

## Full Council

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**Title:** Reports from External Organisations Representatives

**Date:** 12 August 2025

**Author:** Various

### a) 21st Century Thame (Cllr Dollman)

**AGM 2025** – Hilary Dollman is now the Thame Town Council Representative. Ruth Reed one year as Director. 2024 Accounts have been signed off.

**Insurance** – All in order.

**Bank Account** – In the process of changing to Metro Bank, due to the increase in fees from Lloyds. Looking to change over all the payment details for the website and the equipment bank.

**SODC** – Completed the monitoring forms for SODC.

**Tree Watering** – Brilliant that the Thame community is watering so many of the newly planted trees. Thank you to everyone who has so far become involved. We still need more waterers. Need to confirm how many adopters in place.

**Equipment Bank** – We desperately need more key holders. There has been a good level of bookings already this year. We now have 4 marquees having purchased a new canopy, additional leg weights to be purchased.

**Thame Repair Cafe** – A new team have taken up running the Thame Repair Cafe, they have moved the venue to the Scout Hut and are aiming to run on the third Saturday of each month. Website updated.

**Thame Carnival - 14th June 2025** – Actions available from the Thame Carnival minutes. Oxford Security Services road closure. Discussions with Thame Pride going forward.

**Thame Pride - 21st June 2025** – Lots of support and great to see events leading up to the event.

**Environmental Street Champions** – This is inclusive of: Wild Gardens, Grow Your Own, Hedgehogs, Chinnor Hedgehogs. 5.4K funding from TOE. Lots of planning happening, lots of businesses and the public getting involved. Farm in Haddenham receiving trees. Applying in July for more funding for the next projects. Lucy Electric, Tom Knowles and Kubota have promised to provide pallets for additional projects.

**The Wild Things Trial** – Adventure trail to experience Thame through the eyes of a hedgehog. Sponsored by BP Collins & TTC. Maps available the TTC and the library. In initial test phase see the hedgehog plaques around town. Competition to be launched for local schools and children to win books, sponsored by Lucy Electric and Adroit Services. Roberta Eardland is being paid for the delivery of this project and all the team are involved.

**Funding** – £500 from CAG - Big Green Week. £500 from OCC - Councillor grant for Green Education. £800 SODC Councillor Grant Green Education. £5,000 for Lucy Electric - Green Initiatives. £9,884 from OCF - Herland

**Thame Green Networks** – 21st Century Thame and Thame Town Council are working in collaboration with the following projects:

- Thame Wild Gardens
- Hedgehog Highways
- Business Breakfast and decarbonisation of local businesses -focusing on waste next workshop. ASM looking into launching plastic free communities and a Thame Tidy Day & Muck Out Morton. Thame Sustainability Champions Award was launched and companies will need to achieve sustainability within at least 2 strands of the Thame Green Living Plan, to gain their award. River Thame Conservation Trust - guest speaker at the water workshop
- Thame Trees has been concentrating on watering of the trees projects at Churchill Crescent, Lenthall Green, Elms Park, QEC and Skate Park (among other small plantings). Looking at further funding for the next year.
- Pollinator bed in the War Memorial ground - completed, needs regular weeding. 2nd pollinator bed to be outside the Cattle Market.
- Wild Things Trail
- 21st Century Thame are attending St. Josephs Fete, Thame Carnival, Taste of Thame, Lopemedede Open Day, John Hampden Fete.

**Thame Art Group** – Low numbers so requested no insurance cost for this year. Agreed It appears to be growing in numbers.

**Thame Community Christmas** – Successful event. Well done to everyone involved.

**Her Land** – Thrive in Nature funding which is run by Becky with support from 21st Century Thame. Going really well. Funding only for 30 sessions a year, additional sessions during the summer, to maintain momentum. 21st Century Thame is forward funding some of the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) grant for the agroforestry plants and irrigation system.

**Policies** – Ruth to provide a list of policies required for 21st Century Thame. Event delivery policy, Code of Conduct, refresh the Risk assessment, have asked the events to send updated risk assessments for their events. Team meeting to review the policies. Volunteers to complete a form every calendar year, to refresh every year. GDPR review in progress. Mailchimp OK - as individuals can unsubscribe when they want to. Contracts for individual groups - drafted, needs to be reviewed.

