

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL AGM (2024) MINUTES – 15th June 2024

For Sept 2022-August 2023

Present: Dave Paterson-Watts, Sue Knab, Sam Gardiner, Jayne Jarman, Ana Sepulveda, Francesca Lee, Shane Cameron, Lauren Palucci, Mosa Mahmood

Apologies:

1	Welcome - DPW
2	<p>Chair Report – DPW</p> <p>Firstly I'd like to welcome you all and thank you for attending today. For those that don't know me, my name is Dave and I have now been the Chair for several years. My son left preschool in July 21 and my daughter is now here.</p> <p>On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all staff for their immense amount of hard work and ongoing commitment over the past few years. The past couple of years have been difficult financially mostly due to continued under funding and a high turnover of children which has brought many challenges.</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>As usual, it is the passion, energy and dedication of the staff that keeps preschool running.</p> <p>This year Sue and Sam have taken over the daily running of the preschool and Jayne has taken on responsibility for the financial management of the setting. We currently have 8 permanent staff and all Ofsted obligations in terms of training have been met.</p> <p>It has been a year of transition for staff and a steep learning curve in some ways but the team are working well together and have overcome any obstacles they have come across.</p>

Committee

Chairperson – Dave generously agreed to continue in the role of Chairperson for yet another year.

Treasurer – Ana kindly agreed to become treasurer in January but will be stepping down at the end of the year and so we need to fill this position.

Secretary – Fran has done a great job of organising regular online committee meetings and producing timely minutes following each meeting. Fran will be resigning at the end of the year and so we need to fill this position.

Preschool needs the support of parents and carers if it is to fulfil its legal obligations with third parties such as Ofsted and the Charity Commission and so it is time to elect a new committee and in particular the roles of Treasurer and Secretary.

The nature of our preschool is to operate with parental involvement and the more people involved the better, any help that you can give is appreciated.

Joining the committee is not an onerous task and we are always on hand to guide committee members through the necessary procedures throughout the academic year. Previous committee members have found it to be a hugely positive experience and in addition joining the committee means:

- that you and other parents can have a say in the way our preschool is run,
- you get to know other parents better,
- it gives you experience that looks very good on your CV!
- the children love to see their parents joining in activities and events

There are also opportunities for parents and carers to get involved with the preschool and contribute in other ways including:

- helping at fund raising events
- helping us with DIY tasks
- helping us promote preschool
- repairing toys and equipment
- grant applications

All committee member appointments will be subject to a clear enhanced DBS check and will be required to sign up to the DBS update service and will also need to be registered with Ofsted. Committee members automatically become Trustees of the charity.

Aside from being part of the committee, there are always jobs to be done around preschool so if you can offer any practical help please let us know. Preschool staff work extremely hard, under huge pressure and on low wages and it helps with staff morale if parents are contributing. It is also very rewarding for parents to be involved.

A strong committee and parental involvement is vital in our ongoing battle to survive during these challenging times.

Overview

September 2022- August 2023

The number of children attending preschool rose steadily throughout the academic year from 17 in September and by the end of the summer term we had 28 children registered with us.

September 2023 –

In September last year we started very positively with 25 children, unfortunately several children who were attending full time left preschool as their families were returning to their home country, this had an adverse effect on our financial situation, and we had to reduce staff hours as a result.

However, we bounced back and in the Spring term this year we had 32 children attending preschool. We currently have 38 children registered.

September 2024 onwards

We currently have 18 children registered for September this year, our aim is to have 23 so that we have a more comfortable start to the year. If you have any friends or family that might be interested in a space then please do let Jayne know or ask them to contact preschool.

Promoting ourselves needs to be a continued focus. We have our own website and Facebook page and we place articles in Newtown Primary School's newsletter but need to be more active on both social media and other outlets. Our committee members have kindly distributed posters and flyers to Exeter Library and the Baby Room on Paris Street and even at their child's birthday party. If any parents are able to put a poster up in their workplace, community group, church etc then please do let me know.

However, word of mouth still appears to be our most successful marketing tools and we thank all those parents who recommend us to their friends and family. We would be grateful if you could continue to spread the word and to like and share our Facebook page whenever possible.

Fees

Our fees increased in September 22 to £5.22 (2yo) and £4.80 (3yo). In order to

meet rising operating costs, mostly due to the increase in National Minimum Wage in April 23 our current fees of £5.74 and £5.28 were introduced in September 23.

Unfortunately, we have no alternative but to increase fees again in September this year due to the 11% increase in National Minimum Wage in April this year and predicted further increases next year. These fees will be approved by the committee and announced in the coming weeks.

Treasurer Report – JJ/AS

Jayne explained that the preschool has two bank accounts: a current account for day to day business, and a savings account to cover contingencies such as possible redundancy payments.

Sept 2022 – August 2023

Our results for the year 2022-2023 are:

Our income for the 2022-2023 FY was approx. £86.2k

- The main sources of income were Early Years Funding and totalling approx. £80.2k.
- Grants of £5850 – £5.5k from the Norman Family Charitable Trust (NFCT) and £350 from Exeter City Council which was used to purchase an Ipad. The money from NFCT was used towards our operating costs including wages.

