

Westwood Farm Community Pre-School

Registered Charity 294802

Westwood Farm Community Centre, Downs Way, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6SL
www.WestwoodFarmPreSchool.co.uk

Chairperson's Report October 2025

Hi, I am Marie, the Chair of the Committee, I currently have no children at the pre school. No plans for any more either!!) My son has left the pre school and is now in Year 1 at Downsway this September and my daughter attended the pre-school and is now in year 5 at Downsway.

For those of you who have joined us tonight, let me give a little background to how the Preschool is run. The preschool staff team comprises of the most dedicated and hardest working group of wonderful ladies who are managed day-to-day by Clare and then the committee oversee this. The committee currently comprises of a group of former parents and current parents. A committee is a group of people who ensure that an organisation fulfils all its legal obligations and operates efficiently and according to their constitution. The committee is required to have a chair, a treasurer, a secretary and 5-12 committee members. 60% of the committee needs to have a child attending the Preschool for us to be in line with our constitution. As it stands, now that many of our committee's children left and started school this September or last, we will need to find several new parents to join to ensure we are in line with our constitution. As a governing body, we have a shared vision of what Westwood Farm Community Pre-School is about and what it hopes for and works towards. The committee is responsible for the overall management and organisation of the setting which includes such things as HR, payroll, monitoring accounts, purchasing, marketing, and fund-raising events. Over the last few years, the make-up of our committee has changed to all being working parents which means it isn't always possible to do the types of fundraising activities we have had in the past. I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the staff for their efforts with fundraising this year again, the mothers days gifts, mini concerts and summer fund raising bits to name a few were all so great and such a help to the pre school. The staff have always simply taken things on and got stuff done, mucking in with us, a lot of which has been in their own time. The staff always go over and above and this is just one way they show it. I'd also like to thank our volunteer committee who without which we would not be able to function as a preschool. And for all the hard work they have done this year supporting me and staff and myself with other important HR tasks.

The preschool has had another brilliant year and as always the staff have gone above and beyond with activities for the children to participate in. To name but a few we had the police, a nurse and the fire brigade come down to the preschool so the children could see the vehicles and workers and learn about their very important roles in our community. They made their amazing trip to Buckleberry farm and I am always amazed at how they take the whole cohort on these trips and what tremendous leaders they all are to the children at these events making them feel safe and secure to enjoy these new places. They even took lots of children on the bus to a pet shop to see the animals! Such a lovely idea for them and such an enriching experience. And finally they had the amazing zoo lab come in with their exotic

animals for the children to see and hold. For such a small preschool I just think that to do all these brilliant things is just incredible and I couldn't thank the staff more for their efforts with this. It is not small feat at all.

Some of our fantastic fund raising this year includes the Mothers shop, Fathers Day chocolate poem gifts, Christmas shop, raffles, games, sweet cones and our mini Xmas fayre. Over the year, Pre-school organised some exciting learning and enrichment activities for the children. Such as the wonderful all day trip to Beale park, visits from the emergency services for the children to investigate the vehicles and learn about their jobs, local walk to the shops to collect ingredients and make cakes, making biscuits for the elderly group that meets in the club and lovely nature walks in the park. This year staff also revamped the mud kitchen which was completely dismantled and made so much better for the children to enjoy, another huge undertaking.

Some info about admin changes this year to make you all aware of. The minimum wage increased again in April, quite a large percent, which is great for our staff, but has a huge impact on our Pre-school budget. Along with continued struggles with low numbers of children and now the fight against the government initiatives to support preschools and nurseries attached to schools and give preferential assistance financially to these settings, we are up against it at the moment and have been for a while. This is a huge reason why the committee needs as much current parental support as possible. This year we have gained a new member of staff, Catherine, who is an ex primary teacher and has been excellent with the children, we could not be more pleased to have her. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Latasha Peters who has been doing her training with the preschool for some time now and has passed with flying colours! We had no doubt how well she would do and could not be happier that she has chosen to continue to work at and support the preschool. Another fantastic member of the team! We have had our wonderful finance manager drop down to one day a week as she explores other career opportunities. We are very sad to see Nicki less but are very pleased she did not leave and continues to support the preschool hugely with the very important role she plays. Staff hours continue to have to fluctuate every term due to numbers of children enrolled and they all continue to be so understanding of this and the constant changes to their income. We appreciate their loyalty and understanding in this always.

