

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title: Report - External Organisations**Date:** 31 October 2023**a) Chinnor RFC (Cllr Bretherton)**

1. The senior men's team continues to play in National Division 1, the third tier of English Rugby. This is an amazing standard and they are currently second in the Division having played 7 won 5.
2. The senior women's team were promoted and now play in National Cup 1 in the Midlands Division. This is proving to be tough with three losses from three matches so far. That said, the team are in fine spirit.
3. The other senior men's teams (Falcons, Wildboys, Outlaws and Oxen) have all started the season well, with their ranks swelled with a good intake of players who turned 18 over the summer.
4. The youth section is thriving with teams at all ages, including Girls teams at U18, U16, U14 and U12. Our U15 Boys have started the season with good numbers and two decisive wins in cup matches already.
5. Our youngest age-group, the U6s, has attracted a lot of players already this season and they provide a safe, fun introduction to tag rugby for reception-year boys and girls.
6. Looking ahead, on the pitch there will undoubtedly be some changes at the semi-pro level as England Rugby (the RFU) re-organise the leagues to be more financially sustainable. We don't yet know how that will affect the club, but we expect to have to travel even more!
7. Off the pitch, the club has been busy with improving the facilities. Projects have included upgrading female WCs, installing a temporary try-line terrace and extending the original changing rooms. The changing room extension project was funded through developer (Section 106) contributions, an SODC Capital Grant, club fundraising (through a Buy-A-Brick scheme) and match funding by our principal sponsor, Rectory Homes.
8. The marquee and clubhouse continue to be used for conferences, parties, wakes (!) as well as yoga, baby sensory and painting classes. The clubhouse team offer a friendly welcome and the venue is well appreciated.
9. We continue to work well with our on-site partners PowerHouse who offer a strength, conditioning and wellbeing from their gym and with Thame Shed who are already quite well established (and who help the club out).
10. We have just submitted a planning application for new changing rooms to support the expansion of female rugby, ahead of England hosting the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2025. It is early days yet and we will need all the support we can get, but this is part of our long-term strategy for the club and its facilities.
11. Perhaps unsurprisingly, with the cost of living crisis we are finding that our hardship cases (where we waive membership) have slightly increased.
12. Otherwise, we continue to have an active un-paid board of directors, supported by around 150 volunteers who coach, first aid, maintain, mow, water, cook and serve our 600 or so players.

b) Thame Town Cricket Club (Cllr Champken-Woods)

It is a quiet period for the Club now following a good season in the Home Counties Div 2. We have reappointed our Sri Lankan Overseas player-coach for 2024 and look forward to welcoming him and his wife back in April next year.

Our solar panels are up and working and we are negotiating with the National Grid to transfer surplus electricity to them as it is generated.

c) Cuttle Brook Management Committee (Cllr Jones)

There are developing plans for Rycote Meadow, including a proposed scrape (there are lots of biodiversity benefits from this so it is hoped that it will get support but, as it hasn't previously been identified and approved in a management plan, the CBCV management team probably need the nod from CLR before bringing in a digger! The biodiversity benefits revolve around variations in soil moisture conditions. The scrape would slightly lower the soil level, gently sloping down to 50cm below current over an area of about 400sq.m. This will be in what are already the wetter areas. So there would be a greater range of wet to dry and, importantly, the area of fully wet would shrink and expand with the weather; there is a number of rare plants and invertebrates that need fluctuating conditions like this. The invertebrates also attract specialist birds - not as permanent residents but as visitors when conditions are right. The scrape would be part of a more extensive set of riverine proposals that we are putting together with the River Thame Conservation Trust. The long-term aim is to get brown trout back into the Cuttle Brook - the brook is the only tributary of the Thame that doesn't have a sewage works discharging to it, so it has great potential - and water vole along the banks.) Anything that might encourage water voles should get everyone's vote!

