West Berkshire Council.

Our second year of being Sainsbury's Newbury charity of the year has led to a grand total raised of £15,331, this is an incredible amount. We're very grateful to Sainsbury's staff and customers for their fantastic support and generosity. Thank you to our staff, members, their parents, trustees and our volunteers for giving up their time to help with the Sainsbury's cash collections.

I would like to thank Helen for her fantastic energy, enthusiasm and drive that she brings to her role. She gives 110% to everything she does on behalf of PALS and is a brilliant representative for the charity. The charity would not be where it is today without her. I would also like to thank our co-ordinators and volunteers for all of their hard work. A special mention goes to Emma and Steph and their families for everything that they've done on behalf of PALS.

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 our committee for giving up their time and continuing their efforts to help move the charity forward.

Paula Elsley

25th June 2018