

PALS AGM
21st October 2020 at 7pm
On Zoom



1. **Present** – Paula Elsley, Helen Picken, Helen Randall, Henry Bankes, Tim Snook, Gill Waite, Lisa Cullum, Kieran Nailer, Emma Potter and Faye Snook.

Apologies – Jane West.

2. **Minutes from last AGM** – These were approved and signed by the Chair.
3. **Chair's report** – Paula presented her report (see below).
4. **Manager's report** – Helen presented her report (see below).
5. **Financial report** – Helen presented a summary of the finances.
6. **Election of Officers** –

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| Chair | Paula | proposed by Henry and seconded by Tim. |
| Vice-Chair | Jane | proposed by Paula and seconded by Henry. |
| Treasurer | Helen P | proposed by Paula and seconded by Gill. |
| Secretary | Henry | proposed by Paula and seconded by Gill. |

All Officers accepted their positions.

7. **AOB** – Tim recognised for 1 year of service as a Trustee (to receive a PALS badge in honour).
Henry expressed thanks to Helen for her pragmatic and much appreciated approach to the challenges of operating in a COVID 19 environment. All seconded this.
Those present were updated that the church coffee morning had been cancelled this year, and we hoped that this would return next year.
8. **Date of next meeting – October 2021**

PALS Chairman's AGM report – October 2020

Welcome everyone and thank you for joining us for our AGM.

It's been another great year for PALS. Helen put together an incredible programme of activities for all age groups, as well as residential at Ufton Court and PGL. Helen received great support from our support workers, Jess and Fiona, in making sure that all age groups had great experiences. We wouldn't be able to make this happen without our amazing team of volunteers who give so much of their time on behalf of PALS.

Since the lockdown in March PALS has looked very different and has offered zoom sessions, outdoor activities over the summer and some one-to-one sessions. It's been challenging working around government guidelines which have regularly changed. Helen has done a fantastic job with the planning under difficult and unusual circumstances!

In order for our provision to remain relevant we've regularly reviewed our programme so that we can offer the best possible service to our members. It's very important that PALS members are able to give feedback to Helen on what they would like to see on our programmes. We also welcome feedback from parents on anything ranging from possible improvements to our website, ideas for activities or fundraising ideas.

We've continued an important area of our work in building links with the local community through networking and joint working with other charities and groups. This has been especially important during the lockdown.

Our management committee have continued to focus on key areas which included governance, training and raising the charity's profile in the local media and on our social media platforms.

We have also made some changes to our website and more new pages will be added soon.

We have a fantastic fundraising committee, Steph, Emma and Faye who meet with Helen regularly and have some very creative fundraising ideas! I'd like to thank them for giving up their time and for their continued commitment.

Fundraising events in the last year included the clay pigeon shoot which raised a staggering £60,000!! Thank you to Francesca and her team for all of their hard work on this event and making it such a success.

Thank you also to Liz Pudney for raising more than £3,000 by swimming the Channel! An amazing achievement! We received grants from West Berkshire Council and Greenham Trust which we are very grateful for.

It's very hard to pick highlights from the last year, but having the charity shortlisted for the Newbury Weekly News' Business Awards was definitely one of them. It was a great evening and a great way to raise the charity's profile. The clay pigeon shoot was also a highlight which as well as raising money also raised the charity's profile. The link that PALS has with Willow's Edge Care Home is a very special one. I think it's very important that we forge links with the local community. Last year I came across an initiative on Facebook called

'Postcards of Kindness' which is amazing and I was keen for this to be something that our members could take part in, which they have.

I would like to thank Helen for her continued commitment, energy and enthusiasm that she brings to her role. She gives so much to everything she does on behalf of PALS and is a real asset to the charity. The charity would not be where it is today without her hard work. I've enjoyed working with Helen as we have such a great working relationship and are definitely on the same page! We are in contact most days by phone, text, email or WhatsApp. Sometimes all of them!

I'd like to thank Kennet School for allowing us to use the PDR. I would also like to thank Elstree and Cheam for their continued support.

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

I would also like to thank our committee members and trustees for giving up their time and for all of their hard work on behalf of PALS. There's a huge amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the charity running.

PALS is a great charity to be a part of and although the last year has been a very interesting and different one we have continued to move the charity forward. I look forward to the next year which may be challenging, but PALS is in a good place and will continue to offer a great programme for our members.

Paula Elsley
PALS Chairman

19th October 2020

PALS Manager's AGM Report – October 2020

In the last financial year ending just after we went into lockdown PALS has continued to run three sessions, the Fun Factory for the younger ones, the Rockets for 11 to 16 year olds and the young adults group. Numbers attending Fun Factory have been a regular six children each week since the start of the new academic year. Our fortnightly Rockets group has eight members attending most sessions.

