

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 1029698

Details

Other names	ST HELENS PLAYGROUP
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	1993-12-06
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	St. Helens Church St. Helens Street Ipswich Suffolk IP4 2LS
Phone	07507455185
Email	mail@sthelensplaygroup.co.uk
Website	www.sthelensplaygroup.co.uk

Activities

Objects: The aims of the Pre-school are to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups and by:(a) offering appropriate play, education and care facilities, family learning and extended hours groups, together with the right of parents to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of such groups, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children whatever their race, culture, religion, means or ability;(b) encouraging the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs in the local areas;(c) Instigating and adhering to and furthering the aims and objects of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Activities: To support the development and education of children under statutory school age by offering appropriate learning through play experiences for all children whatever their race, culture, religion, means or ability. We follow the national curriculum for early years education.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Children/young People

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** IN PRACTICE IPSWICH
- Suffolk

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-04-30	£77,355	£61,939	-	-
2024-04-30	£54,865	£53,088	-	-
2023-04-30	£59,428	£50,486	-	-
2022-04-30	£50,062	£46,434	-	-
2021-04-30	£35,549	£40,368	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Charlotte Ayers	Chair	2022-09-01
Harvey Crane		2025-11-30
Viviana Botti		2025-09-01

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1029698

Accounts

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

AGM MINUTES

Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 9.00am

In attendance:

Committee

Charlotte Ayers (Chair)

Harvey Crane

Viviana Botti

Carol Pickering (Co-opted Committee Member and Manager, acting Secretary)

Parents

Runa Begum, Kamile Darzinskaite, Rukia Khatun, Huwnas Ali, Ryan Page, Amber Maples, Memud Omotoyosi, Andreea Radu, Agnieka Panek, Deepak Shinde, Anuradha Shinde, Ismat Jahan Mim

Apologies:

Agnes Barabas, Tiffany Bellingham, Rachel Smith

1. Welcome

Charlotte Ayers welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself as Chairperson, Harvey Crane as the new Treasurer and Viviani Botti as a Committee Member and fundraiser.

2. Chairperson's Report

St Helen's Playgroup has been running now for over 35 years and continues to thrive despite all the challenges that pre-schools are having to face, from a lack of government funding and annual increases to the national minimum wage to increased expectations.

We currently have 7 members of staff on permanent contracts and 1 on a zero hour contract to provide cover when needed. The minimum adult:child ratios are always exceeded. This has always been the philosophy of the playgroup and although maximising these ratios would bring in more revenue we believe that this would compromise the care and learning opportunities that we would be able to provide.

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

Charity Number: 1029698

Ofsted Number: 251649

The Playgroup continues to provide as many varied opportunities for the children as possible, including various trips and visits throughout the year. In the past year the children have enjoyed dance sessions with the Ipswich School of Dance, a visit to Soft Play and the Play Den, the Christmas Tree Festival, the library, the local Pet Shop, Brickmaker's Wood and both Alexandra and Christchurch Parks. We have also enjoyed regular visits from the charity Let's Talk Reading who also gave each child a book at Christmas.

The outcome of our regular Ofsted inspection last June was not as good as we had hoped. The issues of concern related to recruitment procedures and have now been addressed. It is important to note that Ofsted commented on:

- The high ratio of qualified staff to children.
- The curriculum being successfully built on children's interests, which means children meaningfully engage and make good progress in their learning.
- Communication and language is incredibly well supported by staff.
- The staff focus on high-quality interactions and make the most of each moment to talk to children.
- The playgroup uses additional funding wisely to positively impact on children's learning and experiences.

We are likely to be inspected again during the current academic year when it is hoped that the additional work that the team have been doing to embed newly introduced areas of the curriculum, including environmental sustainability and oral health, will be recognised.

Our biggest challenge is remaining financially viable. In less than 3 years our annual rent has increased from £1,500 per annum to over £5,000. The minimum wage also continues to increase year on year, which has a huge impact on our pay scales. However, with almost all our children receiving the Government's Early Education Funding, there is little opportunity for us to increase income from fees. We do not want to have to compromise the care and learning opportunities that the children benefit from but if financial pressures continue, we may have to consider reducing the number of staff we have at each session. Your support is therefore vital to us either by contributing towards the cost of providing a healthy snack for the children each day when asked to do so each term or by organising fund raising activities to enable us to buy additional resources.