There was an incident involving a branch falling from an ash tree that hit a child. The tree hadn't been identified as suffering from ash die-back and the council's insurance are dealing with it.

Normal maintenance goes on with the enthusiastic involvement of the volunteers.

This year Cuttle Brook will have existed as a nature reserve for 30 years and there is a major exhibition planned for Thame Museum showing some of the amazing results of the work of CBCV over that time.

The annual hay cut was done since the last report.

d) Thame Good Neighbour Scheme (Cllr Dollman)

The Thame Good Neighbour Scheme continues to operate from the Information Centre in the Town Hall and celebrated its 8th birthday in March 2023. We currently have around 30 active volunteers and to date have completed over 1100 jobs. Several of our volunteers continue to support at least one resident on a regular basis – picking up shopping/prescriptions, meeting up for a cup of tea and a chat or taking them to appointments. In October we held a 'thank you' tea party for our volunteers at the Barns Centre which was a lovely opportunity for the volunteers to meet up with other volunteers, Town Council staff and councillors. During the winter months we usually see an increase in requests for help with transport, shopping and prescription collection especially if the weather is bad.

e) Thame Carnival Committee (Cllr Emery)

Carnival Team have not met formally since the cheque handover for the four charities they supported for this year, 2023.

- Red Kite Family Centre
- [Thame & District Society for the Visually Impaired](#)
- [Thame Youth Memorial](#)

- [Jack & Jill Pre-school Chinnor](#)

The date for Carnival 2024 will be Saturday 15th June.
Date for next meeting will be January 2024

f) Thame Football Partnership (TFP) (Cllr Dyer)

Further to my rather lengthy report at July's meeting, recounting the background to key events which had left the club in a temporary state of limbo through the summer, an AGM was finally held on 14th September. This brought the Board back up to full strength with Martin Pacetti, Joe Kitchen and Simon Lazaruk being elected, joining continuing Board members Richard Carr (Chair), Dave Collinson and Rob Woodcock. The new Board met on 9th October, when they launched a review of the club's internal organisation and of roles and responsibilities throughout the club.

Following two very successful years the club will be reporting a loss for the 2022/23 year (to end June) due to significantly increased energy costs but are confident that existing reserves, and some tight budgeting for the new season, will sustain the club's viability.

For Councillors who are not familiar with the scale of TFP's activities I am pleased to share some interesting, and perhaps surprising, statistics that emerged during the AGM :

- The club has 55 teams and a total of 915 playing members
- Of these there are eight senior teams, including Thame United Ladies
- And 47 junior teams, ten of which are girl's teams
- And 145 coaches, all professionally qualified at their appropriate level and all DBS checked

g) Thame Museum Trust (Cllrs Cowell & Emery)

The last trustee meeting was held on the 9th October. Key points for the Museum are

- Re-election of Adrian Dite as Chairman along with the Secretary and Treasurer.
- Currently meeting with 3 people as new Trustees, who came forward following a successful volunteer open day.
- Still seeking a replacement for the Treasurer from March 2024.
- The AGM was held on the 22nd July. This was a very successful event held within the Museum and support by a short presentation by Catherine Jones and Mike Dyer.
- Currently looking at making the recently used Train exhibit permanent.
- External mentor will be holding 1:1 meeting with all trustees on the forward plan and strategy.
- The idea of having a coffee area has been placed on hold.
- New external signage continues to move forward.
- Storage shed has been placed on hold.
- Looking at differing methods for visitor feedback.
- Looking for a fund raiser to support grant applications.

h) Thame Remembers (Cllrs Bretherton & Dyer)

The project to install individual plaques on properties where men who died in conflict had previously lived seems to have caught the public imagination and is proceeding well. Of the original 84 addresses identified we have now installed plaques on 51 properties and have ordered another ten which will be fitted in November. We have only encountered three who have declined but the remaining twenty include the more difficult ones (ie. tenanted properties with absent landlords, and leased retail premises) so we anticipate that the roll-out will now become slower.

