



**Red Kite**  
FAMILY CENTRE

*Being there for every family*

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June 8<sup>th</sup> 2021

### **Friends Update June 2021**

Dear Friends of the Red Kite Family Centre,

It's been several months since the publishing of our last Friends Newsletter in December 2020, so I felt that it was important to give you an update on the work of the Family Centre during the first half of this year. I hope that we can produce a newsletter before the end of the summer term, but in the meantime this letter will bring you the headlines.

Firstly, as always, on behalf the staff team and trustees, I want to say a heartfelt 'thank you' for your continuing financial support during what has been such an exceptional and challenging time for everyone at the Family Centre, as I know it has been for many within our community. With the aid of your regular donations and the continuing support we receive from business and the local councils I am pleased to say that we have 'weathered the storm' of the pandemic well in financial terms and are confident that our operation is sustainable well beyond the end of this current financial year. It is still our intention to re-launch the Friends scheme at some point in order to attract further community support, and we think this coming autumn is the most likely time for that to happen for reasons that will become clear as you read on through this letter.

After a brief period during the autumn 2020 between the end of the first lockdown and the beginning of the second, we were able to run some centre-based activities again. However, with Lockdown 3 being introduced in January, all activities had to stop and all of the staff were furloughed for some of their hours. Each staff member did keep working for some hours each week. Special weekly activity newsletters were produced (still on website if you would like to look) and personal contact was maintained with families we knew were most in need of support and encouragement. We were also able to keep the preparation of our new outdoor activity space at Moreton Barn Farm going and this is now nearing completion. With great relief, centre-based sessions have now started up again in both Thame and Chinnor and many are oversubscribed as we are still having to limit numbers so as to operate in as covid-safe an environment as we can. The staff are working closely with NHS colleagues ensuring that as many mothers with 'newborns' are able to come to sessions and meet other mums.

In the middle of all this, as you may have heard, Amy Spicer, our Family Centre Leader announced that she was leaving as she was taking up a new post as Family Support Manager at Auditory Verbal uk, a national charity working with families with hearing impaired children. Amy had been with us for 7 years, firstly as leader of the state-run children's centre, and then continuing into the new role of Family Centre Leader when we

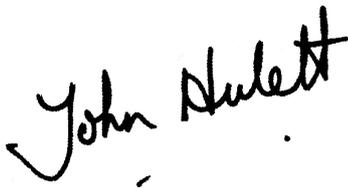
became a community run charity. It was Amy's commitment to managing this transition that played such a big part in the success of keeping the centre alive and gaining the support from so many in the local area. We quite understand that Amy felt it was time to move on, and she actually left on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Because of lockdown we haven't yet been able to say a proper 'thank you' to Amy so we have arranged a **farewell barbecue for her on the evening of Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Please make a note of the date as you will be invited.

Recruitment of a new Family Centre Leader has proved challenging at this time, but we are hopeful of having a new person in post in time for the new year's programme in September. In the meantime, Catherine Myles and Helen Burton are joint acting Family Centre Leaders and they are doing an excellent job at not only 'keeping the ship afloat' but working hard to ensure that we are in touch with as many families within the local community as we can be.

Sadly, at the end of May, Emma Spink our Administrator, also moved on to a new job so as you can imagine, life has been pretty hectic! We will be interviewing for this post later this week so hopefully we will have a new person in this role very soon.

As a footnote, and on a slightly lighter note, you may have heard that half the Family Centre roof blew off last July. I am pleased to report that, after many delays, the county (who we lease the building from) agreed that it was a fault in the original installation that caused this and so the cost was met by their insurance rather than our hard-won bank balance! A new roof was installed in January.

Thank you all again for your on-going support.  
Best wishes,



John Hulett, Chair of Trustees.