3. Treasurer's Report

Carol presented the report on behalf of the new Treasurer. A copy of this report is attached to the Minutes of this meeting. The accounts for 2024/25 were subject to an independent examination and no concerns were raised.

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

Charity Number: 1029698

Ofsted Number: 251649

Carol explained that although the last financial year was profitable, this was due to the playgroup operating at maximum capacity for the entire year. During the autumn term this year, numbers were much lower due to the higher proportion of children on the waiting list with birthdays between September and December. Although we are now full to capacity, the lower numbers in the autumn term will severely impact upon our income for the year.

Parents were asked if they could please contribute towards the cost of providing a healthy snack for the children each day. A voluntary contribution of 10p per day for each day that a child attends is suggested, which is a maximum of £7.00 per term. Alternatively, parents could provide, for example, a cucumber or a bag of apples whenever they can afford to do so.

Harvey then introduced himself, explaining his background and how he hopes to be able to support the playgroup.

4. Playgroup Update from the Manager

Carol explained that Preschools are now required to evidence environmental sustainability by producing a Climate Action Plan and working towards Sustainable Development Goals. Siobhan is leading on this initiative with the support of Viviana. This is not just about developing a love of nature and recycling or repurposing things but also aims to develop an understanding of our World so that we can all work towards developing an environmentally sustainable world with kindness and respect being our priority. We would like to be able to grow some vegetables with the children in our garden and would like parents to consider raising some money to enable us to buy the resources to do this.

Oral health also forms part of the Early Years Curriculum and we are now part of the Let's Brush initiative that supports children to brush their teeth each day during sessions. Carol gave a brief talk on the foods and drinks that are good/bad for children's teeth and provided handouts to take home as well as guidance and a sticker chart for parents and children to use at home.

Lots of trips and visits are planned for the second half of the spring term and into the summer. Most of these will be free of charge.

Carol reiterated that the team are always happy to talk with you about your child and how you can support their development at home and can also offer advice and reassurance on things like toilet training and managing challenging behaviour. They are here to help support you as well as caring for and supporting your child. Please speak to your child's Key Person if you have any concerns or would like any help or advice.

5. Invitation for new Committee Members

Charlotte invited anyone interested in becoming a Committee member, particularly if they are interested in fund raising for Playgroup or taking on a committee role to stay behind for a few moments.

There were no further questions, so Charlotte thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

St Helen's Playgroup
Treasurers Report
Annual Accounts Report YE2025

The following balances were held by St Helens Playgroup as at 30th April 2025:

Llyods Account	£ 59,047.43
Petty Cash in Hand	nil
Total	£ 59,047.43

The accounts for the period May 2024 to April 2025 are as shown below:

Income	£77,354.55
Expenditure	£61,938.49
Profit/ (Loss)	£15,416.06

	FY25	FY24
Profit/ (Loss)	£15,416.06	£1,776.74
Income	£77,354.55	£54,864.96
Expenditure	£61,938.49	£53,088.22
Local Authority Funding	£68,009.90	£44,691.25
Attendance Fees	£8,525.20	£6,610.00
Grants	0	£700.00
Fund Raising	0	£227.31
Other	£819.45	£2,636.40
Expenditure		
Wages	£53,596.82	£45,742.20
Training	£983.04	£116.60
Rent	£3,799.27	£1,480.00
Equipment	£176.31	£972.34
Consumables	£1,036.21	£1,260.60
Other	£2,346.84	£3,516.48

It should be noted that of the £59,047.43 held on 30/04/2025, £16,099.87 related to specific funding and £22,800.00 to allocated reserves, leaving £20,147.56 of accessible funds.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
St Helen's Playgroup

On accounts for the year
ended

30 April 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1029698

Set out on pages

Financial Summary

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30 / 04 / 2025**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 04/11/2025

Name:

Gary L Parker

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA

Address:

23 Woodrush Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, IP3 8RB

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1029698

Accounts

Chairpersons's Report – 20th January 2025

St Helen's Playgroup has been running now for over 35 years and continues to thrive despite all the challenges that pre-schools are having to face, from a lack of government funding and annual increases to the national minimum wage to increased expectations.

