

Trustees' annual report for period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021
Charity name: St Peter's Playgroup Charity registration number: 1167833



Names of trustees who manage the charity

Trustee name	Office	Signature agreeing report
Mrs Vivien Farrell	Trustee	Agreed by email
Mrs Brenda Harris	Trustee	Agreed by email
Mrs Anne Herbert	Trustee	Agreed by email
Mrs Gillian Keene	Trustee	Agreed by email
Mrs Hayley Kingsnorth	Trustee / treasurer	Agreed by email

Summary of the purposes of the charity

Regarding the purpose of St Peter's Playgroup, the Trustees fully endorse the following as stated in the governing document:

“For the public benefit to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age by encouraging parents / carers to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups and by:

(a) offering appropriate play, education and care facilities, family learning and extended hours groups, together with the right of parents to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of such groups, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children irrespective of their race, culture, religion, means or ability

(b) encouraging the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs in the local area.”

Principles, objectives and ethos of St Peter's Playgroup

St Peter's Playgroup is a preschool originally established in 1983 by parishioners of the Church of the Sacred Heart Sittingbourne and was in fact a parish group before becoming independent then taking charitable status. The main objective of playgroup is that children from the local community should come and enjoy themselves whilst learning irrespective of background or financial means. The trustees are proud of the fact that playgroup always meets this objective. St Peter's Playgroup has always endeavoured to have the lowest fees (for those not eligible for government funding) in the local area.

Access has always been offered to any child in the local community irrespective of race, culture, religion, means or ability. The playgroup management, trustees, staff and volunteers are proud of playgroup's record of helping parents / carers to successfully prepare their children for transfer to primary school reception class.

St Peter's Playgroup delivers education and support as specified by the National Curriculum Foundation Stage. Playgroup is fortunate to have highly qualified and experienced staff who enable this commitment to be met.

Parents / Carers are supported throughout the process by being kept up to date with the achievements / progress of their child. If necessary, any area of concern regarding progress or welfare is reviewed with them and when appropriate, guidance is given regarding where and how further support can be provided.

The trustees are pleased to report that all feedback received from parents / carers has been positive and that there is frequent repeat business with siblings coming to playgroup. There is a good relationship with primary schools who have also made positive comments regarding the readiness of children for reception class.

All staff, volunteers and trustees have had appropriate data barring service (DBS) checks that are kept up to date. The staff that look after the children receive appropriate training as required. There is also appropriate safeguarding, data protection and management policies in place.

The trustees are proud of the fact that no child has ever been refused enrolment to St Peter's Playgroup on any grounds including special needs or financial difficulties. A concession that playgroup makes to parents / carers with children that are two years old, is that, unlike many preschool settings no fee is charged if the child cannot attend their usual session. The manager also has the discretion to take a flexible approach where a family is in obvious financial difficulty. Such circumstances are reported verbally to the trustees however the identity of those involved is never disclosed.

Summary of the main activities and achievements

Despite the Covid related restrictions, including the necessary deep cleaning and restricted access to parents / carers, playgroup daily sessions have gone very well. There has been a full programme of activities for the children. The staff have worked hard and the records show that every child has made progress towards achieving their potential. The aims of playgroup are to help children develop in a number of areas as set out in the national foundation stage curriculum. We are pleased to report that every child has made progress with what they can do whilst developing from an individual to being able to take part in group activities. Most importantly they all do this whilst playing and having fun. We have qualified, experienced and professional staff who are good at both putting individual childcare plans into operation and identifying areas where help may be needed. The staff and the parents / carers are to be thanked for their patience and support through this difficult period.

Our staffing levels over the past year have been a concern as playgroup has experienced a period of higher than usual staff turn-over. The trustees are working hard to resolve this issue. However, we have still been able to accommodate children with Special Educational needs (SEN) despite the fact that "One to One" funding is no longer available. The staff are to be congratulated and thanked for their work in supporting those most in need.

We are also very fortunate to have a number of fully qualified standby staff who can assist when there is staff absence.

