

Thatcham Town Council Grant Awards

The Grants Sub Committee oversees the allocation of Grants to community organisations. This is done through its bi-annual grant funding in January/February and June/July. Thatcham Town Council has a match funding agreement with Greenham Trust where every £1 awarded by the Town Council is matched by Greenham Trust. Applications are administered through The Good Exchange to ensure that the recipients receive matched funding from Greenham Trust. The Sub Committee considers applications selected from The Good Exchange with a connection to Thatcham, where residents of Thatcham will benefit from the grant awarded. Applicants are invited to attend the Sub Committee to present their project and take questions.

During 2022/23 Thatcham Town Council has provided the following grant funding to local organisations providing services to Thatcham, which has been match funded by Greenham Trust:

Organisation	Project	Amount
West Berkshire Homeless (Newbury Area)	Emergency Utilities and Food Support	£812.50
Thatcham Town Cricket Club	TTCC Browns Sports Field Live Streaming	£1,500.00
Parkinson's UK, Newbury	Making the Difference - Yoga, Exercise and Voice Therapies for People with Parkinson's	£226.00
Time to Talk West Berkshire	Time to Talk Thatcham Outreach	£2,000.00
West Berkshire Action for Refugees	Providing activities and low-cost transport for asylum seekers in accommodation in West Berkshire (Thatcham)	£1,500.00
Creative Communities	Creative Wellbeing - Surviving to Thriving	£900.00
West Berkshire Draughtbusters	Draught Proofing 2022 - 23	£250.00
West Berkshire Therapy Centre	Hardship Fund 2022/23	£1,000.00
Home-Start West Berkshire	HS West Berkshire Baby Bank 2022/23	£500.00
Glendale Church	Glendale Youth Café	£500.00
TUXchange CIC	TUXchange CIC	£288.75
Thatcham Memorial Foundation	Jubilee Play Area	£1,000.00
Thatcham Town Football Club	Artificial Turf Multi-User Sports Area	£2,000.00 pledged ¹
Total grant funding provided through the community grant programme in 2022/2023		£12,832.25

¹ in addition to £5,000 awarded to the project in 2019

A selection of reports / comments from organisations awarded grant funding and match funded by Greenham Trust are included in the following pages.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES – Surviving to Thriving project.

Thatcham Town Council grant award £900

Creative Communities (South East) C.I.C is a community interest company established in 2021, providing art-based courses to vulnerable adults across West Berkshire and beyond, with an overall aim of improving physical, social, mental and emotional wellbeing. We work with a number of different groups, including older learners in residential care settings, those struggling with their mental or physical health, adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as parents of school aged children who are finding life difficult.

Last year we were lucky enough to receive a generous grant from Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Trust which allowed us to extend our provision into Thatcham, setting up, among others, a ten-week course at Great Barn court, aimed at older learners, many of whom were isolated and struggling with their mental and physical wellbeing. This programme was so successful we felt that something more long term was required. This year we were fortunate enough to receive further funding from Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Trust, which allowed us to set up a yearlong course at Great Barn Court. Running every two weeks, the course provides participants with the continuation they so desperately needed. The participants also have the option to get together on the non-teaching weeks for independent study and socialisation. The course has been greatly received and although we started in September, we are still growing, accepting another 6 learners in March!

Last year we ran our first annual art exhibition in Thatcham, which was hugely successful and a fantastic chance to celebrate the work our students had achieved, whilst providing an opportunity for them to all come together and meet others on different courses. All of the participants on the Great Barn Court course this year will also have the opportunity to exhibit their work to friends, family and the community of Thatcham and beyond in the summer.
<https://creative-communities.org.uk/>

WEST BERKSHIRE THERAPY CENTRE – Hardship Fund 2022/23

Thatcham Town Council grant award £1,000

West Berkshire Therapy Centre delivers a unique service in Thatcham, providing a rehabilitation centre equipped with £160,000 of specialised equipment, helping local people with mobility problems. The equipment provides gentle, repetitive movements, easing stiff and reluctant joints and muscles, helping to improve mobility and independence. The cost of the service is funded mainly by clients making voluntary contributions. However, some are unable to afford to offer any donations and grants are vital to balance the Centre's books. Centre Trustee, John Holt, said 'We were delighted that Thatcham Town Council has supported us with a grant of £1,000 towards our 2022/23 Hardship appeal. This was match-funded by Greenham Trust. The combined amount is sufficient for us to help more than a dozen Thatcham residents with mobility problems to walk further and safer and to have a significant uplift in their psychological outlook and social involvement. One client told us recently how he is now able to sleep on his back for the first time in many years and now get a transforming night's sleep. Most clients tell us about walking further and achieving more. We are most grateful to Thatcham Town Council for helping to cover some of our costs, allowing us to maintain our service, delivering such important results to local people in real need.' <http://www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk/>

TUXCHANGE – Increasing storage capacity – preloved school uniform

Thatcham Town Council grant award £288.75

TUXchange is a pre-loved free school uniform service for Newbury and Thatcham that was setup in July 2020.

The local community is encouraged to donate good quality, clean uniform that they no longer need so that it can be passed on to another family.