**AOB** – Jess Clarke working on Education projects for the Thame youth uniform groups and schools, in a paid role. Issac and Ali to be paid for creating woodworking items and keeping the woodworking workshop in order for the different projects and workshops when required, paid from general funds initially. Accounts to April are available on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century website.

21st Century Thame meetings every 2 months - next meeting at 9am on Friday 5th September 2025 - Racquets

## b) Chinnor RFC (Cllr Bretherton)

- First team playing in Rugby Championship again this year – first game 4 Oct.
- There are 14 teams in league this year which gives Chinnor two more home games.
- No info on Premiership cup yet
- All age grp teams continuing this year both boys and girls
- Ground improvements – new bigger stand with a roof – marquee has more permanent floor.

### c) Citizens Advice (Cllr Dite)

As most people are aware, while the Old Market House is being refurbished, the service is currently running out of Thame Library (drop in centre on Wednesdays) and rented office space in Thame. Many thanks to both the Girl Guides and Thame Town Council for the use of their space for diarised consultation space.

Although these arrangements are less than ideal, a good level of service has been maintained by the very dedicated team of Volunteers throughout

Work on the Old Market House has unfortunately over run and now not due to be completed until mid-December, so the CAB will most properly not be functioning in its normal home until the new year.

### d) Cuttle Brook Management Committee (Cllr Jones)

The path across Rycote meadow, complete with dog-proof fencing has finally been opened to the public.

Two new scrapes have been made, in addition to the existing one in Rycote Meadow – at Nontron Meadow and at Watkin's Bridge. The River Thame Conservation Trust (RCTC) have been heavily involved in the planning and building.

The Nontron Meadow one was less controversial of the two and the spoil was not required to be moved and consequently it has been assimilated into the landscape and is now almost invisible. There is a lot of floristic interest in the meadow and, with the now established and coppiced hedge, and the addition (soon) of a gate at the Oxford Road end, the area should be ideal for the attempted reintroduction of water voles. Also, with dogs excluded from the meadow the hay should be of commercial value. The scrape is spring fed and still has water in it. The temporary fencing around the scrape will go once the field is sealed. The gate will need to be wide enough to allow for the access of farm machinery to cut the hay.

The Watkin's Bridge scrape has been more controversial. The resulting spoil heap had to be disturbed and moved which has resulted in the much slower reestablishment of flora. The CBCV has spread cut hay on it to encourage the seeding of local plants but it will be next year before any significant growth can be expected – unlike the spoil heap at Nontron Meadow which is already covered in plants. The scrape has a culvert to allow fish, which may be washed into it in times of flood, to escape back into the Brook. The temporary fencing to keep dogs and their anti-flea/tic chemicals will be replaced by wooden post-and-rail fencing in due course, as agreed at the E & A council meeting. The fencing will stretch across the field from the bridge but will only fence off less than 3% of the total Cuttle Brook Reserve area. The spare ground, once fenced, will be planted with trees including (hopefully) rare black poplars.

A bid for fencing, hedging and grazing equipment has been submitted to TOE for both Nontron and Rycote meadows (c. £13k)

Other river work carried out by CBCV include the introduction of in-flow deflectors (3 complete, a fourth in progress) into the Brook to create meanders. These improve the low-flow dynamics of the water which keeps the silt moving and which allows the bottom of the brook to be scoured leading to a firmer, gravellier bottom which will encourage fish spawning and increase bio-diversity. All the materials within the deflectors are bio-degradable but they should stay put until vegetation takes hold within them and the bank slowly replaces the man-made structures.

Downstream a weir has been removed by RCTC which has also improved the flow.

A lot of Himalayan Balsam has been identified, and the volunteers have worked hard to remove it

The Environment Agency carried out a non-harmful electro-fishing exercise earlier this year with fantastic results including large pike being found in the Brook.

#### e) **Health & Social Care (Cllr Richards & Cllr Swan)**

Last meeting held in March, to be progressed further after summer holidays. Nothing further to report at this stage.