One interesting aspect of our work was meeting the challenge of having a number of children whose first language is not English. It is pleasing to report that they have all progressed well and enjoyed playing and learning as part of the group.

Parents / Carers are supported throughout the process by being kept up to date with the achievements / progress of their child. Records are kept of each child's progress that are the property of the parent / carer, this allows them to see how their child is progressing in terms of both ability and maturity. When necessary any area of concern regarding progress or welfare is reviewed with the parent(s) / carer(s) and when appropriate, guidance is given regarding whether or not further support is needed and how it will be provided.

Due to Covid restrictions parents / carers have been unable to take an active part in playgroup activities including attending sessions / events such as the pancake day, Christmas mingle and sports day activities. We hope that once Covid restrictions are lifted parents / carers will be able to involve themselves in playgroup activities again.

Parents and Carers wishing their child to enrol with playgroup are invited to visit with the child first to ensure that the setting meets their needs. When first enrolled the child's parent(s) / carer(s) are invited to stay until the child has settled, this usually is a very short time as we find that children settle in quickly.

In September 2020, 17 children transferred successfully to primary school and we have had good feedback that they settled in quickly and happily to school life.

We are fortunate that our landlord the parish of the Church of the Sacred Heart, Sittingbourne has created an outdoor area for playgroup use that has improved our facilities considerably. All at playgroup (especially the children) thank the parish for their generosity.

In June 2021 it was suggested that playgroup should move from the current church hall premises to a nearby building. This was visited by the trustees and staff to assess suitability. The manager was then asked to produce a business plan including an assessment of the venue as a childcare setting, a financial plan and a summary project plan (including financial implications) so that the trustees could make an informed decision. This to be reported to a meeting in September 2021. Initial feedback from trustees and staff has raised both safety and financial concerns.

The challenges faced by trustees, management and staff of playgroup have been many over the period under review, the need to support those children with special educational needs (SEN) despite the withdrawal of funding for "one to one" assistance and the inadequate government funding rate (for qualifying children) are a major concern as both these issues present long-term risks to the charity's viability. Additionally, the increasing bureaucratic demands placed on playgroup to manage the regulatory systems has added significantly to the effort required to meet commitments.

St Peter's Playgroup is fortunate to have reliable and conscientious staff and volunteers all of whom give a significant amount of unpaid time to ensure successful outcomes for playgroup activities. These include staff getting in early to prepare the hall, staying after sessions to pack away and in their own time preparing activities for the children. The staff are to be congratulated for their conscientious approach, commitment and their innovative ideas which help to provide a rich and stimulating programme of activities for the children.

The trustees would also like to thank the parents and carers for their positive contribution to group activities without this it would not be possible for playgroup to function effectively. The feedback from parents / carers and their involvement in activities helps playgroup to achieve one of its primary goals of contributing to the local community.

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection

The latest OFSTED inspection held on 3 October, 2016 classified playgroup as "Good" with "Outstanding" for Personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children. OFSTED reported:

- ☐ Staff provide children with a very good range of interesting and colourful resources to engage and interest them. Children are motivated to learn and make good progress from their starting points.
- ☐ Children are extremely happy and build excellent relationships with staff and each other. The highly effective key-person approach helps new children to settle well.
- ☐ Staff work extremely closely with parents. For example, they share their children's progress effectively with them and find out about their homes and families. Also, they mirror children's home routines and respect their individual interests.
- ☐ Staff place a high priority on children's safety. For example, they complete thorough risk assessments and teach them to keep safe when they move to the garden area.
- ☐ The teacher tracks children's progress very successfully to quickly identify and plan for any gaps in their learning.
- ☐ Staff update their knowledge regularly. For example, they received training on science for young children and have incorporated more enjoyable experiments into their activities.

We continue to work to meet OFSTED's latest requirements by keeping our staff aware of changes that may need to be made.

St Peter's Playgroup Financial Review

The Playgroup account ended the accounting year with a balance of £32,665. A summary of the audited accounts with the independent examiners report (completed by Lyndens Accountants [Kent] Ltd) is provided in Appendix 1.

