

Policy & Resources Committee

Title: Report - External Organisations**Date:** 25 July 2023**a) Barns Centre** (Cllrs Baines and Dodds)

The Barns Centre AGM was held on 17th July at which the Financial and Annual report were received and approved.

The financial situation is almost back to pre-COVID times but it is hard to actually judge what it might have been without the pandemic!

The staff at the Barns are to be congratulated for their continued management. One example of their foresight is the installation of electrical charging points for vehicles. This is yet another income stream.

There are changes to the staffing. Patsy Feighoney is stepping down as a joint manager after a long tenure, although she has said that she will still be available to help out. Her position is being taken by Amanda Mitchell who was already a member of staff and we welcome her to the joint management team.

There is also a change in the position of treasurer. Gordon Taylor is stepping down from this voluntary position after many years and we are pleased to welcome a new Treasurer, Gary Clayton.

The coming months will see the work of the trustees in confirming a new lease and in changing the status of the of the Charity from unincorporated to incorporated, which offers protection to the Trustees and seems to be the model adopted by several local charities.

b) Citizens Advice (Cllr Wyse)

We continue to be very busy, particularly at the two drop-in sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are still seeing high numbers of clients who are struggling with cost-of-living issues and debt.

Volunteer Recruitment

This is still proving problematic. We currently have one new trainee due to start with us mid-July. Our next formal training course is scheduled for the end of September. Ideally, we would like to attract at least 3 candidates for that course. We are planning some additional advertising over the next few months.

Funding

We are extremely grateful for the additional funding from Thame Town Council in this financial year, however core funding for the service is still a major issue in the current climate of continual rising costs.

Pop-up Events

We are committed to raising our profile in the local community and we were pleased to have a stall at the Thame Carnival. We will also have a stall at the Community Market event in August. We recently used a pop-up stall outside of the office to raise awareness of scams and this proved very popular and generated much interest both at the event and subsequently on Facebook

Office Re-branding

The office has recently been subject to a Citizens Advice re-branding exercise. This was funded by central Citizens Advice marketing team and we did not incur any costs locally.

We are very pleased with the 'new look' and we will be hosting an event later this year to celebrate. We will be extending an invitation to all Councillors and other supporters to join us and to have a tour of the offices.

Tricia Hook
Advice Service Manager
Citizens Advice Thame

c) Thame Business Forum (Cllr Dyer)

A meeting held at Kubota on 25th April received an interesting presentation on employment trends and recruitment strategies, followed by general discussions on various topics including (lack of) hotel provision in Thame, SME/starter units, and Business Rates. The subsequent meeting, held at Groves on 11th July, was joined by Nick King, SODC's Economic Development Manager, who gave a short introduction and then a longer Q&A session on subjects of mutual interest, including community energy, solar power generation, and the future potential for a wind turbine to serve local industry.

The Business Forum is currently in good health with strong support and sustainable attendance levels.

d) 21st Century Thame (Cllr Fickling)

[Minutes from the meeting on 12 May 2023 can be viewed here.](#)

Minutes from the meeting on 23 June 2023 are not available yet.

e) Welfare Trust (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Met on July 3rd a couple of grants were made one to Lord Williams's School for Uniform Support and one to St Joseph's School for Trips support. It was interesting to note there were no "emergency requests".

f) Red Kite Family Centre (Cllr Emery)

See attached report (Item 7f).

g) Thame Senior Friendship Centre (Cllr Champken-Woods)

They are beginning to get the numbers up to something like Pre-Pandemic numbers. A New Deputy Manager has been appointed and seems to be settling in well. The Dementia Café held in the Snooker Club on a Monday is going from Strength to Strength.

h) Thame Youth Memorial Trust (Cllr Dyer)

The AGM was held on 12th June, at which David Bretherton stood down, following fifteen years as one of the Founding Trustees. Alison Biddle remains as Chair, with Peter Butt and Dave Hunt filling the roles of Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

That was immediately followed by a normal Trustees Meeting which discussed and progressed current concerns regarding maintenance, fundraising plans, and website development. The main focus of the next 6/9 months will be raising funds, through both events and grant applications, to finance replacement of the paving and the pump.

i) Thame Youth Projects Group (Cllr Bretherton)

I have not been able to make meetings recently. The planning application has just been granted permission (17 July 2023).