

Brief historical context

Following the decision of Oxfordshire County Council to cut funding to the majority of its locality-based children's centres and to concentrate its statutory services in a few regional hubs, it was decided to establish a local community run charity to continue the work of our local children's centre.

The Red Kite Family Centre charity was set up in January 2017, trustees were appointed, and the centre opened with its new leader and staff team in place in April 2017. Since then it has been operating very successfully and this report highlights its main achievements and the value it brings to all families with young children in our area.

Trustees

John Hulett (chair)
Rosie Pearce
Sarah Roberts
Mary Stiles
Katie English
Lottie Curry

The trustees have continued to hold regular meetings during the year and these are fully recorded and notes of outcomes are available on request.

Staff Team

Amy Spicer – Family Centre Leader
Catherine Myles – Early Years Family Worker
Helen Burton – Early Years Family Worker Assistant
Julie Tattersfield - Early Years Family Worker Assistant
Emma Spink – Family Centre Administrator

All these posts are part-time and the Early Years Family Worker and Assistants work largely during the school terms. A part-time cleaner is also employed.

The provision offered by the centre

There are two main bases for activities, the main centre in Southern Road, Thame and the satellite centre in rooms at Chinnor Library. Through these bases the centre offers a full programme of universal (open to all parents of under 5s) activities each week and they are also used fully by NHS midwives, health visitors and speech and language therapists. This partnership with health professionals provides a 'one-stop shop' of advice, support and activities for all parents with pre-school children from birth to 4yrs old. The centre staff continue to work closely with Oxfordshire Early Help support team and children's services and the centre is often hired by social services for contact meetings and other case review meetings. Towards the end of the period covered by this report we entered into an agreement with a local landowner in the neighbouring village of Moreton. She offered the Family Centre a plot of land to be used for outdoor learning activities. It was already equipped with a large polytunnel providing some weather protection. Some funding was obtained to provide the necessary equipment and toilet facilities to make this plot of land operational. It was due to be launched during the summer term of

2021 and to be known as our 'Outdoor Explorers' site. A three-year rent free lease agreement has been signed for this.

Overview of the year's activities

The trustees and Family Centre Leader acknowledge that the future sustainability of the Family Centre is dependent on two key factors:

1. The local community recognising the positive impact that the work of the centre is having on the lives of all parents and pre-school children in our area.
2. Attracting the funding needed to manage the running of the centres in Thame and Chinnor and having effective plans in place to achieve this.

The year covered by this report was dominated by the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns that were imposed on the nation. These had a severe impact on the Family Centre provision during this time and also on our fundraising capability.

Lockdown 1

From the beginning of the pandemic lockdown on March 25th 2020 the Family Centre had to close and cease all activities. Most of the staff were furloughed using the government's scheme. The leader and one other staff member retained some hours so as to maintain contact with families through phone and email support. The initial easing of lockdown restrictions in June 2020 still did not allow the kind of activities run by the centre to resume. Plans were begun for a commencement of activities in September.

Autumn 2020 and second national lockdown

On-going restrictions meant that Family Centre based sessions would have to be severely restricted in numbers and a rigorous contact tracing regime established. Because of the smaller numbers attending, additional sessions were built into the programme so that more families could benefit. This increased our staffing costs but was offset from savings during the furlough arrangements. All staff were re-instated at the beginning of September. This programme ran successfully during September and October but on 5th November a new national lockdown was imposed because of rising case numbers. All staff were furloughed for a proportion of their time with a few 'skeleton' hours being retained for essential administration and for maintaining contact with families. During this lockdown the following priorities were agreed by the trustees:

Priority 1: Ensuring the wellbeing of all members of the staff team who were now having to balance support for their families and childcare with work responsibilities.

Priority 2: We agreed that the basic minimum that should be offered was informal support to our known list of 'vulnerable families', and this was managed in a different way to lockdown 1 so as not to put undue pressure on the centre leader and family support worker.