The financial year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 was another difficult year due to the continued interruption to normal activities resulting from the impact of Covid restrictions. However, trustees and staff have worked hard to mitigate the issues. There has been a number of concerns, in particular high staff turnover, loss of income due to fewer children attending playgroup and lack of opportunity to attract new children to playgroup. However, treasurer, Mrs Hayley Kingsnorth reports that the balance for this financial year is satisfactory. Mrs Kingsnorth has implemented improvements in budgetary control and presentation of receipts and invoices. Additionally, use is now made of the XERO accounting software to provide access for all trustees, to the financial status of playgroup.

A number of issues are being monitored by Mrs Kingsnorth and former treasurer Mrs Farrell including the increasing cost of wages / staff training as well as the inadequate government funding that has not kept pace with inflation. The government expects childcare settings to make up the difference between the funded rate and a viable rate by charging parents / carers for other services (for example, provision of meals, nappy changing etc.). There is of course a limit to how much income you can raise this way. For example, the increasing rate of inflation impacts on parents / carers ability to pay and playgroup's ability to charge a realistic rate for these services. The loss of "one to one" funding for children with special needs is a major problem as staff costs are so high.

Summary of income and expenditure 2020 / 2021

	Income		Expenditure	
	Government funding, Fees and Special Needs Support	£98,891	Wages	£76,816
	Sponsorship and donations	£571	Rent	£10,380
	Sundries, teas, raffles	£6,792	Supplies	£6,530
	interest	0	Renewables, Course Fees, Equipment, Insurance, Professional Fees, Marketing etc.	£5884
	Total Receipts*	£106,255	Total Expenditure*	£99,610

***Note: Totals rounded to nearest pound.**

The trustees wish to thank the staff and volunteers who did all they could to reduce the financial burden by volunteering their services free of charge for so many, session preparation and back-office activities. Without this support playgroup would not be viable.

Appendix 1

**St Peter's Playgroup Financial Summary
and
Independent Examiners report
Financial Year
1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021**



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
St. Peter's Playgroup

Charity Number
1167833

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	To	Accounting period to
01/09/2020	31/08/2021	

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Fees	98,891	-	-	98,891	79,683
HMS Milk	-	-	-	-	272
Special Needs Support	-	-	-	-	2,072
Sponsorship and Donations	571	-	-	571	386
Teas and Raffles	-	-	-	-	-
Sundries	6,792	-	-	6,792	3,984
Interest	0	-	-	0	13
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	106,255	-	-	106,255	86,410
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	106,255	-	-	106,255	86,410
A3 Payments					
Wages	76,816	-	-	76,816	69,375
Rent	10,380	-	-	10,380	8,269
Supplies	6,530	-	-	6,530	7,625
Insurance	370	-	-	370	-
Course Fees	1,376	-	-	1,376	-
Renewables	-	-	-	-	-
Sundries	1,575	-	-	1,575	-
PPG and Advertising	832	-	-	832	-
Legal and Professional	1,730	-	-	1,730	6,508
Sub total	99,610	-	-	99,610	91,777
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	99,610	-	-	99,610	91,777
Net of receipts/(payments)	6,645	-	-	6,645	5,367
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	26,020	-	-	26,020	31,386
Cash funds this year end	32,665	-	-	32,665	26,019

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank	32,736	-	-
	Petty Cash	370	-	-
	Debtors	505	-	-
	Creditors	945	-	-
	Total cash funds	32,665	-	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

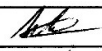
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Independent Examiners Fee Accrual		240	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	HAYLEY KINGSNOR	21/6/22
Vivien Farrell	VIVIEN FARRELL	21/6/22



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's
report on the accounts**

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity St Peter's Playgroup		
On accounts for the year ended	31 st August 2021	Charity no (if any)	1167833
Set out on pages	1-2		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/08/2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:  **Date:** 25/05/2022

Name: Jane Henning

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): LYNDENS
accountants

Address: 53 WEST STREET
SITTINGBOURNE
KENT, ME10 1AN
TEL: 01795 422565

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.