

Policy & Resources Committee

Date: Tuesday 20 April 2021
Title: Report - External Organisations

a) Barns Centre (Cllrs Deacock and Dodds)

The Barns recent meeting was a virtual one. Two major issues were discussed. Firstly there are still issues relating to responses to anti-social behaviour and actions that should be taken and by whom. Barriers have been installed on Barns land without consent of the trustees. This is problematic for the Town Council as it owns part outright and 50% interest in the other part.

The budget for the next year was discussed and it was decided to keep rates the same for hiring. Subsequent to this meeting the Barns Insurance Claim for loss during lockdown 1 has been paid which has yet to be discussed by the Trustees, but is a welcome contribution.

b) Citizens Advice (Cllr Austin)

The service offered in Thame continues to be mainly telephone based. However some minor internal alterations have occurred to an area of the building and this has allowed CA to re-introduce face to face appointments for the most vulnerable clients. Thame is the first of the four OSAV offices that has been able to do this. The remaining three offices are considering how they might be able to do something similar.

The office is gradually being opened to allow more advisers to work from the building for at least some of the time. This is particularly helpful for new advisers who require a certain amount of support.

Since the beginning of the first lock down in March 2020, 7 new advisers for the Thame office have been successfully recruited and trained and there are currently 3 more trainees due to start this week.

The recruitment of experienced supervisors is proving to be more problematic. This is the case across Citizens Advice generally and is not only a local issue.

Local demand for services is increasing. In particular, CA is helping a number of clients with employment and debt issues relating to the pandemic.

The lack of local affordable housing continues to be a significant problem in Thame and the surrounding areas. Clients are frequently presenting with housing issues and concerns about possible eviction once the current restrictions on evictions are lifted.

The office in Thame is now staffed between 9 and 1 from Monday to Friday. However CA is unable to accept drop-in visits but appointments can be booked if necessary.

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

Nothing received at 15.4.21.

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. The Acting Town Clerk continues to share the weekly NALC and monthly OALC update emails with Councillors.

e) Red Kite Family Centre (Cllr Emery)

Nothing to report.

f) Thame Business Forum (Cllr Dyer)

Currently suspended, having last met in February 2020, and will not be resurrected until Covid regulations are substantially relaxed.

g) Thame Senior Friendship Centre (Cllr Midwinter)

We will be welcoming our members back after lockdown on 18th May subject to all going well. Fish and chips have been delivered once a week to our members which has been very much appreciated by them, and also a cream tea and Easter Egg for a treat for Easter. We are also in appreciation to our fourteen volunteer drivers who would not take travel allowance for delivering Fish and Chips, so we treated them to a cream tea as well.

Ms Kate White has been appointed our new Manger due to the retirement of Mrs Gill Coleman. Kate has been doing a sterling job over the period of lock Down keeping in touch with our members and will be a great asset to the friendship centre when we get back to a normal situation.

The Coronavirus Community Fund, who gave us the grant for use over the lock down period, were very impressed by the way we used it for the benefit of our members to help combats loneliness.

The Trustees and members very much appreciate the service and of all the hard work that has been accomplished by Kate, the volunteers, and the chairman and her husband over this long period of lockdown.

h) Thame & District Housing Association (Cllr Emery)

Although lockdown is easing, in accordance with government guidance those employees who can work from home continue to do so, and those who need to be on site work to covid-safe arrangements.

We have been delivering freshly cooked meals to our most vulnerable residents and look forward to further easing of restrictions. We are glad to have pleasant gardens where residents can meet up, weather permitting.

We have recently sold a plot of land in Waddesdon to another registered provider of social housing and they will build sheltered flats on the land.

i) Thame Youth Memorial Trust (Cllr Tipping)

No update since the last, although will see a few updates with the applications that are being processed.

j) Thame Youth Projects Group (Cllr Tipping)

- Detached youth work is going well although numbers are low.
- Programs were ran during the Easter holidays virtually. Awaiting to hear the numbers and the results of these.

- The youth café looks like it won't be reopening till may/ June in accordance with Covid restrictions. Locations are being assessed ahead of this date.
- We are looking at summer alternatives that can be held outside, possible outside activity days.
- Property discussions are moving well through the working group.

k) 21st Century Thame (Cllr Fickling)

Tree planting initiative - In March, 21st CT facilitated the planting of 57 Fruit trees and 10 Birch Trees in the area. On 19th April they were expecting delivery of another 420 trees. Many are woodland trees which as seedlings are in need of nurturers to look after them until they are mature enough to be planted out. Please pass the word on or consider nurturing a tree or 2.

Equipment Bank - New Walkie Talkie has been purchased. SODC has provided funding. The manager needs volunteers to help with a stock take at the EB. Please publicise.

21 C Thame is working with Thame Green living and has been helping Thame Wombles.

l) Welfare Trust (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Nothing received at 15.4.21.