



Grant Report – Thame Town Council 1st Quarter of the 2023/2024 Award

Date: 18.07.2023

As you know the first six months of 2023 have been a very challenging time for the charity with a real prospect of having to close unless significant additional funds were raised. Our 'Save our Centre' campaign has been a fantastic team effort from the whole community, with local businesses, organisations and parents working with the trustees, volunteers, staff team and many others together to raise everyone's awareness of the situation. As a direct result of these efforts, the immediate crisis has been averted, and that we now have the funding in place to see us through to Spring 2024.

Our campaign is now moving from 'Save our Centre' to the 'Support our Centre' so that we can continue 'Being there for every family'.

Historical Context:

The Red Kite Family Centre was established as a community run charity in 2017 the annual running costs were about £70k. These rose annually in line with inflation up until 2021. Our aim is to 'be there for every family' with children under 5. Our reach in the local community is wide and targeted. Our main site is based in Thame, and we have a satellite site in Chinnor, with outreach taking place in surrounding villages with poor accessibility and proximity to services. We support families' mental and physical wellbeing long term and target our services at families most in need. Our partnerships with local statutory services, charities and community groups are key to reaching these families. We work in close partnership with Oxfordshire Social Services and NHS health professionals, with Health Visitors and Midwives running sessions and surgeries at the Family Centre. We also link with other Early Years professionals in the town and other agencies such as Sharing Life Trust and Citizens Advice. We supported the setting up of the Community Larder that runs at Christchurch each Thursday afternoon.

Update on financial position:

- We are continuing with the funding strategy devised by the Trustees, aimed at ensuring that the Centre has a financially sustainable future. We are now in the second stage of this plan – 'Support our Centre'.
- Our fundraising group are actively applying to many grant making bodies which we hope will result in significant additional income. So far this has yielded £20k for 2022/23 & £50k so far for 2023/24
- Our Friends scheme is now up to 114 friends, bringing in almost £20k in funding.
- Our business sponsorship plan has already brought in £8.5k so far for 23/24 with more local businesses promising to donate going forward.
- User surveys have been sent out to better service the local community whilst making our staffing the most efficient it can be as part of our ongoing cost saving exercises.

Key financial figures:

Money raised for 2022/23 financial year £64.5k

Budget for money raised 2023-24 £103k – total raised so far £80.8K

The annual running costs for the Family Centre are currently about £100k.

Current bank balances: revenue account £57.7k, contingency reserve £50.1k.

Grant Award:

Awarded Amount	£10,000 – Lump Sum – Annual Award
Intended Use	<p>Staffing Costs: £10,000 covers 15.85% of our annual staffing costs from 2022-2023. Total Staffing costs for 2022-23 were £63,085. Total Staffing Costs for 2021-22 were £59,465 (16.82% covered by the TTC award) Total Staffing Costs for 2020-2021 were £57,270 (17.46% covered by the TTC award)</p> <p>Increase in staffing costs due to inflationary pay rises. Following our recent plea for more funding, and as part of the subsequent cost saving exercises, pay has been frozen at current levels for the next year.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years its value in real terms has dropped because of inflationary pressures.</p>

User Feedback:

Following our survey launch, we have had yet more valuable testimonials to the work that our Centre does and the importance this has to the families of Thame and surrounding villages.

- *“It has been incredible to have somewhere to go for my child but also for me. It can be lonely and when a child has extra needs sometimes it’s difficult in the standard groups. To meet other parents and to talk. For my child to play and be around other children similar to himself. To try different things. So much help and advice. Everyone is very kind and welcoming.”*
- *“I owe so much to the Red Kite Centre it’s difficult to write it all down! We’ve had to stop attending other groups due to the high cost, and having a free high quality programme within walking distance (especially as I can’t drive) is a lifeline! I feel like this has been vital for my daughters socialisation especially as she’s not at nursery. When I moved to Thame I didn’t know anyone at all in the area, and had very little family support. I have met every single one of my network of local friends at the centre - I would be totally isolated without them and so would my daughter! I was really struggling with postpartum anxiety when I first came to the centre after a very difficult pregnancy. Being able to ask the team questions in this relaxed setting made a massive difference to my mental health and by extension my daughters wellbeing.”*

Update on services offered:

We are now moving to the Summer holidays and have changed the format offered this year. Following feedback from families that they missed our regular groups we are offering several pop ups and a reduced timetable for 5 out the 6 weeks of the Summer Holidays. This will also permit us to keep in contact with our most vulnerable families who are often alone and isolated over the holidays.

Community Engagement:

- Our Easter Events raised a healthy £1,135 from the Messy Play and the Cinema.
- Thame Carnival, Parade and our stall was very well received. Many parents commented on the positive nature of our stall, with something for most ages of primary school. Something they really highlighted and appreciated was not having a cost attached to our services, which of course we are very passionate about here. We want families to be able to access opportunities regardless of financial situation.
- We have run 2 Cinema sessions with the help of the Players Theatre and Thame Cinema 4 All this quarter and have plans to start up again in September.
- We had a plant stall at the Thame Tuesday market, which was a great way to engage in members of the public, as well as raise money for the centre.