

Annual Return Report – 2024-2025

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 8th October 2025 – Nursery Setting

Attended

Nursery Staff: Amanda Darley (AD), Victoria Bourne (VB), Ros Wood (RW), Sian Bradshaw (SB),
Susannah Grimes: (SG), Anna Millgate (AM), Julie Buchanan (JB)

Current Committee: Caroline Lander (CL) Chairperson, Steven Burgess (SB) Treasurer, Kristie
Raymond (KR) Trustee, Amy Greening (AG) Trustee

Parents/Carers: See list of Attendees

Apologies

Baley Faulkes-Anstee (BFA) Trustee, Kerrie Shepherd (KS) Secretary

1. **Welcome** and introductions
AD introduced all staff and current committee
2. **Matters arising**-none
3. **Chairpersons Report**-CL
4. **Nursery Managers Report**-AD
5. **Financial Report**-AD
6. **Resignation of current committee**- BFA and KS have both resigned from the committee.
7. Nomination and election of new committee- AG has agreed to take on the role of secretary.
CL, SB and KR are all happy to continue their roles. Email from Molly Muncaster and Jess
Rose expressing interest in joining committee as both unable to attend meeting. MM
nominated by AD and VB seconded, JR nominated by VB and AM seconded.
8. **Next meeting for new committee**-this takes place immediately after the AGM

Chairperson Report (Trustees Report)

Firstly, may I thank you for attending Ditton Lodge Community Nurseries AGM, 2025.

We have a couple of staff changes to report this year. Fiona, our Administrator, sadly left us in May, after being with us for just over 5 years, and we have seen the welcome return of Ros. Ros has a long-standing association with the nursery, having been the nursery chairperson back in 2008 before joining the staff team as our Administrator in 2009. After leaving nursery in 2015, Ros has spent the last 9 years as an Early Years Teaching Assistant in a local primary school.

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.

We have had work done on the wooden fence around the grass area near the entrance, to secure and reinforce the fence posts that had become loose. Over the summer holidays we also had a tree topped, a bush and Ash tree removed that were growing too close to the building and the big hedge cut back hard.

We have also had various plumbing issues with the staff and children's toilets, which have all been sorted for us and very kindly donated by Richard Greening, one of our parents.

Some of the team also gave up much of their free time over the Easter holidays to build our new raised beds for growing vegetables and again in the summer holidays to rearrange the outside space. Thank you for giving up your time and energy to develop new opportunities and experiences for the children to enjoy.

As a registered charity, the 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, last year we were able to subsidise the cost of the coach for the nursery trip and pay for an entertainer for the summer party, from fundraising money. 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 2024 with **£58,628.66** in our current account and finished in August 2025 with **£71,903.91**.

Our total income into the Current Account was **£163,563.92** (last year's total was **£161,427.35**). Our Current Account consists mainly of Early Years Funding, Voluntary Donations and session fees invoiced for hours not covered by funding. Our total expenditure was **£150,288.67** (last year it was **£134,935.29**), with our main outgoings being wages, utilities/service charges and consumables. The

main reason for the difference in last year and the previous years outgoings are the increase in minimum wage again and the changes to the rate of employers' NICs which increased from 13.8% to 15%, from 6 April 2025 and the threshold at which employers start paying NICs was also reduced from £9,100 to £5,000 per year.

In our Reserves account we have a total of **£31,147.55**, of which £9,200.00 is still being ring fenced for rent payments. This year we have transferred in £11,104.39 as we aim to reach having 3 months running costs here. We are still about £12,000.00 short of that goal.

In our Redundancy account we have a total of **£17,334.90**, this is about £4,300 short of the current amount needed to cover redundancy costs should there be a need.

