

Annual Report

September 2019- August 2020



Stowey Bears Commitments

- We are committed to providing a nurturing environment that enables all children to achieve their full potential, throughout their formative years.
- We are committed to providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all of the children who attend Stowey Bears and their families.
- We are committed to providing opportunities for children to learn and develop in a challenging and fun way.

Stowey Bears Highlights

- We provided a nurturing learning environment for 34 children and their families, also supporting some additional special educational needs.
- We supported 16 children to move up to Nether Stowey Primary School., and 1 to Enmore primary school.
- Parents survey found 100% satisfaction with Stowey Bears and would recommend us to a friend and staff were widely praised.
- Parents felt we were doing all we could to keep them informed and keep their children safe regarding Covid-19.
- Little Bears woodland learning programme has been further expanded offering all children in the setting outdoor learning curriculum in a dedicated forest school area and we have delivered over 20 woodland learning sessions.
- Ten volunteers provided over 500 volunteer hours of services and support in the following areas: management committee, fundraising and building maintenance.
- Garden AstroTurf has been replaced and garden resources revamped.
- Over £1,600 income from our community, through local business support, individual donations, and fundraising events
- Over £9,000 income from grants to support the future development of Stowey Bears as well as ensuring continuous early years education provision through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Parents Testimonials

"My daughter loves coming and all of the activities and use of outdoor space has been great. Having the pictures on Tapestry everyday gives me so much to be able to talk to her about and I learn far more about her day. Thank you!"

"The pre-school is fantastic, my son has settled in really quickly, the resources are brilliant and we have been very impressed with the activities and learning he has done so far."

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A Message from the Management Committee

As a consequence of Covid-19 Stowey Bears has had a challenging time, but despite this we are delighted to report that as we close the year, Stowey Bears is now financially secure and has an extremely strong and committed staff team.

In September 2019, we were delighted to see Lisa Cripwell stepping up to take on leadership of the setting as our new Manager. We also welcomed Rachel Rich to the team as an early year's educator and Nicola Rigby as our financial administrator. Lisa stepped up initially as interim manager and we were delighted to secure her as a permanent Manager in November 2019. Sarah Grubb also took a step up and was appointed Deputy Manager and designated Safeguarding Officer. Under Lisa's leadership, the initial focus was to develop the preschool environment through the use of more natural and open-ended materials. This has seen the setting gradually replacing many of the plastic resources, the introduction of regular yoga sessions and thanks to the generous support of Homes in Sedgemoor we were able to train staff and launch our 'Little Bear Woodland Sessions' which have proved popular with both children and parents.

In January, Lisa welcomed the birth of her daughter Lottie, and we were delighted that Tina Miller joined us as acting Preschool Manager to cover Lisa's maternity leave. We sadly said goodbye to Lianne Field in January, a much-loved key worker, and we welcomed Haley Gardner as key person and SENCO. Rachel also secured a permanent role as key person. The Spring term proved to be exceptionally challenging with the unprecedented events that unfolded in March 2020. However, Tina and the team have done a fantastic job of managing everything in very challenging circumstances with the Covid-19 impact and it's complexities. We were extremely proud of the staff team who enabled us to reopen early following the lockdown period. We are very proud of the staff team who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to bring positive learning experiences and a safe and friendly space to the children in our setting in this period of uncertainty.

As we closed the doors for Summer, we were extremely pleased to be able give the garden a much needed update with very special thanks to the support of the HPC Community Fund who awarded us a £5,000 grant to undertake much needed ground works. This has enabled us to replace the old artificial grass area that had started to flood and caused the garden to be out of use in bad weather. We have also been able to buy some new resources for the garden including a new willow bower, tool station, mud kitchen and much more. In response to Covid-19 and the need for social distancing the council has given us access to the back garden, so we now have additional outdoor space. This has enabled us to create a new play park area with tree swing, a garden area with raised beds and a nature corner to extend our learning about growing and nature.

