

Manager's Report November 2021

Item 5.2.1



Hale Community Centre

Commercial Hiring

Please see Centre Administrator's report

Income:

	2020/21		2021/22
	Invoiced amount	Value of cancelled bookings	Invoiced amount
Aug	£ 829.00	£1185.50	£1,516.30
Sept	£2735.75	£240.75	£2,639.75
Oct	£3387.70	£540.00	£2,287.50

Some bookings have had to cancel due to lack of take up. We continue to have to turn some bookings away due to lack of space or times available and although we have tried to communicate with the Family Centre in order to book their space when available, it continues to be an issue. Because we were unable to host some sessions for the NCT they cancelled whole programmes which lost a total of £1895.50 in potential income between November 21 and March 22.

Grant funding

An application has been made to Waverley Borough Council for the Thriving Communities fund for funding for the continuation of Girlz Club, to establish a Boyz Club and to run Code Club. Norma and I expressed our concerns about the application process and the criteria for funding strongly to Councillors and officers as we believe that the competitive tendering process used does not fit and there were restrictions on what we were allowed to request funding for that did not help our operational model. The funding was for the delivery of activities and services but no funding could be claimed for any core costs or staff to manage these nor indeed for proper cost recovery of resource costs: I quote: We do not support capital or equipment costs although you may include costs for a small amount of necessary materials for direct delivery towards the activity or service. For example, you may be applying for funding towards an arts activity for young carers and this could include a small amount of associated art materials.

Grant funding received August – October 2021 – total value £27,367.00

Fareshare via Waitrose – towards Community Fridge £1000.00

Community Foundation for Surrey – running and staff costs for Fridge and Share Store £10361.00

Reaching Communities – first tranche of funding, 6 months £16006.00

Donations

Astra Recycling £131.00

Café sales £73.90

General donations into Centre £49.08

Regular donations via bank £65 per month

Gift Aid

We continue to ask any donors who are eligible to complete a Gift Aid form to be claimed at the end of the financial year.

Social Impact

Our increasing social impact can be seen in the draft annual report and the figures contained therein. In addition to this Emma has been increasing engagement with the Community and we have received valuable feedback which will inform future activity. See Engagement report for more information.

Increasing business This has been put on hold while we consolidate our current activities and projects and will be reviewed as part of the Business Plan review early next year.

Projects and Engagement CoOrdinator

Following Fiona's resignation, we were fortunate to be able to secure 10 hours a week from Emma Swinden, who used to run Girlz Club, a very experienced community worker. She has really stepped up and done some great work in increasing engagement with the local community – please see separate report for details. The funding we have is for a 15 hour post and obviously Emma cannot cover the whole scope of the position in the hours she can commit so the Project CoOrdinator role is not being fulfilled. Because of other engagement activities taking place in the New Year from the PCN and Healthwatch, Emma and I have discussed moving her attention from this to reviewing the projects and setting up a monitoring and evaluation framework to feed into a social impact report for next year.

For Board consideration: we have an underspend in the Wellness funding which I would like to put towards employing a Project CoOrdinator to work with Emma to take over managing and reviewing the activities and services we run. I would suggest this is a 10 hour a week post for a year which would require some unrestricted funds to be allocated to this.

The Wellness Funding was for one year and will finish at the end of March 2022. I would like to request that the £12000 restart grant received from the Government is designated to fund Emma for another year after this as she has added immense value to what we do.

Hale Community Centre projects:

Youth Work

Tracy has really made great strides with getting herself connected within the community and starting to build a team and starting a universal evening session. We have received the first 6 months of funding from Reaching Communities and are looking to recruit a qualified assistant for Tracy for next term.

See separate report for more detail.

Girlz Club

The girls have now transitioned to senior school and weekly between 17 and 20 girls attend, meaning that a single session can now be offered. One of the volunteers has had to stand down but Gillian Hope, another long term centre volunteer, has joined the team.

See separate report for more details.

Community Garden

Although only few intermittent people attend the weekly garden drop in, the core team continue to work hard to keep the garden in production. Some work is being done on the boat to weatherproof it and re-plant it (many people have expressed concern that we were going to take it away!).

