



## **Report to Charlbury Town Council by The Thomas Gifford Trust**

**June 2021**

### **1. Coronavirus Support**

Now that shielding is no longer recommended for vulnerable people and the Co-op have stopped offering a “tab” for people buying on behalf of others, we have decided to gently withdraw the Community Support scheme. Some of the volunteers have come to a private arrangement with the people they help. One person still uses the Community Centre helpline on a regular basis. We pay for her shopping and liaise with the volunteer on her behalf.

As most councillors already know, we ran some successful schemes during the pandemic. As well as the volunteer support scheme above, there was a “Keep Charlbury Active” campaign through which we added up the miles people collectively walked, run or cycled and made it round the coast of GB; the “Spring Clean” litter picking, where we collected and disposed of 150 bags of litter; The Youth Project which built free raised beds for people and arranged for young people to help with gardening (and earn a bit of money); and the Learning Café to give support to children’s home learning.

### **2. Sporting and leisure activities**

Whilst some sports have been able to restart and are as popular as ever, there are still a few things that can’t resume yet, including our fund-raising activities, such as quiz nights. A new singing session for babies and toddlers has had to be postponed because of the extension to restrictions and the Strength and Balance sessions run by Age UK have not yet resumed. The very young and older people have probably been the most adversely affected by the pandemic, so we would like to get as many of these services up and running as possible. In some cases (such as the Bump-to-Two group) it has been difficult to attract customers back. Others, such as Toddler Gym are as popular as ever. Three classes a week are still being conducted over Zoom because it is impractical to run them in a Covid safe way indoors. The Friday coffee club for the elderly has been very enthusiastically resumed and they are all extremely grateful to have had coffees and cake delivered and a chance to do group chats over the phone throughout the pandemic. But very glad to be able to now meet in person. (They are offered subsidised coffees at only £1 a cup).

### **3. Children’s Holiday Club**

In collaboration with St. Mary’s Church, we are once again offering a holiday club for 4–11-year-olds, where children can spend the morning doing craft activities in the church and are then walked up to the Community Centre for an afternoon of sports and other activities, led by our Youth Co-ordinator, Charlotte Hansford. This will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> August and people can send their children to the whole thing or just parts of it.

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# THOMAS GIFFORD TRUST

## **4. Career Mentoring**

As reported last time, a recent new initiative is the Career Mentoring Scheme for 16-18 year olds, which is the brainchild of one of our new trustees, Stuart Duff, who has long experience on school governing boards. We now have plenty of trained volunteer mentors but we still need some young people to use the free service. Stuart hopes this will pick up in the autumn term, when they go back to school and start thinking about their futures.

## **5. Finances**

Due to some excellent work in raising grant funding, we feel more optimistic about our financial position than we dared to hope 12 months ago. We are forecast to break even this year, which is fantastic considering how much of a hit our income took, especially over the winter months, when the sports hall gets much more use. We will be depending on everything opening up sufficiently for the coming winter to be fully functional, as we need the cricket nets and indoor football to bring in the revenue.

## **6. Playing Close**

The tree work which was recommended by the recent tree survey on the Playing Close has now been ordered, thanks to the grant from the Town Council to help with this and other maintenance.

We have been in discussion with some of the residents on the top road and side road of the Playing Close (which are owned by TGT) about the problems caused by them parking their vehicles on this road rather than on their own properties. It causes delivery vans and other vehicles to drive over the verges, causing more damage to the road edges and the grass. We plan to set up a working party, hopefully with the help of some of those residents, to do some repairs to the potholes in that road.

## **7. Thomas Gifford Trustee appointed by the Town Council**

We are delighted to welcome Gary Harrison from the Town Council as our newest trustee and we can already see that he is going to be a great asset. Gary is going to look at our existing booking system and options going forward.

*Tanya Stevenson*

Trustee, Thomas Gifford Trust

19.6.21