

SUMMARY OF THOMLEY ACTIVITY CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2011

Over 20% of you participated in our recent consultation. Thomley Trustees, staff and volunteers have prioritised your suggestions and we would now like to share these with you.

Activities

In relation to workshops and themed activities for children, you listed all sorts of exciting ideas which will keep us going for the next few years! These ideas will feed the creativity of our Playworkers in their preparation of art and craft projects and workshops. We will also continue to use external facilitators, generously funded by BBC Children in Need.

Equipment

You also gave ideas on the types of outdoor facilities you would like us to develop. The list included:

- New bikes, trikes and carts for use on the cycle track, a sandpit and a better defined football pitch. You will be glad to know that we already have funding for these, and you will see their arrival in the not too distant future.
- A sensory assault course accessible to wheelchairs, water play, a slide, playdens, seating and shelter. We have not yet got funding for these but will hunt down some eager donors!
- A trampoline and a hydrotherapy pool. Although we think these are great ideas, we feel we are not yet ready. Aside from the cost of a hydrotherapy pool, both activities will need higher levels of staffing than we currently have available. These may however form part of the next business plan so watch this space!

Teenager resources

In this, and in a previous consultation, we heard that you would like Thomley to widen the variety of activities for teenagers and support their transition into adulthood. In response to this, Thomley has decided to refurbish the ground floor of the Manor Hall and will develop a kitchen area, hobbies room, games room and maybe a mini gym. Currently Thomley supports children up to the age of 16 years, however these planned building adaptations, will enable Thomley to extend the age group up to 19 years. We are hoping that this will be up and running within a year or so, but this very much depends on funding available for necessary adaptations as well as recruitment of a youth worker.

Developing capacity to offer relief or respite care to parents of disabled children

We are regularly asked if we can provide respite care at Thomley. We would very much like to offer this service and are planning to work towards this in a phased approach.

- **Phase 1** - Thomley already provides a venue for groups and carers to bring children for respite care. If you are interested in being linked to these respite care groups, let us know and we will put you in contact.
- **Phase 2** - As mentioned in our last newsletter, you are welcome to ask a member of staff to keep an eye on your child while you get a cup of tea or pop to the loo. As yet, we do not have enough staff to supervise individual children for any length of time and, due to our child protection policy, we are also unable to provide personal care i.e. toileting.
- **Phase 3** - We would like to offer 'relief care' i.e. offer short sessions to families. Although families will still need to remain on site, it will at least give parents time to relax, chat to another parent, attend a discussion group or even book a chill-out half hour in the sensory room. For us to be able to do this, we will need to increase our staffing levels and look into necessary policies and procedures. This phase is again time and funding dependent.
- **Phase 4** - Our ultimate goal is to offer full respite care whereby a parent can leave their child in the sole care of Thomley staff. We hope that this may be phased in at the end of this 3 year plan.

Hairdressing and shoe fitting

We had a very receptive response to the idea of hairdressing and shoe fitting, so we hope to begin with shoe fitting at the end of the next summer holidays. You also proposed that we organise demos from equipment companies which we also think is a good idea.... watch this space.

Building developments

In response to your feedback, there are a number of large building related capital projects which Thomley hopes to embark upon during this 3-year business plan. These projects are also wholly reliant on successful fundraising efforts. These projects will be to:

- Design more welcoming entrance with shelter, signs, plants and artwork
- Improve playrooms and include more comfortable seating areas for parents
- Improve toilet, showering & changing facilities (**in response to toilet consultation**)
- Improve canteen facilities (**in response to 'Thomley teahouse' survey**)
- Refurbish the ground floor of the Manor Hall for use by teenagers
- Resurface the car parking area to define spaces and improve accessibility
- Install new infrastructure to reduce our use of fossil fuels

Visiting costs

- Thomley makes every effort to minimise costs to visitors. The recommended donation structure covers just 13% of Thomley's costs, and we fundraise in any way we can to cover remaining costs.
- Please note however that we will, at some stage soon, need to upwardly revise the recommended donation costs to reflect increasing inflation. We hope you will understand.
- We know that some families find Thomley's costs prohibitive. If this is the case, we are very willing to discuss the issue, as the recommended donation structure is flexible, and we will never turn families away.
- In the "Thomley Noticeboard" newsletter, we will publicise any funding that we know is available for individual families.

Opening hours

Thomley may vary opening hours, or days based on need. This may include extended visiting hours for families and additional days for birthday parties. This will be dependent on available staffing levels.

Raising awareness about disability and inclusion

As mentioned in our holiday planner, we are frequently asked about the purpose of community days. These days are open to all children and their families, encouraging disabled and non-disabled children to play together, and promoting a greater understanding of differing abilities. In addition to this, Thomley is also hoping to play a more active role in raising awareness about disability and inclusion through outreach play days, advising fledgling organisations and running disability awareness days for mainstream playgroups and schools.

Donor support

The successful implementation of our plan relies on sufficient support from donors to help finance these 3-year plans. Many of you had very creative ideas around fundraising and we will share these with the rest of you through our brand new website, once it is completed. So, we would be delighted if you could inspire your friends to get involved in fundraising events... to run a quick 5k or to organise a mere 20,000ft jump for example..... or perhaps a more sensible and relaxing pamper evening!!!

WE HOPE YOU LIKE OUR INTERPRETATION OF YOUR IDEAS.

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR VALUABLE FEEDBACK.