



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
Date and Time
and
ANNUAL REPORT 2022
Meeting details

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Minutes of Annual Meeting held on**
- 4. To receive the Annual Report**
- 5. To receive the Accounts for the period ending 31st December 2022**
- 6. Election of Examiner**
- 7. Election of Trustees**
- 8. Any notified business**

Chairman's Report

It has been a quieter less frenetic year!

Whilst Covid 19 seems to have been more contained and the restrictions are fewer, there are still some concerns about the long term effects. This was mentioned in one of the latest Zoom meetings by a headteacher colleague and is something which we intend to investigate further.

These Zoom meetings have proved a very effective way of communicating with and between members across the country. It is very gratifying to hear colleagues sharing experiences and hearing how they grapple with the same problems despite the distances between them.

Zoom is just the latest addition to our methods of communication. Our termly Newsletters continue to provide detailed information about our work and have increasingly incorporated articles from all members of the school communities. In this way we try to provide a rich tapestry of life in small schools.

Elements of social media – Twitter and Facebook continue to provide additional information about our activities to a national audience and enable us to emphasise our message of the value of the small school. Our website is expanding slowly and it is hoped it can be developed further over the next twelve months.

Probably the most important aspect of the past year has been the development and publication of the Small Schools Manifesto. This document – as the name suggests – seeks to emphasise the importance of the small school within the national education landscape. Our thanks are due to Dr. Cath Gristy from the University of Plymouth for all her hard work supporting and writing the finished document.

The Manifesto was formally introduced at a BERA (British Education Research Association) Conference held in Liverpool in September 2022. Here a groups of academics with a specific interest in researching small schools provided information about

their current findings. There was also an agreement to continue meeting into the future. Since that time NASS has been pleased to learn of a number of other colleagues who are investigating aspects of small school life and many of them have either attended the Zoom meetings or written details of their research in the Newsletter.

About the same time as the BERA Conference, an article in the Times Education Supplement indicated that more small schools were deemed to be inadequate following Ofsted inspections. NASS immediately began the process of challenging these remarks and was subsequently invited by Ofsted to join a steering group to investigate ways of providing more detailed support for those inspecting small schools. The initial meeting took place in November and consultations will continue through the coming months.

At the same time NASS has continued to provide support to individual members who have been disappointed in the findings from their Ofsted inspection. This support has included personal visits, telephone conversations, e mails alongside full discussions during Zoom meetings. This support has been welcomed by all colleagues and was used to inform the Ofsted steering group.

Alongside visits to individual schools, links have been established and developed to a wide range of contacts across the country. Groups in Essex, Kent and Norfolk have added to the knowledge of what is taking place in those areas and provided valuable information to be communicated and shared. Individual colleagues at Local Authority level in Kent, Essex, West Sussex, Cornwall and Nottinghamshire have all been able to provide details of their work and share thoughts with others.

It is gratifying to note the growing interest in small schools and their work. In the past few months we have heard of three conferences – in Kent, Nottinghamshire and Essex which will take place over the next few months devoted solely to aspects of small school development. NASS has received invitations to all three and will be providing input on a range of issues.

NASS continues to work tirelessly for small schools. The past year has seen illness strike members of the Trustees and, unfortunately this has taken its toll. However, newer members have joined this

body and they should provide the energy, stimulus and knowledge to enable NASS to flourish into the future providing the support and guidance to meet the needs of all the members.

Neil Short - Chairman

NASS Early Years Report

Early childhood has sadly become a pawn in an economic argument to get parents back to work in the recent budget. The headlines were based upon the following:

- Working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year (or spread their free hours over a higher number of weeks), from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school. This will be funded by an additional £4.1 billion by 2027-28. The new entitlements will be rolled out in stages:
 - o From April 2024, all working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week
 - o From September 2024, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old can access 15 hours per week
 - o From September 2025 all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old can access 30 hours free childcare per week

However, many early childhood organisations have called on government to prioritise fixing the funding for current entitlements before trying to add on further ones. The additional £204m for this year is not enough to address the severe funding problems in the sector - based on their own estimates, the actual figure needed is probably closer to £2bn. Therefore, it seems likely to expect provider to continue to struggle with their viability.

