

Minutes of 44th AGM of Barns Green Playgroup

2021-2022 Academic Year

1) Present AGM/Parents' Evening:

Rachel McAlonan, Philippa Berry, Becca Leonard, Alex Mannion, Liz King, Laura Jacques, Dan & Rachel Crisp, Amelia Scott-Cowley, Eunice Chan, Vickie Harvey, Britt Hvaal Wilder, Rosie Biggs, Sammy Berwick, Jefferson Wenban, Lucy Priestley, Amy Cawt, Daniela Havermans, Emma Cox, Samantha Sage, Adam Rood & Rosie Biggs

Apologies:

Bev Liley, Charlotte & Tom Ploughman, Laura & Carl Beard, Katrina Maynard, Caroline Fisher, Amiee & Justin Pilgram, Ellie & Mark Welfare, Charlotte Dalal, Paul Martin, Emma Dasey, Amanda Page, Gayle Goodall, Kasia Greenwood, AnnMarie Smith & Penny Courquin.

2) Minutes From AGM:

Accepted and signed by Rachel McAlonan, proposed by Becca Leonard, seconded by Alex Mannion.

3) Matters Arising:

None

4) Supervisors Report (Given by Becca Leonard)

Welcome everyone. First of all, I would like to say a big thank you to you all for being so supportive and patient during the pandemic. It has been challenging and hard work, but worth it when you see how much Playgroup benefits the children. The pandemic has really highlighted to me, the importance of children being together particularly from a social aspect.

Despite all of the disruption, the pandemic has had its positives. One being that children come in without parents/carers. Children settle much more quickly, and staff are just focussed on the children rather than in conversation with adults. I also think by having not so many adults milling about, it is less daunting for little people. It has helped the children go into school independently too.

Also, by having individual snacks from home, it makes it much safer for those with allergies. Again, it frees up staff to be with the children, as no one has to prepare food or wash up cups and plates. Children having their own water bottles also saves time and money, as we were sterilizing them. As I said in the newsletter the negative to children bringing in a water bottle, is that many children were having continuous access to squash and juices. The children have not been phased changing to water only, thank you for supporting this change. Mealtimes are social occasions with learning opportunities, which means staff talk about healthy options and how we should look after our bodies and teeth. We did a topic on 'our bodies' which they were really interested in, and I think it helped them to want to make healthy choices. It would be good if you could continue this at home and in their lunch boxes. Included in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is, "the provider must promote good health, including the oral health, of children attending the setting" As an extra to promote good oral health we have a dentist visiting in July.

Sessions are busy, and this continues into the next year too. We are ending this year with 43 children. Only 10 are leaving to go to school. The following school year I have capped at 22, so that we do not have a drastic drop in numbers

next September. If you have younger children, it is best to give me their details as soon as possible. I am constantly having enquiries for spaces, and there is a shortage of availability in the area.

The children have had a less disrupted year thank goodness. They are keen to learn and explore. I know it has been hard for parents to not come into the setting, but I hope the photo boards help to show the things we have been doing.

We are in the process of liaising with our feeder primary schools, to make sure that children have a smooth transition.

This year we have had a few visitors. Nic from Technotots had returned on a Thursday. He provided a wide range of ICT equipment, including programmable and remote-control toys, laptops, cameras, voice recorders etc. It was very beneficial and the children loved to spend time with Nic, but unfortunately due to personal circumstances he isn't in until further notice and may not return.

Victoria Brock came in to do a music session, which was great. The children really enjoyed it and could try lots of different instruments. They listened exceptionally well and followed all her instruction. I am looking into making this a regular event depending on her availability. This may replace Technotots. If any of you or your family members have a skill or interest to share with the children, then I would love for you to come in to share this with us?

Staff have kept statutory training up to date, a lot of it is online now. First aid still has the practical part. Annmarie will begin her formal qualification next term, after Key working with Gayle for this year. In the Early Years sector there is a shortage of qualified staff. This is proving an issue for settings all over the country. An update on our staffing situation is as follows: We will have 4 Key workers for the next academic year. Amanda, Emma, Annmarie and Kasia. Kasia has qualified teacher status so will be a real asset to Playgroup. Becca is going on maternity leave after the October half term. She will still be playing an active role at Playgroup during her time off. This means she will remain in her roles as my deputy, Senco and Health & Safety and is going to oversee Annmarie and Kasia key working. Gayle has stepped down as Key worker due to other commitments but will remain as bank staff. We currently also have Daniela, Penny and Eunice as bank staff, who are all very experienced with children. Also, due to being so busy, we are looking to employ Rebecca Lismer as bank staff, she has worked with children for 8 years in reception and year one. Rebecca has a lot of experience with SEN children too. Emma Cox, who also has qualified teacher status, will be working 2 days per week.