#### f) **Music in the Park (Cllr Jones)**

Music in the Park 2025 was another success, with a fairly good turn out, but it was a shame the weather turned very cold in the of middle afternoon and deterred people from attending. The date for 2026 is Sunday 3 May and MitP have already provisionally booked the headline band (A Coldplay tribute band). They have been contacted by the local churches who want to perform Primary School Bangers with the churches and schools of Thame. School band, Technical Difficulties, are booked to perform, as well as the very popular Counting Colours who performed last year at the Thame Ball. Rob Ellis, the accounts volunteer, is unfortunately having to leave the committee as the accountant, and they would like to thank him for years of service and support to MITP and they are pleased to announce that Peter Hook will be his replacement. The rest of the amazing committee remains the same. They are aware of the new Martyn's Law, and Geoff Cotton, the Site Manager, is going to be responsible for studying what is required and updates from the Government and making sure things are implemented where necessary.

#### g) **National Association of Local Councils (Cllr Dyer)**

The Town Clerk circulates the weekly newsletter from NALC to all Councillors, to which there is nothing further to add. I also aim to attend the 'Super Council' Forum meetings, held remotely twice a year, but regrettably missed the most recent due to technical issues.

#### h) **Red Kite Family Centre (Cllr Emery)**

##### **Context:**

- Red Kite Family Centre is a community-based charity that has been supporting families and carers of children aged 0–5 since 2017. Through our centres in Thame and Chinnor, we offer playgroups, parenting support, courses, and access to essential services, helping families thrive in their early years. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Thame Town Council for their continued support and for the increase in this year's grant award, now totalling £10,241. This vital funding enables us to sustain and grow our services for the local community.
- Red Kite Family Centre has been actively developing a new strategy to guide our work from 2024 to 2027, focusing on strengthening our core services and community impact. As you can see from the highlights below, these developments reflect our commitment to supporting families with meaningful, accessible services.

##### **Key Highlights:**

##### **Development Strategy**

- 26 new family registrations since April (20% increase).
- A breakfast club is launching in Chinnor this September.
- Upcoming sessions include Managing Emotions, First Aid, and Marvellous Me.
- Positive responses to workshops; self-appraisal tools are being trialled.

##### **Marketing Strategy**

- Website: 414 visits (up 44%), 226 unique visitors (up 33%).

- Facebook: following increased social media planning and execution - Link clicks up 800%, interactions up 82.8%.
- Mailing List: 5 new sign-ups; goal to grow by 10.
- Programme Reach: Distribution increased to 500 physical copies starting in September 2025.

### **Funding Strategy**

- Grants: so far this year we have had £10,241 awarded by Thame Town Council, £2500 from the Lord Lieutenants, and successfully applying to the Tesco/Groundworks for £1500; as well as new applications being submitted almost monthly. We are also trialling a Grant Writer for a couple of larger bids.
- Increased business engagement via social media; Kubota, Invictus gym and White Lion Residential featured.
- 6 new “Friends” joined so far as part of our ‘25 for 2025’; room hires remain strong.
- Spending tracks consistently with our planned budget however we are continued to be left with around a 25k annual deficit following the departure of a key funder in 2023. Increased costs and fewer business donors are key issues for this.

### **Community Engagement**

- There continues to be strong collaboration with Health Visiting Team, local schools, and nurseries.
- We have been successfully making referrals to OXPIP and CAB; including accessing support for young parents post-premature birth.
- We have increased our presence at Community Larder and find it to be mutually beneficial for both the community groups, and the service users; with some accessing our services after making contact at larder and vice versa.
- We are hosting a digital safety evening with Thames Valley Police, Thame Youth Projects and Thame Guides in October 2025.

### **Grant Award:**

- Awarded Amount: £10,241 – Lump Sum – Annual Award
- Intended Use: Staffing Costs
- As in previous years, our staffing costs proudly remain our largest overhead. Our staff are trained and deliver quality groups, embedding the EYFS learning aims in all our activities for parents and children as well as 1-2-1 support and advice regarding a range of topics.

### **i) Thame & District Housing Association (Cllr Dite)**

As my first report I thought I would share some basic details.

