

Autumn 2023

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Dear Lovely Volunteers

How the year is running away with us all, isn't it?? Autumn is a beautiful time of change - conkers, leaves on the ground and a chill in the air.

Friends for Life has so much going on at the moment - as you'll see through the Newsletter. Our first trial of an evening Welcome Session, working together on the decorations for the Christmas Tree Festival and finally our Volunteers Christmas Tea to say, thank you, thank you, thank you for your brilliant work.

YOU are FRIENDS for LIFE!! 😊



Pauline Carter
Volunteer Lead

Volunteer Story

Below is the story of one volunteer's friendship.

"When I first met my new friend, she was able to tell me her life story which involved leaving her home country and making a life in the UK. She was young and full of excitement and dreams for a better future.

Many, many happy years followed until Covid reared its ugly head. Her husband got ill, went into hospital and passed away. She could not visit or see the man that meant the world to her. She then began to tumble and fall over and had to leave the beautiful home they had built together, moving into a care home. While appreciating her new surroundings, she misses her home and the life she had before. Her family visit regularly, she has her memory and her heart so you might ask what the problem is.

Loneliness: All her life she has been surrounded by people and purpose, now the days are long and while there are lots of people around, they are not her people. Her mobility is severely impacted now and moving about is painful and difficult.

What do I bring to her life? 1 hour a week where she can express her feelings freely, we can have a chat and a laugh, including sharing recipes with me in the hope that one day I might be a good cook!

What do I get from the visits? A good laugh, fabulous recipes and tips and just a feeling of doing some good in life.

Loneliness is the scourge of the 21st Century and we must invest and make time to ensure people are given hope."

The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2023

We are very excited to let you know that Friends for Life has been selected to participate in the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2023. All donations made as part of this scheme will be matched by The Big Give, this means they will be doubled!

Through taking part in the [Big Give Christmas Challenge](#), we aim to raise £5,000.

Raising £5,000 would:

- train 30 new volunteers
- cover our annual insurance
- fund volunteer coffee mornings for one year
- provide ongoing training for volunteers

Can you, or someone you know, help us meet our target? We are looking for people willing to arrange a small fundraising event in aid of Friends for Life, any time between now and 28th November 2023.

Could you....

- host a cake and coffee morning and invite your friends, family and neighbours to attend?
- invite a small group of friends/family over and provide them with a delicious lunch or dinner in return for a donation to Friends for Life?
- take on a new challenge (cycling, swimming or walking a certain distance) and invite those you know to sponsor you?
- come up with another fundraising idea?

The donations raised from your event would then be paid to Friends for Life, via the [BigGive.org](#) website, during the challenge week (28th November-5th December), enabling their value to be doubled.

Are you ready to take on this challenge? If so, please contact our Fundraising Lead, [Kathryn Hughes](#) and share your plans with her!



Our Impact



In the Summer, we shared some results from our recent survey. The full report is attached with this newsletter.

We will be asking for your feedback again at the end of the year but if you have any comments in the meantime, please contact [Jane](#).

Welcome Back Kathryn!

Hello all,

I am pleased to be back as part of the FFL team, now that my maternity leave has come to an end. My son will be turning 1 this month and is well on his way to walking!

As our services at Friends for Life grow to support an increasing number of socially isolated residents within Bedford's care homes, our running costs also increase. You will, therefore, be hearing from me from time-to-time with details of how you can help support our fundraising efforts.

Our next big fundraising event is the Big Give Christmas Challenge which is mentioned above. If you have a particular passion for fundraising, please do send me an [email](#), I would love to hear from you!

I hope to meet you in person at a coffee morning soon.

Kathryn Hughes, Fundraising Lead



Top Tips for Visiting Care Homes in Autumn and Winter

There are lots of bugs around at this time of year and staff in the homes are extra busy. If there is an outbreak in the home, visitors will not be able to attend.

It is a good idea to:

- Ring the home on the day you are visiting and check it is ok to go.
- Protect yourself by washing your hands when you arrive and when you leave. We have hand sanitiser in the office, just let [Alison](#) know if you would like some.
- Keep yourself as well and healthy as you can.
- Don't visit if you are feeling unwell.

If the home is restricting visitors due to an outbreak of infection, remember you can still make contact with your resident by dropping them a card or a letter.



Volunteer Expenses

All volunteers are entitled to claim travel expenses for their visits to residents. If you would like a copy of the Expenses Policy and Claims Form, please let [Alison](#) know.

Bedford Christmas Tree Festival

Friends for Life are taking part in the Bedford Christmas Tree Festival at St Paul's Church, Bedford MK40 1SQ, which takes place between 6th and 10th December this year.

The public will be voting on the best dressed tree. We will be linking friendship into the theme of 'Kings and Queens' and invite you to get involved, with your friend if possible. We will be handing out a simple pack, with instructions, at the next Coffee Morning in October.

If you want to know more, but you won't be at the Coffee Morning, or if you're keen to get involved helping us to complete the decoration of the tree, please contact [Jane](#).



Dates for your Diary

Friends for Life are involved in the following events between now and Christmas, we would love to see you at any of them.

Friends for Life Coffee Meetings

Friday 27th October - 10.30am, Albero Lounge, Riverside Square

Tuesday 28th November - 10.30am, Albero Lounge, Riverside Square

Ageing Well Festival and Exhibition for the over 50s

Wednesday 11th October - 10am-2.30pm, Bedford Corn Exchange

Look out for the Friends for Life stand! As well as information stands, there will be taster sessions and services such as as health checks and hand massages.

The Big Give Christmas Challenge Donation Week

28th November to 5th December

Friends for Life AGM

Wednesday 29th November - 6-7pm, CVS Building, Bromham Road

Bedford Christmas Tree Festival

6-10 December - St Paul's Church (see article above)

Friends for Life Christmas Party

Saturday 9th December - hold the afternoon, further details to follow!