We continue to offer up to 30 hours for funded and nonfunded children. If you qualify for 2 Year free entitlement, or the extended free entitlement for working parents of 3 & 4-year olds from September, then make sure that you apply in plenty of time before the end of August. Please let me have your code as soon as possible.

Last September saw changes to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The main change was the emphasis on practitioner's spending less time doing written observations on children and more time playing and talking to children, enriching their language and understanding. We have been using our professional judgement and our knowledge about the children to plan and progress their learning. This means their written learning records have much less in them. This change has been so beneficial. It is lovely to see staff being much more involved with the children, rather than head down, scribbling notes all of the time. After speaking with staff, I know that they have felt the benefit, and feel they not only know their Key Children better, but all children. This means that your consultation with your Key Worker is mainly verbal rather than reading through a journal. You should feel that they really know your child. I welcome feedback regarding this.

We welcome any feedback about all aspects of Playgroup. This can be verbally, written or emailed to me, or you can email a member of the committee. I sent out a parent survey and it showed that on the whole everyone is very happy with the service we provide. There were a few points raised.

1. **Communication and feedback.** This has been a challenge during the pandemic, but we have done our best to keep you informed. I didn't feel it was very easy on collection in the car park in front of everyone. Hopefully now that you are able to come in to collect you can chat more with your Key worker. I am always available if anyone would like to speak to me. If at anytime you feel you need more time or feedback, always say as I appreciate it is sometimes difficult at pick up, especially if you need to be somewhere else.

2. **Staff taking photos during sessions to post on apps etc for parents, day to day feedback.** As I have said the EYFS has changed. The emphasis is on staff spending time fully engaged with the children, developing communication and language skills and really knowing the children. I feel that if staff were under pressure to do this, it would undermine this and take priority over quality interactions. The sessions go by quickly, I do not want staff using precious time doing this. We do take photos and use them for our displays which you can see around the room. They will also be out when you collect your children. These show the sorts of activities we do at Playgroup which covers all aspects of the curriculum. The children also love to look at them and sometimes will ask to do activities they can see.
We try to give verbal feedback as often as possible. The whiteboard is a good way to share information, but often gets forgotten during this busy time. We will make the effort to try and remember this. Always speak to me if you would like time with your key worker.
3. **Information on the EYFS** - This should be shared by your key worker so always ask them. Also, all of the information can be found on the parent information table. If you have any questions, please ask.
4. **Information or support about aspects of development** You can ask about this at any time. For example, potty training, or difficulty with routines, concerns about development or behaviour etc. We have a lot of experience dealing with every day challenges, so always ask. If we don't have the answer, I can always find out information for you. If you are worried about behaviour at Playgroup, then always speak to me.

I would also like to thank the officers of the Committee, who had had quite a difficult time this last year sorting out inherited unfinished Committee business. Thanks to Philippa our treasurer, who has worked with me for many years and is now stepping down. Lastly, thank you to all of the people that have joined the fundraising team, those willing to help out at events and to everyone involved in playgroup.

As always, a big thank you to all of the staff for their hard work and commitment to playgroup, and I really appreciate how supportive they are being at the moment during tough times. I am aware that it is a very demanding job, with many challenges. Thank you to my deputy Becca for being so proactive and supportive and for the time she dedicates to Playgroup. As a staffing team we are always striving to provide the best care for your children, so thank you to all of them.

5) Fundraiser's Report (Given by Alex Mannion)

Over the last year, we've held various fundraising events at Playgroup, our Christmas jumper day raised £40, our World Book Day Costume week in March raised £43 and then we had a really successful Race Night raising just over £2000.

I know a few parents have signed up over the last few months to be on the fundraising team which is amazing but we are always on the lookout for new recruits, so please just ask if you would like more information!

We have the Barns Green half marathon coming up in September and Playgroup has the cake and refreshments stall so we will be in touch soon asking for people to help bake cakes and yummy treats for this please. We then also have a nearly new baby and toddler sale in October so you will see bits and pieces about this coming out soon.

Barns Green Playgroup is a fantastic asset to our village and is heavily reliant on fundraising so we really do appreciate all the support and help we can get.

6) Treasurer's Statement of Account (Given by Philippa Berry)

It's been another year of trying to keep costs down and as at 31st March the deposit account stood at £40087.04. This is the account we keep should we have to close playgroup and this would be used to pay redundancies, creditors etc. The second savings account had £35,246.29 and this is used for any big purchases and to put into the current account should we need to. The current account had £4496.07 in as at 31st March.