This will be further compounded when the additional entitlements are introduced if these are paid at a similar hourly rate to the current funded 2-year-old offer, as the more hours are paid for at government rates, the fewer parent-paid hours are available to generate cross-subsidy. Parent-paid hours are likely to cost even more, and additional charges to become higher and more widespread. Some providers may not be able to afford to offer the new funded entitlements.

The decision to make the entitlements only available to parents working at least 16 hours at a minimum wage is not well thought

through. It mirrors the current 30 hours entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds, which is premised on the universal 15 hours, and assumes that parents only need support for additional hours if working longer hours (which already overlooked that childcare is needed to cover travel times as well as working hours). In the absence of a universal 15 hour offer for under 3s, parents working fewer hours will not qualify - even though their lower incomes will increase the need for support. This may be offset by childcare support through Universal Credit. The changes to the latter are welcome, but as this will only be paid up front for new claimants or those extending their hours, many will still be left having to claim in arrears.

With a workforce recruitment and retention crisis already impacting the sector, the only workforce measure here is a bonus for new childminders, which is heavily weighted towards childminders joining agencies instead of being Ofsted registered. This seems unlikely to offset the dramatic and long-term decline in the number of child minders, or to change childminders' preferences to be Ofsted-registered rather than belonging to agencies. There is no mention of how the wider workforce will be increased and upskilled to deliver the increased number of places for babies and children under the new entitlements, which should surely be a priority.

While I welcome the ambition of this government to support working parents and put in place early childhood education and care from the end of maternity leave until the start of school (and to provide wraparound care for children in school), the detail of these policies leaves much to be desired. The current system does perpetuate the problems of underfunding, which in turn is impacting on workforce recruitment and retention, provider viability and the availability of high quality, affordable early education provision accessible to all.

Kathryn Solly - Early Years Champion

Headteacher Liaison Officer Report

I worked on the question for the review document sent out by the NAHT 'UNDER PRESSURE The Financial Squeeze on small schools

in England'.I sent this to the committee, I can send it again for inclusion or signposting in the newsletter.

Representing NASS and the NAHT I now have a place at the table with OFSTED to discuss their impact on small schools and to challenge the secondary based curriculum deep dives when so many of our members lead on so many subjects. However, all has gone quiet since the Ruth Parry suicide and OFSTED are laying low. Before the end of term, I am travelling to Reading to support the schools in the same area who knew her to show support.

At the NAHT conference at the end of April my motion is all about small schools and OFSTED. The Motion theme is '*Sustainability of small and rural school's*'. The intended outcome is the wellbeing of leaders of small and rural schools is supported by appropriate inspection procedures that take into account the distinctive context of these settings. The wording of the motion is: Last year, Conference called on National Executive to continue the campaign for sustainable funding for all small and rural schools. However, whilst small and rural schools continue to be the lifeblood of many communities across all nations, the complexities of leading them remains. They are subject to the same demands as larger schools, however, both school leaders and teachers have to fulfil multiple roles. The impact of this on well-being continues to be alarming and, we feel, unsustainable. Conference calls on National Executive to campaign for recognition of the unique context of small and rural schools when considering mechanisms for school inspection, appropriate funding and the well-being of staff and communities.

Julie Kelly - Headteacher Liaison Officer

Accounts for 2022

**Receipt and Payments account for the period
1st January 2021 to 31st December 2022
Registered Charity No. 1169002**

	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds	2021
<u>£</u>			
Receipts			
Subscriptions	2837.00	2837.00	427

Donations	355.68	355.68	
Total Receipts <u>427</u>	<u>3192.68</u>	2192.68	—
Payments			
Newsletters	186.84	186.84	
141			
Travel and Expenses	414.65	414.65	
Web Site Management	120.00	120.00	
ZOOM Meeting Expenses	360.00	360.00	
School Visits			261
Administration	349.30	349.30	267
ZOOM Renewal	119.90	119.90	
Total Payments <u>669</u>	<u>1550.69</u>	1550.69	—
Net of receipts/payments -242	1641.99	1641.99	
Cash funds last year end <u>7522</u>	<u>7280.17</u>	<u>7280.17</u>	
Cash funds this year end <u>7280</u>	<u>8922.16</u>	<u>8922.16</u>	
Represented by			
Co-op Bank	<u>8922.16</u>	<u>8922.16</u>	

Signed DR Woodage - Examiner