

**Policy & Resources Committee**

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**Title:** Report - External Organisations**Date:** 7 November 2023**a) Barns Centre** (Cllrs Baines and Dodds)

Since the AGM we have been concentrating on the technicalities of converting ourselves into a CIO, which will limit the liability the Trustees. At present the 6 Trustees would be jointly liable up to the total value of the premises, or about £200,000 each. We have taken professional advice (from John Saville) on the new constitution, and as a consequence agreed by majority vote to switch to the CIO structure and increase the Trustees from 6 to 9. The additional members are to be unaligned with either Church or Council.

The Barns property was originally leased to the Trustees jointly by the Council and the Church, and this will have to be replaced with a new lease to the CIO. The old lease allowed some free use of the buildings by both parties, since taken up exclusively by the Church. The task ahead is to draw up a new lease that reflects the independent, community-wide nature of the new organisation – and get both parties to agree to it.

The latest report from our new Treasurer shows that although the Centre has considerable cash assets it is actually losing money on the current account. The room hire charges were raised in July for new bookings, but as people mostly book months in advance this will take a while to show through.

The post of Admin Assistant has been filled by Angelique Bull, who started in August.

**b) Citizens Advice** (Cllr Wyse)

Recently there was a reopening ceremony at the CAB offices in the High Street to celebrate the revamp of the offices.

Visitors were taken on a conducted tour of the refurbished offices.

**c) Thame Business Forum** (Cllr Dyer)

Box Technologies hosted the meeting on 12th September, at which we were also pleased to welcome two businesses who had not previously attended – Stuart Barr Group and Carmichaels UK. The focus has shifted more towards identifying areas of mutual interest where businesses can work better together. The next meeting is scheduled for 5th December.

**d) 21st Century Thame** (Cllr Fickling)

I have not been able to get the latest minutes. However, this is a link to their website which gives a good picture of their activities at present: [21st Century Thame](#)

**e) Welfare Trust** (Cllr Champken-Woods)

There is nothing to report from The Welfare Trust as there has not been a meeting.

**f) Red Kite Family Centre** (Cllr Emery)

Following our 'Save the centre' campaign, we have been successful with several grants, as well as renewed community support, meaning that our outlook is significantly more positive than earlier this year. We are now looking forward to a more sustainably funded future. We are however dismayed at the recent news that OCC intend to finish the 'rent holiday' that we have been on the past couple of years and to begin charging us £10k, effectively wiping out the £10k grant that is awarded to us by Thame Town Council, limiting the resources that we would otherwise have allocated this grant towards. Our resources are proving to be more important than ever with the continued cost of living crisis and heading into the colder months, where families use us as their warm, safe, space.

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:

- Our funding strategy, devised by the Trustees, aimed at ensuring that the Centre has a financially sustainable future is continuing to prove successful. We are following on with the second stage of this plan – 'Support our Centre'.
- Our fundraising group are actively applying to many grant making bodies which have proved successful in raising a large proportion of the income shortfall. So far this has yielded £68k for 2023/24.
- Staffing efficiency has also been at the forefront of planning for our activities, meaning that we are now able to better deploy staff across our centres and sessions.

Key financial figures:

Money raised for 2022/23 financial year £64.5k

Budget for money raised 2023-24 £103k – total raised so far £106K

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

Current bank balances: revenue account £61k, 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>

Over the last 5 years its value in real terms has dropped because of inflationary pressures.
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#### Services & Events:

Following a series of successful pop up sessions over the summer holidays, families have been appreciative of the reduction in isolation that this has helped with. We were able to see some of our most vulnerable families as well and meant we could assist with such tasks as liaising with Social care, referral to GPs and assistance with Housing applications.

#### Community Engagement:

Our main event since the summer was our Neurodiversity Awareness evening which was extremely well received. We have received lots of positive feedback from both those attending and stall holders/speakers. It raised a healthy £600 as well.

“The speakers were fantastic, both engaging and highly informative. The stands were great too. But it was the whole atmosphere and the supportive environment. It felt safe to share and it was overwhelming to be surrounded by others who are in a similar neurodiverse boat. But even the smaller touches such as the lovely refreshments, lanyards, speakers bios - it was so thoughtfully done and put everyone at ease immediately.”

We have started our cinema events again after the summer. We've had a slow start but hope for more numbers at the next showings.

We are gearing up for our Christmas events, such as our popular Messy Play.

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

During Covid-19 TSFC, we lost no members during the pandemic to Covid. However, since the relaxation of Covid rules and the return to normality the Centre has witnessed a number of our members having passed away or now residing in a home. The pandemic has had a significant impact on our members mobility and a negative impact on their medical conditions.

Thame Senior Friendship Centre currently has 39 clients on the books. All new referrals have attended a first visit. There is no one on either of the waiting lists.

- 15 members Tuesday
- 20 members Wednesday
- 16 members on a Friday

Some members attend twice a week and two attend three times.

#### Memories Café

- Memories Café has 11 clients.

Memories Café has on average 6 people attending each session. We would like this number to improve as 10 members makes for a better atmosphere.

Membership applications at the Friendship Centre are still on the up

Over the last few months, we have seen an improvement in the number of applications received. This is due to the realisation of darker wetter days to come and being able to do less activities outside.

New members are very complimentary about the service we provide. Many state that they had been unaware that we existed until gaining information through other service providers.

We have two applicants for the position of Deputy Manager. Interviews take place on Friday 3rd November 2023.

We were visited by Stephen Chandler from OCC on Friday 27th October, and he was impressed with the service we provide and will be arranging for the Comms team from OCC to visit to raise our profile within Oxfordshire.

We have recently met with Clare Woodcock from OCVA to explore the option of a Communities of Practice Group in Thame. Practice Manager at the Rycote Practice wishes to be kept informed of progress.

We are now planning Christmas at the Friendship Centre with food being ordered in the next week. As a thank you to the entertainers who provide their services during the year free of charge, we have asked them to join us in these celebrations.

We are in the process of updating our website and printing more leaflets with up-to-date information about both services that TSFC offer.

TSFC is also a member of BOB VCSE Ageing Well subgroup and the impact volunteers have on community services and the important part they play. We have recently taken part in some qualitative research by BOB on the workforce.

We continue to recruit for volunteers, trustees and we are now seeking another individual from TTC to sit on the Board of Trustees as Ann Midwinter is no longer a serving member of TTC.

**h) Thame Youth Memorial Trust (Cllr Dyer)**

Plans are advancing towards a complete renovation of the youth memorial garden with new paving, re-engraving the individual memorial plaques, replacement pump for the water feature, and possibly also replacing the teardrop stone. Work is expected to commence in early May 2024. In the meantime volunteers are actively engaging in regular maintenance of the planting, whilst the Trust continue their efforts to raise finance to fund the renovation, both through events and grant applications. An 80's night in September, held at Meadow View Park, successfully raised £ 1600 and a substantial grant has been awarded by Haddenham Beer Festival.

Work is also underway to update and refresh the current, rather tired, website

**i) Thame Youth Projects Group (Cllr Bretherton)**

A volunteers update (Autumn 2023) from Thame Youth Projects' Youth Worker is attached. An update on the Community Youth Centre Project will be provided at the November Full Council meeting.