



## Report to Thame Town Council on the work of the Red Kite Family Centre February 2020

### Brief historical context

Following the decision of Oxfordshire County Council to cut funding to the majority of its locality-based children's centres and to concentrate its statutory services in a few regional hubs, it was decided to establish a local community run charity to continue the work of our local children's centre.

The Red Kite Family Centre charity was set up in January 2017, trustees were appointed, and the centre opened with its new leader and staff team in place in April 2017. Since then it has been operating very successfully and this report highlights its main achievements and the value it brings to all families with young children in our area.

### Trustees

John Hulett (chair)  
Rosie Pearce  
Sarah Roberts  
Mary Stiles  
Katie English  
Lottie Curry  
Rebecca Matthews

### Staff Team

Amy Spicer – Family Centre Leader  
Catherine Myles – Early Years Family Worker  
Helen Burton – Early Years Family Worker Assistant  
Julie Tattersfield - Early Years Family Worker Assistant  
Emma Spink – Family Centre Administrator

All these posts are part-time and the Early Years Family Worker and Assistants work largely during the school terms. A part-time cleaner is also employed.

### Update on services from July 2019 – February 2020 and planned services for coming year

#### Feedback:

Once a year feedback from parent users is gained more formally through an online survey and this was circulated during July 2019. The main findings of this survey were as follows:

66 individual responses were received. 4.5% of responses came from parents using the centre twice a week and 36% came from those who used the centre weekly and 24% from those using the centre less than once a month. Just under 8% of respondents regularly attended sessions in Chinnor. These people gave the following responses to the questions asked:

- At least 80% rated the services offered by the centre as excellent and 20% rated them as good. Only one activity organised by the centre received a rating less than good and some of those organised by the NHS

professionals who run services at the Family Centre. All the rest received 100% of responses as good or excellent.

- In response to a question about the one thing that would improve the service offered, most respondents said they were happy with the current provision but suggestions included the following – Earlier time slot for a stay and play session; More activities in Chinnor; More space; sessions to run more during the school holidays; more help for fathers; a greater variety of snacks on offer and refreshments for parents; cleaner toys; weekly notice email; a private area for one to one conversations when needed.
- 83% of respondents were aware that the centre is a community run charity and therefore dependant on funding through donations.
- 16% said that they had joined the charity's 'Friends' scheme.
- 76% were aware that the centre was available for private hire and 24% were not.
- 18% thought that the Family Centre was visible within the wider community and 5% thought it wasn't.
- 67% thought that the Family Centre was visible to families with children.
- A question about the main sources of information on Family Centre activities accessed by users showed that 11% use the website; 21% the printed termly programme; 29% Facebook and 29% by visiting the Family Centre.

During the year we were able to continue with the Chinnor outreach project funding the time of the family worker assistant to visit families in Chinnor and encourage them to join in some of the activities offered. This role has also meant we have had the capacity to respond to the specific needs of some vulnerable families in the area.

### **Services from July 2019 to February 2020**

Alongside our usual busy activity programme we have also been delivering various outreach projects within the Thame community.

#### **Starting from a story**

Our popular 'starting from a story sessions' have continued to visit the local pre-schools each month so we can continue to build community links and share good practice.

#### **Thame and District Day Centre**

Red Kite have made some magical visits to the Day Care Centre this term. Sessions have included silhouette cutting, paper aeroplanes, making birdboxes and a singing session with Starlight Theatre. It has been such a special opportunity to watch the elderly build relationships with the Red Kite Family. The sessions continued monthly after the summer holidays and have now been completed.

#### **Growing Up Together**

As a similar venture to the project with the Day Centre SOHA are funding a series of workshops under their 'Extra Care Scheme' at Windmill Place in Thame. These started on a monthly basis in December 2019 and are planned for a 12-month period. The sessions held in December and January were well attended by both residents and families and featured Christmas crafts and canvas bag decorating. They were much enjoyed by all those who attended.

#### **Thame Play Day**

An estimated 500 adults and children visited us for a day of 'free play' on Southern Road recreation ground on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Local organisations had a chance to showcase their businesses and meet families in the community whilst children enjoyed an array of activities including giant bubbles, soft play, zorbing, bouncy castles and having their hair and nails painted! An enormous thank you to Thame Town Council for their support with the event – another successful year!

#### **Abingdon and Witney College**

Red Kite are continuing their partnership with Abingdon and Witney College this year to deliver community led learning. Courses have included Makaton sign language for volunteers, HENRY (a parenting course for health and nutrition in the family environment) and this spring the 'Webster Stratton' parenting course is being run.

## **Summer Holidays**

Summer can be a long period for young families. Last August we again ran our Summer Holiday Club for children aged 3-5. This allows working parents to find childcare for young children but also funds vulnerable families to have places who could not otherwise afford to access such schemes.

The Red Kite also linked up again with Chinnor Community Church to deliver 2 summer sessions, a messy play and a teddy bears picnic.

## **Thame Children's Cinema**

Red Kite have been working in partnership with Becky Reid from Thame Town Council to develop a 'Children's Cinema' There have so far been 3 pilot dates held and attendance has grown at each event. A further date in March has been arranged for the showing of 'Frozen 2'. The project is also supported by Thame Players and Thame Cinema for All.

## **Spring Term**

Our Spring Programme is now published and we look forward to welcoming lots of new faces into the centre.

## **Outreach roadshow**

This was mentioned in the last report but it has taken some time to develop the plans. Part funding has been received from SODC for the purchase of the required equipment and we plan to run an 'outreach roadshow' in the new housing developments starting later this Spring so families can meet the team and have a taste of Red Kite sessions on their doorstep. Venues and permissions for a number of events in Thame and Chinnor are currently being negotiated starting with a roadshow in Thame town centre.

## **Data**

The updated attendance data for the centre is shown in our recently published annual report now available on the charity commission website.

## **Financial position**

The examined accounts for 2018-19 have been published and are available on the Charity Commission website. The budget for the 2020-2021 financial year is currently being finalised. The main transition grants from OCC have now ceased as has the support from Sharing Life Trust which was for the first three years of operation. Our development plan for a sustainable future outlines how we plan for the work of the Family Centre to continue and this will be very dependent on support from parent users, our 'Friends' scheme, local business support, grant making bodies and, most importantly, the Town Council.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Thame Town Council for your ongoing support and commitment to deliver our vital services to the families in our community. Both they and we are truly grateful.

Report compiled by John Hulett and Amy Spicer  
February 2020