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# AGM Meeting Minutes

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A meeting of: **West Wycombe Preschool** was held on **Friday 12 November 2021**

Attendees:

Jo

Claire

Dee

Debbie

Sarah

Sadia

Susie (Chair)

Louise (Secretary)

Pooja (Secretary)

Sinead (Fire officer)

Grace

Camilla

Apologies:

Katie

Alex

Nicola E

Kerrie

## Chair Report

Here we are another year on. Where has the time gone. It doesn't seem that long ago since our last AGM.

The Pandemic over the last year has still had an impact on our setting. With fundraising still hugely being affected. But since restrictions have eased, we have been able to have some normality. We have had Stay and Play return, walks around the community, and future events like carol services to look forward to.

Our last academic year has since seen staffing change. With Belinda, Sarah R, and Rosie leaving our setting. Rosie was preschool manager for 6 years. She managed our move to School House 4 years ago and led our team to achieving our Outstanding Ofsted in 2016. I wish her great success in her new adventure as a primary school teacher.

We welcomed Jo in September. Jo has vast experience in early years. She has joined us and hit the ground running and is fantastic asset to our preschool. I'm really looking forward to seeing her plans for pre-school and how pre-school develops under her leadership. I would also like to take this time to thank her son who has been a fantastic asset for the testing of our security systems.

Fundraising – whilst we haven't been able to do lots of our usual events due to the ever-changing Covid restrictions, we still raised over £3k. Myself, Kerrie and Tasha walked 300,000 steps each throughout April raising over £650. We had fantastic Mother's Day afternoon tea boxes delivered in March which the staff team did a fantastic job in organising. Thanks to Sarah's husband Phill for putting together a great Christmas Carol DVD for the families to buy last Christmas.

Fundraising is such a huge part of our role as committee. As a preschool, only 80% of our income comes from Government funded childcare. The additional comes from fee-paying children or fundraising. I hope for the following year we can get back to some normality with our events. Our plans already include a Christmas Raffle, and I hope to have lots more things planned for the rest of the year.

We continue to improve School House - we have a new garden fence and driveway fence. We are currently having a new lightwell installed in our basement to make this area safe and hopefully make the basement a drier space to use. We have had new doorstops installed which now close when the fire alarms go off, rather than using the children's toys. I hope to get the outside storage building more useable in the coming year.

After a slow uptake on occupancy levels in September 2020, by the new year we had become full for most days. This is something that seems to be a trend which we have experienced each year. We are currently working on improving our intake by now having an early enrolment for the academic year 2022 plus a waiting list.

This AGM has seen a lot of our committee standing down. I would like to thank Ellen as Treasurer, Monica who was Secretary earlier this year, Steph and Natasha who have stayed on as Trustees for a number of years since their children left our setting. Helen who has been fantastic at getting us donations, and Kerrie who has always been there to help in and out of the setting. Which just leaves me and Camilla. But I am really pleased how many new parents are willing to join the pre-school committee this year and are already passionate and eager to help. I am sure this coming year we will all together be able to achieve great things.

## Presentation of Accounts

### Financial Activities

The reduced income compared to the previous year is approx. £25k, primarily £23k less Grants received in 20/21. Additionally, fundraising events have also reduced due to the Pandemic, so we need to focus again on applying for Grants where possible.

Expenditure overall has increased by £1.3k from the year prior due to salary increases by approx. £1.7k, training increased by approx. £1k due to more training being done, rent decreased by £6.8k as 19/20 had some 18/19 rent, and increased equipment costs.

Overall, 20/21 finished with a loss of £1,600

Cash/Bank account; £800 more in the bank at the end of 20/21 than 19/20.

### Risks For 21/22

Increase to the national living wage in April 2022 may increase salary costs but the Government has indicated the funding rate may also increase, but there are no substantial details as yet.

We still need to ensure costs for materials, office supplies and other adhoc expenses are value for money and ensure they do not escalate.

Covid lockdown – it seems unlikely we will have another lockdown, but if so, this would have an impact on our parent funding places.

Rent negotiations in 21/22 may reduce the rent but there are no guarantees as we will need to take on more costs such as water, health and safety, and utilities. The current rent includes utilities.

Charity Commission reports will be completed once some cash is applied against correct code and also some unreceipted expenses coding is corrected.

19/20 finished with a profit of £16.8k.

20/21 finished in August with a deficit of -£1,689.05.

A full breakdown of each financial activity is available

## Presentation from Sarah

The best place to begin our thoughts is with our new manager, Jo. 'Hello!'. Jo was recruited in the last days of the Summer term to replace Rosie who had managed preschool for the past 6 years. Jo has a wealth of experience and comes to us with her 3-year-old and has found her feet and fitted into the team seamlessly.