Sadly, despite increasing numbers and our best efforts to try and enrol more children we have continued to remain closed on Tuesdays and Friday afternoons as it has not been financially sustainable for us, but we are delighted that after the financial challenges in 2019 our hard work has seen Stowey Bears return to a much more secure financial position. Other positive developments have seen us offering up to 30 hours free funded childcare for families who qualify.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our new 2020-1 cohort and supporting the team in the year ahead. We warmly encouraged others to take an active role to make a strong dedicated Committee in order for the preschool to continue running and raise much needed funds.

Rosie and Zoe

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Financial Statement

2018/2019 Opening Balances	£459 Current Account (following a £4k SCC sustainability grant) £984 Reserve Account
2019/20 Closing Balances	£5,159 Current Account £10,000 Reserve Account

Overheads, financial liability and wages have been significantly reduced, and coupled with robust financial planning we are able to place £10,000 funds back into our reserves building the future security of Stowey Bears.

In Autumn 2019 we were awarded a further £2,000 from SCC as part of our sustainability grant due to cash flow challenges in November 2019, however this was a direct result of starting the year with a balance of less than £500. Our closing balance in 2020 left £5,159 in the current account at the start of September 2020.

We received £5,000 grant from the HPC Community Fund to replace the all weather surface in the garden together with flood prevention groundwork and other improvements. We also secured a £2,000 Covid mitigation grant from Somerset County Council to assist with additional costs incurred when the setting reopened voluntarily in June 2020 following earlier closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic..

We have also raised £1,618 from our own fundraising events.

The Stowey Bears Team

Management Committee

Zoe Hick, Co-Chair
Rosie Aubrey, Co- Chair
Lucy Carpenter, Secretary
Kirsty Wishart, Treasurer
Victoria Blake
Jackie Banks
Vanessa Malen
Lucy Mayhew
Angela U'dell
Keely Hicks

Staff Team

Lisa Cripwell, Pre-School Manager
Tina Miller, acting Pre-school
Manager (maternity cover)
Nicola Rigby, Finance Administrator
Sarah Grubb, Deputy Manager
Hayley Gardner, Key Worker
Rachel Rich, Key Worker

Fundraising and Social Events

From September 2019- July 2020, we delivered a number of fundraising and social events for parents including:

- Chocolate tombola raised £154
 - The annual Christmas Tea Party, raffle and Christmas Nativity in December 2019 raising £373
 - Stowey Bears business sponsored calendars raised £252
 - Charity Bingo Night raising £419
 - Bags to school October and March raising £76
 - Amazon Smile £27.86
- Sadly all other events and activities were curtailed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

Thanks to our supporters

Homes in Sedgemoor
Nether Stowey Parish Council
Hinkley Point C
Somerset Community Foundation Little stores
Nether Stowey Post Office
Tropiquaria Zoo
Keystone Pizzeria
The Carew Arms
Combe House Hotel, Bar & Restaurant
Plowright Organic
we the curious

Quantock Lodge Leisure
Blackmore Farm
Quayside Trampoline and Gymnastics Club
Notley Arms. Exmoor National Park
Dunster Castle & Gardens
Hunstile Organic Farm
Taunton Tesco
Asda
Morrisons
Paperboat Consulting

Mrs Donna Richards
7 Harry Prowse Close
Nether Stowey
Bridgwater
Somerset
TA5 1BF
23/06/2021

Mrs Tina Miller
Stowey Bears Pre-School
Nether Stowey

Dear Mrs Miller,

As requested, I have reviewed the accounts you prepared for Stowey Bears Pre-School, in conjunction with the supporting documentation you supplied.

After reviewing the paperwork submitted to me, I can confirm the following:

- All transactions have been accurately accounted for
- All bank accounts reconcile with statements provided
- All balances were found correct

On this basis, I can confirm that the accounts you have prepared are an accurate reflection of the financial transactions which took place during the financial year.

Regards

Donna Richards.