If a family wish to donate or are in need of uniform, they contact me via the TUXchange Facebook page or website. I arrange to collect donations directly from their home, I then sort through them, add it to my stock sheet, and store the items.

Requests for uniform are checked against the stock sheet and if the items are available, I will deliver them directly to the person's home.

During the summer holiday's things are done a little differently. I hold 'pop-up' shops in Newbury and Thatcham where families can visit, look through stock, take what they need and drop off donations. The Furniture Project also help by placing a large donation bin at their premises where families can drop items off. Due to the sheer number of requests and donations coming in there are no collections or deliveries during this period.

All of the stock (around 500-600 items) has until recently been stored in my home but due to capacity I'm unable to take further donations. Each year the service has grown and with the cost-of-living crisis I anticipate that the demand for pre-loved uniform will significantly rise. The funding has enabled me to rent a storage unit (for the next year) and this extra space means that I can accept donations and increase the stock so that I can help more families.

HOME START WEST BERKSHIRE - Emergency Utilities and Food Support

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £812.50

"Once again we are indebted to Thatcham Town Council for their generous support of our work. Over the last year the need for our Befriending service to support those newly in tenancies and those who have been feeling the effects of the Cost-of-Living Crisis which has drastically added to their poverty. Our Befrienders spend their time assisting with managing tenancy queries, Council Tax and utility bills and supporting with visits to different services. All West Berkshire Homeless members are volunteers - the Charity has no paid staff or premise. We can only continue our work with those on the poverty line, those sofa surfing and those struggling to maintain tenancies with the support of the local community, companies, and grants such as the one received from the Thatcham Town Council. Thank you!"

PARKINSON'S UK - Making the Difference - Yoga, Exercise and Voice Therapies for People with Parkinson's

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £226

We are most grateful to have received grant funding from Thatcham Town Council, which was matched by Greenham Common Trust.

Your funding allows us to run special therapy sessions for people living locally with Parkinson's. These sessions have been designed to help people manage their lives more easily and to promote social inclusion and wellbeing.

We arrange physical exercise such as yoga and chair-based exercises. Yoga can help with slowness and stiffness, improve balance and flexibility, and increase muscle strength and power. It can also relax blood pressure, help control weight gain, and increase breathing strength and lung capacity. Many people also report having better mood and sleep, while going to group classes is a way of meeting others and being more socially active. The chair-based exercises keep the mind active; the body moving, improve posture and helps flexibility and strength.

One of the main symptoms of Parkinson's Disease is a reduction in the ability to speak clearly. Voice therapy addresses volume and clarity of speech which can make it difficult for others to understand and can lead to feelings of social isolation. Attending voice therapy not also builds better communication but also involves group work and support, which can be very companionable. This therapy includes both speech and singing. The latter is provided by the Berkshire Maestros and forms the Parkinson's Singing Cafe.

HOME-START WEST BERKSHIRE – Baby Bank

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £500

Home-Start West Berkshire was delighted to receive this generous financial support from Thatcham Town Council. The Baby Bank service receives donations of preloved baby and children's equipment from families within the community, the goods are then gifted to families experiencing financial hardship. The project supports the most vulnerable families at a the most critical time, and it also has a positive environmental aspect through recycling. This funding, which is so gratefully received, supports us to be able to maintain our storage space and contributes to our project and volunteer costs. Thank you for helping us to maintain this vital resource for Thatcham families.

TIME TO TALK - Thatcham Outreach

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £2,000

Time to Talk West Berkshire is a free confidential counselling service for young people in need aged 11 to 25. We support young people in a number of locations including the family hub in Thatcham.

Our mission is to provide a counselling service which helps young people deal with their specific challenges in a sustainable way. We are incredibly grateful to Thatcham Town Council for their donation, which has had such a positive impact on the young people we have seen.

We offer just over 100 counselling sessions across the service per week; we offer 13 sessions per week in Thatcham, this means we can see around 70 young people in Thatcham hub alone each year. Without funding like this we would simply be unable to offer these sessions. Our work is so important and very much appreciated by the young people we see.

“The best thing about counselling was being able to talk to someone, it helped me to see things through different view/ perspective, I felt heard and understood by my counsellor and the issues were topics I wanted to talk about. My biggest learning was that I was not abnormal but was in an abnormal situation. Counselling helped increase my confidence in talking about issues to my mum and older brother. “

Thank you so much for supporting us and the young people we help!

GLENDALE CHURCH – Youth Café

Thatcham Town Council grant award £500

The Youth Café has been running for a year at The Well on Green Lane. It is run by Glendale Church and provides a safe place for young people on a Friday night, to spend time together and wind down after a week at school.

We welcome between 12-20 young people each week, between the ages of 12-15. We hope to create a welcoming atmosphere where they feel able to talk with leaders about what's going on in their lives and where we build an expectation of mutual respect.

We would like to use this generous funding from Thatcham Town Council to purchase more resources and provide more opportunities for these young people to access that they may not otherwise be able to.

One item that we hope to buy with this funding is a new pool table that can be folded away when not in use.