We currently have 7 members of staff on permanent contracts and 1 on a zero hour contract to provide cover when needed. The minimum adult:child ratios are always exceeded. This has always been the philosophy of the playgroup and although maximising these ratios would bring in more revenue we believe that this would compromise the care and learning opportunities that we would be able to provide for the children.

We have been full to capacity since September and already have a waiting list for next September.

The Playgroup continues to provide as many varied opportunities for the children as possible, including various trips and visits throughout the year. For the past three years the children have enjoyed free sessions at Goals during the summer months to develop their football skills and it is hoped that we will be able to do this again this summer. During the past year, there have also been trips to Dial Lane Bookshop, soft play, Pipers Vale Gymnastics Centre, the Christmas Tree Festival, library and both Alexandra and Christchurch Parks. The children have also enjoyed visits from the charity Let's Talk Reading, a puppet theatre, Together Dental and an array of pets.

Our biggest challenge is remaining financially viable. In 18 months our annual rent has increased from £1,500 per annum to over £4,000. The minimum wage also continues to increase year on year, which has a huge impact on our pay scales. However, with almost all of our children receiving the Government's Early Education Funding, there is little opportunity for us to increase income from fees. We do not want to have to compromise the care and learning opportunities that the children benefit from but if financial pressures continue we may have to consider reducing the number of staff we have at each session. Your support is therefore vital to us either by contributing towards the cost of providing a healthy snack for the children each day when asked to do so each term or by organising fund raising activities to enable us to buy additional resources.

The team here are always happy to talk with you about your child and how you can support their development at home and can also offer advice and reassurance on things like toilet training and managing challenging behaviour. They are here to help support you as well as caring for and supporting your child.

St Helen's Playgroup
Treasurers Report
Annual Accounts Report YE2024

The following balances were held by St Helens Playgroup as at 1st May 2024:

Llyods Account	£43,266.58
Petty Cash in Hand	nil
Total	£43,266.58

The accounts for the period May 2023 to April 2024 are as shown below:

Income	£54,864.96
Expenditure	£53,088.22
Profit/ (Loss)	£1,776.74

	FY24	FY23
Profit/ (Loss)	£1,776.74	£8,942.40
Income	£54,864.96	£59,428.31
Expenditure	£53,088.22	£50,485.91
Local Authority Funding	£44,691.25	£45,583.98
Attendance Fees	£6,610.00	£2,963.00
Grants	£700.00	£1,875.00
Fund Raising	£227.31	£280.85
Other	£2,636.40	£8,725.48
Expenditure		
Wages	£45,742.20	£44,581.18
Training	£116.60	£268.07
Rent	£1,480.00	£1,472.00
Equipment	£972.34	£838.55
Consumables	£1,260.60	£949.46
Other	£3,516.48	£2,376.65

It should be noted that of the £43,266.58 held on 01/05/2024, £18,477.84 related to specific funding and £21,165.00 to allocated reserves, leaving £3,623.74 of accessible funds.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
St Helen's Playgroup

On accounts for the year
ended

30 April 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1029698

Set out on pages

Financial Summary

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30 / 04 / 2024**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 04/11/2024

Name:

Gary L Parker

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA

Address:

23 Woodrush Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, IP3 8RB

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1029698

Accounts

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

AGM MINUTES

Friday 19th January 2024 at 9.00am

In attendance:

Committee

Charlotte Ayers (Chair)

Carol Pickering (Co-opted Committee Member and Manager, acting Secretary)

Parents

Akintunde Basirat, Viviana Botti, Marcus Cormack, Sara Ghaiora, Stephanie Goodall, Temutayo Johnson, Chanel Lewis, O. Ogunleye, Kithariyan Saran, Pooja Sharma, Jaspreet Singh Arora, Lizzie Slomka, Luke and Chelsea Smith

Hilary Smith – Church Warden

Apologies:

Jyoti Agwar (Treasurer)

Katie Strowger

Helsie Hallums

Ben Ianson

1. Welcome

Charlotte Ayers welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself as Chairperson and gave the apologies of Jyoti, the Treasurer and Katie Strowger, the other Committee Member.