Before Jo's time, we had a small change in our team, which saw us say goodbye to 2 members of staff who have left childcare and taken new positions in very different fields.

We supported a student on long-term placement from BCA and also employed Claire and Emma who have been with us for just over a year.

More recently we have said goodbye to Sarah R who leaves us after 12 months, but Debbie has taken on some of her responsibilities for us temporarily.

A congratulations to Dee who completed her level 3 qualification this year.

The Ofsted notification that came to us last year knocked the team for 6. Jo was not with us but has been fully briefed on the situation. Although deeply unfounded, what it did prove to us is that, as a team we are doing a sound job of both caring for and teaching the children who are entrusted to us every day. The support shown by the families was nothing short of overwhelming, many parents taking it upon themselves to contact Ofsted and strongly disagree with its judgement. A tough ride that reduced the team to tears on several occasions was turned into a positive when we read the many emails of support. We regrouped & took a look at how we operate, deliver the curriculum and support our families, tightened up any small bumps in the road and came back stronger. Covid continues to be part of our practise, our cleaning routines are more than they ever have been, hand washing is more embedded with our children. The team continue to be on high alert to any symptoms and we thank our families for working with us when required to test & to keep the setting as safe as possible.

We feel very proud that since the start of the Pandemic we have only had 1 case and that was last month. When the Government lifted restrictions in July, we opened our garden to families that were leaving us and new families who were joining us. This amalgamation was lovely to see, the garden had never looked so vibrant. The relationship between a key worker and a family is such an important one and we place huge value on that.

January saw us launch Tapestry and as a team we have found it invaluable. The interactive opportunities for families is wonderful and the children often request that we take a picture and 'send it home.' The immediate links to home are brilliant. Our links with local primary schools are as strong as ever, in the Summer we fed to 8 primary schools and the handover was as smooth as Covid would allow. We are working closely with the school next door; their reception teacher has a little one with us, so she is a familiar face to many of our families and she now does regular reading sessions with our children in the preschool, as well as organising an activity session for the children to attend at the school. The Head Teacher, Mr Tang, is keen to forge stronger links with us which we are excited to do.

When we began this school year in September, we had 27 children registered with us. When we returned after October half term, we now have children 35 on our books. We have no further full-time spaces; a handful of part time spaces remain for sessions increases etc.

Last school year we were part of an initiative called PIPS where several local settings collaborated to share ideas and good practice guided by BCC. We were fortunate enough to receive £1,110 which our last manager and Sarah worked to put together take-home packs to support a variety of areas of development, including fine motor skills, phonics, school readiness and several more.

If you would like to take one home for a week or so, pop us an email. We will add a complete list to the newsletter for your convenience.

Fundraising has been slower than previous years, due to restrictions in place but the support we have received has been super. But the funding we have raised in the last year has been ploughed straight back to the children and their learning opportunities. So far this school year we have managed our Bags to School, the Halloween Disco, individual photos, and Christmas cards, which have raised a good amount. We have planned a hot chocolate stand on the driveway, a Christmas raffle, and teas and coffees after our Christmas singsong which rounds off our term.

### Presentation from Manager

Thank you, Sarah, for that clear summary of the preschool since this time last year (even if you did make me read it for you). I want to thank everyone for the welcome I have received, which has been really heart-warming. All the staff have been great at welcoming me in, been patient with me and my million questions and put up with me spending the first few weeks asking which child or parent was which.

This is the first preschool I have managed, where previously I have worked in Nursery settings, so I am getting used to working with a committee and enjoying the diversity that brings to everything. We seem to be extremely lucky with our amazing Chair, Susie, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for everything she has done this year, but especially since I have started and how much support, and essentially time, she has given up to help us carry on. I know that many of you have joined our committee and are helping with the fundraising events, all of your time is really appreciated, and it really does make so much difference to the care we can provide for your children.

Looking ahead now for where we would like our preschool to be in the next few years is the fun part of the job. With all the lovely fundraising that goes on it gives us opportunities to improve the preschool continually and make sure that we always have the best activities and opportunities on offer for the children in our care. I will be creating a Quality Improvement Plan as we go throughout the year but for now we are focusing on making sure that we are running each day so the children experience as much fun and have as many opportunities to learn as possible.

We are expecting that we will have a visit from Ofsted at some point within the next year or so, if we are lucky they will give me a bit of time to settle in, but if not we will face the challenge whenever they come and I have no doubt that the fantastic team we have will show off to their best abilities and get us the result we want.

I am really pleased that the numbers within the preschool are continuing to rise and our reputation seems to mean we have a steady stream of children signing up to join us, which is a testament to all of you who are here and spreading the word about us.