Priority 3: Some staff expressed a willingness to support some 'Zoom' groups for new mums and also provide activity packs for home use by families. An agreed package of enhanced web-based activities was put in place. Some time was also given to preparing the Forest School site at Moreton.

These priorities were achieved in the following way:

- Each member of the staff team was asked to work for the equivalent of one day's worth of their normal weekly hours and an absolute maximum of two days' worth.
- Furlough was therefore offered for up to four-fifths of a staff member's normal number of hours.
- The exception to this was Emma, our administrator, as the nature of her work meant that it could be more easily achieved through home working. She was invited to work as many of her normal hours as possible.
- Amy, centre leader, was asked to share the known caseload of families being supported amongst all her staff family workers (Catherine, Helen, Mandy and Rebecca). This was seen as a useful upskilling experience for them.

- With priority 1 in mind all staff were asked to put clear boundaries around the hours they gave to Family Centre work and Amy in particular was encouraged to have a mentor/friend to help her to monitor this family-work balance.

Lockdown 3 - January to March 2021

The arrangements described for lockdown 2 were continued during the third lockdown lasting from January 6th until 6th March 2021. However, the trustees agreed to top-up all furloughed staff salaries to their normal level for this period in recognition of all the extra effort they had given to maintaining service provision through such a challenging and stressful time.

Fundraising and Financial Position

All fundraising events were cancelled because of the pandemic and this had a significant impact on our donation income. Most subscribers to our 'Friends' scheme continued their support which was gratifying. Overall financial support for the Family Centre was however sustained during the year with grants being received from the Town Council, local businesses, Covid support grant and other grant making bodies. We were also fortunate in obtaining a National Lotteries Community Fund grant to provide the additional finance needed to run more sessions with smaller numbers.

During the course of the year inter-agency co-operation continued. There was regular liaison with our local Citizens Advice Bureau and Sharing Life Trust, a charity operating a foodbank in the area. Particular attention was given to ensuring that families identified as vulnerable or struggling were given additional support and that signposting to other support agencies was provided. NHS health professionals including midwives, health visitors and speech and language therapists stopped using the centre during the periods of lockdown but we continued to work closely with them particularly in supporting parents with new-born babies and children in their first two years.

J.Hulett, Chair of Trustees.

RED KITE FAMILY CENTRE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Donations;				
Individuals	10046		18815	
Companies/Trusts etc	47052		70820	
Gift Aid	—		386	
	-----	57098	-----	90021
Grants		31157		15000
Subscriptions[Friends Scheme]		2672		1888
Fundraising Events		2265		10686
Holiday Club				860
Off site Activities		2020		2614
Room Hire		3122		3117
Sundries				552
Courses				494
		-----		-----
Total Income		98334		125232
		-----		-----
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries		57270		51799
Start up Costs		2186		1079
Rent		5050		6600
Insurance		56		271
Utilities		2391		3464
Repairs and Maintenance		3683		24125
Courses				1692
Fundraising Expenses				3335
Holiday Club Expenses				705
Off site Expenses		7450		8471
DBS Checks		33		10
Staff Training				874
Session Costs		3030		1243
Depreciation		348		348
Telecom		1085		382
		-----		-----
Total Expenditure		82582		104416
		-----		-----
Surplus for the year		15752		20816
		=====		=====

RED KITE FAMILY CENTRE
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				348
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	555		2938	
Bank	106898		91538	
	-----		-----	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	107453		94476	
Accrued Expenses	-2138		985	
	-----		-----	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		109591		93491
		-----		-----
NET ASSETS		109591		93839
		=====		=====
ACCUMULATED FUNDS				
Brought Forward	93839		72023	
Surplus for the year	15752		20816	
	-----		-----	
		109591		93839
		=====		=====

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE RED KITE FAMILY CENTRE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Red Kite Family Centre [The Trust] for the year ended 31st March 2021

RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 [The Act]

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 [5][b] of the Act

INDEPENDANT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in accordance with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect;

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Keith Tattersfield FCA

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