The garden has been recognised with several awards: At Farnham Town Council's annual Farnham in Bloom Awards evening on 6th October, the Hale Community Centre's community garden received the Madge Green Community Garden Award and we were awarded Level 4 (Thriving) Award for our Get Growing Gardening Project from South & South East in Bloom

For more information please do keep your eye on the Blog on our website, written by Jean (big thanks to her for capturing information on press mentioned and keeping this record for the Centre)

<https://www.halecommunitycentre.org.uk/weblog/>

Share Farnham Swap Shop

The Share Store has been relocated to the large cupboard in the reception area which means that it is available to Centre users at any time there are staff in the office and not restricted to set opening times. The number of items have had to be restricted but it is still being used fairly regularly and this will continue be monitored.

Community Cupboard & Fridge

Please see separate report. We are still awaiting the final part of our inspection by Environmental Health. We did receive further funding from the Community Foundation for the continued operation. Katie, our coordinator, is stepping down at the end of the year and we will need to appoint someone else to take this over as a paid position as there are many health and safety procedures that have to be followed in order to satisfy both donors of food and Environmental Health. A job description has been drawn up and will be circulated.

Pop-Up Café

This now only happens to support other events at the Centre although there are plans to have the café open for one session a week in the New Year. The coffee machine appears to be covering the costs and we are still using donated coffee beans which keeps the costs down.

TimetoShare/Timebank

Rita and Felicity have worked hard to relaunch this volunteering service in July 2021 following a long period of suspension due to pandemic restrictions. It had previously operated as Farnham Area Timebank for six years. Members offer skills/services/help to each other on a non-payment basis. The group also organises regular social events to help members to get to know each other. There are currently 44 members, including 5 new joiners registered since relaunch. Since July 2021 volunteers have been provided (mainly multi teams) for 7 projects/events.

Talk and Support

Several sessions were run with the two trained counsellors but lack of attendance has meant that this has now been stopped.

Space for You

This drop in session started in September on a Monday afternoon, offering a drop in session for people who just want to come and have a chat or need a bit of help with a phone call or letter, or need information or just want to get out of the house. It is hosted by Simon Porter and Katie Burnhams. Take up has been low but they have provided practical help on several issues.

Consideration is being given to widening this to provide an open access session at the same time and date each week which will offer refreshments, craft activities, advice and information as a one stop shop where people like Job Club, CAB, and others could come regularly to offer support.

Seniors Group – they are back! A good number of seniors are meeting again at the Centre each Wednesday morning and it has been lovely to welcome them and re-establish those connections.

Code Club – 10 new laptops have been set up for use and a promotional video was made by Red Hat featuring Code Club and their support. A taster session was offered at the end of half term which was very well received and a monthly club will be started in the New Year with support from Red Hat staff and Zoe, one of the Youth Club volunteers who used to be a technology teacher.

Partnership projects supported by Hale Community Centre**SHIP, WiSH**

The WhatsApp group has proved to be vital in keeping people supported: it has been really encouraging to see how this peer network has grown and has provided vital care and encouragement to members of the community who are continuing to struggle with the effects of the pandemic. One single parent has had a long stay in hospital and several others have really struggled having contracted Covid and the group have stepped in providing childcare, lifts and meals.

The parent and carer peer support group for people with children with additional learning needs has restarted and is about to make a presentation to the school to identify what help and support they feel would be the most useful. Melissa and I are in talks with Surrey Care Trust to put on a specialised parenting course for this group along with identifying if any of their services can be accessed by these parents and young people.

Space2Breathe

Has been mothballed, hopefully for good!

Craft Group – Opportunities – another group that have returned and it is good to see the Centre buzzing again, especially on Wednesdays.

Job Club – still low numbers attending.

Warm Hub – is back offering drop in sessions.

Combatting Loneliness working group

This group meets on a monthly basis to create a coherent plan for activities across the town to combat loneliness. A six month report has been created for funders. Funding from this was used to establish the **Craft Café** facilitated by a paid session leader. We have recently invited members of WiSH to attend the craft café.