2. Chairperson's Report

St Helen's Playgroup has been running now for over 35 years and continues to thrive despite all the challenges that pre-schools are having to face, from a lack of government funding and annual increases to the national minimum wage to increased expectations.

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

Charity Number: 1029698

Ofsted Number: 251649

A Committee of volunteers consisting of parents and past parents oversees the Playgroup with Carol providing the day-to-day management of the setting. We currently have 7 members of staff on permanent contracts and 2 on zero hour contracts to provide cover when needed. The required adult : child ratios are always exceeded. This has always been the philosophy of the playgroup and although maximising these ratios would bring in more revenue we believe that this would compromise the care and learning opportunities that we would be able to provide for the children.

We are currently full and have already started a waiting list for September. The sudden closure of all Alpha Nurseries at the end of December, which included Bluebells Nursery in nearby Bond Street, means that demand for spaces locally has increased.

The Playgroup continues to provide as many varied opportunities for the children as possible, including various trips and visits throughout the year. For the past two years the children have enjoyed fully funded sessions at Goals during the summer months to develop their football skills and it is hoped that we will be able to do this again this summer.

Following an application to the Suffolk Community Foundation we were awarded £1,875.00 to carry out necessary repairs to our outside space. This work was completed over the summer with the help of two volunteers, making the garden a safe and fully usable space for the children to enjoy once again.

Finally, we believe that the government chose to offer “free” early education to all children from the age of 3 and that it is therefore their responsibility to ensure that this is properly funded. We don't want to find ourselves in the same position as Alpha Nurseries, having to close because we can no longer afford to deliver quality early years education. That's why we're asking as many people as possible to speak out by writing to our local MP. If you would like to do this, please ask Carol for details.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Chairperson presented the report on behalf of the Treasurer.

A copy of this report is attached to the Minutes of this meeting. The accounts for 2022/23 were subject to an independent examination and no concerns were raised.

83 % of our income comes from EEF/ EYPP. 88 % of our expenditure is wages.

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

Charity Number: 1029698

Ofsted Number: 251649

The minimum wage is increasing by 9.8% from April which means that our wages bill will increase by 9.8%. However, although the Early Education Funding rate increasing, it is not set to increase by an equivalent amount. We are also anticipating a large increase in rent to cover the increased costs of running the building. This means that we will not make a profit this year and may make a loss next year, unless the funding rates set by the government are increased. In the future, we may have to consider reducing our staffing levels to the required minimum, which will impact hugely on the level of attention that each individual child will receive.

4. Election of a New Committee

Charlotte invited anyone interested in becoming a Committee member, particularly if they are interested in fund raising for Playgroup, to speak with Carol. New Committee members will be required to undertake a DBS check.

5. Playgroup Update from the Manager

Most of the equipment that Playgroup buys is funded by specific funds or fund raising. Last year the Committee raised money for a new trampoline. Several of the children have mentioned basketball recently and we would like to be able to buy a basketball hoop for the garden, but we need to raise some extra funds for this. They cost around £50 but we already have £23 from our Christmas raffle so are almost half way there. If you would like to help, please let Carol know.

The team at St Helen's Playgroup are always happy to talk with you about your child and how you can support their development at home and can also offer advice and reassurance on things like toilet training and managing challenging behaviour. The staff are here to help support you as well as care for your child. The nearest Family Hub is Treehouse but as this is quite a way away, Carol is therefore working with one of their Child Health Practitioners to run some information sessions for parents during Playgroup sessions. The first session will hopefully run in March and will focus on healthy eating.

6. Any Other Business

There were no further questions so Charlotte thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.30am.

