



## REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

5<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Every year seems to be busier than the last, with the number of counselling hours increasing over the year from 100 to over 125 a week across the service, which now extends to Berinsfield and Didcot. We have had to take on more counsellors to meet the demand and now have 40, who offer nearly all their counselling hours on a voluntary basis.

Riverside offers an affordable service and although most of our clients contribute something towards the cost of their counselling, we are relying increasingly on support from local government, trusts, organisations and businesses, as well as community fundraising, to meet our costs.

Again this past year we have been very fortunate to receive money from Henley Town Council, Stuart Turner and the John Hodges Trust in Harpsden. We have also received funding from the Elizabeth Jane Foundation and the Henley Educational Trust. We are very pleased to be one of Phyllis Court's chosen charities this year and have just learned that Bradfield College will be donating the proceeds from their annual Charity Jazz Concert in June to Riverside. Members of The Space - the branch of our service dedicated to young people - will be attending the concert and will speak about the work they do with young people in the local community and how, sadly, the need and the demand is constantly growing.

Last year Becky Saunders, Clinical Lead for The Space, and I met with our local MP John Howell to make him aware of the growing crisis in mental health care and how organisations such as Riverside are plugging the gap in mental health services left by the NHS.

It also seems to have been a year of regulatory demands, with both the looming deadline of the General Data Protection Regulation in May and more stringent requirements for counselling young people put in place by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, the body that accredits our counselling services. These, along with the organisational demands of a growing charity, have provided us with additional challenges over the past year.

Education and learning are part of our remit, and Riverside offers counsellors regular workshops and talks to maintain and increase their professional expertise. Our 10-week mindfulness course was offered again at Gillotts School and this year we also held a follow-up to our Introduction to Counselling course, at the request of former students.

Our dedicated trustees, managers, counsellors and administrators are responsible for the charity's continued success, but we could not continue to provide our service without the generous and continuing support of our local community.

Hilary Arthur  
Director and Clinical Lead  
March 2018