

October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021

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

Following the easing of pandemic restrictions in June the Family Centre was able to start running more sessions for parents and children in both Thame and Chinnor. So as to maintain a COVID safe environment, numbers at each event were kept to much lower levels than before the pandemic. These sessions were in high demand, as for many parents with 0-4yr olds, this was one of the first opportunities to meet together with other parents and the first opportunity for their children to socialise.

Some of the summer sessions were run at our brand new outdoor learning space (known



as Outdoor Explorers) at Moreton Barn Farm, kindly made available to us by the owner. Staff and volunteers worked hard to get this area ready and equipped. It has a poly tunnel for shelter and semi-indoor activities and a large grassy area which has been set up with a range of creative play activities. It also has access to running water and a new toilet installation. We are delighted to have this additional space as outdoor play in a safe environment is so important for pre-school aged children. Some special sessions were run during the summer holidays and

this autumn it is being used regularly as an integral part of our programme of activities for families.

Our programme for the autumn term has been going very well with many sessions often having waiting lists. We now have about 210 families registered with the Family Centre. Of these 96 families have attended this autumn, 60 of them coming to more than one session. Our online booking system is making administration much easier. We are still limiting numbers to reduce the infection risk but many families and staff members have been affected by seasonal illnesses and Covid this autumn and it is clear that families with children in school have made the transmission of infection worse.

Given the on-going issues with Covid we are planning to continue offering more sessions with fewer numbers for the foreseeable future rather than returning to the old model of



open access sessions. This is obviously increasing our costs, but we believe it is the right approach at this time.

The other challenge that we have faced in recent months is sustaining the work of the Family Centre without our Centre Leader. As you know Amy Spicer left us in April to take up another role in the charity sector. Catherine Myles and Helen Burton have done a brilliant job as acting leaders and the trustees are very grateful for the extra time and energy that they have given to sustaining the Family Centre's work. We are however pleased to announce that a new Family Centre Manager has now been appointed. She is Sarah Candy, a qualified teacher and former Literacy Co-ordinator at Mill Lane Primary School in Chinnor. She is currently on maternity leave and will be taking up her new role with us at the beginning of January. We look forward to welcoming her and to having a full-strength team once again.

#### January 2022 Staff Team

Family Centre Manager	Sarah Candy
Professional Lead Programme Delivery	Catherine Myles
Professional lead Family Support	Helen Burton
Family Support assistant	Rebecca Boulton
Family Support Assistant	Amanda Mitchell
Family Centre Administrator	Marie Scott

We are very grateful indeed for the on-going financial support of the Town Council for the Family Centre. We take our accountability to the local community very seriously and hope that, with your continued support, we can offer our vital family support service to as many families with young children in the area as possible.

John Hulett, Chair of Trustees