



Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes – 2023/24

Tuesday 11th March 2025, 6.30pm at Acorn

Attendees: Connor Tobin (Chairperson); Sacha Glasgow- Smith (Treasurer); Jana Peake (Secretary); Jessica Baldwin (General Trustee); Roxanne Speede (Manager); Delia Alves (Deputy Manager); Joanne Codd (Parent) and Eva Dustagheer (Parent)

1. Welcome

Connor Tobin welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked them for coming.

2. Apologies for absence

Keith Jones (Accountant); Linda McLellan (SENCo); Tara White (Staff); Sonia Wilsher (Staff) and Lisa Johnson (staff).

3. Minutes from 2022-23 AGM

The minutes from last year were distributed via email to all parents and staff on 10th March 2025 with no queries raised, therefore the minutes are confirmed as read and agreed. A copy of the minutes were made available at the meeting for everyone to read.

4. Manager's report- Roxanne Speede

Here we are at my second AGM as Manager of Acorn. I would like to start by thanking everyone for your support over the last year.

Where are we now?

Acorn has continued to thrive throughout the last year, with the number of children and session hours being accessed remaining at a high level.

Following the departure of our previous SENCo, we were delighted to welcome Mrs McLellan back to the Acorn family. With her wealth of experience and knowledge, she has been an invaluable addition to the team.

Throughout the year, I am delighted to advise that we were able to fulfil my vision for the interior of Acorn, making several changes to create an enabling environment with a continuous provision that is fully embedded into our daily practice.

Improvements made:

- a new roof
- storage shed
- outdoor story shed
- parent rain canopy
- replacement of 3 windows
- inside cosy corner
- re-vamp of our entrance garden
- removal of several overhanging trees in our garden
- new branding signage
- sensory garden flooring
- foundation for sensory garden canopy
- interactive construction area
- classroom projector
- smaller activities and play equipment to enhance our teaching of termly topics.

Setting

We have the above changes to the setting to ensure all areas of the EYFS are constantly accessible to our children. We have continued to focus heavily on offering a continuous provision.

Curriculum

We have embedded our topics relating to each term and will use these each year to offer a wide range of learning experiences, knowledge and vocabulary to the children through adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We have finalised our curriculum, setting out the achievements we would like all children to reach upon entering their reception year and the teaching steps required to support these. Above all, we want our children to be happy, feel safe, explore, learn and flourish and to be the best that they can be.

Registered Charity Number 1054698

Plans for the coming year

- New purpose-built role play area
- Re-surfacing the entire outdoor area flooring. Quotations are currently being sourced.
- Planting area input in the sensory garden where a variety of herbs and aromatic plants will be grown.
- As the sand pit has not been covered, this will need to be emptied and re-filled ready for the summer term. We are currently looking at quotes to make a hard plastic cover to reduce the cost of emptying each year.
- New carpet for the entrance of Acorn
- New carpet area for circle time
- Further storage facilities for our resources

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the whole of the Acorn team for everything they have done and continue to do for Acorn: Sonia, Tara, Lisa, Delia and Linda.

I would like to say thank you to all of our Parents and Carers who are always so supportive of our pre-school. We are very lucky to have you.

Last but not least, I would like to say a very special thank you to our trustees for all of the support and dedication they have given Acorn.

5. Chair's Report - Connor Tobin

We've reached the end of another wonderful year at Acorn, and what a year it has been! This is my first AGM as Chair, and it has been an exciting time, not only working alongside a brand-new set of trustees but also supporting the evolving vision of our fantastic management team, Roxanne and Delia.

Roxanne has already shared details about the setting over the past year, so I'd like to reflect more generally on what makes Acorn such a special place. We continue strengthening our position as a sought-after pre-school in Welwyn, with children feeding into several local primary schools, most notably Welwyn St Mary's. This year, five children left us in July 2025 to start Reception. The transition to 'big school' is always bittersweet, but we know that their time at Acorn has given them a fantastic foundation for their next stage of learning.

It has been a jam-packed year, full of enriching experiences for our children. From nurturing four baby chicks to a magical visit from the Easter Bunny, Acorn has been a hive of activity. We were also thrilled to welcome local children's author Shirley Murley, who officially opened our garden book shed, and to host an engaging week focused on 'The People That Help Us' - a highlight of which was visits from the fire brigade, ambulance service, and police.

Our involvement in the wider community remained strong, with Acorn participating in the Welwyn Festival Street Market, running both the children's and adults' tombola stalls. The children also participated in the Welwyn Festival Parade and, in fantastic Acorn style, returned as winners of the children's parade!

We ended the year with a wonderful graduation ceremony and summer BBQ - both a celebration of our hardworking team and a reminder that Acorn isn't just about preparing children for primary school but about immersing them in rich, hands-on learning experiences. Whether exploring the depths of the ocean or venturing into space through play and storytelling, our children are constantly engaged, inspired, and ready to discover the world around them.

Now, onto fundraising. As you all know, Acorn is a charity that relies on the generosity and support of our community. I do want to take a moment to thank everyone who has played a part in raising vital funds this year. Whether you've donated prizes, volunteered at an event, or simply helped spread the word, your contributions make a huge difference.

A special thank you to my fellow trustees:

- Treasurer – Sacha
- Secretary – Jana
- General Trustee Member – Jessica

I want to give a particular mention to Jessica Baldwin, who joined us midway through the year after another trustee had to step down due to personal circumstances. Your support and enthusiasm have been invaluable!