#### **Background**

Founded in 1964

Focused on Age 55+ housing needs

First housing scheme built in 1966

Current developments (164 dwellings)

Croft Court, Playford Court, Pearce Court, Summersbee Court – Thame

Plus, Anstey Court – Waddesdon

#### **Strategic Objectives**

Great People, Doing the Basics Right, Resident Centred Services, Quality Homes

## Key Performance Measures

Objective and Measure	2025	2027 Target	2030 Target
<b>Great People</b>			
Employee Engagement Score	80%	82%	85%
Training & Development Participation	90%	95%	95%
<b>Doing the Basics Right</b>			
Time to bring a void back to use	21 days	19 days	18 days
Compliance with Gas & Electrical testing	100%	100%	100%
Rent arrears	<2%	<1.5%	<1%
Maintenance requests dealt with on time	95%	96%	97%
<b>Resident Centred Services</b>			
Resident overall satisfaction	85%	87%	87%
Complaints dealt with on time	95%	96%	97%
Resident satisfaction with repairs	85%	87%	87%
Attendance at resident meetings	30%	35%	35%
<b>Quality Homes</b>			
Maintenance issues resolved first time	85%	90%	90%
EPC C or above	80%	85%	100%
Resident satisfaction with their home	90%	91%	92%

AGM set for 16<sup>th</sup> September

**j) Thame Barns Centre (Cllrs Baines and Dodds)**

At the AGM of the Barns Centre a discussion re environmental improvements to the building took place. An architect's brief has been produced which outlines a capital project to address energy issues and losses.

A further meeting will be convened to discuss the project and when a programme is established this will be presented to Thame Town Council.

Next meeting: Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am.

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

The March meeting, held at Windles, focussed primarily on the need to secure a banking hub for Thame, receiving a comprehensive presentation from Helen Johns on the background to the issue, feedback from other towns, and the ongoing campaign in Thame. Other subjects discussed included an update on companies' implementation of new waste regulations, a presentation from Phoenix Energy Community, and a briefing on Government plans for Local Government reform.

The next meeting was held in June at Kubota and was, disappointingly, very poorly attended but, under the circumstances, very lively and proactive. Graeme gave comprehensive coverage of current planning issues, particularly in relation to employment land, and of expected substantial planning reforms, then discussions moved on to a further update on banking hubs and a review of the Business Forum's policy in relation to outside organisations seeking a platform. An interesting range of topics were briefly covered under AOB, some of which will be carried forward for more thorough debate on future agendas. The next meeting is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## I) Thame Carnival Committee (Cllr Emery)

The annual Thame Carnival took place on Saturday 14 June 2025, running from midday to late afternoon at Southern Road Recreation Ground. Organised by The Thame Carnival of 21st Century Thame and supported by a small team of dedicated volunteers, this year's event embraced a powerful VE Day theme, honouring wartime resilience and community spirit.

A vibrant parade travelled through the town centre, led by local schools, community organisations, and vintage military vehicles. Heather the Hedgehog from Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital delighted families along the route. The Parade Cup was awarded to Thame Pride, whose float was praised for its colour, creativity and inclusivity.

The event was officially opened by Harry Smythe, son of the late Lieutenant John Smythe, a decorated RAF navigator during World War II. His presence gave a meaningful personal link to the VE Day commemorations and was warmly received by those in attendance.

Entertainment throughout the day included performances from Maria Scobey, Sandra Brooks, and the local band Je t'hame, fronted by Mayor Andy Gilbert, playing hits from the '60s and '70s. Sixteen-year-old William Scobey also wowed audiences with a modern, genre-blending musical set.

The recreation ground hosted a wide range of family attractions, including go-karts, bouncy castles, traditional games, fairground rides, food stalls, a Pimms tent, tombolas, and a BBQ. A highlight for many was the dramatic car-cutting demonstration by the fire service. The afternoon was capped by a stirring Lancaster bomber fly-past, organised by Peter Harris. (*Note: Applications for future fly-pasts must be submitted by September.*)

Operationally, the event ran smoothly thanks to the support of Thame Round Table, who assisted with logistics and stewarding, and the Thame Town Council team, who were instrumental in setting up the field early in the morning for the arrival of stallholders. Their contribution ensured a smooth and welcoming start to the day.

Feedback from stallholders was overwhelmingly positive, with most reporting a profitable day, especially for fundraising and community engagement. The event also supported three local charities: Thame Citizens Advice, Maggie's Oxford, and Florence Nightingale Hospice, each of whom had a visible and engaging presence on the day.