We keep a very close eye on all of the spending; each year Fiona 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 vs expenditure. This task will now be completed by Vikki and myself. 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 Manager Report

1. Thank you!!

Thank you to everyone on the committee for their support throughout the year. It's been another tough year with staffing changes, minimum wage increases and changes to employer NI contributions. Your support through decision making processes is invaluable, so thank you. This year our fundraising total amounted to just over £1,000, which is a great amount but considering we raised almost £3000 last year through the same or very similar means, it was a little disappointing. 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. We welcomed Sian into nursery back in September last year and she has settled well into the team. As Caroline mentioned, Fiona left in May and Ros joined us at the beginning of September. Ros has settled back into the team and it feels like she had never been away. I know I say this every year but I really am so proud of how hard the 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 in the setting. All staff attend training, and all mandatory training is kept up to date, this includes paediatric first aid and food hygiene which we renew every 3 years and child protection training along with FGM and Prevent training which is updated every 2 years and covered in every staff meeting. 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, these roles include Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCo, ENCo, behaviour management and sustainability Leads. Most of the team have attended 'managing childrens behaviours and interactions' training.

In addition to all the regular training that we attend and keep up to date with. Sian and Susannah have both successfully completed early years qualifications over the past few months. Susannah has completed her Level 2 Diploma and Sian has completed her Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship. So, a massive well done to both of them.

4. Website/Social Media

Vikki has taken over the role of maintaining our website since Fiona left, keeping it up to date, which she is getting the hang of now. 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...

- We continued our popular Stay and Play sessions, where family members can come into nursery to play for an hour.
- We introduced our 'voluntary donation' on every invoice, which has been working well, with the majority of parents making the donation.
- In October, we held our annual Open Morning, welcoming, past, present and future families into our nursery, this was not as successful as previous years and did not result in any new families joining the setting or our waiting list.
- The Christmas Fayre, which we hold alongside the school, was again held on a Friday afternoon after nursery. This was not as successful as previous years as the school had introduced a token system, where parents buy the tokens in advance so most people did not bring cash with them to be able to spend in nursery.
- Just before Christmas we had unscheduled Funding Audit. It was a bit manic getting all the information together, with everything else that goes on at that time of year, but we got through it and just had to make a couple of small changes to the wording around our voluntary charge and add a couple of details onto our invoices. Is always good to know that you are doing things correctly.
- Our biggest achievement this year has been the introduction of our new curriculum, Vikki and I spent a long time taking what we have always done and making it into a formal curriculum.
- We incorporated the increase in the National Living Wage and employer NI contributions into our budgets, with all staff receiving a pay rise too.
- Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding reforms came into effect at the beginning of September this year. We have been working hard in the background to ensure that we are still fully compliant with these legal requirements.
- We used fundraising money to pay for the coach for our summer trip to South Angle Farm and to pay for an entertainer for our end of year party.

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. We will not hold another open morning this year, we will keep a check on our waiting list to see if this will need to be reintroduced at a later date.
- Continue to support new staff in their roles.
- With Vikki and I having taken on all the duties from the admin role, we will be continuing to get to grips with these tasks, to ensure the smooth running of the setting.
- This September has seen the introduction of 30 hours of government funded childcare for children from the age of nine months, an increase from 15 hours per week. This shouldn't have an impact on us with the 2-year-olds as our fees are £1.15 lower than the funding, it will be once those 2-year-olds turn 3 and the funding reduces as this is £1.34 below our hourly rate.
- Staff will attend all mandatory training, to ensure that Ditton Lodge Nursery remains a safe and secure environment for your children to be in.

- In addition to mandatory training, we are also looking to do Cyber Security Training, in response to the recent security breaches in Nursery chains, further training around the new Nutrition guidance for early years, Recovery through relationships, to name a few. We will also be providing all staff with Equalities training.
- Vikki and I will also be getting familiar with the new Ofsted inspection toolkit that comes into play in November 2025, this includes new grading framework.
- We will be looking at streamlining and consolidating some of our Policies and Procedures to make them more user friendly and we will be looking at uploading some of them onto Tapestry so that they are available for parents to access.
- Sustainability is becoming a big focus within education and that starts in early years. Vikki has taken on the role of our Sustainability Lead and will be looking at how we can become more environmentally aware as a setting and how we can pass that passion onto the children to look after their planet.
- The replacement of the soft surfacing outside continues to be the focus for our fundraising 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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