

Annual Return Report – 2023-2024

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 9th October 2024 – Nursery Setting

Attended

Nursery Staff – Amanda Darley (AD), Victoria Bourne (VB), Fiona Jones (FJ), Sian Bradshaw (SB), Julie Buchanan (JB), Anna Millgate (AM), Suzannah Grimes (SG)

Current Committee: Caroline Lander (CL) Chairperson, Gemma Killick (GK) Secretary, Charlotte Waugh (CW) Trustee

Parents/Carers: (see List of Attendees)

Apologies

Steven Burgess (SB) Treasurer, Kristie Raymond (KR) Trustee, Amy Green (AG) Trustee, Kerrie Shepherd (KS) Trustee

1. **Welcome** – AD welcomed all and thanked everyone for coming and introduced current committee members.
2. **Matters Arising** – Passed on this
3. **Chairpersons Report** - CL
4. **Nursery Managers Report** - AD
5. **Financial Report** - FJ
6. **Resignation of current committee** – AD announced that CL will remain as Chairperson and SB will remain as Treasurer, GK and CW would like to step down
7. **Nomination and election of new committee** – Baley Faulkes-Anstee would like to join the committee, VB nominated and CL seconded. Kara Pitcher will also join, CL nominated and JB seconded. KR, AG & KS will also remain on the committee. Secretary yet to be decided and confirmed.
8. **Next meeting for the new committee** – Wednesday 13th November

Chairpersons report (Trustees Report)

Firstly, may I thank you for attending Ditton Lodge Community Nurseries AGM, 2024.

2024 has marked the first full year of Amanda's return to nursery in the role of nursery manager and Vikki stepping up into the role of Deputy. Susan sadly left us in February after being with us for 10 years and Charlotte, who joined last October, left at Easter. We have had two people join us recently, Susannah joined in February and Sian mid-September, both have settled well into the team and their role.

Every member of the team has continued to show terrific dedication, hard work and an immense loyalty to the nursery and the children. They never lose sight of their common goal; that Ditton Lodge Community Nursery remains a safe and fun place for our children to be. A place full of happiness, laughter, learning and adventure.

Some of the team also gave up much of their free time in the summer holidays to revamp the outside space and to paint and rearrange the inside area, in order to develop new opportunities and experiences for the children to enjoy.

Your nursery needs you! If you have an idea for fundraising, or you'd like to become more involved in nursery life, please let Amanda or myself know. The committee needs volunteers. We rely on a committee in order to operate and it is a requirement of the charities commission and Ofsted. I can assure you that it isn't a huge commitment, maybe a few hours a term but it is important that you are responsive to emails and there to support Amanda and the team.

Without our volunteers, we wouldn't have some of the amazing equipment available for our children to enjoy. We have also seen settings close as they cannot fulfill the committee requirements. Let's not let that happen to our wonderful nursery. Thank you.

Financial Report

We have four bank accounts which consist of a 'Current/General' account, this is our working account, a Reserve, Redundancy and Fundraising account.

We started the year in September 2023 with **£32,136.60** in our current account and finished in August 2024 with **£58,628.66**.

Our total income into the Current Account was **£161,427.35** (last year's total was **£130,455.04**). Our Current Account consists mainly of Early Years Funding, consumable costs and session fees invoiced for hours not covered by funding. Our total expenditure was **£134,935.29** (last year it was **£113,896.59**), with our main outgoings being wages, utilities/service charges and consumables.

In our Reserves account we have a total of **£19,812.42**, of which £6,000.00 is still being ring fenced for rent payments, in here we aim to have 3 months running costs in.

In our Redundancy account we have a total of **£17,175.94**, this will cover all redundancy costs should there be a need.

We keep a very close eye on all of the spending, each year Amanda and I sit down and plan forecasting for the year ahead and this is then visited regularly throughout the year to gauge where we are with our income v expenditure. The end of year accounts has been looked through by our

accountant and within the next few days these will be uploaded to the Charity Commission site where they are published on their website.

Nursery Managers Report

1. Thank you!!

Thank you to everyone on the committee for their support throughout the year. We raised almost £3000 throughout the year in fundraising, which is much more than we have done over recent years. Most fundraising events were organised and carried out in nursery but we did welcome families into the setting for our Christmas Fayre and for our ever-popular pancake toddle.