However, significant challenges were faced during the planning and delivery of the event. The cost of road closure security was only just met, with Oxford Security generously providing services well below the standard market rate. There is now very limited funding remaining for future Carnivals.

Most notably, all current organisers are stepping down, including long-time Carnival leader Sharon Smits, along with Darryl Slatter and John Reid-Hansen, who have also played key roles in recent years. As it stands, no date has been confirmed for 2026, and the future of the event is uncertain.

The Council is therefore asked to consider an important question: *Has Thame Carnival run its course, or should it be revived with new leadership and support?* It would be a considerable loss, especially for the many schools and community groups who have supported the event so loyally over the years.

## m) Thame Community Land Trust (Bob Austin)

Update provided under agenda item 7 of the Full Council agenda.

**n) Thame Football Partnership (TFP) (Cllr Dyer)**

My last report was at the March Council Meeting, towards the end of the football season, so there is not a lot to add, but Thame United first team finished a creditable 6th in Southern League Central, just three points from a promotional play-off place. In June, as always, the Football Partnership held its annual Festival of Football, attracting more than 200 junior teams from the surrounding area, and the close season then provided a chance to carry out maintenance and bring the pitches back up to peak condition. The new season commences this Saturday, 9th August.

**o) Thame Good Neighbour Scheme (Cllr Dollman)**

*Nothing received as at 07/08/2025*

**p) Thame Museum Trust (Cllrs Cowell & Emery)**

AGM

- 21 members present from 140 members
- Roof work completed and leak resolved
- Midsummer Murders tours have added to funds and footfall
- Received additional funding from local businesses
- Successful Exhibitions
  - Emergency Services
  - Active Thame
  - Rycote Park
  - Jonnie Smythe
  - Site F Archaeology
  - Robin Gibb weekend
  - LWS Ace week visits

New Chairman is Phil Williams

Forward Plan

- Collection review 50 % complete
- Style guide in preparation for future exhibitions

Talk by Chris Ellis at Thame Players raised £660 to be used for Archaeological exhibitions  
Adrian Dite has resigned as a Trustee

**q) Thame Senior Friendship Centre (Cllr McGarry)**

The Senior Friendship Centre operates three days a week at the Cricket Club, while the Memories Café is open on Mondays and Tuesdays at the Snooker Club. Both initiatives provide crucial companionship and support to older residents in Thame, with the Memories Café additionally offering a supportive space for carers. This service is especially valuable for carers, who often face isolation. By connecting with others in similar situations, carers not only receive emotional support but also gain insight into available services and resources.

Both the Senior Friendship Centre and the Memories Café are managed by dedicated teams, supported by a network of volunteers. Earlier this year, the charity appointed a new Chair of Trustees to further strengthen its leadership.

Due to limited funding, both centres rely on voluntary contributions from members. Fees are £10 for the Memories Cafe and £20 for the Friendship Centre. As financial sustainability remains an

ongoing challenge, the Trustees are actively seeking new funding sources to support and expand the charity's services.

In addition, the Trustees are committed to raising awareness of the centres and ensuring that as many people as possible are informed of the services offered. To achieve this, they are working on strategies to improve signposting through local health professionals, the Town Council, and other community organisations, with the goal of reaching those who could benefit most from the charity's support.

**r) Thame Shed (Cllr Cowell)**

- Currently 70 members, small number of women, 1 SEND young person and 1 wheelchair user
- Undertake woodwork, metalwork, and now moving into electronics
- Currently building their own Electronic CNC router
- Built Mezzanine floor for storage and have 2 containers as well
- Will pick up old tools and machinery from shed / garage clear-outs
- Work with Work Aid in Chesham, who refurbish tools, sewing machines and knitting machines
- Refurbished items are built into kits, e.g. carpentry tools and sent to Africa
- People join to do a project, learn, or just have a coffee and talk.
- Space is now an issue as they wish to expand, Rugby Club still require space at the back for Tractor
- Space in the front of the entrance could be used, however owned by Showground and would require a new building.

**s) Thame Sinaia Friendship Association (Cllr Wilde)**

*Nothing received as at 07/08/2025*

**t) Thame Sports Club (Cllr Jones)**

The one important development at the Sports Club has been the installation of the solar panels on the roof. TSC Ltd received a grant from SODC towards the cost.

