

## Committee - Annual General Meeting Minutes - 19/10/22

**1. Present:** Janet Cushing, Jonny Cooper, Holly Ling, Amy Livingston, Lykke Hansen, Siobhan Knifton, Helen

**2. Apologies:** Ruth Mattison, Matt Franks

**3. Minutes of the last committee meeting:** Agreed.

**4. Chair's Report discussed.**

**5. Business Manager's Report discussed:**

The Committee discussed cost of heating (currently included in rent). Janet to confirm the increase. A rent increase is expected in January - the right is reserved to increase it elsewhere. The statutory amount is currently held in reserve (3 months running costs) - so this will also be increased in line with the national economic situation (£35k - £40k). There are two accounts - current account (rolling spend) and reserve account. The latter is reasonably healthy. The plan to extend school hours will bring about an element of change - to have extra in reserve would not be a bad thing.

**6. Pre-School Leader's report discussed:** A special mention for the photobooth during the summer fair. Thanks extended to the Committee for embracing fundraising and community opportunities.

**7. Christmas:** Inset day next half-term for detailed planning. A Christmas raffle is planned, with cakes and drinks, to be held after the Christmas concert. Preschool staff will most likely continue with last year's approach - a filmed performance/nativity, then Christmas songs to be performed for parents.

**8. Fundraising:** The committee aims to hold the next cake sale during the first week back after half-term as an opportunity for the parent community to come together. Preschool staff are planning a stay and play in November - Friday 11th. The cake sale could coincide. One day feels more sensible than two days (there was low attendance last year when it was split across two dates). Staff to consider a possible dress-up day (pyjamas, wear something red, etc) nearer Christmas.

**9. Whatsapp Group:** Jonny is keen to get the word out that it exists - it is a good way to promote social events and fundraising opportunities. Preschool staff to put notes in book bags, newsletters, facebook, email. Committee to reflect on ways to ensure parents don't fall through cracks - some parents were not aware of the summer fete last year.

**10. AOB:**

New committee members were confirmed as: Siobhan Knifton (Vice Chair - Fundraising) and Lykke Hansen (Treasurer). Jonny Cooper to continue as Chair.

Thanks to Holly Ling and Matt Franks. Amy Livingston also to step down as secretary, but continue in post until a new secretary is nominated.

Ruth to be in touch with paperwork in due course to enrol new committee members and complete all necessary checks.

**11. Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 23rd November 2022 - 8pm

## **Handsworth Pre-School Annual General Meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

### **Committee Chair Report**

The 21/22 school year represented another successful year for Handsworth Preschool. Our setting ran smoothly and efficiently, which is reflected in our finances, as conveyed within the Administrator's report.



It's easy to forget that the school year started with Covid looming heavy over education settings, so I would like to put on record once again the Committee's thanks to the leadership team for steering the Pre-School through the tail end of the pandemic. We can also celebrate - with crossed fingers - the idea that this can be the last time a Chair's report ever need mention the word Covid again.

In terms of Committee activity over the past 12 months, I'm happy to report that we saw an engaged parent community, with regular fundraising taking place around the year. We ran a lively WhatsApp group, for parents to share questions and updates; we held cake sales every half term, to bring parents together in person; and we hosted a spring fair that was extremely well attended by the wider Highams Park Community. The fair brought in over £1,000, capping a record breaking year of fundraising. My thanks to all those who were involved in every event over the course of the past 12 months.

With the new school year now in full swing, and with some significant decisions facing the pre-school over the coming 12 months, it's time to recalibrate the Committee. Three members have left, with their children heading to school, so we are in need of a new team to help behind the scenes. As Chair, I will be handing over fundraising responsibilities to these newly elected members of the committee, so I can concentrate on helping the leadership team steer the pre-school's business functions.

