

Ashurst Wood Community Pre-school

Charity commission number 1033649

Ofsted registration number: EY397901

The Sanderson Building

School Lane

Ashurst Wood

Est Grinstead

RH19 3QW

Chair – Charlotte Tester

Secretary – Carlie Francois

Treasurer – Georgie Bushell

Other trustees – Agnes Rogers, Helen Buck, Natasha Ficker & Cressy Imber

Regularly asking parents if they would be on the Pre-school committee, however it gets harder and harder each year to recruit. The Preschool is a Member of Early Years Alliance and use their constitution template.

The Pre-school daily Monday to Friday and has a Manager, Deputy and Room Leader with 4 other Practitioners and a Business Officer overseen by the Trustees.

Ashurst Wood Community Pre-School Committee Meeting

11th November 2024 at 8.00pm in Preschool

AGM minutes

Time	Item	Notes/comments
8.00pm	Apologies & introduction	<p>Helen Buck & Agnes Rogers are apologies, both have received reports.</p> <p>In attendance: Charlotte Tester, Carlie Francois, Georgie Bushell, Natasha Flicker, Claire Shuttleworth, Joanne Funnell, Shannon Brailey, Lauryn Page online, Holly Loveday, Katie Daw, Kelly Hamilton, Lisa Hobby online, Cressy Imber.</p> <p>The meeting is quorate there are 4 committee members and 1 in the process of completing final checks and 8 non-committee members present.</p>
8.01pm	Declaration of an interest	<i>Requirement for the committee to declare an interest in any item on the agenda</i>
8.02pm	Minutes previous meeting	Minutes from EAGM 1 st July & AGM 2023 a true reflection – this was called to ensure committee members for the coming academic year were confirmed. Georgie Bushell Proposed, Charlotte Tester seconded.
8.05pm	Chair report	See below
8.10pm	Managers report	See below
8.15pm	Treasurers report	See below
8.20pm	Fee increase	<p>Discuss the proposed fee increase and the fact that this did not happen and potentially Easter time in line with new financial year / National Living Wage / and research of settings in the area</p> <p>This did not happen as there was the change in the funding and the introduction of childcare being made available to working families with children from the age of 2. The rate that was being paid for these 2 year olds and the increase in those children already on the roll that were eligible meant that we would hold the fees and ensure we keep on top of any changes made by our counter parts in the area.</p> <p>Claire will keep checking against other settings the fee change will be reviewed in the new year</p>
8.25pm	Fundraising	<p>Bonfire night update, curry night, fashion show, Georgie idea</p> <p>Bonfire night made £206.00</p> <p>To arrange another curry night for Feb/march next year</p> <p>Fashion show to potentially be held in May/June, but considering doing the tickets at a reduced cost of £5.00 instead of last years charge of £10.00 per ticket</p> <p>Georgie suggests an eye spy booklet of Ashurst Wood</p>

		Georgie and the band to play outside the butchers on Christmas eve to raise money for the Pre-school.
8.38pm	Next meeting date	13 th of January 2025

Chair's Report - AGM November 2024

Future admissions were a little low when we first returned, the rest of the committee and I agreed with Lauryn's and Claire's solution to reduce hours across all staff to avoid redundancies. Finances were well managed by Claire and overseen by Georgie.

The committee trustees remained the same as the previous year. The committee and staff regularly meet each term (via Zoom) to help run and fundraise for our lovely Preschool. We are always on the lookout for committee members, so if you are interested in joining, please get in touch. As a non-profit making charity we try to keep our fees low to be accessible to all in the community however this means we rely on fundraising to ensure we remain sustainable.

I must thank the staff for their continuous commitment to the setting by taking time out of their personal lives to prepare and run various successful fundraising events for us to attend with our children.