In the last year the activities for Fun Factory have included drama, messy play, crafts, cooking, themed sessions and going out and about in the summer term. We have also taken part in "Look for a Book" and "Postcards of Kindness" initiatives being run on Facebook. We have enjoyed visits from Swings and Smiles, the SPLAT team and a friend of mine did a great singing session for us. Trips have included going to Victoria Park, Pizza Express and one of my personal favourites, three sessions at Willow's Edge Care Home in Newbury, where we visit and join the residents for tea. This continues to be a really special relationship between PALS and Willow's Edge, and watching the interactions between our children and the residents is truly amazing.

The Rockets continue to meet in the PDR in Kennet School and we thank Kennet School for allowing us to use this, as it provides us with all the facilities that we could ever need. We have had some sport sessions, lots of food, played board games, which is surprisingly popular, as is just popping to the park and chilling with an ice cream. We also enjoyed a visit from two therapy dogs and had a trip to the new ice skating rink in Thatcham.

Our young adults group continues to meet monthly. Last year we made pizzas at Haddon's, went bowling, had a day trip to Harry Potter Studios (a highlight for all of us!), went to panto at The Corn Exchange, had a pub meal and managed to get out of the escape rooms in Newbury! We have six regular members in this group.

Our holiday and weekend sessions are very popular and we often have up to twelve children attending. Last summer the PALS enjoyed a very wet day at PGL zip wiring, abseiling, orienteering and zero balling. We had a return trip to the Five a Day Market Garden and a session at the Andrew Simpson Watersports Centre to use their sailing and speedboats.

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

In 2019, we held two sleepovers at Ufton Court and we were also able to return to PGL for our two night trip, with five PALS (and the adults!) having a great time!

Our links with Cheam School and Elstree School continue, for which we are extremely grateful. We enjoyed half termly sessions at both schools and did a variety of activities. 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 thirteen of our members attending.

We have welcomed two new members to PALS.

We have run nearly one hundred sessions in the last financial year providing 1,396 hours of respite to 32 families in the local area!

I must thank all of our volunteers as without them none of this would be possible. Our link with the local Lions Club continues, with our younger volunteers being able to be recognised for their service with us, a great thing to add to their CV's. We have also introduced termly volunteer meetings in the last year after receiving feedback from one of our volunteers during our annual review.

Steph, Emma and Faye have been fantastic in helping to fundraise and to raise the profile of PALS. We meet on a regular basis to look at ways that we can do this. Also, a big thank you to Sue who continues to volunteer quietly behind the scenes completing our payroll each month, despite being in Devon!

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 six new volunteers since this time last year. But sadly we have also had to say goodbye to Emily and Siena as they have gone off to university.

Behind the scenes Paula and I have spent a lot of time doing all the good governance and admin needed to run the charity.

Raising our awareness continues to be very important. Our social media platforms are regularly updated and the number of followers is growing. We have had several press releases over the year and a couple of interviews on Kennet Radio.

A highlight back in October last year was being shortlisted for Newbury Weekly News' Business Awards, which sadly we didn't win, but it was a great experience.

We have been to several events over the year to raise our profile including Carer's week at Sainsbury's, local Christmas and summer fetes and Thatcham Fun Day. We hosted St Nicolas' church coffee morning and another one for the Newbury Mayor back in March, this was the last event we had before we went into lockdown. The lasting memory for me from last year was our attendance at the Step Up 4 Good event. What an incredible day we had despite the dreadful weather. Connor, Otilie and Adam completed the mini run and our PALS bear even did the 10k!

We have been busy fundraising in the last few months and have been successful again with a small grant from West Berkshire Council. Greenham Trust have been extremely

supportive with their grant and match funding. We continue to have a fantastic relationship with Sainsbury's Newbury and we have been invited back regularly to take part in opportunities where we can. We also have a great link with the Berkshire Masonic Charity and made them 60 goody bags for their dinner last November. Liz Pudney has once again supported us with a fundraising event and raised over £3k by swimming The Channel.

The highlight in fundraising last year was the clay pigeon shoot kindly organised by Francesca and a team of supporters. What an incredible day and nearly £60k was raised for PALS. This is a mind blowing amount of money which has secured the charity's future for a little while longer, especially with the current climate.

Since March the charity has worked very differently as we weren't able to meet but we've been able to offer a service online and over the summer a great outdoors programme. We are now getting our groups meeting inside again. We will do everything that we can do to carry on our work with the ever changing situation.

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

As I enter the start of my sixth year with PALS, I just wanted to end with how much I enjoy working for PALS. I think that we have continued to make great progress over the last year despite the many challenges that we have all faced, and firmly believe that our work will be even more important than ever in the coming months.

Helen Randall
PALS Manager

14th October 2020