Our expenditure for the year was approx. £88.2K

- The major expense was wages and tax/Ni which totalled around £76K.
- The other significant expense was rent totalled approx £7.3k.

The figures show a deficit of just over £2K, but the real deficit was actually £5k as we also transferred £3k from our deposit account to keep us going so. This also included the significant amount of £5.85k of grants.

Without the substantial grants from the NFCT we wouldn't have been able to survive. There are various reasons for this, the main being underfunding, the amount that we are paid by the government just doesn't cover the running costs of the preschool, in particular the wages. The increase in funding levels fell significantly short of the increase in National Minimum Wage.

We are now reliant on receiving grants and fees from unfunded children to cover our costs.

We also had reserves of just under £9K in September 2022 in a separate account to cover contingencies, such as redundancy payments, this was reduced to £5827, due to withdrawing £3k to help cover costs.

The accounts were accepted and agreed by the meeting.

The accounts have been audited by an independent auditor and will be submitted

to the Charity Commission following this meeting.

September 2023 onwards

Providing that our children numbers remain as they are we currently stand to make a small profit for the first time in several years. Thanks to the forecasting spreadsheet set up by the previous treasurer, this allows us to keep an accurate picture of how we are doing financially and to react to changes quickly.

Grants

We have been successful in applying for the following grants:

Exeter City Council £350 – table top cooker and hand washing unit
 Devon County Council £950 – expansion funding to purchase resources for the younger children including sleep mats and bedding
 Norman Family Charitable Trust - £2500 towards operating costs and to replace funds in the deposit account
 South West Water Conservation grant - £950 to cover the cost of the new water tray, staff time and resources for the children to do some planting/gardening

Fundraising

This could be an invaluable source of income which we are not currently benefiting from. It would be great to have a small team of parents to come up with some ideas.

It would also be amazing if all of our parents could sign up to Easyfundraising, some settings earn a huge amount of money from this each year so it would be great to get you all on board. It doesn't cost you anything but if you use this platform for online purchases the preschool will receive a donation for every purchase you make. This applies to thousands of online stores/suppliers.

We did attend the Winter Celebration at Newtown Primary School and are hoping to join in with other events run by Friends of Newtown School.

Playleader's report

Overview

We started this academic year, with change in mind. Sam and Sue worked very hard over the summer holidays, to de-clutter the rooms and we have all continued to work together as a team, to sort, be creative with space and storage, and to

provide an environment that is welcoming, calming, and yet exciting for the children to explore. There is still some way to go, especially with the battle for space and purchase of new and fresh toys for the children to play with, but we have definitely seen the benefits of the improvements that have been made, as we continue to move forward.

The Team

As a new Leadership team, Jayne Sam and Sue have been adjusting to our new job roles and responsibilities as we have moulded and shaped to form the strong Leadership team that we are now.

Jayne, has been responsible for all business matters (we do use that word loosely though, because Jayne picks up anything that is needed!) We are truly grateful to Jayne for keeping things together, when we have faced challenges, Jayne has worked relentlessly to see us through these trials and has been the arrowhead for forging partnerships with families across the whole preschool community. Jayne has always gone above and beyond her 'job role' to support staff and families and we are so grateful that she is part of our team.

Sam has been responsible for the day to day running of the sessions; She has taken charge of all the planning and is excellent at communicating with the staff team, to get a broader range of activity choices and create a learning environment that is fresh, fun and exciting. I am truly grateful to Sam for all her hard work, for being the 'consistent' person in the setting, where often I am taken away from it all, to do the many other things that need doing. Sam is also our Designated Safeguarding Officer, and has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to this role.

Along with overseeing the running of the whole preschool group, I am the SENDco. My passion lies with supporting all children and their families, to offer advice and support where they may be struggling and to make referrals to outside agencies if necessary. I strive to be a role model to staff, supporting them to see the individual child as unique, and work towards supporting every young person's exceptional qualities along with their individual challenges. I work closely with outside agencies, gather and record evidence and make referrals as necessary.

The Setting

We have introduced visual aids within the setting which support children to understand their options and what is expected of them. We use strategies such as 'First and Then', Choice boards, and visual timetables.

We have an exceptional team of staff and together we have embraced all the children in our care. We have built up strong bonds and relationships with the children and have got to know them very well. I believe this is the key principle of all children thriving and succeeding in life. We have rhythms and routines throughout the day, which give children a structure they can feel secure in. This comprises of :-

Registration first thing in the morning – we break into two groups, which gives the opportunity for all children to engage in activities that are suited to their ability. For the Rising 5's (those starting school in September) we also include brushing our teeth. This is an excellent scheme, which is funded by the NHS and gives children that extra boost of fluoride each day.

Snack – which is a rolling snack time where children are encouraged to come and eat and drink together with their friends.

Independent Learning, both inside and outside where children make their own choices about what they would like to do or play.

