

Report for Thame Alliance Group (TAG) for their meeting on 23rd February 2023

- The Family Centre meets in the former children's centre building on the corner between Rooks Lane and Southern Road. This building is leased from Oxfordshire County Council.
- This is a purpose-built space for parents and 0-4yr old children. There is also a satellite centre in Chinnor Library. Both have been running since April 2017.
- The Family Centre offers a range of universal provision for parents and children (programme attached). In addition, it offers specialist sessions for specific groups with additional needs.
- The Family Centre also offers advice and support on a range of topics related to parenting and the needs of young children.
- We have a highly qualified and experienced staff team of 5 people all working part-time.
- The Family Centre Manager is Marie Scott and there is also a board of 6 trustees.
- We operate as a community run registered charity known as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- The Family Centre now has 305 families registered and 256 of these attended at least one activity during the last year. Many attend much more regularly.
- 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.
- Our motto is 'Being there for every family' and our aim is to reach and support as many of the families with young children in our area as we can. ONS statistics suggest that there are about 760 children of 0-4yrs old in Thame and 500 in Chinnor.
- The Family Centre used to cost about £70k a year to run. With the increased costs from inflation, energy price rises and staff salary increases, this is now nearer £100k a year.
- We receive no state funding at all. All our funding comes from grants, private donations and business support. We are grateful for Thame Town Council continuing their support grant which is currently for £10k. Unfortunately, we have recently lost a significant business sponsor as their company has gone into administration. This is resulting in an annual shortfall of about £24k. The trustees are actively engaged in sourcing further financial support at a particularly challenging time for personal and business finances.
- The trustees are determined to ensure that this much valued resource for the local community continues at a time when the vital importance of the first 5 years of life is again being highlighted nationally.