

Meeting	AGM 2024	
Meeting Date	28 th August 2024	7PM
Meeting Location	Alderton Village Hall	
Attendees	Ali Armishaw	Grace Robertson
	Andy Robertson	Cathie Bridges
	Andy Bridges	
	3 Acorns staff	1 member

	Item
1.	Ali Armishaw (Chair) welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the AGM.
2.	Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaynor Kingston • Scarrott family • Connolly family
3.	The minutes from the 2023 AGM were reviewed and unanimously approved.
4.	Cathie Bridges announced that all committee were up for re-election. Members for election: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ali Armishaw - elected unanimously • Andy Robertson - elected unanimously • Grace Robertson - elected unanimously • Gaynor Kingston - elected unanimously • Andy Bridges - elected unanimously • Cathie Bridges - elected unanimously
5.	Andy Bridges presented the Toddler's report, written by Roz Smith. See Appendix A.
6.	Ali Armishaw presented the Chairperson's report summarizing the charity's key activities over the past year. See Appendix B.
7.	Cathie Bridges presented the Treasurer's report summarizing the charity's income and expenditure over the past year. See Appendix C.
8.	Grace Robertson presented the Play Leader's report summarizing the main activities over the past year. See Appendix D.
9.	<p>Questions from attendees</p> <p>Request for an update on the Friday Toddlers group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group is currently not running. • Actively seeking volunteers to run the Friday group. Possibly needs a break to prompt a new volunteer(s) to step forward. • The committee are happy to support anyone who comes forward. • Nicki McCotter confirmed that she was happy to give a handover to the new volunteer. <p>How many children are required to open Acorns preschool on Friday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For it to be viable a minimum of 5 or 6 children would be required. However 3 or 4 would be acceptable to start.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff confirmed that they are happy to flex their work days to accommodate a Friday opening.
	Ali Armishaw thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. Time of close: 7:45 PM

APPENDIX A - Toddler Group Annual Report 2024

Alderton Acorns Toddler and Baby Group have had another very successful year under the leadership of Cat Fowles, Nicky McCotter and Ros Smith, ably assisted by Joy Edwards in the kitchen.

The number of families attending rose significantly as the year progressed, from between 8-10 earlier in the year to 14-17 families by the summer, due to the hard work of the volunteers who have ensured the activities and equipment on offer each week match the wide age range of the children. Furthermore, while some attendees could be called regulars, the weekly totals disguise how variable attendance actually is. In reality, we have been in contact with a higher number of families than these totals indicate. Our clientele comes from a range of directions – Evesham and Winchcombe notably as well as Alderton. Advertising has not been undertaken on a regular basis, so the reach of this group has increased entirely by word of mouth.

What has changed during the year is the number of mums with babies who are now living locally and are regular attenders. This augurs well for continuity into next year and hopefully for a feed into the Acorns Pre-school. This can't be guaranteed, however, as some mothers return to work after maternity leave, placing their children in full time nurseries.

It has been a very happy group and a really enjoyable experience for me, Cat and Nicky, despite the hard work of setting up and dismantling equipment, plus cleaning the hall, toilets and kitchen each week. We have also compiled a number of points that we would like to request are carried forward to the next group of volunteers.

Ros Smith
Alderton Acorns Toddler and Baby Group

APPENDIX B - Chair's Report for Alderton Acorns AGM August 2024

This report covers Acorns Preschool and Toddler activities from June 2023 to August 2024, including input from the previous Chair, Sian Tryner.

June 2023 - December 2023

At the June 2023 AGM, a new committee was formed, comprising new and returning members, along with interested villagers. The committee immediately focused on staff appraisals, safeguarding, and updating contracts for the September term. Staffing challenges arose when two long-standing staff members resigned, creating anxiety about maintaining required staffing levels. Fortunately, the lower enrolment (seven children) in September allowed us to manage with existing staff.

Due to committee member resignations, we faced the difficult decision to close the preschool side of Acorns, keeping only the toddler group open. After an EGM and outreach to the Alderton community, a new committee was appointed in January 2024.

January 2024 - August 2024

I took over as Chair in January 2024, alongside a newly appointed committee. Our initial aim was to focus on marketing to boost enrolment and to enhance financial sustainability. The Treasurer's aim was to streamline our finances by transitioning to the financial software, Xero. However, some of this focus was taken over by other matters arising.

People

We developed a new maternity policy, managed cover for sickness and absence, and provided support through fortnightly 1:1s and 6 monthly appraisals. To acknowledge the team's hard work during a busy and challenging period, we awarded one-off bonuses. More recently, staffing adjustments have included offering a permanent contract to a bank staff member and adjusting hours for another.

Ofsted

A long-overdue Ofsted inspection resulted in maintaining our "Good" rating, reflecting the continued quality of care and education provided by the team at Acorns.