## Handsworth Pre-School Annual General Meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022



### Pre-School Leader Report - Overview: 2021/22 Academic Year

**COVID:** The last academic year continued to be marked by COVID, with one closure in the Spring Term due to staff absences. The Government withdrew their tranche of COVID guidance in April 2022 which has relieved some of the pressures on staffing, PPE, processes and procedures etc. The Pre-School has retained some practices established through the pandemic – in particular, encouraging hygiene and hand-washing routines for the children; our continued efforts to move towards online or ‘paperless’ working practices; and the additional resources and activities we provide for parents over the school holidays (the ‘virtual Pre-School’).

**Parental Involvement:** We have been delighted to invite parents back into the setting for stay and plays and special events. The Jubilee Garden Party stands out as a very special day; as does the Sport’s Day; the Christmas Concert and the end of year celebrations.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Committee in supporting the Pre-School through the challenges of COVID; and in embracing the fundraising and community opportunities of the last academic year. As and when possible, the Committee ran coffee mornings and the hugely successful annual fete. In particular, the fete in May 2022 felt very special. It was the first for two years and attracted parents past, present and future – and raised a huge amount of money.

**Curriculum:** Staff have worked hard to implement changes to the early years curriculum brought in at the beginning of September 2021. We have refined our planning and review procedures, and continue to reflect on our practice.

Feedback from the summer parent questionnaire suggested that the team have been successful in supporting children’s development across all areas of the curriculum – with parents commenting that the Pre-School has supported their children either “well” or “very well”.

This year, the summer questionnaire was delivered online through Google Forms. This helped us increase response rates and presented the information back to staff in a quick, clear and easy to read format. We will therefore continue to use Google Forms for feedback forms and questionnaires.

We managed the full introduction of Tapestry over 21/22. Tapestry was rolled out cautiously in the Autumn Term 2021, with full access enabled from the October half term. Parents and staff have fed-back that they like using Tapestry and as a consequence we have rolled-out access much more quickly in the new academic year.

All funds raised by parents supported new resources and activities for the children. In the summer term, we invested around £2000 in new resources and special activities. Little Legs Playbus – our summer ‘treat’ – was particularly successful and, if funding is available, we would like to book them again for July 2023.

**Staffing and Staff Training:** there were no changes to the permanent staff team in 21/22. We welcomed back one team member from Maternity Leave in May; and retained until the end of the academic year the staff member who was providing maternity cover. This meant that we temporarily went up to seven members of staff. Last year, we also employed a total of two Learning Support Assistants; one of whom left mid-year as the child she supported moved to another setting.

Training opportunities have continued to be disrupted by COVID. However, the Deputy Leader completed the DfE sponsored Early Years Educator course. One other team member attended Borough-led training from Magic Behaviour Management; and is taking part in “Foundations For the Future”, which is delivered across NE London. Staff also attended the online, Borough-delivered ‘Festival of Early Years’ which provided some short insights into ways to develop our practice.

I acknowledge the contribution of the staff team over the year. They have remained committed and have worked hard to deliver high quality experiences for children and families through sometimes difficult and challenging circumstances.

**Children on Register:** the Pre-School remained full last year (in terms of the number of children on the register). This includes offering an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment for (over the year) 3 children with special educational needs.

**Finances:** the audited accounts identify that the Pre-School was in good financial health last year. In terms of income, both our fee and funded incomes were higher than 2021. However, pressures continue in terms of wages and rent. We made significant savings by increasingly moving to 'paperless' working. Our bank accounts remain healthy, with our reserve account holding above the statutory requirements.

We expect pressures will increase significantly, particularly in the light of the current energy crisis and other national (or global) economic changes. Staffing issues and a number of child vacancies suggest that our finances may be less buoyant in the 22/23 academic year.

#### **Forward Look – Priorities for 22/23**

- Staffing: recruiting to existing vacancies and retaining high quality, qualified staff
- Child numbers: increasing to full capacity once staffing/ratios allow
- Advertising the Pre-School: raising the profile of the Pre-School to ensure a healthy waiting list and recruitment for September 2023
- Managing the budget, particularly in the light of reduced child numbers in the Autumn Term and expected further pressures due to the national economic situation
- Looking at options to extend the Pre-School's hours, reflecting the needs of working families