

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)

	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.