

Full Council (on behalf of Policy & Resources Committee)

Date:	11 August 2020
Title:	Reports - External Organisations

a) Barns Centre (Cllrs Deacock and Dodds)

A brief summary of the last meeting 23rd July.

The meeting was held in the Barns Garden. A discussion at that time was relatively optimistic about reopening, but don't hold your breath as we can know what will happen next.

If the Barns does open the number of users will be reduced and the view will have to be taken as to viability. The large barn is restricted to 30 users and the small hall to 10..

What we can be certain of is that every effort will be made to open later this month or early in September. However, besides the reduce numbers the other issue to be aware of is the necessity of cleaning rooms, doors, switches and toilets in between sessions.

b) Citizens Advice (Cllr Austin)

Nothing additional to report than was expressed the last time.

c) Health Hub (including Community Hub Pilot) (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Health Hub

Planning application is in but very little has happened for obvious reasons.

Community Hub

Due to Covid19 Thame Community Hub and Marlow Community Hub closed for the majority of services at the end of March 2020. The only service that continued at Thame Community Hub was the ultrasound service which could safely continue to provide a service.

In May, in accordance with second phase guidelines from the government and Public Health England, a review was carried out of all of the community sites within Buckinghamshire Community Healthcare Trust. The outcome of this review was to adopt a stepped approach to reopening sites or increasing the footfall as relevant guidelines would need to be followed and on some sites considerable changes would need to be made and implemented prior to them being utilised again for clinical care.

Therefore as a first step the footfall of Amersham and Brookside was to be increased and followed by the reopening of Buckingham for urgent patients due to the site only requiring minor changes.

It is then proposed that Thame and Marlow Community Hub will be reopened in September following changes being implemented. We do not have exact dates for the reopening as yet.

Community Assessment and Treatment Service (CATS)

The CATS services in Amersham, Marlow and Thame closed towards the end of March 2020. The number of patients seen in March was lower than usual with a number of patients choosing not to attend even before the clinics themselves closed.

All patients who were waiting to be seen in CATS were reviewed by telephone and in line with government guidance only offered a face to face appointment where essential. These face to face appointments were offered in our sister service Mudra (Multidisciplinary Day Assessment Service) at Wycombe Hospital.

We reopened Amersham CATS in July 2020, temporarily in a different location within Amersham Hospital due to a cycle of refurbishment works taking place.

When CATS reopen in Thame and Marlow we will be introducing changes which include:

- Telephone assessments for some patients to ensure they are only brought into a hospital site if this is necessary
- Replacement of hospital beds with wipeable outpatient style couches
- Reduction in services that run at the same time as CATS due to the need to ensure social distancing for staff and patients

d) NALC (Cllr Dyer)

Nothing significant to report. NALC have continued to lobby Government on behalf of the Town & Parish sector, and have focussed almost entirely on the challenges facing Councils during the pandemic, sharing advice and best practice throughout.

e) Red Kite Family Centre (Cllr Emery)

Update from John Hulett, Chair of Trustees, Red Kite Family Centre:

“Along with so many other charities and businesses in our community we have been greatly affected by the covid19 pandemic. The government restrictions that have been put in place have meant that we had to close the Family Centre to all sessions from the beginning of the lockdown in March. Amy Spicer, Family Centre Leader, has made it a priority to maintain contact with as many families with young children in the area as possible. We have kept physical contact with families to a minimum and instead launched a 5 day a week telephone support service and by shifting our efforts to support early learning through social media and website information.

The telephone service initially identified 30 families we would stay in regular contact with during lock down. We continue to do so but what has in fact happened is that we have 10 families regularly using the line (some daily) and our relationship with social care, health and local early years settings that have remained open, have been strengthened to say the least.

We have also had to cancel a lot of our fundraising and community activities - including an auction, children's cinema, play day and the launch of our roadshow - which both the Town and District Councils were supporting. We did have a fabulous opportunity when a local photographer offered family doorstep photos during the pandemic and gave all the profit to Red Kite - £3500. This was a real bonus given the loss of other fundraising income. However, we have been very fortunate to be applicable for the furlough scheme for some of the staff who would normally run the stay and play sessions. We were also the nominated charity for support by the chair of SODC David Bretherton during his year of office. Sadly, the government restrictions meant that many of his planned fundraising activities had to be cancelled. It's not quite clear yet whether his chairmanship will be extended and therefore whether there will be a further opportunity for him to support us. All but two of our 'Friends' have continued their support during the recent months which is very gratifying. With this and our continuing support from the Town Council we are actually in a financially stable position at the moment although we are planning for the increased costs of running activities within pandemic guidelines.

Autism support groups and a group for new parents have been held via Zoom and these attracted small numbers but positive impact. We would like to have done more in terms of the

online group but childcare responsibilities for the team have prohibited this a little and instead we have made the phone line our priority.

All in all, we remain positive and we are using the time to look at alternate delivery models and how this may benefit the families in the community.

Amy was able to organise an adult learning course online for parents to gain level 1 in Makaton sign language and has also run a virtual first aid course for parents. The Makaton course got extremely positive feedback and we have a full waiting list for the next virtual course to be run in the Autumn term. We have never run courses online before and we are able to use a funding stream from Abingdon and Witney College, so this has all been very exciting for us.