St Helen's Playgroup
Treasurers Report
Annual Accounts for Year End 2023

The following balances were held by St Helens Playgroup on 28th April 2023:

Llyods Account	£41,127.45
Petty Cash in Hand	nil
Total	£41,127.45

The accounts for the period May 2022 to April 2023 are as shown below:

Income	£ 59,428.31
Expenditure	£ 50,485.91
Profit/ (Loss)	£ 8,942.40

	FY2022/23	FY2021/22
Profit/ (Loss)	£8,942.40	£3,628.19
Income	£59,428.31	£50,061.98
Local Authority Funding	£45,583.98	£42,510.85
Attendance Fees	£2,963.00	£6,915.00
Grants	£1,875.00	£570.00
Fund Raising	£280.85	0
Other	£8,725.48	£66.13
Expenditure	£50,485.91	£46,433.79
Wages	£44,581.18	£39,811.56
Training	£268.07	£1,516.17
Rent	£1,472.00	£1,600.00
Equipment	£838.55	£1,214.34
Consumables	£949.46	£877.12
Other	£2,376.65	£1,414.60

It should be noted that of the £41,127.45 held on 28/04/2023, £18,321.06 related to specific funding and £18,377.00 to allocated reserves, leaving £4,429.39 of accessible funds.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
St Helen's Playgroup

On accounts for the year
ended

30 April 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1029698

Set out on pages

Financial Summary

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30 / 04 / 2022**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 21/10/2023

Name:

Gary L Parker

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA

Address:

23 Woodrush Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, IP3 8RB

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1029698

Accounts

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

AGM MINUTES

Tuesday 31st January 2023 at 9.00am

In attendance:

Committee

Charlotte Ayers (Chair)

Carol Pickering (Co-opted Committee Member and Manager, acting Secretary)

Parents

Becky Fletcher, Emma Griffin, Taylor Garlick, Yarnah Claxton, Agnes Barabas, Kamile Darzinskaite, Mohamad Ali, Amber Maples, Helsie Sherman-Hallums, Stacey Hyam, Stephanie Goodall, Anna Repman, Katie Strowger.

Apologies:

Jyoti Agwar (Treasurer)

Rosie Loveday

Dan Sedgwick

Tiffany Bellingham

1. Welcome

Charlotte Ayers welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself as Chairperson and gave the apologies of Jyoti, the Treasurer.

2. Chairperson's Report

St Helen's Playgroup has been running now for over 35 years and continues to thrive despite all the challenges that pre-schools are having to face, from a lack of government funding and annual increases to the national minimum wage to increased expectations.

We currently have 7 members of staff on permanent contracts and 3 on zero hour contracts to provide cover when needed. Carmen is the newest member of the team who started with us in September but she has settled in well and is already a valued member of the team. Joanna will be starting maternity leave in March with her shifts being covered by existing members of staff.

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

The required adult:child ratios are always exceeded. This has always been the philosophy of the playgroup and although maximising these ratios would bring in more revenue we believe that this would compromise the care and learning opportunities that we would be able to provide for the children.

We have been full since September and have a list of children waiting to join.

Following an application to the Suffolk Community Foundation we were recently awarded £1,875.00 to carry out necessary repairs to our outside space. It is hoped that this work will be completed this term so that the garden can be fully utilised once again.

Over the past two years we have been able to access additional support for families through the Ipswich Opportunity Area. Although the funding for this work has come to an end, Carol is still able to help families who are struggling financially or in need of a little bit of help with parenting, you just need to ask.

The team at St Helen's Playgroup are always happy to talk with you about your child and how you can support their development at home and can also offer advise and reassurance on things like toilet training and managing challenging behaviour.

3. Treasurer's Report

Carol Pickering presented the report on behalf of the Treasurer.

A copy of this report is attached to the Minutes of this meeting. The accounts for 2021/22 were subject to an independent examination and no concerns were raised.

Carol explained that the Early Education Funding levels for 2023/24 have been released by Suffolk County Council and although the levels have increased, they are not in line with the increase to the national minimum wage which comes into effect in April. As a result, it is likely that Playgroup will operate at a loss next year and this is not sustainable in the long term.

4. Election of a New Committee

Charlotte invited anyone interested in becoming a Committee member, particularly if they are interested in fund raising for Playgroup, to speak with herself or Carol Pickering. New Committee members will be required to undertake

St Helen's Playgroup, St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2LS

Charity Number: 1029698

Ofsted Number: 251649

a DBS check.

5. Playgroup Report

Carol Pickering thanked parents for raising the money for a new trampoline which the children now enjoy using.