Fundraising – we had a Race Night which made an amazing amount of just over £2000. We have also had £240 from the Cobra team who do the mask trees and £270 from the Half Marathon.

Costs for wages and associated costs. insurance and hall fees have risen again this year. We kept our hourly fee at £6.50 last year but I propose to increase this to £7.00 an hour from September for all non-funded hours. The committee have agreed to this increase and I hope this is OK with everyone.

All other costs are in line with the previous year.

The accounts are in the process of being audited but at the moment we have made a loss of £1733. Considering the past 2 years we have had and the fact we have only just got round to fundraising again, and didn't increase our hourly charge last year when all other costs went up, this is not too bad.

I am in the process of handing over the treasurer role to Alex Mannion. Once the bank account is sorted then she will be in a position to take over properly.

Lastly, thank you to all the staff and committee for all your hard work.

7) Chair Report (Given by Rachel McAlonan)

I am Rachel McAlonan, I took over as Chairperson last year. I have a daughter who currently attends Playgroup and another who will be starting next year.

Barns Green is very fortunate to have such a lovely playgroup in the village. I would like to start by thanking the staff for their hard work over the year, it is very much appreciated, and it is so lovely to see the children enjoying being back at playgroup. We have had another year touched by COVID but we are almost back to normality now.

The children have enjoyed many different activities throughout the year, and it is great to see them being able to resume activities such as TechnoTots led by Nick as well as the annual outing, which is to Washbrooks Farm this year.

These are challenging times for virtually all parts of the economy and Playgroup is no exception. Fundraising is key to helping with running costs and helps provide new toys and equipment for the children. Over the course of this year, we have run the refreshment stall at the half marathon, organised dress-up days, enjoyed the most successful race night we have ever had and maintained a clothes collection with bags2school. A massive thank you to everyone involved in helping with fundraising and to those that have supported all our events. We have welcomed Laura Jacques as head of the fundraising team this year and we shall look forward to the fundraising events next year, starting off with the refreshment stall at the half marathon in September. If anyone is able to spare even a small amount of time and would like to help with fundraising then do, please come and speak to us so that we can sign you up to join the team, we really do appreciate it.

I have written to our local MP, Jeremy Quin to raise the issue of funding for playgroup. As a result he came to visit us in May to meet the staff and children where we discussed the issue of funding as well as the pressures that we face. The rate of funding that we receive from government has dropped in real terms. We will continue to lobby our elected representatives making the case for increased funding to support Early Years learning and development for all our children and we encourage you to do the same.

I continue to represent Playgroup at the Village Trust meetings. We have supported the proposal for a path and crossing to improve safety along Muntham Drive, which I feel will really benefit the children particularly at drop off and pick up times. I have also suggested improvements for accessibility to the arboretum which I hope will be adopted.

I would like to thank all of the staff for their hard work this year. Karen joined the team in September and has settled in well, sending out invoices to parents, sorting out payroll for the staff and carrying out admin tasks to help with the smooth running of playgroup. Kasia has taken over the toddler group on a Monday and is doing a great job.

I would like to thank all of our volunteers who have given up their time this year. A special thank you to Liz King who took over the role of secretary and Alex Mannion who have both provided invaluable help with the committee and fundraising and have both gone above and beyond. Alex will be taking over as treasurer, and we are very grateful to her for that.

Lastly, I would like to extend a special thank you to Philippa Berry who has given up so much time over the last 10 years to help playgroup. She is now stepping down from her role as treasurer and we wish her all the best. I hope everyone enjoys the break over the summer holidays and will look forward to kicking off another challenging but successful year for Playgroup and our people.

8) Committee

We voted in new committee members – details are as follows:

Treasurer:

Stepping down: Philippa Berry

New chair: Alex Mannion

Proposed by Rachel McAlonan, seconded by Becca Leonard

Committee Members:

Stepping down: Alex Mannion

New Committee member: Charlotte Plowman

Proposed by Becca Leonard, seconded by Alex Mannion

9) Any Other Business

None

10) Date of Next Meeting

45th AGM – 27th June 2023.