As a committee, we remain confident in the abilities of Lauryn (Manager), Kate (Deputy Manager) and Claire (Business Officer) and the pre-school continues to run to a very high standard, offering the children a variety of experiences such as Mini notes, reptile visits and visits to the local community. We are lucky to have such a highly qualified and experienced team who all bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the setting. Lauryn is constantly researching and reading up on changes to legislation and requirements and ensures any changes are implemented swiftly.

The staff continue to enhance their knowledge through regular training courses which Lauryn oversees and books in line with requirements and the need of the children or setting.

I continue to have regular catch ups with Lauryn and Claire regarding the ongoing in the setting, finances and supporting the staff and feel the Pre-school is managed well and the staff are happy and enjoy working at Ashurst Wood Pre-school. Lauryn completes regular supervisions and appraisals with the staff to ensure staff have opportunities to express interest in further training.

Thank you to...

- Carlie, Georgie, Hels, Agnes and Mrs Hobby for their continued support and joining our meetings regularly.

- Staff continually working above and beyond to give our children the best early childhood experiences and care.

- Thank you to you all (Parents) for your continued support by attending and supporting our fundraising events and contributing to our wonderful Pre-School.

Charlotte Tester

Chairperson of Ashurst Wood Community Preschool

AGM Managers Report 2023-2024

In September 2023 we started back with a lower number of children attending. This gradually increased throughout the year. We retained all staff members, with Holly remaining on Maternity Leave until May half term. Staff agreed to take a small reduction in hours for first half of the year to avoid any staff facing redundancy due to our lower numbers. This demonstrated the commitment our staff have towards our setting and in times of need pulled together to ensure the longevity of the setting and team. Leah completed her apprenticeship in the Autumn Term and remained with us for the remainder of the academic year. Leah left us to take a well-deserved gap year but has agreed to help us as bank staff.

Training

Lauryn, Shannon & Joanne renewed their paediatric first aid training.

Joanne embarked on her Level 3 qualification and is making outstanding progress and is due to complete by November 2024. She also renewed her level 2 food hygiene certificate and attended a talking clearly training.

Kate has attended, supporting families in domestic violence training, the SENco/Inco network and joined the primary school for phonics training.

Lauryn has attended, a look at writing, readiness and pencil grip, The West Sussex Leaders Network and completed a checkpoint tracking and assessment training.

Shannon renewed her level 2 food hygiene certificate and attended a nurturing self-regulation training.

Curriculum

Our planning continues to be based on stories, occupations/professions and countries around the world. This gives us opportunities to introduce a variety of food to snack times, music from different countries to the sessions and look into cultural beliefs. Alongside this, we consider and incorporate individual planning based on each child's interests and development stage and their Key Person activities to extend their learning.

We celebrated festivals and awareness events throughout the year. We entered the village scarecrow festival, acknowledged Remembrance Day and walked up to the memorial tower on Hammerwood Road, celebrated Diwali, Christmas, the Lunar New Year, Storytelling week, Road Safety Week, Valentine's Day. We invited parents to watch the children sing their Christmas songs and celebrated National Fish and Chip Day. The children enjoyed having fish fingers, chips and peas for lunch instead of their packed lunches and for weeks after asked when we would have Fish and Chips again.

Resources and Premises

We upgraded many resources, particular the garden equipment and understanding of the world resources. As funding and numbers of children were low, we were unable to have our regular mini notes sessions but were able to re-introduce these in the summer term. Funding was also used towards a reptile and hedgehog visit.

We were donated a lovely children's indoor climbing frame from St Mary's Primary School which has been a huge hit. We were also invited to Forest Row Pre-school to choose any resources we wanted following their closure for a small donation. We came back with 3 cars full of so many great resources and furniture that the children and staff have enjoyed building into our curriculum.

We arranged to have some external maintenance done during the summer term and holidays. This included pruning of trees, hedge cutting and roof and gutter clearing.