They also held a joint open morning in May which attracted quite a bit of interest.

**u) Thame Town Cricket Club (Cllr Jones)**

We are currently two 3rds of the way through, what has been, a very sunny and dry 2025 season. This, in marked contrast, to rain deluge we had last year which meant the season didn't get under way until mid/late May.

So, the weather has been favourable and we have had good success on and off the pitch. We currently run 6 adult teams and we have had good availability throughout the season so plenty of playing time had for all.

Our membership is growing year on year and notably in the junior section where we have seen +50% growth in number over the past 2 years. There are a number of reasons for this; including increasing population of the town, the club being more accessible and more community focussed, social media drive to communicate with its members and the local population, All Stars program for the youngsters enabling them to access cricket for the first time (whilst the parent relax with a glass or too ;-), introduction of new teams; including the girl's team over the past few years.

We have also hosted some very well attended events such as the Summer Ball, Oxfordshire vs Surrey Showcase, Oxfordshire Women vs Cornwall, The Grey Ashes between England and Australia just to name a few.

So, all very positive.

Where are our key challenges? – as there are always a few considering the usage, the club gets. I'd say we need to focus on the ground and its usage. As we only have one main ground there is huge demand for the space for matches and training. For our second ground (where our Men's 3s and 4s play) we rent the cricket pitch every Saturday from the Lord Williams School.

This second ground is vital for the club and it's important that the wicket, pitch and facilities are of a required standard.

At present we feel the facilities need to be improved as a priority. The club and the league have standards which I feel aren't be met currently. Something which perhaps we can discuss in more detail when we meet. Any council support with this would be amazing.

#### **v) Thame Welfare Trust (Cllr McGarry)**

The primary objective of the Thame Welfare Trust is to alleviate hardship, distress, or need for individuals residing within the parish of Thame. This is achieved by providing grants or funding services and facilities aimed at reducing such needs, either on a general or individual basis.

The Trust convenes twice annually to review and consider requests for assistance. These requests may come directly from individuals or through referral from organizations such as Citizens Advice, the Sharing Life Trust, local health professionals, and schools within Thame.

In addition to the biannual meetings, the Trust has an emergency grants committee that operates year-round. This committee is responsible for reviewing and approving emergency applications and grants that are typically below £1,000.

#### **w) Thame Youth Memorial Trust (Cllr Dyer)**

Following the recent renovation of the gardens TYM have implemented a monthly volunteer rota for cleaning, garden maintenance and general upkeep and have received numerous supportive comments from the community. Other maintenance, including resolving water leaking from a underground stopcock, replacing the electricity box, fitting a new wooden door & frame to the pump maintenance access, and trimming hedges have continued through the summer. The Trust continues to be financially healthy and there is no immediate need for any special fund raising.

#### **x) Thame Youth Projects Group (Cllr Wainwright)**

Thame Youth Projects remains a very active and well-run group, with good governance. As the only free-to-access youth provision in the area, TYPG plays a vital role for those who might otherwise have nowhere to go after school, or during the holidays. There is good evidence of a lot of positive feedback from parents and young people involved.

Needs of that TYPG encounter in Thame include Social, Emotional, Mental Health issues, Not in Education, Employment or Training, Emotional Based School Avoidance/ Social Isolation, Special Educational Needs, and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

During 24/25 they supported 1296 young people's visits to activities, with an increase in new attendees of 111 young people, ran 22 wide-ranging holiday activities, supported Lord Williams's School with over 95 sessions, & developed a Young Leader Programme for 4 young leaders, who also provide valuable weekly support.

In term-time they provide weekly Youth Café for students in school years 7-9, with noticeable increase in year 7. For years 10-13, they focus efforts on a more targeted approach, for those who need it. Throughout the school holidays there are a wide range of experiences for young people, including Laser Tag, Golf, Movie Nights, Activity Day, Cooking Sessions, Book Club, Board Games Sessions.

Their employed youth-worker has continued to work closely with Lord Williams's School to support young people through various initiatives; providing 1:1 mentoring at the upper school, lunchtime engagement at both schools, connecting with new students, supporting Pride Club, support during ACE week, with summer school to welcome the new Year 7 students, participation in Future Fest, and career guidance.