Thank you again to all of the lovely staff I get to work with; one of whom will be celebrating having worked with us for 25 years this summer term!! But thank you also to the parents of the charming children we get to spend each of our days playing with, who could ask for a better job?!

Thank you all.

## Election of Management Committee and other

Chair	Susie Chester
Treasurer	Jacob Jull
Secretary	Louise Thomas & Pooja Sharma
Safeguarding Officer	Susie Chester
Fire Officer	Sinead Carty
Fundraising	Grace Allen
Fundraising	Katie Bruce
Fundraising	Alex Verim
Fundraising	Nicola Evans
Fundraising	Camilla Holland

## Other Business

The following suggestions/recommendations were made by both staff and committee members:

1. **Training for a Forest School** – this is a separate qualification from an NVQ – Dee will put a proposal together and send to Susie and Jo. (Jo confirmed she obtained a grant for her training, and you can do up to x 4 qualifications a year fully funded). **Louise** will source Grants for forest school funding in this regard, and also any other free courses for England
2. **The addition of an allotment** – the location of which was suggested to be between the school and the preschool. There would be separate keys with gates either side for access for both the school and the preschool. **Sinead** is going to approach Mr Tan regarding this
3. **Fire extinguisher training** - Susie is trained in how to use an extinguisher and it was suggested this could be a good skill for others to learn, we could also include the school in this training. The costs of doing this from the fire brigade are c. £300, so including the school in this would be cost effective for us also
4. **Soft-play area** – if the space is useable in the basement, or to build a separate room within. We are not sure of its usage however at the moment and are concentrating on damp-proofing the basement before allocating its usage. We could however, consider converting the out-building for this instead?
5. **Food/hot lunches** – the main school currently use ‘Invoate’ which are meals brought into the setting. **Jo** to reach out regarding the logistics before approaching parents. Does Inovate already do this with other preschools?
6. Story sacks and props – **Katie** has a website with these being sold – would be good to get her involved in this, if feasible
7. **A veranda or a covered space/new roof** - outside in the garden to shade from the sun - **Sinead** to get photos of the multi-coloured one at the school for inspiration

8. **Mental Health training** – for both children and the team
9. **Extending the garden forward and re-purpose of the buggy shelter**- repurposing it (see point 4), or getting rid of it altogether and getting a smaller one located near the bins – **Louise** to check if Grants available for this
10. **Climbing frame** for the garden. **Jo** to source this
11. The money raised from the walk in April this year was nominated towards getting a new playhouse (£500 or less). **Claire's** husband may be able to assist with the build
12. **Loft resourcing** – **Grace** to go through the resources we have already and to make a detailed list
13. **New toys** – some of the larger toys are outdated (i.e. the salon). **Louise** to look at selling on social media any unwanted toys to recoup some money towards purchasing new ones. Also, we may be able to take some of the toys from the school – **Sarah** is going to look into doing this. Also, **Susie** knows someone that could provide a discount to us from 'BigJigs'
14. **Road safety** – can we obtain road signage/school road signage to encourage drivers to slow down along the Chorley Road? Or, failing that, approach the council for road safety to be increased. The hell fire caves car park is predominantly used by parents for both the main school and the preschool. With no speed restrictions, and a very narrow pathway, its highly likely for an accident to occur. Whilst the lollypop lady is a great asset, she is not employed by either of the 2 settings.
15. **John Lewis fundraising** – Claire has a member of her family that does the fundraising for John Lewis and who may be able to assist us in this regard also
16. **Supermarket coin charities** – is the preschool able to get involved in having a donation box in local supermarkets? One of the children's parents works at one of the supermarkets so would be worthwhile asking him/her.
17. Collating the occupations of parents as helpful with fundraising opportunities
18. **Yoga & drumming**– good for mental health, motor skills, reduces stress, and increases intelligence. Sinead to link in with the main school re. the African drums.
19. **First aid** - training sessions for parents to attend. **Sarah** has a company that one of her relatives works with and will look into this. Also a good opportunity to boost numbers/intake by holding a session for parents in the local/surrounding areas.
20. **Sleep Clinic** – as above, good opportunity to also boost intake – Susie to look into this
21. **Little Kickers** - to come in and do 'taster' sessions with the children
22. **Languages** – Emma knows sign language and would be good to incorporate this into the preschool. **Jo** to look into this further
23. **Library** – change the library and books by having a 'membership' to the preschool library. Membership cards for the children who could then chose a book to take home. Could also look at incorporating the 'reading challenge' with a certificate being awarded after a certain no. of books have been read. Also consider 'Readathon' for fundraising
24. **BigJigs** – the preschool get a discount from both of these companies

## Next Meeting Booked

Monday 6 December, at the Apple Orchard, West Wycombe.