

**Thame Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Thame Alliance Group (TAG) – Tuesday 8 October 2024**

Present: Alison Champken-Woods, Tricia Hook, Sarah & John Hurell, Marie Scott, Phil Stratton, Ewan Shinton, Ruth Taylor, Rebecca Vaughan, Linda Newton, Karen Fuller, Dan Levenson, and Vic Walton. Dr. D Faller, Rycote Practice.

1. **Welcome** – Phil Stratton
2. **Apologies:** Annie Jenkins (SoHA), Cllr Andy Gilbert (Mayor), Mandy Sturdy (Town Clerk), Hannah Kape (Thame Youth Projects)
3. **Minutes** for last meeting - approved
4. **Streets of Light Event** – Ruth Taylor from Grace Church announced a new initiative for businesses/residents to decorate their windows to promote - Love, Light and Hope, on any business windows and homes, people have to sign up by next Tuesday 15 October 2024. A craft afternoon will be held at Christchurch on Saturday 19 October 2024, to aid with window decoration ideas. The official Streets of Light event takes place from 26 October to 23 November, with windows lit up from 5.30pm to 9.30pm. People taking part can download a map to show the locations who are taking part. Please can you share the advertising and encourage residents/business to take part in the first event.
5. Money Coaching Course – Ruth Taylor – running money coaching course in October half term – to help people not in debt but more to provide support and coaching to manage their money, these sessions can be based, within clients' homes or there is a group session taking place in Lee Court in November. Support is flexible for those who want individual assistance or within a group. There is a capacity to help more people, if anyone has any referrals.
6. Presentation from Karen Fuller – Oxfordshire County Council, Adult Social Care Team and Dan Levenson, Place Director for Oxfordshire – Integrated Care Board (ICB). They highlighted the importance of the Oxfordshire Place-Based Partnership and the importance of other agencies to deliver care/services going forward within Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West (BOB). The new Integrated Neighbourhood Teams are crucial to delivering coordinated care to the population within BOB however, this is a slow process.

Karen Fuller explained, OCC Adult Social Care focuses on providing essential services within individuals' homes and communities. These services include hospital-level care delivered at home, aimed at supporting those who are unwell and helping them recover in a familiar environment.

The initiative to develop integrated teams is designed to support individuals with long-term health conditions or frailty, promoting their ability to remain at home and reducing the need for hospital visits and admissions. In cases where hospitalization is necessary, the goal is to facilitate quicker transitions to home-based recovery.

The approach emphasizes health and social care collaboration aimed at improving outcomes for individuals rather than merely focusing on financial

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aspects. By understanding and describing patients' conditions rather than just prescribing treatments, care teams can help individuals recuperate more effectively at home.

Recent initiatives, such as roadshows highlighting the top ten hospitals in Oxfordshire for minimizing bed-blocking, demonstrate the commitment to enhancing home care services, which now average over 34,000 hours weekly.

The "discharge to assess" model has mobilized 100 staff from hospitals into the community to evaluate patients' needs in their home settings. Since the implementation of the new system in January 2024, positive outcomes have been reported.

Furthermore, the Oxfordshire Way initiative, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, has fostered partnerships with voluntary organizations to enhance adult social care. As a result, delays in hospital discharges have decreased, and the average length of hospital stays has reduced, allowing for quicker recovery times and better care in patients' homes.

Dan Leveson addressed the issues regarding Community Funding and Collaboration with State Provision to aid fund Homelessness and Community Gaps. Community projects can help raise funds to help address homelessness and social isolation by promoting connections, such as through park runs and tailored initiatives to help with funding and companionship. Strengthening grassroots efforts to identify and bridge service gaps is vital.

Addressing Social and Regional Inequalities, significant disparities exist in life expectancy and deprivation levels between areas like Thame and Blackbird Leys. Targeted funding and localised analysis are needed to address these inequalities.

Challenges in Healthcare Access, barriers include inadequate GP funding for deprived areas, transport challenges, and digital exclusion. Proposed solutions include revising funding models and improving transport and digital inclusion.