Fundraising and Contributions

The staff all worked together to get a selection of goodies made for the bonfire stall from donations from our Pre-school parents. Sadly, the event was a wash out and our stall location was not easily visible, so we didn't do as well as we did the previous year. Committee and staff set up the stall at the Christmas market which gave us another little boost of money too.

In February we ran a very successful fashion show event which brought our families and local community together for the afternoon and we raised an impressive amount of money. Our Tarana Curry Night in April too was another successful event – very easy to plan and made a great profit from ticket sales, raffle and games.

We also booked our regular photographer for a family photo shot. The Pre-school made a small commission from each photo sale.

We continue to display our consumable donations lists regularly throughout the year. Parents donated as and when they could/wanted and we have had a continuous stock of dry snack, messy play resources and ingredients for making playdough and experiments. This saved the Pre-school a considerable amount of money meaning our funds could be used for resources or experiences that the children directly benefited from. We will continue to put lists outside of Pre-school for parents to donate to.

Transition

All the staff worked extremely hard to complete thorough assessments, reports and transitions for all of the Owls who moved onto Primary school. We liaised with Ashurst Wood Primary, Forest Row Primary, Blackwell Primary and The Meads Primary schools.

Thank You's

I would like to thank the staff for their endless commitment to our high standards, providing a home from home environment for our children and families despite the drop in their hours. The committee for attending regular meetings and sharing ideas for sustainability, all parents for their continuing support through donations, gifts, sweet treats and lovely feedback. Mrs Hobby and the Primary School for supporting us and including us in relevant updates, policy changes and Phonics training to ensure we are working collaboratively. Laura Wicks (Previous Chair of Forest Row Pre-school) for inviting us to look through and take resources for Ashurst Wood Pre-school for a very small donation. Will Blackledge (Eliza's Daddy) for garden maintenance at a heavily reduced rate compared to other quotes and completing the task on the two hottest days of the year.

Lauryn Page
Manager

Treasurers Report

Ashurst Wood Community Preschool September 2023 – August 2024

A year that started off very low on numbers and staff agreeing to making a slight reduction in their weekly hours for the first 2 terms ended with a busy, virtually full, final term.

The balances of the accounts at the start of the year and at the end of the year were as follows:

Account	September 2023	August 2024
Main	11859.19	31471.87
Reserves	52363.20	58677.20
Redundancies	13475.64	20676.76

In September we had 30 children on the roll, however, the amount of sessions being utilised was low with 13 or fewer children in for the afternoon sessions. Following the forecasting being done for the year ahead conversations were had in a committee meeting and it was voted that rather than making a staff member redundant we would ask staff if they would be willing to reduce hours for the first 2 terms as these were the terms where numbers were low. This was agreed with staff members, apart from our Apprentice as she had specific hours that needed to be completed, and they had an afternoon a week where they finished early of which we are grateful. Compared to the forecasting and the actuals this reduction saved £7500.00.

As more information on the introduction of the government's intentions to offer funding to 2 year olds of working families from April 2024 we started to see an increase in those parents looking to start their children earlier than their previous intentions. This meant that once parents had a confirmed code they were utilising a good portion of their 15 hours and putting their children in for the Spring term and paying for the initial few sessions knowing that it was only be for a short time before funding would kick in.....as long as they stayed on top of the code renewal process. We have a lot of children with birthdays in the Autumn term and a lot in the Summer term so with this change it meant a large number of our children turning 3 in the Summer term that would usually be getting funding in the September were actually eligible for the 2 year working families funding after Easter instead. When we compare this to the forecasting when it was first completed and the lower numbers for 2023-2024 we ended up with a busy full Preschool in the Summer term, with a spread of children across the 3 age groups. Moving forward the amount of up front monies received from funding for the coming Autumn term, Sept 2024, we can see it was considerably higher than the previous year when we look at the start and end balances. The numbers of children were also higher compared to the previous year so it was clear there was the need to maintain the staff especially as Leah had handed her notice in and we had Holly returning to increased hours. We received a total of West Sussex funding through this last year of £111023.79 and EYPP monies of £2383.68. A total of £26114.94 was monies received in the Summer term as estimates for those hours that children were due to be attending in the following Autumn term. The expense of EYPP monies at £2179 was shorter than the monies received as we were pending some resources to arrive which have been invoiced n the start of the current academic year and has also gone towards part of a child's extra session costs. A small portion of the money that is listed in the other column was monies transferred to another setting as we had claimed the full 30 hours of funding and 7 hours worth a week was agreed to be transferred to them towards non term time sessions attended.