2. Staffing

I would like to thank my fantastic staff team for all their hard work over the past year. Susan sadly left us in February, just shy of her 10-year anniversary with us. We also lost Charlotte who was with us just a term and a half. We welcomed Susannah on to the team back in February, she is making great progress and will be starting her qualification over the coming weeks. Mid-September we had Sian start with us. She is qualified to a Level 2 and is currently studying for her Level 3. I know I said this last year but I really am so proud of how hard the whole staff team work, always putting the needs of the children first and striving to ensure that every child reaches their full potential.

3. Training

Training and keeping up to date on best practice is so important to us. Our most valuable resource is the adults. All staff attend training, and all mandatory training is kept up to date, this includes paediatric first aid, basic food hygiene and child protection which we all renew every 3 years. In addition to this some members of staff have a designated role for which they are responsible, and they therefore need training to fulfil their responsibilities, this includes child protection, Special needs, equalities and behaviour management.

4. Website/Social Media

Fiona continues to maintain our website, keeping it up to date, which she does brilliantly. Steven Burgess continues to support us if we get into any difficulty not only with our website but with technology in general, so I would also like to give a big thank you to him again this year. We have a public Instagram and Facebook account which Vikki keeps updated for us, she is much better at this than I would be, thank you Vikki.

5. The past year –

To summarise...

- This year we have had our first full year with our new management team of Vikki and myself.
- We continued our popular Stay and Play sessions, where family members can come into nursery to play for an hour.
- We re-introduced our donations list, which was so popular we would run out of space to store everything, everyone was so generous. With the changes in childcare funding since September this has since been replaced with our 'voluntary donation' on every invoice. We used targeted funding money to buy some new climbing equipment.

- In October, we held our annual Open Morning, welcoming, past, present and future families into our nursery, this was a successful event.
- The Christmas Fayre, which we hold alongside the school, was another successful event, we were a bit sceptical with it being held on a Friday afternoon after nursery.
- Every 3 years our rent is reviewed by CCC using a 'Less-than-Best' process, where we have to supply them with our accounts for the previous 3 years and our financial forecast. I am delighted to say that we were again awarded a reduced rent for the next 3 years of £1,600 per annum.
- In April, we saw the first stage of the governments increase in childcare funding for working parents with parents of two-year-olds being able to access 15 hours.
- We incorporated the increase in the National Living Wage into our budgets, with all staff receiving a pay rise.
- Vikki created our new public Facebook page, to help us advertise our wonderful nursery.
- We used fundraising money to pay for the coach for our summer trip to Hollow Trees Farm, which was a great day out.
- Over the summer we used some fundraising money to continue the revamp of our outdoor area, repairing the sandpit, we also painted the nursery room and had a move around of areas.
- Our biggest challenge over the year was recruitment, struggling to find sufficiently qualified candidates to interview.

So, the year to come...

- Will see us continuing to strive to enable your children to reach their full potential during their time with us, whilst maintaining the standards that gave us our outstanding grade.
- Continue to advertise for new children to enable us to remain sustainable, including holding another open morning.
- This September has seen the introduction of 15 hours of government funded childcare for children from the age of nine months. We will monitor this to see how it affects our income over the year.
- We will be supporting Sian through her Level 3 and Susannah through her Level 2 qualification.
- Staff will attend all mandatory training, to ensure that Ditton Lodge Nursery remains a safe and secure environment for your children to be in.
- We will be looking into the possibility of replacing the soft surfacing outside as this is starting to rise up and split, it has been repaired a couple of times already but things do only have a finite lifespan so will be looking into the costs around this.
- We do recognise that finances are a struggle for lots of families and understand that fundraising may not be as effective as it has been in previous years.

As always, the children will remain top of our priority list, and we will continue to support their early education and care, providing a variety of activities and resources to gain their interest.

We cannot do it all by ourselves and do need you to help us and be a part of what goes on for us to continue to achieve our goals. Therefore, I cannot express enough how important it is that we have a committee of people who are willing to give up a little time a few times a year to support their children's nursery and its ability to move forward.

Myself, Fiona and Vikki will support new members in completing the appropriate paperwork to enable you to be part of the committee.

Financial Review

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