We would also like to bring in outside organisations to run workshops with the young people. For example, dance workshops, film making, cooking, cadets, and Duke of Edinburgh Award taster sessions, and many more. This funding will allow us to provide these opportunities for free, making it accessible to all our young people.

We so appreciate the opportunities this funding will provide.

WEST BERKSHIRE ACTION FOR REFUGEES - Providing activities and low-cost transport for asylum seekers in accommodation in West Berkshire (Thatcham)

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £1500

West Berkshire Action for Refugees (WBAR) is a volunteer led charity supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the local area. We are currently supporting over 130 Asylum Seekers; with a team of over 30 volunteers providing English language and activity sessions which promotes integration and a better understanding of the British way of life.

With the £1500 grant that we received (with match funding from the Peter Baker Foundation, Greenham Trust and generous donations from supporters) we purchased refurbished bikes for low-cost transport. West Berkshire Council helped to arrange cycle proficiency training and a bike maintenance course with a local cycling business, Ali Bikes. Sovereign Housing provided a disused bike rack which was cleaned up and put to good use; there are now over 20 bikes on site enabling residents to travel to local volunteering and join in local activities off site such as the Well café.

The purchase of sports equipment including football boots, weights, skipping ropes and communal games has helped to improve the health and wellbeing of the group. A loan scheme has been set up so that gym equipment can be booked for use in friendship groups. Yoga and football are all year-round activities and in the summer residents have joined the local cricket team in Thatcham. One of the cricketers played at County level last summer. Table tennis, snooker, Uno, and chess are popular in the games room.

As well as the financial support, Thatcham Town Council encouraged volunteering at the Thatcham Fun Day last summer. This led to further volunteering opportunities with the Canal and Rivers Trust, local charity shops and the Community Resource Group at Greenham. The formation of the environmental group, VIAN, has resulted in a clean-up of the hotel grounds and regular litter picking sessions in Thatcham. VIAN are currently asking for donations of cutlery and crockery so that they can reduce the amount of plastic waste at the hotel. These can be taken to the Thatcham Town Council offices to be passed on to the group.

During 2023 some of the Asylum Seekers will have been in the UK for over a year and may become eligible to work in jobs listed on the Shortage Occupations List, WBAR will be looking for opportunities to assist in finding suitable work.

Claire McCorquodale, Treasurer, West Berkshire Action for Refugees

Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund Awards

The Town Council also has a fund for the distribution of smaller grants through the Community Project Fund, up to £250. This fund is administered directly by the Town Council and is in place to support organisations where a smaller amount is sought but will make a big difference. When an application is made by an organisation for a Community Project Fund award, it is considered by the next appropriate Committee following the application, thus allowing these awards to be considered swiftly throughout the year rather than on a bi-annual basis. A list of beneficiaries of this fund during 2022/2023 are listed here.

Organisation	Project	Amount
Daisy's Dream	Funding for purchase of a gazebo	£189.99
Thatcham Women's Institute	Funding for purchase of a gazebo	£250.00
Thatcham Branch Royal British Legion	Purchase of two Silent Soldiers	£350.00
Newbury Road Club	Purchase of a branded gazebo replacement	£250.00
Thatcham Old Bluecoat School	Bobbie Collins-Wootton's Plaque	£200.00
Thatcham United Reform Church	Thatcham Warm Spaces	£220.00
Thatcham Rugby Club	Thatcham Rugby Club Homework and Games Club	£250.00
Total Community Project Fund awards provided to support the local community in 2022/2023		£1,709.99

A selection of reports / comments from organisations awarded funds from the Community Project fund are included in the following:

NEWBURY ROAD CLUB – Replacement gazebo

Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund Award - £250

One of the highlights of the Newbury Road Club social calendar in 2022 was its attendance at the Thatcham Family Fun Day in June. As guests of organisers Thatcham Town Council, this superb event gave the Club an opportunity to showcase cycling in the community, meet and greet lots of new faces and unleash its legendary reverse steer bikes on an unsuspecting audience.

However, the day got off to a very windy start which saw the Club gazebo, along with a few others, heading skywards towards Reading. A replacement was found for the day, however the gazebo was unfortunately damaged beyond repair. However, all was not lost. Thanks to a generous donation by the Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund, the Club has been able to fund a new high-end branded Gazebo for its 2023 season of events.

Thatcham Town Council has a history of assisting voluntary groups and societies, clubs, not-for-profit organisations with discretionary awards, where it is felt they will benefit the local community.

“We are thrilled that Thatcham Town Council have generously helped to replace our Gazebo,” said Club Chair, Lorraine Murrell. “The contribution of the Council has been instrumental in the Club being able to fund this purchase and we will use it to promote our Club and the benefits of cycling in events across the community. Look out for it at the next Thatcham Fun Day. We have signed up to take part and we look forward to seeing you there!”

The Sub Committee looks forward to facilitating further projects for the benefit of Thatcham residents throughout 2023/24, further information on how to apply for funding can be found on the Thatcham Town Council website or by contacting the Town Council at the following email address enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Councillor Mike Cole
Sub Committee Chairman