Maintenance costs were higher than anticipated, however we had £1000 that was paid out in the Autumn term for the repainting of the external parts of the building to ensure it was protected this is ideally required every 5 years so was due and had been agreed at the end of the previous year. The costs in the Spring term was slightly higher than anticipated as we needed to buy a new fridge freezer for the children's lunch boxes as the previous one was not staying cold and was out of warranty. In the Summer term our increase in children and with the unfortunate closure of Forest Row preschool, who kindly gave us first refusal on their resources for a donation, we found we were in need of a big clear out of the Preschool's resources. This led to a £264.00 expense to a local previous parents company who deal with

disposal and recycling of rubbish to remove for us rather than booking several refuse tip trips knowing that all items would be disposed off or reused.

We received a grant of £587.00 from the 'Making a difference locally' charity that is linked with the village shop, Loco, the money from this has been used to fund a greenhouse, gardening equipment for the children to use and some outdoor cascading drums. The garden maintenance of £360.00 was also actually covered through the Loco grant monies as this gave the front and back gardens a much needed tidy up.

With the increase in children and the changes in the funding we found that some of our 2 year Local Authority funded children were now eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, this meant that we were able to start with Amy returning and providing 2 Mini Notes sessions a week which has been well received by all the children.

Our insurance renewal for the year initially came in just short of the forecast amount, however, we spent an extra £475 to get our buildings sum insured re checked as this was not in line with current index's and had not been calculated since the building had been built. It was voted that this was a necessary cost to ensure we are fully covered should the worst happen.

We introduced a voluntary contribution to families of either £10 a term or £30 for the year and this has generated £380.00.

We had a large amount come out in the Spring term for training this was largely first aid courses and other courses through West Sussex that had been delayed following their updates to a new payment system.

The monies that show as replacing the reserves fund is a combination of the monies raised from fundraising and the increase in monies from funding due to our increase in session take up. This means that the money taken out in the previous academic year to pay for our lovely astro turf has been replaced and also the pot of money held for redundancies has also been able to be added too keeping us not far off current government calculations should the unforeseen event arise.

All staff were given a rise in line with the National living wages increase following the percentage structure and agreed by committee. Following on from funding changes, more children signing on the roll and as a thank you to the staff for reducing hours and their hard work each staff member received £20.00 towards the cost of their meal out at the end of the year. We also had £100 in donations from parents that was specified to go towards an evening out.

We had debts of fees totalling £754.00 which has since seen £166.00 settled at the start of the new academic year and the remaining on a payment plan.

Fundraising:

In the Autumn term we received £50.00 from the commission from the Photos that parents bought towards the end of the Summer term. Our stall at the bonfire night made a profit of £317.00 and the Christmas market stall made a profit of just over £100. We also had the cookbook which so far has approximately made the Preschool £152.00, and a Bag 2 School collection that made the Preschool £17.50. Georgie and the band pitched up at the butchers again and played music one afternoon and we received £150 thank you so much.

