

PEBBLES PRE-SCHOOL AND DAY CARE

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 13th November 2024

Pebbles Nursery 7 pm

Present: Holly Gilman – Chairperson
Nicola Flemming – Treasurer
Karen Sims – Secretary
Jo Neave – Manager
Pat Spencer
Kelly Kelly
Andrea Willford
Cassi Stubbs

Apologies: Gary McMahon

1. Minutes of previous A.G.M. and matters arising

The Minutes of last year's A.G.M. were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairperson.

There were no matters arising.

2. Financial Report

This year as we look back at the financial year (April 23 to April 24) saw the setting end the year in a financial deficit.

We are aware of why this occurred and can be attributed to staffing changes that resulted in additional wages being paid to staff members during this period of change, i.e. the requirement of Jo kindly returning from maternity leave early, and other key management team members working overtime. This was a much-needed requirement during this period of change.

The increase in the minimum wage, utility costs, increased rental costs and the need for much needed setting equipment also contributed to this. All of this I might add occurring during a cost-of-living crisis. However, with a plan in place the setting has already been able to make savings and small adjustments, for example using paper towels, and offsetting utility costs and carbon footprint that has seen savings made and has already, I'm pleased to report, seen this deficit reversed and the setting now back in the black. Further plans continue, and reviewed, to continue this growth.

As treasurer I have a personal goal for the coming year to assist in exploring how forecasting and actuals can be approached, and amended

where possible, to give Nishel back much needed time for other essential administration and give clear views of monthly, quarterly and yearly forecasts (this should allow for the setting to clearly see spikes and troughs in intakes and financial lulls).

Nicola Flemming – Treasurer

3. Setting Report

Since last year's AGM lots of changes have occurred at the Pre-School.

Staffing

After last year's AGM I was appointed as Manager full time in January, after the period of time where there was a 'management team' covering the leadership roles. Hannah West was appointed Deputy Manager as a permanent role, with Elaine Roberts (Forest School Lead), Christine Tustain (Baby Room Lead) and Nishel Hay (Executive Administrator) filling the rest of the senior roles. This brought closure as we said goodbye to the previous Manager, Caroline Pilcher, who retired last Summer. We have also completed the retirement for a staff member who has been on long term sick leave over the past few years. We wish them both all the happiness with their retirements.

Emma Hamilton was also promoted to a Key Person role, and we welcomed Laura Fountain back to Pebbles as a Key person, who has previously worked for us but took a break from childcare.

Pip O'Connor received a job role change/promotion to Wrap Around Coordinator, and is running our Wrap Around area, under the supervision of myself as Manager.

Before the summer holidays a staff member left the setting, and another staff member reduced their hours to term time only. At the start of the summer holidays another staff member suffered a severe break to their leg, which has resulted in extensive recovery and time off from work. This will be continued into the new year, therefore, we are offering a temporary position to fill these hours due to the increase of children's bookings from January. We are also going to be looking to recruit a lunch time and relief cover to relieve the amount of covering that the Manager and Administrator are doing.

We have implemented a TOIL scheme to reduce the extra costs each month for staff doing extra hours. There have been some teething difficulties but this is now working well.

Staff Training

I have completed my SENDCO level 2 qualification and my Leadership and Management training.

Hannah West has completed her SENDCO level 3 qualification.

Christine Tustain has completed her Safeguarding Lead Practitioner training and has continued her level 3 Childcare qualification.

Baby room staff have attended some baby specific training.

Nicole Whiting has continued with her level 3 Childcare qualification.

All staff have been provided with access to FGM and Forced Marriage training.

The senior team have completed Fire Marshall training.

Laura Fountain is working her way through the compulsory training that Pebbles requires for new starters.

Pip O'Connor has completed some wrap around training and will continue to access this.

Fundraising

Holly Gilman completed her fundraising with her Ultra challenges – Well Done Holly, and Thank You! We are so proud of you!!