Challenges for TYPG, that impact youth, are largely:

1. **Funding** is the most critical element. It currently costs just under £41k a year to maintain the provision they are providing. Thame Town Council provides £15k of this, the rest rely on donations, vigorous fundraising, and grant applications, which they are constantly working on
2. **Volunteers:** There is one paid youth worker, with no additional admin support there is heavy reliance on volunteers for increasing numbers of youth who are declaring anxiety, SEN, and medical needs. It can be difficult to provide this through volunteers alone, and there is scope for more paid support.
3. **Space/building:** For general activities TYP rely on hiring different facilities around Thame; a community / youth centre would be very beneficial for young people, and make a huge impact on their work.

#### y) Transport Representative (Cllr Bretherton)

Last meeting on 8 July. Notes from mtg provided 7 Aug.

- BSiP approved by cabinet 27 March
- New interactive bus maps for towns being created – not sure when Thame will be available.
- MyBus tickets system very popular – so popular may have to increase the price of ticket.
- BSiP infrastructure planned
  - More real-time information screens
  - More bus priority schemes at traffic lights
  - Gloucester Green bus station improvements
  - General bus stop improvements £575K
- Vehicle improvement fund is at £1.4m
- Botley road bridge works – extended by Network Rail to Aug 2026
- 400 service does not run west of Botley Rd bridge. New service 4b instead.
- X40 service to Reading
  - New 6-wheel buses
  - Every 20 mins M-F
  - Better late night services.

#### z) Twinning Association (Cllr Emery)

The Thame & District Twinning Association was pleased to host 17 visitors from Montesson, our twin town in France, over the weekend of 2nd to 4th May. Guests were hosted by local families, several of whom have welcomed the same visitors for many years—some relationships stretching back over two decades. These exchanges continue to strengthen the personal and cultural bonds between our towns.

The weekend began with a welcome gathering at Thame Town Hall on Friday evening, where Mayor Andy Gilbert formally greeted our guests and helped launch the weekend in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

On Saturday, our joint excursion was to the British Museum in London, a venue specifically requested by our visitors. After a morning exploring the exhibits, both groups enjoyed a shared picnic in Bloomsbury Gardens. The fine weather and relaxed setting allowed for informal conversations and the renewal of longstanding friendships.

That evening, we held a social event at Towersey Manor Barn. Sue Motteram and her team provided a generous and beautifully presented buffet, which was very well received. Entertainment was provided by local band Je T'hame, and the evening featured dancing and celebration enjoyed by both guests and hosts.

Sunday was left free for visitors to spend time with their host families. Many enjoyed walks, visits to local pubs, or simply relaxing at home; quiet, personal moments that are central to the success of twinning.

Our thanks go to all those who contributed to making the weekend such a success: our hosts, drivers, caterers, organisers, and volunteers. These events depend entirely on their continued generosity and commitment.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for our return visit to Montesson in September. A full programme is expected, and Mayor Andy Gilbert is also planning a cycle trip to meet with cycling enthusiasts from Montesson, further developing shared interests within our communities.

Our Annual General Meeting was held recently and was well attended. The committee was re-elected. However, our Chair has indicated her hope that a new volunteer might come forward to take on the role in the near future, as part of healthy succession planning. The AGM was followed by a cheese and wine evening, which was enjoyed by all and helped maintain the sociable spirit of the group.

We are pleased to report that our finances remain in good health. Once again, we will be subsidising the coach travel for members attending the Montesson visit, helping to make participation more accessible to all.

The association continues to run a programme of local fundraising and social events throughout the year, including quiz nights, food and wine evenings, and garden gatherings. These events help fund the exchanges and provide valuable opportunities for engagement between visits. They are open to all and help promote a wider sense of community around the town's international connections.

We are always keen to welcome new members, and we encourage councillors to help promote the association within the community. Twinning offers local residents the chance to take part in affordable, well-organised travel and cultural exchange, as well as enjoy sociable, low-commitment events here in Thame. French language skills or hosting ability are not essential, just an interest in people and community life.

We thank the Council for its ongoing support and look forward to continuing to represent Thame with pride in our international friendship with Montesson.