Adult planned activity runs alongside this. Topics we have focussed on over these last few terms are as follows:

- All about me – giving the children a sense of identity, and celebrating each other and our differences
- Autumn, Christmas and Winter
- People who help us
- The Hungry Caterpillar
- Spring
- On the Farm and animal babies
- Mini Beasts
- Under the Sea
- Summer and beach

Samples of planning sheets were provided by Sam Gardiner.

Group Time – this is an opportunity for the children to be split into three groups, which are led by the adults. Examples of group activities are

- 2 year olds to 3 ½ year olds – Singing, music and rhythm, interactive

stories, bubbles, ribbons and bikes. Often led outside.

- Rising 4's and a carefully selected group of Rising 5's – this has focussed on social interactions, communication and language. Activities include being part of a group, singing and playing music together, exploring stories together with props to illustrate the storyline.
- Rising 5's – Letters and Sounds, maths with counting, problem solving. Getting creative with resources, often focussed on our theme for the month.

Lunch Time- 12.00-12.30

Afternoon:

Our afternoon sessions are as follows:-

- Registration – Split into two groups
- Independent Learning and Adult Planned activities
- Snack
- Outdoor play
- Story

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of our parents that have got involved in the preschool, in many different ways. We love to work with you, because we know and understand that you know your children the best.

An informal discussion took part before the meeting closed where the group talked about how communication could be improved between preschool staff and parents so that parents are better informed about the daily routines and how the sessions work.

Sue and Sam explained how the small groups work and the benefit of these. Parent meetings were suggested, but it was discussed how difficult this was to factor in time for these formal chats. Dave suggested that all Key Persons make sure that they speak with their parents regularly, eg once every few weeks, so that formal chats did not need to be arranged. However, we need to make it clear that parents can always ask for a consultation with Play Leaders and/or their Key Person.

We also discussed ways to inform parents of the type of activities that take place during our small group sessions. Sue and Sam will arrange a staff meeting for us to discuss this further, to decide the best way to keep parents informed on a regular basis.

We also spoke about displaying the planning sheets in a way that Parents can read. The alleyway is a good place if we had extra notice boards, for parents to read as they wait to drop off their children before session starts. We will need to purchase more notice boards to fix to the outside wall.

Family observations – Dave to look into the option of taking short videos with voicenotes so that we can capture snapshots of the day as they happen.

	<p>Parent volunteers – we have a few parents that have been willing to volunteer, we need to make sure that we make the most of this invaluable resource from September 24 and work out how parents can best help us in this way.</p> <p>Election of the new Committee – After a brief explanation of the committee’s roles, the following roles were elected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Dave Paterson-Watts • Treasurer: • Secretary: • Following the meeting Mosa Mahmood agreed to join the committee and Lauren Palucci agreed to remain on the committee. <p>We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those parents who have supported preschool when we have asked for volunteers to help with tasks either recycling centre trips, donations to preschool etc.</p> <p>Meeting closed.</p>
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6	Thanks given to those who attended AGM your support is really appreciated! Close

NEWTOWN PRESCHOOL PROFIT AND LOSS 29TH
AUGUST 2022 TO 28TH AUGUST 2023

INCOME

FUNDING	£42,901.85
FEES	£37,300.86
FUNDRAISING	£46.93
ACS	
OTHER	£76.92
INTEREST	£ 32.09
GRANT	£5,850.00
TODDLERS	

£86,208.65

INCOME	£86,208.65
EXPENDITURE	£ 88,259.95
SURPLUS	-£ 2,051.30

EXPENDITURE

WAGES	£72,524.26
TAX	£3,418.25
COMMUNITY PROJECT	
RENT	£7,336.25
EXPENSES	£4,557.15
EQUIPMENT	£71.52
PETTY CASH	
OTHER	
TRAINING	£127.20
CONSUMABLES	£198.35
NEW BUILDING	£26.97

£ 88,259.95

BALANCE SHEET

ACCOUNTS	Total	Current Account	Savings Account
OPENING BALANCE	£ 15,333.46	£ 6,537.64	£ 8,795.82
CASH INFLOW	-£ 2,051.30		
CLOSING BALANCE	£ 13,282.16	£ 7,454.25	£ 5,827.91

BANK	
LLOYDS CURRENT	£ 7,454.25
LLOYDS SAVINGS	£ 5,827.91
	£ 13,282.16

Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Name
Newtown Preschool

On accounts for the year
ended

28th August 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1031577

Set out on pages

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Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [named body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent
examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, 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:

N A Hooper

Date:

08/05/2024

Name:

N A Hooper

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FMAAT
Address:	21 Cherry Tree Close
	Exeter
	Devon EX4 5AT

Section B	Disclosure
	<p>Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.(E.g. accounting records have not been kept in accordance with s132 of the Charities' Act 2011 and those accounts do not comply with the requirements of the 2008 Regulations setting out the form and content of charity accounts; any material expenditure or action which appears not to be in accordance with the trusts of the charity; any failure to be provided with information and explanations by any past or present trustee, officer or employee; and any material consistency between the accounts and the trustees' annual report.)</p>

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