Fundraising

The Acorns team worked hard to provide a wonderful Christmas event in December bringing the parents and community together. It was the turn of the committee in April with our main fundraiser, the Quiz and Curry evening. My thanks go to the entire committee, as well as Rebekah and Jim Glocking, and Lisa Harding for their invaluable support and help in making this such a successful evening.

Finance

The trial of the Xero software system did not go as smoothly as anticipated, with several issues arising that prevented us from gaining a clear financial overview as we had hoped. In light of some outstanding invoices, we have developed a policy to recover fees and will be implementing advance invoicing and payment plans to improve cash flow.

During this period, the Treasurer resigned. My grateful thanks to Andy Robertson and Cathie Bridges who took on additional duties to help fill the gap. I am pleased to report that we have since been able to co-opt a new Treasurer who has already provided the much-needed financial clarity we were seeking.

Toddler Group

The Toddler group continues to grow, and while Andy Bridges will provide more details, I want to acknowledge the need for new volunteers to take over its running. We are actively seeking replacements and remain committed to ensuring Toddlers remains an integral part of our offering.

Looking Ahead

We are about to trial opening five days a week and continue to market for new enrolments. A new Play Leader Manager has been appointed, and she has already positively impacted the team, with more benefits expected when the children return in September.

As we move forward, our priorities remain financial stability, increasing enrolment, and supporting our dedicated staff.

I want to express my huge thanks to all the committee members who have continued to work hard behind the scenes. It is testament to their support and goodwill that many of the tasks and actions were achieved in the timeframes they were.

I also want to thank the Acorn Preschool and Toddler teams, parents, and the Alderton community for their incredible support during what has been quite a challenging year!

That said, I am confident that Acorns will continue to thrive in the years ahead.

Ali Armishaw

APPENDIX C – Treasurer’s Report

For the financial year ending March 2024, Alderton Acorns recorded a total income of £42,833.34. This income was primarily generated from government-funded child hours and fees (£39,119.47) and our annual fundraising events (£3,566.07). Among our fundraising efforts, the Alderton 5K race was our most significant event. Additionally, the annual quiz & curry night, sponsored walk, Christmas Fayre, and charity football match were all highly successful.

During the first half of the financial year (April to July), the number of children attending Preschool was higher than in recent years, with 22 children enrolled. This allowed us to build up a reserve to cushion the typically leaner Autumn term when attendance drops; 15 children left to start school, leaving only 7. Our total expenditure for the year was £47,802.38. The largest expenses were rent (£7,761.00) and staffing costs (£38,467.23), with the latter being significantly impacted by an increase in the national minimum wage. This resulted in an overall deficit of £4,969.04, although it’s important to note that some of this shortfall is a result of outstanding unpaid fees.

As of August 2024, Alderton Acorns holds over £7,000 in reserves. Our policy is to maintain a minimum of three months’ worth of operating expenses to ensure financial stability in the event of funding shortfalls. I am pleased to report that we are currently exceeding this target.

In January, we trialled Xero accounting software to streamline our accounts, payroll, and invoicing processes. However, we faced ongoing challenges with the new software, leading to the decision to discontinue sending invoices through this system. Consequently, the committee has taken this opportunity to review our current fee payment schedule. A new system will be introduced at the start of Term 1 in September 2024.

Looking ahead, we expect continued support from government-funded hours for children, particularly with the newly introduced 15 hours for 2-year-olds. The committee plans to focus on promoting the preschool and exploring ways to enhance our offerings to prospective parents. However, we remain vigilant about rising costs and are carefully managing our spending to stay within budget.

I can confirm that the charity’s accounts have been independently examined by Kaye Hunt, and I am pleased to report that no issues were identified. The full report is available for anyone who wishes to review it.

In conclusion, Alderton Acorns remains in a stable financial position, and we are confident in our ability to continue fulfilling our mission in the coming year. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our committee, staff, and the residents of Alderton. Your contributions and efforts make Acorns possible.

Cathie Bridges on behalf of Treasurer

APPENDIX D - Play Leader/Manager Annual Report

1. Attendance and Enrolment

Summary: Enrolment and attendance were high during April to July 2023 with 22 children on role. 15 of those children left for ‘big school’ leaving 7 on role in September 2023. The enrolment rose to 9 during the remainder of 2023/24. With another 5 children graduating in the Summer, we are now actively marketing

through the local school, social media and with flyers delivered to houses and shops with the aim of increasing our numbers for the Autumn term and beyond.

2. Staffing and Professional Development

Summary: The preschool has continued with the current team with excellent support from our Bank staff, Steph Castle and Camilla Cheney. Eleanor Mott has now left us to start her maternity leave and Katie Chandler has stepped into her role over the summer ready to begin the new term leading the team. Sarah Turner has continued to develop her role of SEN with additional focussed training in the area which has greatly benefitted the children attending. All of the team are now up to date with their First Aid training.