Playgroup has received the grant from the Suffolk Community Foundation to replace the retaining sleepers and play bark in the garden and requested help from volunteers to prepare the garden for the necessary works. 7 parents offered to help; a date is to be agreed after the half term break.

Carol encouraged parents to 'like' or comment on observations of their child on Tapestry and to upload photos and comments of the things their child does with them at home. This will help staff to plan activities for individual children, which helps to support their learning and development. Tapestry was purchased with a grant from the Covid Restart Programme in September 2021 and has proved to be an asset to the setting.

6. Any Other Business

Questions were invited from those present:

- Will Playgroup be affected by the planned teacher strikes?

Carol confirmed that Playgroup would not be affected by any strike action.

There were no further questions so Charlotte thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.30am.

St Helen's Playgroup
Treasurers Report
Annual Accounts for Year End 2022

The following balances were held by St Helens Playgroup on 29th April 2022:

Llyods Account	£32,472.73
Petty Cash in Hand	nil
Total	£32,472.73

The accounts for the period May 2021 to April 2022 are as shown below:

Income	£50,061.98
Expenditure	£46,433.79
Profit/ (Loss)	£3,628.19

	FY22	FY21
Profit/ (Loss)	£3,628.19	(£4,818.89)
Income	£50,061.98	£35,548.65
Local Authority Funding	£42,510.85	£30,583.28
Attendance Fees	£6,915.00	£3,009.00
Grants	£570.00	£1,856.37
Other	£66.13	£100.00
Expenditure	£46,433.79	£40,367.54
Wages	£39,811.56	£36,714.13
Training	£1,516.17	£51.60
Rent	£1,600.00	£440.00
Equipment	£1,214.34	£967.02
Other	£2,291.72	£2,194.79

It should be noted that of the £32,472.73 held on 29/04/2022, £9,384.92 related to specific funding and £14,671 to allocated reserves, leaving £8,416.81 of accessible funds.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
St Helen's Playgroup

On accounts for the year
ended

30 April 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1029698

Set out on pages

Financial Summary

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30 / 04 / 2022**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 30/11/2022

Name:

Gary L Parker

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA

Address:

23 Woodrush Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, IP3 8RB

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

ST HELEN'S PLAYGROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1029698

Accounts

Chairpersons's Report - 15th December 2021

The last two years have been particularly challenging and Playgroup has had to continuously adapt to ensure that everyone stays as safe and well as possible whilst also ensuring that the children have the same learning opportunities that they had pre-Covid.

Apart from the first lockdown, Playgroup has remained open for all children. At times we have only had a few children regularly attending, at the choice of their parents, and there were some sessions when we only had one child but we continued to provide a full curriculum with lots of child led learning. During the lockdowns we used a private Facebook group to keep in contact with families and to provide daily activities for the children to do at home with their families. The staff took it in turns to produce videos, something that they were initially reluctant to do, but they all took part and pulled together as a team to support each other, as they always do!

There have been a couple of staffing changes during the past year. One member of staff has had to switch to a zero hours contract due to continuing ill health whilst another member of the team has returned to a permanent contract. We have a very strong team who support each other and the required adult:child ratios are always exceeded.

The challenges of providing remote learning combined with the fact that parents are still not allowed into the setting in the way that they were pre-Covid led to the decision in the summer to invest in Tapestry. Although the annual fee is relatively small, the cost of tablets to use within the setting had previously prevented us from using it. However, Carol was able to secure funding through the local Covid Restart Programme to fund the cost of the tablets and heavy-duty protective cases. Finances are particularly tight and but every opportunity to bring in additional funding is utilised.

Through the Ipswich Opportunity Area we are able to access additional support for families who may be struggling financially or who need a little bit of extra help with parenting. If you ever need to talk to someone, Carol is there for you, you just need to ask.

Carol is also working closely with other pre-schools and primary schools in the Ipswich Opportunity Area to ensure that children are ready to start school. This includes assessing the children's speech and language development at a much younger age and providing them with additional support where needed.

We have recently been awarded Communication Friendly Setting status in recognition of Siobhan's hard work to improve our provision in this area.

We have just been promised an additional £1,735 from the Ipswich Opportunity Area Fund to improve maths provision within the setting. As well as investing in new resources, all staff will be completing training to develop their skills. We hope that maths will become embedded in our provision in the same way that speech, language and communication is.