The Thame Remembers team also continue to liaise with TTC Officers regarding the additional names to be added to the war memorial.

i) Twinning Association (Cllr Emery)

It was an early start from Thame Cattle Market for the Thame Twinning weekend on the 15th September for our annual three days exchange of friendship and entertainment, it didn't seem long before we were pulling into Dover and could already see France across the water.

Arrival in Montesson was on the dot of 6pm and to a warm welcome in warm sunshine from our host families. Some French families were first-time hosts, others have been hosting the same Thame visitors for over 20 years, but they had all prepared wonderful French meals for their guests. A chance for plenty of conversation in multiple languages before some much-needed sleep.

This was the heritage "open doors" weekend in France so there were some additional treats with a vintage car display, even the Citroen from Jackie Kennedys visit and a display of dancing from Napoleonic times.

Château de Malmaison This is the former residence of Josephine Bonaparte and for a few years before that was the meeting place of Napoleon's cabinet. Beautifully restored, it now hosts a museum devoted to the Bonaparte family and has lovely gardens in which to wander.

We could spend some time in Montesson in the late afternoon before getting ready for the start of the Fête du Pâté à la Carmen. German families and guests from Montesson's twin town of Baesweiler had also arrived and our hosts laid on a celebratory meal for two hundred. A busy hall with two hundred guests for dinner

During the dinner, David Laver spoke on behalf of Thame, we heard from the Mayor of Montesson Nicole Bristol and from Burgemeister Pierre Froesch for Baesweiler, who thanked us for Harry Kane. Montesson Twinning President Anne Gillet did an excellent job with her own speech and translations of the others. The evening finished with a bang – literally - with fireworks on the banks of the Seine.

On Sunday morning, a small delegation from Thame met with the widow and family of Jean-François Bel, who sadly passed away earlier this year. Jean-François helped to set up the twinning between Montesson and Thame, had visited Thame many times and was a strong supporter of our twinning links.

The date for next year's visit from Montesson to Thame has already been decided, this will be 10th to 12th May.

j) Thame Sinaia Friendship Association (Cllr Bretherton)

The Group has been enhanced by Romanian people who live in Thame (one from Sinaia). A successful Romain Fair event that was held recently is to be repeated on Sunday 3rd December again at the Town Hall. Deputy mayor Andy Gilbert attended the Sinaia Forever festival in September.

k) Music in the Park (Cllr Jones)

Plan are moving forward with the headline act booked, stall holders have been approached, a new pricing scheme for tickets has been agreed and sponsorship deals have been made. All in all, MitP is on course for 5 May 2024.

l) Thame Shed (Cllr Wyse)

Thame Community Shed held its first AGM on Monday 16th October 2023.

The agenda consisted of mainly voting on the make up of nominations for positions on the organising committee. It was proposed that the annual membership should be increased from £15 to £20 a year.

m) Thame Sports Club (Cllr Jones)

Thame Bowls Club hosted a Visually Impaired bowling event on the Bowls Green on 30th September attended by not only local people but also by a number who travelled some distance to attend. Linda Emery was there with many of her group and an enthusiastic time was had by all. The Bowls Club provided all the equipment needed by the bowlers and everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch provided by the Club. Many of the members were on hand to give guidance on the bowls green but also in the kitchen and behind the bar.

The Tennis Club have planning permission to update their existing court lighting with LED lights. I believe the plan is for this to be carried out in Nov/Dec.

Otherwise it is business as usual, tennis continues outdoors although the bowls season has finished. The clubhouse will continue to host table tennis, short mat bowls, the Musical Mayhem pre-school group and Art Classes every week alongside Linda Emery's Visually impaired Lunch Club fortnightly sessions.

n) Friends of Elms Park (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Little is happening at the moment. It is hoped next year to hold a joint event with Thame Concert Band and Thame Sinaia Friendship Association with a Concert and a Food and Wine Festival.