The Spring term's main fundraiser was a fashion show provided by Colours and made a profit of £711.00 people had a great afternoon. The main expense for the Preschool at this event was the supply of drinks and the TENS licence, the hall was very kindly given to us at no cost

as the initial deposit was refunded after the event had taken place and there were no damages, thank you. We reached out to the local community and offered some tickets to vulnerable families and elderly residents. We made £46.00 from the Christmas card/items sales last term as well that was kindly transferred over from the primary school PTFA as this is a fundraiser both done together thank you to PTFA help with this. Over the Easter holidays the Preschool held a curry night at Tarana in Lingfield it was a lovely social evening and we made a profit of £455.72 part of which was from Tarana themselves who rounded up the ticket sales commission to £200.00, thank you

There was another bag 2 school collection just after Easter raising £20.00. The committee held a cake sale after Preschool and school one afternoon that made £60.86 and we also had a stall at the village Ashstock celebrations which we made £103.79. We had graduation and leavers photos which earnt £40 commission from the sales and a final bag 2 school which we made £18.00. This gives us a grand total of just over £2100 profit from events/fundraisers this academic year, this all helps towards the previous years out lay on the new astro. The total for fundraising after expenses was approximately £2100.00 some of this was used towards the reptile visit at the end of the Summer term and part of it was put back into the reserves account covering monies taken out for the Astro. This is the biggest amount of fundraising since Covid.



Ashurst Wood Community Preschool's reserves policy

Reserves are that part of a charity's funds that are either freely available to spend on any of the charity's purposes or are restricted for a specific purpose.

At Ashurst Wood Community Preschool we have two accounts aside from the main bank account. These are the Contingency (reserves) account which is deemed as unrestricted funds and a Redundancies account which is deemed as restricted funds.

The aim of the contingency account would be to have a balance equal to a terms Preschool expenses this would vary by academic year but would be reviewed annually. As a small charity our Contingency account would also potentially cover costs such as:

- An unforeseen emergency or other unexpected need for funds, eg an unexpected large bill
- Covering unforeseen day-to-day operational costs, eg employing temporary staff to cover a long-term sick absence
- A source of income, eg a grant not being renewed. Funds may be needed to give the trustees time to take action if income falls below expectations
- Planned commitments that cannot be met by future income alone, eg plans for a major asset purchase
- The need to fund short term deficits in a cash budget, eg money may need to be spent before a funding grant is received

The aim of the Redundancies account is to cover the costs of paying staff should the Preschool need to close or, after reviewing its needs, be forced to make redundancies. This will be annually reviewed using the government redundancies calculator online and inputting the relevant information associated to each employed staff member.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Ashurst Wood Community Preschool

Held on: 29th April 2024

Date to be reviewed: JUNE 2025

Signed on behalf of the trustees of the charity:

Full name: Charlotte Tester

Position: CHAIR

Signature: 

Date: 30th April 2024

ASHURST WOOD COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES ON THE ACCOUNTS OF ASHURST WOOD COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

We report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2024, which are set out on page 2.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied ourselves that the Charity is eligible for independent examination it is our responsibility to:

- a) examine the accounts under Section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- b) to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 43(7) of the 1993 Act; and
- c) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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 our statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

- 1) which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met, or
- 2) to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Robert Agates & Associates
Certified Accountants

Sentosa
Southview Road
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 1HG

Dated: 11th June 2025.....

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

RECONCILIATION OF CHARITY RESERVES

OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
	£		£
Cash at bank:		Cash at bank:	
Current account (General Fund)	11,634.94	Current account (General Fund)	31,471.87
Deposit account (Contingency Fund)	52,314.33	Deposit account (Contingency Fund)	58,677.20
Redundancy provision account	13,463.06	Redundancy provision account	20,659.21
Petty cash in hand	275.35	Petty cash in hand	47.25
Stock in hand - T-shirts	320.00	Stock in hand - T-shirts	300.00
WSCC funding received in advance	(9,408.39)	WSCC funding received in advance	(26,114.94)
		Creditor - PAYE & National Insurance	(1,238.10)
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	68,599.29		83,802.49
Net surplus for the year	<hr/>		<hr/>
	15,203.20		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	83,802.49		83,802.49