Debt and Fuel Poverty areas perceived as affluent may still face financial hardships and fuel poverty. Support programs should address these hidden challenges.

Leveraging existing resources, the Live Well Oxfordshire website offers valuable local support information. Expanding and maintaining this resource is crucial to better serve the community.

Healthcare Integration and Cross-Border Issues regional variations in service priorities and cross-border challenges (e.g., patients from Thame accessing services in Stoke Mandeville) require improved coordination and oversight to ensure equitable service delivery.

The role of BOB ICS (Integrated Care System) is to provide collaborative efforts across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West with an aim to

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standardise service delivery and address systemic issues like long waiting lists and resource allocation. This is the biggest challenge to ensure that the cross-border communication, funding and that resource allocation is available for all. Currently Thame cannot access some facilities as one GP practice at the Health Centre practice is under the Buckinghamshire remit.

Infrastructure and Resource needs for an aging healthcare infrastructure and limited resources pose challenges. Optimising current assets and prioritising capital investments are immediate concerns. To equal access to level up or level down to make services available for all without the cross-border issues.

Integrated Care Systems are improving coordination between healthcare and social care systems will streamline processes, enabling individuals to access services with less complexity. To aid long waiting lists, look at the services available in the areas and to ask are people willing to travel to receive the care they need. To aid GPs to get advice, improve social care by using systems to work together to enable the patient/person to access the support they need once.

**Key Action Points**

- Increase awareness of available resources.
- Address regional disparities through improved coordination. (5 upper tier councils, city and different organisations to reduce variations)
- Advocate for equitable funding models.
- Prioritise infrastructure improvements.
- Adopt integrated care models to simplify access to support.

**7. AOB**

Red kite Family Centre - Have held summer play events in Thame and Chinnor. The Centre is targeting community evening events for professionals to network, such as neuro diverse evenings or Coaching professionals to help others who work in the Special Needs sector.

Thame Youth Projects - Have had a busy summer for both the Youth Café on Wednesday, (school year 7-9), and the Tuesday Afternoon Youth Zone (school year 10-13) there is a challenge to find volunteers to help at the sessions.

Half-term activities include book club, film night and activity day.

On Sunday 1 December the Santa Fun Run commencing from Invictus Fitness at 9.30am will take place with funds going to the Thame Youth Projects.

Thame Senior Friendship Centre – The Board of Trustees have recently recruited four new trustees. Stephen Chandler from OCC is investigating possible funding for the Thame Memory Café to hold a second morning dedicated to support those people living with dementia.

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Citizens Advice – The Citizens Advice Service held a big 85<sup>th</sup> celebration in September, inviting those who had supported the service as a volunteer, trustee or supporter of the service.

The three drop in mornings have been very busy where there the volunteers have not been able to cope with the number of people calling in. There are such a variety of issues such as employment, housing and debit.

From the beginning of February South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) will be undertaking refurbishment work of the Market House Public Toilets for six months. With the Citizen Advice team struggling to find alternative accommodation, SODC offered a place in Abingdon which is not suitable for volunteers or users needing access to the service from Thame to travel too. The temporary location requires enough room for 8 volunteers to be office based. The main concern is to preserve the drop in facilities and to retain valued volunteers. Suggestions to contact the Thame Fire Station and the possibility of using the Red Kite Family Centre. Thame Town Council has offered a small meeting room for appointment-based sessions.

Citizen Advice is joining forces with Oxfordshire, South and Vale, West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and other County Councils linking up to provide services centrally, there will be no changes to local services but more extensive cover.

**Sharing Life Trust**

There is continued demand for the food bank with a figure to date at 60%, which is an increase of 23% from the same time last year. The Trust are spending an average of £1,600 per month to top up the stock for shopping. Regular support of cash donations is crucial to enable the food bank to keep up with the demand.

**8. Date of next meetings:**

- a. Tuesday 4 February 2025 - 2pm
- b. Tuesday 3 June 2025 - 2pm
- c. Tuesday 7 October 2025 2pm