

## Friends of Off The Record Twickenham

### Annual Report to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Off the Record Twickenham has helped thousands of local young people since it was established in 1992, in Church Street in the heart of Twickenham. We provide free and confidential counselling to those aged 11-24, who live, work or study in the London Borough of Richmond.



Securing sufficient funding to continue to offer our services is our biggest challenge and, as such, our fundraising activities are critical to Off The Record's existence.

Because of the confidential nature of our work, we cannot call on beneficiaries to help with fundraising, as a number of other charities do. In 2013, it was decided to run traditional fundraising events such as tombola stalls at local fairs to raise awareness. We gathered together a group of trustees, counsellors and others who were willing to do shifts on the stall and talk to the public. Right from the start, we had people coming up to our stalls saying things like "You helped my daughter ten years ago".

Over the years, this group of supporters has been involved in a number of different activities, from running stalls at local fairs to quizzes and concerts at St Mary's Church Twickenham, where a number of young people perform. When I stood down as Chair of Trustees of Off the Record in October 2022, it was decided to formalise this group as the Friends of Off the Record and so this is our first Annual Report. We hope it will encourage others to join us at different events in the next year.

On October 10th 2022 we held a birthday party in St Mary's Church to celebrate all the achievements in our first thirty years. Our outgoing Patron, Tania Mathias, spoke to an audience that included Munira Wilson MP and Gareth Roberts, Leader of the Council as well as former Trustees and counsellors past and present. One of our young supporters sang "I dreamed a dream" and a delicious chocolate cake was enjoyed by all.



One of our annual fundraising events had been our Christmas Carol Concert, which we had to abandon for two years because of Covid. On 13th December 2022, we were delighted to welcome back Teddington School Harmony Singers, and some talented young soloists

including members of our Young People's Advisory Group. The audience enjoyed singing some favourite carols and the festive refreshments and raffle afterwards.

On 18th May, we ran our first Friends Forum, which gave us the opportunity to bring together old Friends and new, along with staff members, to discuss how we could expand our fundraising activities. This resulted in some positive ideas and in a number of those present signing up for future events.

The busiest part of our Friends' calendar is usually early summer and 2023 was no exception. On 30th April some of us attended a very successful Charity Music Night run at OneOneFour in Teddington, where customers were treated to specially priced cocktails and live music from Will Massie (aged 16) and friends, along with an Open Mic Session.



The Summer Fair at St Mary's, Twickenham on 10th June provided the first opportunity for our new OTR Chair, Peter Jenkins, and new Trustee, Charlotte West to run a stall on behalf of Off the Record. Following this, we had a stall at the St Margaret's Fair on 8th July. We were also delighted with the funds raised at the Eel Pie Island Artist Open Studios weekend on 15th/16th July, which attracted people from all over London. We arranged to have a Friend present at all times to talk about Off the Record and take donations.

On 30th July we were invited to have a free stall for the second time at the Twickenham High Tide Festival. This festival features young bands who perform on stages close to Church Street. Having a site literally outside our Office made running a tombola much easier - once we had sorted out the complex construction of the gazebo!

Our major fundraising event this year was our Quiz on 29th September. There was live music from talented young singers and pianists at the start and during the interval. Wine was provided by Doran Family Vintners whose offer of a wine tasting for our Silent Auction raised the highest amount of money. Quiz questions were devised by a number of our Friends and other Friends prepared the delicious tapas food which was served. We plan to run a similar event in 2024 and to increase our links with young supporters – many of whom have friends who have come to us in the past.

As a small charity, Off The Record relies very much on the support and generosity of individuals, as well as organisations, funds and trusts. If you understand the importance of supporting young people through free, confidential counselling, we would very much welcome your involvement with the Friends. You can make contact with us by emailing [info@otrtwickenham.com](mailto:info@otrtwickenham.com)

Whatever we do, we want to make sure we put the fun into fundraising!

**Sarah Simpson**

Chair- Friends of Off the Record Twickenham