BARNS GREEN PLAYGROUP
Statement of Accounts for the period

	1 April 2021 to 31st March 2022	1 April 2020 to 31st March 2021
	£	£
Balance brought forward	81,598.08	81,130.05
<u>INCOME</u>	£	£
Session Fees	41,720.15	10,203.50
Funded Fees	63,801.56	68,890.02
Fundraising	1,861.48	-
Donations	545.90	1,217.24
Toddlers	457.08	104.95
Uniforms	434.74	457.75
Technotots	737.00	128.50
HMRC NIC or Furlough payment	-	6,046.03
Refunds	-	239.47
Interest on deposit accounts	15.26	41.40
	<u>109,573.17</u>	<u>87,328.86</u>
	<u>191,171.25</u>	<u>168,458.91</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Fundraising	594.85	-
Hall Fees	12,554.50	5,860.00
Milk for children	-	37.00
Refreshments	4.50	33.50
Running Costs	2,023.32	1,685.50
Professional Services	1,869.12	146.58
Refund of funded fees	-	319.50
Staff Pension & Training	2,721.92	2,268.84
Equipment	1,775.30	414.00
Subscriptions	169.00	362.40
HMRC	15,163.56	8,133.21
Children's staff presents/party	796.05	890.71
Deposit refunds	-	279.00
Uniforms	941.25	255.40
Wages	70,601.32	65,036.42
Memberships, Ofsted, PLA insurance	1,068.17	1,139.22
Technotots	1,024.00	-
	111,306.86	86,860.83
Savings (£40,087.04 & £35,246.29)	75,333.33	75,318.07
Bank	4,496.07	6,245.01
Cash	35.00	35.00
	Balance c/f	Balance c/f
	<u>79,864.40</u>	<u>81,598.08</u>
	<u>191,171.26</u>	<u>168,458.91</u>



Alex Nicholson

Auditor

Philippa Berry

Treasurer

26 January 2023

Dear Trustees,

Part of the work that is carried out when we look at the financials is the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. In assessing whether the charity is a going concern the Trustees and management should consider all available information about the future of the charity in the period of at least twelve months from the date when the receipts and payments are approved and authorised for issue.

The lasting impact of the Covid-19 outbreak should mean all entities, including charities, reassess their financial position and their ability to continue to operate as a going concern. This may require considering a number of factors including updating the charity's budgets and forecasts. Trustees may consider and take account of realistic mitigating responses open to them, considering the likely success of any response.

Part of the work that Trustees and management can do for assessing the ability of the charity to continue to be a going concern is:

- Prepare the following covering the period of the going concern assessment (at least 12 months),
 - * budgets,
 - * cash flow forecasts
- review the accuracy of past budgets and forecasts by comparing the budget for the current year against actual results for the year, and

Trustees should consider not only the budgets and forecasts but also the sensitivity analysis on these: key considerations will be around reserves, liquidity and resilience.

a) Reserves

The Charity Commission guidance "Managing financial difficulties & insolvency in charities" (CC12) stresses the importance for *"a trustee body to have a good knowledge and understanding of the charity and its finances so that, as far as possible, the continued viability of the charity and its charitable activities can be assured."*

This is a theme that runs through the Charity Commission's updates and alerts including its guidance on whether charities can use reserves and restricted funds to help the charity through the crisis.

As at 31 March 2022, BGPG is reporting unrestricted funds totalling £79.9k.

The Charity Commission guidance highlights a number of factors the trustees need to consider.

- Trustees should review what are their short, medium, and longer-term priorities, including whether certain projects, spends or activities can be stopped or delayed.
- The guidance recognises that reserves can be used to help cope with unexpected events like those unfolding at present.
- If the trustees have previously decided to earmark certain funds for a particular purpose they may be able to re-prioritise these.
- Restricted funds which cannot be spent at the trustees' discretion may only be used for a particular and defined purpose.
- All decisions on such financial matters should normally be taken collectively, and significant decisions and action points noted in writing.

b) Liquidity and resilience

The Charity Commission guidance goes on to explain that *"The overall responsibility for effective governance and the implementation of proper financial management rests with the trustees, but may well involve all staff members whether paid or volunteers."*

As well as the level of available reserves the trustees will also need to understand and consider the charity's liquidity.

- Proper consideration needs to be given to cash flow forecasts and debt and project management based on realistic assumptions set. There should be a budget including cash

projections and business plans produced at least annually and monthly monitoring against the plans.

- There is a need to extend cash flow forecasts to evaluate issues that may arise after the end of the period covered by existing cash flow forecasts.
- There should be processes in place to ensure that appropriate procedures and controls have been applied to models used to generate cash flow and valuation information, including the choice and consistent use of key assumptions.
- Appropriate sensitivity analysis needs to be applied to address the potential impact of reasonably possible events. Sources of income and expenditure should be analysed with consideration of uncertainties around grant funding, voluntary or earned income.
- The sensitivity analysis should properly flex assumptions to identify how robust the model outputs are in practice and that the assumptions are free from bias.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Nicholson

Alex Nicholson