Farnham Health Inequalities Development Group

This has proved to be a great opportunity to represent the local community among other practitioners from many different sectors. A survey is being developed which will deliver quantitative data to confirm where and which inequalities exist so that provision can be better targeting. North Farnham has been identified as the pilot area for this (thank you Catherine for your help in directing this) and I have offered for the major engagement activity to take place during the Community Christmas Fayre on 18 December (put the date in your diary now!) when we hope to have a good representation from the local community present.

Joint Action Group – Waverley Safer Partnership Task and Finish group

Slow progress is being made to identify which organisations are responsible for which service on the estate. WBC appear to have cancelled the contract with Vivid to collect all bulk items from residents to prevent fly tipping – we were not updated and this has caused some issues with local residents.

Farnham Youth Practitioners Network

Now that we have Tracy in post, we decided with 40 Degreez to re-establish the Youth Workers Network to provide a forum of support and networking for youth workers working in all organisations within Farnham. It is recognised that there are individuals that engage with several providers and that sharing information and resources is key to ensuring the best provision possible to the young people of Farnham. The first meeting was held on 18 November at the Centre with 10 attendees.

Networking

Hale Network - suspended

Farnham Network – is meeting quarterly on Zoom

Farnham Locality Patient Group – has disbanded

Farnham Connects - meets monthly on a Tuesday afternoon to discuss issues affecting residents of Farnham and has proved to be a really valuable networking opportunity.

Farnham Younger People Task Force – run by FTC

PR/Marketing

See Centre Administrator report

A newsletter is being prepared for distribution.

We had a really well attended Autumn Craft and Soup Share session in October half term.

Building/Health and Safety/Risk Management Issues

The routine checks and inspections are ongoing. Risk assessments for the Centre, the Swap Shop and the Community Fridge are kept under regular review in order to ensure they comply with current government guidelines.

Trees – several trees have been removed and others cut back which has greatly improved light in the hall and lounge and reduced the quantity of leaves.

Gate at the front of the building – Men In Sheds have made new gates and we are waiting for them to be hung. The bench has been moved. Sue is getting quotes for a path from the pavement to the gate and across the Community Garden.

Reception area – great strides have been made to improve the reception area, making it more engaging for users who have been involved in the changes. Boxes and frames are to be hung on the mural in which groups can exhibit information or articles they have made to encourage ownership and a sense of belonging.

Staff Covid testing – we have continued to review the situation with staff testing and still do not require it although most staff are taking intermittent lateral flow tests at home before coming to the Centre.

Staff Training – all staff and key volunteers have been asked to complete the online GDPR course and if applicable an online Safeguarding course. A new database of training records has been established to help with tracking and renewal information. DBSs have been obtained for all staff that require them.

For Board consideration: currently we use Surrey Community Action to process our DBSs but they will only support one if I can provide a government eligibility check which tells you which level of check you are able to access for different roles. Very few of our roles fit into the predefined boxes ie Sue. So can the Board decide if they want DBS checks on office staff which can only be at the basic level?

In the New Year I will arrange for general health and safety training for all staff and lead volunteers.

Maintenance of the building

For Board consideration: Sue has quotes for painting the reception area and the lounge – to be forwarded for consideration before the meeting and expenditure agreed.

We would also like to replace the carpet in the lounge with hard flooring to match/compliment the hall flooring so that when the two rooms are combined the whole space can be used for exercise groups etc. It will also be better to maintain and keep clean.

In addition to this we would like to replace the old donated sofas with newer easier to move ones.

I would like to look into purchasing a commercial dishwasher – as we have more events and the Centre gets busier, having a dishwasher running for an hour is not viable and often the emptying gets left to staff rather than users.

Staffing

Fortnightly operations and monthly team meetings continue in order to share information about the different projects. This ensures everyone is up to date with what is happening, can share any ideas or comments, and feels connected and involved. Both staff and lead volunteers attend.

For Board consideration: I am planning a staff and lead volunteers Wellness and Building Resilience Workshop for the New Year as I feel all staff have been under extreme strain over the past 2 years and have worked very hard to ensure the Centre has not only remained open and accessible but have developed services and support to fill any gaps identified. I have sourced and toolkit which: aims to help leaders break down the wellbeing challenges facing themselves and their teams and quickly find high quality resources to inspire and assist them. These resources can be used individually, or put together to form the basis of a full or half-day team wellbeing session.

