

OCT 2023

# NEWSLETTER

THE RIGHT TO A SOCIAL LIFE



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

We have been really busy telling lots of schools of what we do and so we can share the message to more people. We recognise that due to covid there were lots of changes to many people. Lots of people made the decision not to go out in the community with their friends and it was hard to tell people that we were still running services.

We now feel that we can offer services like we did pre-covid. We are now providing day friendship groups as well as groups that are held in the evening and weekends. We are now running film nights monthly, over 25's group, karaoke and have relaunched our first 'TeenSpirit' – for under 18s. Now that we have more groups running, we can tell more people what we offer and where. We plan to start an art and cooking clubs, as well as an LGBTQ+ group. We hope to see more new faces with their friends attending a wide range of events.

Matt as of April 2023 began the business administrator role. He now helps with all the back room functions of the charity, which is a massive help for me and Michelle. Everyone knows Matt as he was our apprentice for 18 months prior to his new role. He is so committed to helping everyone get to use the service.



## 2024 HOLIDAYS

We have been planning many more holiday and short breaks for 2024. We want to get your views on what holidays you would like us to plan. Our recent holidays to Stubbers and Spain were a massive success, with everyone having an amazing time and we are looking forward to Butlins this coming November.

Here are some examples of what has been suggested already:

- Spanish cruise (April) – flight to Barcelona where we would board the ship and travel around Spain for 6 days, arriving back in Southampton.
- Short city breaks in the UK - Brighton, York, Bath, Bournemouth.
- London weekends - theatre shows, shopping and lunch.
- Butlins/Centre Parcs/Stubbers (depending on demand, we need to have enough people wanting to go for these holidays to happen.)

The proposal for Butlins is to do a music weekender but we must book early so we need numbers, if people want to go to an 80s/90s weekender.

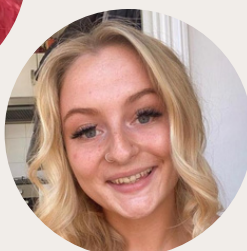
If you have any other ideas, please do phone Matt in the office. Please email or phone us to discuss these holidays and any new holidays you want us to investigate for you.





We want to plan monthly and yearly events, so you know what's happening in advance and can plan what you want to do with your friends. We want to advertise this monthly on social media and we'll also send to everyone via email/WhatsApp.

## WE HAVE TAKEN ON SOME NEW STAFF & VOLUNTEERS RECENTLY: BEE, LAUREN, DOMINIC, BEN, CHLOE & JESS!



## 9TH JULY 2023 - AWAY DAY

We had a great turnout for our away day on 9th July. We invited trustees, staff, parents, and people that use our service, to give us feedback on the future of Friends and Places Together. We had lots of discussions and feedback which has helped us put together a plan of action for the next 3 to 5 years.



**CELEBRATION DAY**  
11am to 3pm  
**THURSDAY 22ND FEB 2024**  
**COME CELEBRATE OUR 5 YEARS AT VICTORIA SHOPPING CENTRE**  
Come & Meet The Staff & See Our Centre.  
Opportunity To See What Our Service Offers.  
Top Floor Unit 13, Victoria Shopping Centre,  
Southend-on-Sea, SS2 5SP

Clients already using the service, invite your family to pop in for a Cuppa & Cake. Or book a slot with Michelle for a catch up

Wish you had a friendship group but not quite sure how to find your people? Friends and Places have worked with a diverse range of people and created a community of individuals, alongside trusted support workers

who have fun together and support each other through thick and thin! If you're interested in doing more activities like going to the theatre, pub trips and holidays then come along and meet us!

IF THIS SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING THAT WOULD APPEAL TO YOU, PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AT....

Friends and Places Together - 07904 271 027  
TOP FLOOR UNIT 13, VICTORIA SHOPPING CENTRE SS2 5SP  
www.friendsandplaces.together.org.uk office@friendsandplaces.together.org.uk

Company Registered Number: 8564207 | Charity Registered Number: 118864

## 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Friends and Places Together will be celebrating five years at Victoria Shopping Centre in February and 10 years as a registered charity in December 2024. We are going to offer an open event in February, to celebrate our venue - watch this space for our date. We have also planned a big ball at Westcliff Hotel on 30th November 2024, where we are going to have a lovely sit-down meal, live music and a big party to celebrate our 10 years. We will obviously keep everyone up to date!





## VOLUNTEERING

We have recently joined up as part of the Southend Volunteer Hub (Facilitated by our good friends at SAVs). This has been a great resource for us to have volunteers come on board and help the charity. We appreciate the great work our volunteers do and if you or anyone you know would like to join as a volunteer follow the link below to scroll through the opportunities.

<https://www.southendvolunteerhub.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities/>

# SAVS



The roles we have available include Support Worker Volunteer, Night Club Activity Volunteer, Fundraising Volunteer, Football Activity Volunteer, Film Night Volunteer, Volunteer Driver, and Trustee. Or contact us direct: 07796678939 between 10am - 4pm or email us: [office@friendsandplacestogether.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsandplacestogether.org.uk)



We have recently become the sponsors of the Lancaster Lions football team. Our logo is printed on the front of their brand-new red shirts. A large number of our guys and girls play for the team and are all excited for the season ahead with our sponsorship hopefully bringing the team lots of success! We would like to thank Simon and the Lancaster Lion's team for giving us the opportunity. See the photo of Nieve in the new kit! COME ON LIONS!!

## SOUTHEND YMCA - MUSIC

We have been lucky enough to partner with Southend YMCA (All In Music) who are holding a music workshop open day at our centre on 24th October starting from 12:00 (See poster below for details). This will be an opportunity for anyone with an interest in music to come along and try out many different instruments as well as beat making and songwriting with trained musicians. Holding it in half term we hope to see lots of people attend. This workshop is for all levels of ability in music including complete beginners, you might just find your brand-new hobby and passion!



## MICHELLE

This year, 1st November marks my 5-year anniversary since I joined the charity and what a ride it has been so far. I initially joined as the volunteer coordinator and overseeing the under 18's weekly meet ups and then moved into the Coordinator role. It has been an amazing journey, and it has been one I have had alongside some amazing clients and staff members.

To see the growth and development of those we support has been so rewarding. Hearing the positive feedback from service users and parents alike letting me know how the charity has helped them is so lovely and I am truly grateful that I am able to do this job.

There has been bumps along the way as well. We have had a variety of offices and premises, and it has been so great to have a settled base in the Victoria Shopping Plaza for such a long time.

Covid also presented so many challenges and it seems almost surreal to think of the zoom meetings we used to hold. We have come out the right side of the biggest challenge we ever could've thought we would face and are much stronger for it. I just want to say thank you for every client that has accessed our service and all the brilliant staff and volunteers who have worked at the charity during my tenure, we couldn't do it without you all!

Finally, just a reminder to everyone that over Christmas we will be closing starting from the 23rd December and reopening on the 2nd January. Our staff work so hard during half terms and summer holidays and deserve a break over the festive period to spend with their family and loved ones and we hope you all do the same.



# THANK YOU!