The Lifeboat Day and Easter raffle both went really well and the nursery received 2 grants from Norfolk County Council - £5,000 for our quality and inclusion application, and a grant for our Wrap Around Care. The Q and I grant was used to support the division of the nursery into age-appropriate areas, including furniture, equipment and resources. The Wrap Around grant has been used to purchase older resources and food preparation equipment for The Island, including a mini oven with hobs, a toastie machine, action figures, outdoor equipment, sit on scooters, cooking equipment, art resources and is also to be used towards Pip's salary.

Learning Journals

Since January we have been using Tapestry, which is going well. Again, there were some teething difficulties as the staff came to terms with the technology, and we experimented with our parent's expectations of what is provided via Tapestry. Following the new EYFS guidance, it is recommended that providers step away from paperwork and numerous observations, however we felt that this would be detrimental to our parents who love to see what their children have been up to. Each room works slightly differently depending on what they are able to do in the moment, however the aim is that each child receives at least two photographic updates to their Tapestry account within the month. Recently we have also implemented an 'observation checkpoint' scheme that each Key Person is using, which identifies what the children have

learnt or are then able to do at the end of each term, which is more individualised than the previous EYFS checkpoint tick boxes. The focus from the government is to look at children as individuals, as opposed to checking them off and putting them in age brackets. This is challenging for staff to change the way that they work considering some have worked in the previous checkbox system for many years, but the team are working well and supporting each other, which was apparent at our recent OFSTED inspection – the staff really know their children well!

The Setting

Since February the setting has been undergoing a major make over, following the proposal that I created to divide the room. We created The Barnacle, The Harbour, The Cove, The Rockpool and The Island. This has required constant assessing, reflecting and perfecting, including moving staff around and trying them with different age groups, but I am pleased to say that this is now going really well. The main reasoning behind making the change was to positively impact the emotional wellbeing and progress of the children, to reduce fight or flight response behaviours, to reduce accidents and incidences from behaviours, to create calmer, safe, communication friendly zones, to allow for age appropriate activities in each room (opportunities for older children to access more challenging activities and resources without younger children being at risk or impacting their play and learning), and to support positive transitions from the baby room to the main nursery.

The outside areas have been developed and are continuing to be developed, with plans to create a construction shed in The Cove, with pea shingle and construction tools. Two parents kindly helped to build our outdoor classroom at the front of the nursery, for the Rockpool and Island children to use when they are out the front. This provides shelter for outside play on very hot days, and rainy weather. With this, a new large gate has been put up at the front, with plans to build another at the other end (near the half wall – with trellis along the wall). These can then be locked to ensure maximum security when the children are out the front.

The internal door to the nursery has been locked at specific times of the day to maximise security, so that the community does not have free access to the building when The Island is in use. We have created a lone working policy and risk assessment for The Island and Rockpool room, and have implemented walkie talkies to maximise communication between the rooms.

We hosted a community day to help clear and set up the pond area, which we have been given access to under a transfer of contract agreement with the school, and use for our Forest School sessions. These are now up and running for the children who will be going to school next September, with the first group being on Tuesday mornings, run by Elaine Roberts.

The setting has participated in many walks around the village, talking about road safety, including a trip to the park and a visit to the Fire Station. The aims for our cultural capital this year include reintroducing visits to the library, booking another visit to the fire station and exploring a visit to the local care home. We are also looking at music and movement story sessions, which will include one session a term for the children, and then one session a term as a parent pay and stay baby session.

The baby room have increased to 9 babies a day with 3 staff members, which has been made possible due to them having their own outdoor space fenced off.

OFSTED

The setting received an on-the-spot OFSTED inspection at the end of September following a complaint that was made to OFSTED. The setting was inspected at great detail, and the inspector was on site from 8.50 am – 6.30 pm. The setting had an amazing response to their parent feedback request, including a high number of parents who spoke to the inspector face to face on the day. The committee provided an immense level of support on the day (as always), and support was given from our IDW at Norfolk Early Years, who attended the feedback session in person. I am delighted to share that we received a GOOD rating, with very high feedback. The two areas of improvement are to re-implement peer observations between the staff to reflect on what each member is doing in each room, something that has taken a back seat due to the many changes over the year. The other area of improvement was to sequence learning throughout the rooms, which will come from peer observations and the observation checkpoints.