St Helens Playgroup

Treasurers Report

Annual Accounts Report YE2021

The following balances were held by St Helens Playgroup as at 30th April 2021:

Lloyds Account	31,124.52
Total	<u>31,124.52</u>
Petty Cash In Hand	0.00

The accounts for the period May 2020 to April 2021 are as shown below:

Income	35,548.65
Expenditure	40,367.54

Profit/(Loss)	(4,818.89)
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	FY21	FY20
Profit/(Loss)	(4,818.89)	558.44
Income	35,548.65	45,789.19
Expenditure	40,367.54	45,230.75
Wages	36,714.13	38,477.24
Training	51.60	2,064.19
Rent	440.00	944.00
Equipment	967.02	777.32
Local Authority Funding	30,583.28	34,864.83
Attendance Fees	3,009.00	5,794.00
Training Grants	1,856.37	4,252.00
Fundraising	100.00	819.36

1. The FY2021 accounts are complete and have been signed off by an independent examiner.
2. Reserve calculations have been reviewed and the level required is £25,235.83. We are currently holding specific funds of £10,245.08, which leaves a deficit of £4,356.39 as at 30th April. Although this puts playgroup in an extremely vulnerable position it should be noted that the reserve relating to payment in lieu of notice (£8,300) will only be required in an extreme circumstance.

3. 86% of our income was generated by Local Authority funding and 8.5% from attendance fees. Local Authority Grants accounted for 5.2% of overall income, down from the previous year (9.3%).
4. The primary running cost of playgroup is the wage bill, making up 91% of total expenditure. In operational terms the wages cost was down £3k against budget, £2k against last year; during the Covid closure we were able to pay full contracted hours to staff as SCC did not pause our funding, savings were however made on the extra/paperwork hours usually paid. Pay rises were given effective April 2021 to accommodate the revised 'National Living Wage', which equated to an overall rise of 2.2%. The senior staff pay scale was again effectively frozen, although the lower end had been 'caught up' by the assistant scale. The decision was therefore taken to globally apply a +3% to the senior scale against the equivalent assistant rate, bringing this in line naturally over a course of years. The NLW is currently estimated to rise to £9.42 in April 2022, a 5.7% increase and this will again impact upon our salary structures and expenditure on wages.
5. Training spend was £51.60, however over £600 worth of staff hours were spent on the Elkan and Family Support Practitioner schemes funded by Ipswich Opportunity Area grants.
6. St Helens Church was kind enough not to charge playgroup any rent during the enforced Covid-19 closure, resulting in a saving of £504.
7. £887 of the equipment purchased was paid for by specific funds held. Significant items included a climbing frame and hoops funded by SCC (£150), a portable sink funded by The Co-Op Local Community Fund (£336) and stepping stones funded by SCC's SEN provision (£108).
8. Generally costs were lower in most areas due to closures and a lower than average number of pupils. Activities were higher than budgeted as the staff prepared home learning packs for the children during the first lockdown. Notably no DBS requests were processed, there were no Christmas celebrations and we no longer require an annual music licence as this is now covered by the church's music licence.
9. Local Authority Funding was down on last year by £4.3K. However, we are currently full to capacity with the majority of children in receipt of Early Education Funding.
10. Fees were charged at £15 per session; no further increase is currently being discussed. Fee paying sessions were reduced drastically in FY2021 with 60 fee paying sessions being lost due to lockdown closure.
11. Fundraising was significantly lower than last year at £100.00 vs £819.36, the Committee would like to thank the Loynes family for their generosity. Also received was £1856.37 from the IOA scheme to fund staff training.
12. As a charity, the playgroup is a non-profit making organisation. Any profits made in the last year and to date in this financial year need to be put back in to supporting and developing the playgroup and its activities. Any losses must be absorbed by prior year profits to enable Playgroup to continue.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
St Helen's Playgroup

**On accounts for the year
ended**

30 April 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1029698

Set out on pages

Financial Summary

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 03/12/2021

Name:

Gary L Parker

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

FCCA

Address:

23 Woodrush Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, IP3 8RB

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.