3. Curriculum and Educational Activities

Summary: The curriculum has continued to focus on personal, emotional and social development whilst utilising 'in the moment planning'. Different themes days throughout the year have provided further focus including world and international days encouraging creativity and critical thinking. Seasonal themes have also been a part of the curriculum where the children have been taken out on walks around the village encouraging movement and physical development.

4. Health and Safety

Summary: Risk assessments and health and safety guidelines have been assessed on a regular basis. There have been no major incidents to report. Concern around the safety with some aspects of the outdoor space has now been resolved with the landlord. Our focus remains on providing a safe and nurturing environment. The team now meet termly to have a safeguarding/SEN meeting. They also have regular 1:1 to raise any concerns or issues.

5. Parent and Community Engagement

Summary: We have continued to build strong relationships with parents through regular touch points at the end of each day and through newsletters and texts. The Christmas event and the Quiz and Curry evening brought more parent/community engagement. Particularly successful was the Graduation Event this Summer held for the leavers of class 2024.

6. Facility and Equipment Updates

Summary: Our bid for new funding to obtain more equipment (including SEN equipment) was sadly unsuccessful. The use of the outdoor space has been hugely beneficial to the children in their physical play.

7. Achievements and Success Stories

Summary: We are proud of the progress all of the children have made at preschool, and particularly to our wonderful class of 2024 on their Graduation. Particularly significant for the Preschool was our rating of Good from the Ofsted inspection in March 2024. This saw us maintain our existing level of Good and we are grateful for all of the time and effort that was put in by the Acorns team in achieving this.

8. Upcoming Events and Plans

Summary: Looking ahead, whilst our Play Leader is on Maternity Leave, we welcome Katie Chandler as our new Play Leader/Manager beginning in September 2024. Katie has already been working hard with the team in preparation for the new term. This has included a revised Welcome Pack for new parents, allocation of a 'key person' to each child and a newsletter for parents outlining new activities coming up including Bonfire night, Autumn, Diwali and Remembrance Sunday. Her focus will also be on expanding the outdoor learning programme.

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	2023/24				2022/23
1.Receipts and Payments Account					
	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds		Total funds
INCOME	£	£	£	£	£
Grants and Donations					
Donations - general	60.00				60.00
		60.00		0.00	60.00
Trading Activities					
Children's fees & nursery grants	39119.47				41648.26
Fund-raising event proceeds (see page 2)	3566.07				4598.17
Greenfield Trust grant	0.00				0.00
Tewkesbury Borough Council for Forest School	0.00				0.00
T-shirts	0.00				0.00
Photo commission	20.00				17.50
		42705.54		0.00	42705.54
					46263.93
Investment Income					
Bank interest		67.80		0.00	67.80
					7.84
TOTAL RECEIPTS		42833.34		0.00	42833.34
					46331.77
EXPENDITURE					
Direct Charitable Expenditure					
Rent	7761.00				9922.25
Staff payments	38467.23				32493.74
Insurance	0.00				887.42
Materials/Equipment	133.57				672.45
Music workshops	520.00				270.00
Cleaning, refreshments and miscellaneous	229.33				252.55
		47111.13		0.00	47111.13
					44498.41
Other Expenditure					
Fund-raising event costs (see page 2)	20.00				328.22
T-shirts	0.00				236.30
Greenfield Trust expenses	0.00				0.00
Administration	411.25				445.75
Other expenses (see page 2)	260.00				688.06
		691.25		0.00	691.25
					1698.33
TOTAL PAYMENTS		47802.38		0.00	47802.38
Net receipts/(payments) for year		-4969.04		0.00	-4969.04
Cash and Bank balances at 31st March 2023		20565.63		0.00	20565.63
Cash and Bank balances at 31st March 2024		15596.59		0.00	15596.59
					20565.63
2.Statement of Assets and Liabilities					
Monetary Assets					
Business Premium Account		7192.80		0.00	7192.80
Current Account		8305.79		0.00	8305.79
Cash		98.00		0.00	98.00
		15596.59		0.00	15596.59
					20565.63
Non monetary Assets					
Equipment held for functional use					

Signed, Financial Administrator

Signed, Treasurer & Trustee

Date of approval

Other expenses

	2023/24	2022/23
Course fees	10.00	75.00
PATA membership & contribution	0.00	110.00
Staff DBS	0.00	124.00
Sundry expenses	81.00	166.86
Information Commissioner	35.00	35.00
Tapestry online journal	84.00	127.20
Ofsted registration	50.00	50.00
	<u>260.00</u>	<u>688.06</u>

Fund-raising Events

	Proceeds	Costs	Net
Quiz night	324.00		324.00
Dumbleton Fete	188.00		188.00
Easter raffle	88.50		88.50
Sponsored walk	287.42		287.42
Christmas Fayre	247.65		247.65
Coronation trail	57.00		57.00
Charity Football	211.12		211.12
5K Fun run	2101.61		2101.61
Easyfundraising	60.77		60.77
	<u>3566.07</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>3566.07</u>