I am so proud of the accomplishments that the staff team and committee have made throughout the year, and look forward to the year ahead. To my team, thank you for believing in my vision and supporting me to make the positive changes to the nursery. To our committee, your support and encouragement throughout has been second to none, we truly appreciate your efforts. And to our families, thank you for entrusting our team with your little ones' Early Years Adventure. We love helping them learn and explore each day, and are so excited for the continued learning and growth in the year to come.

Jo Neave - Manager

4. Chairman's Report

Each year, as I sit down to write my report, I look back on the previous year's reports to see how far we've come and this year, my third in the role of Chairperson, it's wonderful to see the way we have built and grown as a committee over this time.

More specifically, over this past year:

- we have increased our numbers as a committee,
- we've promoted both Jo and Hannah into the roles of Manager and Deputy Manager respectively, and supported this new management team to not only take over the running of the setting but to overhaul and improve our offering
- we've worked together to rethink how the original hub space could be better incorporated into the nursery offering
- we've had one of our most financially successful summer holiday clubs
- whilst I don't have the official numbers, I know that this has been our most successful year of fundraising since I joined the committee in 2019
- and of course, I cannot fail to mention the Good rating achieved at our last Ofsted inspection.

I do not want to take any of that achievement away from the staff, because most of that is absolutely down to them but I also think it's worth reflecting on how much work we as a committee have done and how much effort and love we've put in. Thank you to everyone for their work this year and I really hope we can continue to build on that next year.

It is time for the committee to vote on who they would like to steer the committee going forward in the role of Chairperson, as we must vote anew every 3 years. I will be putting my name forward to continue in the role should others wish me to continue.

Each year I like to set us goals for the year ahead, and this year I'd like to make my recommendations for whomever takes up the mantle of Chairperson, if it isn't me.

1. Now that our new management team has been in place for almost 12 months, and on the basis that we have a larger group of Trustees, I'd like to see us taking on more specialised roles in how we support the nursery. As we say each time we receive new applications to join, everyone brings a different and unique skill set with them and it's important that we utilise that to the advantage of the setting. I have specific goals for areas of improvement for the setting which I will share with the committee, but this is only now possible with the number of Trustees that we have.
2. On the basis of the above I would like to see us finally getting to grips with our Committee board and getting the message out there about what we do and hopefully attracting more members to our team. The more people on the board the easier everyone's job will be as we can share the load.

3. Finally, I'd like to start gathering feedback from parents, staff and ourselves on how we are performing and how we can improve. This is something I would like to see being started now that we have our Good Ofsted rating, and not for us to become complacent in our activities.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved this year – the incredible staff for all their hard work, the parents who have supported us through a complicated year, the wider community who may not necessarily use Pebbles but who have nonetheless donated their money, time or skills to helping us, and of course to the amazing team on this Committee.

Holly Gilman - Chairperson

5. Election to Positions

Chairperson – Holly Gilman was the only name put forward and was unanimously voted in to this position.

Secretary – Karen Sims was the only name put forward and was unanimously voted in to this position.

The new Committee is:

Chairperson	Holly Gilman
Treasurer	Nicola Flemming
Secretary	Karen Sims
Committee Members	Pat Spencer Cassi Stubbs

There are currently three parents interested in joining the Trustees, one is currently completing the necessary checks and the other two will be contacted by email in order to start the paperwork.

6. Ofsted

The Setting had an on-the-spot inspection on 26th September 2024 and following a thorough inspection received a Good rating.

7. Fund Raising for 2025

We will continue to run the successful Easter Raffle and take part in Mundesley Lifeboat Day.

It was suggested organising a Quiz and Chips night during January and Nicola will look into the logistics of this.

8. Any other business

- a. Nicola is happy to embroider T shirts for the Nursery leavers and suggested that parents sign up for this before Easter.
- b. The school photographer has proved successful, but the setting will be looking for someone closer to home.
- c. There are many grants available for the setting and Holly and Andrea will look through these and select ones appropriate to the Nursery and apply for them.
- d. All staff have now completed training of the first three modules of the Curiosity Approach. There are six modules in total.

9. Date of Annual General Meeting 2025

Wednesday 12th November 2025.