We have given much time to mapping out what our Family Centre provision will need to look like in September when we hope to restart sessions based at our two venues. Despite the overwhelming stream of guidance from government on the easing of lockdown restrictions there has in fact been none specifically for our kind of setting where parents and children meet together at activities. This has meant that we have had to 'second guess' the guidelines that we work within in order to operate safely and in a way that inspires enough confidence in parents for them to come to sessions at the centre.

We have three priorities which are underpinning our plans:

- The health and well-being of each member of our staff team.
- To maintain and develop the Family Centre's role of advice and support to families with young children and reinstate centre based activities in line with public health guidelines.
- To work on the continued sustainability of our charity.

Our 'lifeblood' is the contact that we have with as many parents with 0-4yr olds in the area as we can sustain. With this in mind we are planning a significant expansion of our centre based activities. Our 'Stay & Play' sessions regularly attracted 30-40 parents and their children. In order to comply with pandemic guidelines on social distancing, social 'bubbles' and hygiene/infection control recommendations, we are planning to significantly increase the number of sessions that we offer. This will mean that we can limit the number of families attending at any one session. We will use an online booking system for this. We will also try and control the membership of each session group to avoid cross socialisation and introduce a 'deep cleaning' regime of the centre and play equipment between each session. We believe that it is vital to plan for this as it is the only way that we can continue to fulfil our 'Being there for every family' motto and serve the community in a way that justifies their continued support for what we do.

These plans obviously have a considerable price tag attached! With this in mind we have applied for one of the covid19 Lottery Fund Communities Grants. We also applied to SODC for one of their covid19 funds and are hoping to do the same with Oxfordshire Community Foundation but their fund is closed at the moment.

Our future plans really are about turning the negative impact of the pandemic into a positive for us by potentially increasing our value to the local community. This model may only need to be in place for 6 months, or possibly until next July at the most, but we feel it is the best way of fulfilling our plan for a sustainable future.

There has been much in the media about the pressure on families during the lockdown and I believe that we have performed a really important role supporting these families in our area and that the plans I have described will help us to continue this role. My thanks once again to Thame Town Council for your invaluable financial support and on-going interest in our work."

f) Thame Business Forum (Cllr Dyer)

Nothing to report. April and July meetings were cancelled and it seems inevitable that the September meeting will be, though businesses continue to use the network and to support the community.

g) Thame Senior Friendship Centre (Cllr Midwinter)

All I can say that we would like to open for our elderly clients to come to the centre as soon as possible, because we are concerned the effect of not meeting with their friends will be having on their mental health.

h) Thame & District Housing Association (Cllr Emery)

We have had our annual audit and the Financial Statements were approved by the Board on 27th July 2020. It was the first time the audit has been carried out remotely and the whole process went very smoothly. It was once again a clean audit, with no issues raised by the auditors.

Office based staff continue to be mostly working from home, each working one day in the office each week. We are considering how this may best be increased safely. Our residents have continued to be well supported both by telephone and by door-step visits and we are now able to go into people's flats (if they are happy with this) using appropriate PPE.

We are in discussions about the safest way to begin to reintroduce some activities for residents such as coffee mornings and hope to be in a position to re-start some things during August. The safety and wellbeing of our residents and staff remains paramount.

We have been granted planning permission for refurbishment works at Croft Court and works will commence before long.

i) Thame Youth Memorial Trust (Cllr Tipping)

Nothing new to report.

j) Thame Youth Projects Group (Cllr Tipping)

There has been a very positive response to the request for volunteers to become part of the team engaging with young people around the town.

Possible office space for our youth worker found but discussions are still ongoing.

Gordon Taylor has become a trustee as well as being elected to the position of secretary.

Positive signs with fundraising for the new build. Discussions with organisation One side.

A budget is underway to show prospective donors to the project.

Publicity campaign that was launched in July (the survey) was going well with over 100 responses and 90 likes on the love Thame site. The remaining flyers will be distributed around local villages, we are hoping some of the young people will be involved in this.

Personal photos for members of the Trust shall be taken by myself at the studio for the TYP's website.

k) 21st Century Thame (Cllr Fickling and Francis)

THE partnership now has a Lift Share scheme, ' Share a lift to Haddenham ' with a link from the 21st Century Thame website, aimed mostly at commuters who wish to save money and contribute to reducing their personal Carbon Footprint.

The Thame Trees project, though progress has slowed because of the Covid-19 restrictions, is moving forward. To date, 1,000 trees have been supplied; 70 trees have been planted by volunteers; 47 have been planted by landowners and the scheme has received 3,300 pledges to plant or nurture young trees. Six major sponsors are on board including Lucy Electric.

Thame Wild Gardens project - Set up to encourage Thame gardeners to provide habitats to encourage hedgehogs, frogs and other native fauna into their gardens. The project has a facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ThameWildGardens/>. The project's target is to give 100 people in Thame 'Wild Garden Certificates,' and in the Spring Wild Gardens Awards, they gave out Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze awards to gardeners depending on how many habitat features they had in their garden. (Our own Cllr Catherine Jones was the recipient of a Bronze award)

The latest accounts show a considerable drop in income due mostly to Covid-19 restrictions, meaning that people have been unable to organise family parties and other gatherings, the usual source of funds from hiring out items from the Equipment Bank.

I) Welfare Trust (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Nothing to report no meetings due to Covid 19.