



REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

4th April 2019

This year has been particularly busy with referrals increasing by 111% and we have consequently seen a 40% increase in clients accessing counselling across the service. This increase in demand is partly due to an increased awareness and acceptance of mental health issues, our reputation, as GPs feel confident in referring their patients to us, but also due to cuts in provision for mental health in the NHS.

Riverside offers an affordable service and although most of our clients contribute something towards the cost of their counselling, with the increased demand on our service, we are relying more so on support from local government, trusts, organisations and businesses, as well as community fundraising, to meet our costs. Our counsellors offer nearly all their hours on a voluntary basis.

Over the past year we have been very fortunate therefore, to receive money from Henley Town Council. We have also received funding from the Phyllis court Charity Action Group as their chosen charity last year and Bradfield College donated the proceeds from their annual Charity Jazz Concert to Riverside. In addition, we have received money from G in the Dark, Field Seymour Parks Walk, Living Advent and Tennis Day Donations.

This year we have focused on consolidating our recent expansion in order to continue to provide a safe and professional service and part of this has been to complete a charity health check with the Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) which is comparable to an Ofsted, the outcome of which recognised Riverside as a well-run service with good governance. This has enabled us to be eligible to apply to the OCF for a much needed database system which will improve our efficiency in terms of how we use our resources and it will support us in sustaining a professional service. We are through to the next round and are hopeful that we will be successful in our final bid.

Part of our remit is Education and learning and Riverside offers counsellors regular workshops to maintain and increase their professional expertise. Our 10-week mindfulness course was offered again at Gillotts School and this year we have also held our 'Introduction to Counselling' course again. We have had increased interest in this course this year and now have a waiting list for the next one, which we will offer later in the year.

We now have three new trustees who bring additional expertise to Riverside, clinical managers, counsellors and administrators. They are all responsible for the charity's continued success, but we could not continue to provide our service without the generous support of our local community.

Hilary Arthur
Director and Clinical Lead
March 2019