I would like to run this session off site, perhaps at the Garden Gallery in the Museum. I should be able to negotiate a good rate but there will be some costs involved. Board to agree a budget.

Current paid staff are:

Cathy Burroughs - Centre Manager, 24 hours/week

Sue Connolly – Centre Administrator, 24 hours/week

Tracy Yates – Youth Lead, 15 hours/week

Emma Swinden – Projects and Engagement coordinator, 10 hours/week

Katie Burnham – Fridge Coordinator, 8 hours/week

Jocelyn Close – Girlz Club leader, 4 hours/week

Danielle Wright – cleaner, 8 – 10 hours/week

I have started discussions with Norma about the staffing structure and succession planning which will be introduced at this meeting.

Emerging issues

Nursery Space – renamed Youth Centre

There has been another extension to the timeframe for when the building will be ready for us to occupy: we are now promised it will be ready by the beginning of April!

Change in finance management/book keeper

Kathryn Frimmond who has been providing our bookkeeping on a voluntary basis is no longer able to continue to do this. She quoted for doing the work on a paid basis (£250/month, a heavily discounted rate) but after discussions with Jeremy, he has offered to take over that function.

For Board consideration: the payroll function needs to be maintained and I would suggest that Kathryn continues to do this for us which would give us some fall-back should be need to review the bookkeeping function again and also would be good practice to have someone else doing it. This would cost £50/month with any additional members of staff added incurring a small extra cost.

Community Engagement and HealthWatch

Phase 1 – the research phase – has been completed and an engagement plan developed

Part 1 of the engagement has been delivered with Healthwatch coming to Girlz Club one evening and we are waiting for the report from that.

Part 2 will be agreed after the wider engagement event taking place at the Community Christmas Fayre and may be used to fill any gaps identified once that data has been analysed.

Response to increasing cases of COVID-19

We have continued to follow national and government advice on opening up and capacity and have to date not had any issues.

For Board consideration: please could we have a discussion re what our ongoing position is going to be in relation to adult parties. At the moment we are refusing them on the basis that we are still being cautious due to Covid cases increasing and using our facilities for families and vulnerable people and not being able to clean after their event before the next users. My position would be that we adopt this as policy but that would cut off a possible income stream. My reasons for this is that the only damage and issues we have had from hirers in the past has been from adult parties (we have only had very few as we are usually too small with no bar facilities), the lateness of the finish times may cause reputational damage locally, we do not have the facilities to check after their booking for damage or to clean before the booking the next day for weekend bookings.

Greenways Pre-school support and joint buying

I had a meeting with the manager of Greenways, in the village, and we have set up a support system with the Community Fridge where we notify them of the availability of fresh fruit. Many of the children do not have fruit in their lunch boxes and staff has been purchasing this from their own funds. We have also agreed to supply Greenways with cereals for their breakfast club (which they exchanged for their excess milk this week) and to create emergency care packages for their families if needed (mum had just had a premature baby so had no food or household stocks in and we were able to put a box of items together). Greenways is also able to use the nappies and baby milk we are often donated.

I have also agreed to purchase additional cleaning items from In Kind when available which Greenways will reimburse us for at cost. I gave them contacts for emergency funding which they weren't aware of either.

Hygiene bank

We have signed up to be a partner organisation with the Hygiene bank so that they can distribute their products through the Fridge and Cupboard and give local people access to a wider range of hygiene and cleaning products.

Possible partnership working

Brightwells are looking to partner with a local organisation to provide cookery and exercise sessions that would be open to both groups – discussions ongoing

Family Centre – we would really like to engage with the Family Centre to try to provide some support/activities for families that are not being supported with targeting services at the moment. This would hopefully prevent them having to be referred at a later date as any issues could be dealt with in a timely manner before escalating. It is proving very difficult to get any engagement from the Family Centre and Catherine is trying to establish to parameters of their contract with Surrey for provision of early years help and if it is not in their remit, who has been commissioned to provide this.