Of course, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our incredible staff: Roxanne, Delia, Linda, Lisa, Tara, and Sonia. Your dedication, passion, and care ensure that Acorn remains a nurturing and inspiring place for every child who walks through its doors.

Thank you all for your continued support - I look forward to another fantastic year ahead at Acorn!

6. Treasurer's Report- Sacha Glasgow – Smith

Financial summary for 2023-2024

Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school started the academic year retaining all but one of our non-reception aged children, in addition to welcoming new children and their families to the setting.

Our overall number of both children and the sessional hours being accessed remained the same as the previous year and stayed consistent with those of 2022-2023 throughout the year. This resulted in a similar income for invoiced and funded sessional fees.

In November 2023, following the stepping down of our interim manager, Acorn internally recruited Roxanne Speede as the new manager and later in January 2024 welcomed back Linda McLellan as SENCo and key worker. Staff costings per head continued to increase due to staff salary/hour increases; National Living Wage increases and pension increases, however, with careful management we were able to reduce our annual staff outgoings by over £17,000.

Outgoings which Acorn were able to reduce were monitored with strict budgets to ensure we ended the year in profit, following a deficit the previous year whilst still maintaining high levels of staffing and standards of learning and developmental opportunities for our children. Our utility outgoings remained consistent, and we were able to reduce our household costings increased despite the nationwide cost of living crisis. Our professional fees halved with the restructure of some of our outgoings.

Our equipment and building outgoings increased with the installation of a new roof; storage shed, outdoor story shed, rain canopy, replacement of 3 windows, inside cosy corner; re-vamp of our entrance garden, removal of several overhanging trees in our garden, new signage, sensory garden flooring, classroom projector and smaller activities and play equipment to enhance out teaching of termly topics. All funds spent were carefully considered and only where our monthly review of accounts showed available funds.

Fundraising income reduced from the previous financial year, although we continued to successfully operate several events and campaigns.

Financial summary

We have included a summary of Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school's finances over the last financial year (1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024), and those from the 2022/23 financial year for comparison.

	2022/2023	2023/2024
INCOMINGS	£	£
Fees (Hertfordshire County; Invoice; lunch club; reg fees)	161,251.19	160,900.83
Fundraising	4,929.11	3,889.75
Other (Petty Cash; Misc)	0	1,050.00
Interest	0	0
Total	166,180.30	165,840.58
OUTGOINGS		
Wages; NI; Tax; Staff pension	(142,618.31)	(125,236.51)
Rent and Insurance	(3,335.57)	(3,246.45)
Utilities	(6,333.61)	(6,642.84)
Building and Garden	(5982.07)	(8,707.67)
Uniform and Book bags	161.24	(494.85)
Snack and Household	(2789.61)	(1,906.69)
Equipment; Stationary and Craft	(3933.88)	(5,036.89)
Professional Fees and Memberships; Staff Training	(4,312.35)	(2,211.82)
Advertising	(265.00)	(115)
Banking fees	(137.09)	(111.23)
Other	(9.50)	(775.87)
Total	(169,555.75)	(154,485.82)
ANNUAL PROFIT/(LOSS)	(3,375.45)	11,354.76

We are delighted to have finished the year with a profit and wish to thank the Acorn Trustee and staffing team, for their efforts in managing our outgoings and keeping costs as low as possible in addition to their fundraising efforts. Thank you to all of our families who have helped organise; attended and supported the years events.

In addition, we would like to say a huge thank-you to Keith Jones, Acorn's accountant, for his invaluable assistance during this time.

Finances 2024-2025

As a charity, we do not aim to end each financial year with large amounts of profit and instead, prefer to spend our funds on improving the setting and ensuring the children enjoy the best learning experiences through quality teaching and resources. Our focus for the academic year will be our outside area and effective management of equipment storage.

With the changes in government funding for working families again extending in September 2025 and the majority of our children now accessing funded hours we are hopeful that with the continued close monitoring of our outgoings and expenditure, our financial position will again be positive for the 2024-2025 academic year.

We will continue to offer funded places to families accessing the existing working parent childcare initiatives and believe that this will lead to our younger children accessing more sessions with us. We do, however, need to remain stringent due to the national rise in utility and general household costings and expected staff cost increases.

For 2024/25 we must continue to strive to run cost effectively:

- Further our reserve funds for a potential year of increased staffing costs and utility hikes.
- Continuing our financial obligation as employers, redundancy contingency fund and pension contributions.

7. Election of Trustees

All existing trustees were re-elected with additional one trustee proposed and elected. Vote took place, the outcome of which was:

Connor Tobin- proposed to be elected as Chair

Supported by Delia Alves

Seconded by Jess Baldwin

Sacha Glasgow - Smith - proposed to be elected as Treasurer

Supported by Connor Tobin

Seconded by Roxanne Speede

Jana Peake - proposed to be elected as Secretary

Supported by Jess Baldwin

Seconded by Delia Alves

Jess Baldwin - proposed to be elected as General Trustee

Supported by Connor Tobin

Seconded by Delia Alves

Joanne Codd- proposed to be elected as General Trustee

Supported by Jess Baldwin

Seconded by Connor Tobin

8. AOB

The resurfacing of the garden (rubber mulch) was discussed with quotes currently being undertaken. Additionally, a storage shed for learning resources has been put on a wish list.

Future fundraising activities have been discussed- namely Mother's Day gift shop; Scavenger Hunt; possible nearly new baby/toddler clothes and toy sale; Easter activities, Acorn fitness challenge and bake sales. All of which would be crucial to raising funds for Acorn.