Unfortunately this will be my last meeting as chair. I have been chairperson for the preschool for about 2 years now and it has been an extremely fulfilling and lovely role to hold but it has come to a time where I must step down. My son left two years ago now, which feels like a long time, and I feel it is important that whoever runs the preschool committee is fully invested and closely attached to the running of it. I have learnt so much in my time in this role and the experience it has given in many aspects of HR and other areas are hugely valuable. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who I have worked with during this time. All your support and kindness has been so helpful and I could never have done this without such a great team doing all the hard stuff! A special thanks to Clare and Cheryl who have done so much to keep this preschool going with the committee and have helped me so much throughout the years. Clare is the most wonderful manager and person to work with and I am constantly bowled over by her efforts that always go above and beyond to make this setting so incredible. She has made the role of chairperson so much easier and I am so very grateful to her for doing so many things that she really didn't have to!

Cheryl is such a support to myself and Clare and all the staff and I think without her we would all be lost with the payroll and many other tricky aspects she is so good at. As a team leading this preschool we could not ask for better and I just know that you will only continue to make this setting even better and better as your drive and remarkable ideas and efforts push it further. I wish the preschool and all the staff the absolute best for the future and I am always here if they need me! (I'm sure they won't! They are far better than I am at all this!)

So we are in a bit of a pickle now. We are about to lose nearly the whole committee, leaving one possibly two current parents and one ex parent, our treasurer, on the team. Not only do we desperately need to add more parents to this but in particular we need a new chairperson and possibly a secretary. Unfortunately there is no way we are allowed to continue to keep the preschool open without a correct ratio committee and a chairperson. It is against the rules of the constitution of the preschool to continue without these things. We are a charity run organisation and must stick to the strict rules of the charity commission and that OFSTED hold us to. So with a heavy heart I must say clearly that if this is not rectified quickly the preschool will have to shut on a permanent basis. We are looking for dedicated individuals like yourselves to join our committee and help us achieve our goals. Positive change starts with passionate individuals coming together to work towards a common cause... your children! Your children need fun and education, families need childcare, if we don't have a committee unfortunately there will come a time when we will no longer be able to provide the service we do. The Early Years is so very important to life-long learning and therefore our committee plays a vital role in creating a lasting impact on the lives of the children in our Preschool family.

Being part of a committee can be both enjoyable and rewarding. Each trustee brings with them their own set of skills and ideas that can be used to enhance the group and therefore support and strengthen the Pre-school. In return, there are benefits to yourself in volunteering, making new friends, gaining opportunities to develop new skills in areas such as management, marketing and recruitment. Parental involvement is voluntary and mostly informal, but it is absolutely critical to our future – it is simple, without a committee of trustees, Westwood Farm community Preschool would not exist. Even if you can only manage to add your name in writing but not much physical help that is enough, we need enough parents signed on so then ex parents who want to continue to help can stay. If not we may have many of our current members leaving us and therefore have many spaces to fill. I want to thank all our committee leavers for all of their support over the last year and the years before that, we appreciate the time you have given to your role. Those that are leaving us; Laura, Dave, (Abbey?) a huge thank you for everything, to those staying; Colin, Richard, Tina another huge thank you and I hope you can continue your amazing work.

So, what does joining the committee look like? It's a small commitment, a 1-2 hour meeting 3-5 times a year, plus whatever jobs you volunteer to do, so it can be as time consuming as you make it! As I say you can be a committee member in name mostly and we will just keep you updated with all info so you are aware if ever needing to weigh in on a vote. It's a fun, informal atmosphere at the meetings (as you can see!) which are held here in the bar at the club and always online if you can't make it. You will have an opportunity in shaping and developing the Pre-school. If you are interested in joining the committee, but don't want to

put your name down right now then you can always speak to a member of the current committee or staff tonight, or alternatively you can email or call me for a chat about it. We have an extremely loving and dedicated team of staff who are warm and welcoming, it is a pleasure working with them all and I hope more of you will be able to join our committee to see this first hand too.

Thank you for listening, and I hope it has helped make things a little clearer as to how a Preschool is managed. Hopefully I haven't scared you off and that there are some new parents who would be interested in joining!

Marie Cope

Pre-school Chair

WESTWOOD FARM COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL**Charity Number:294802****ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD****1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025****INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

	31-Mar-25	31-Mar-24
	£	£
<u>INCOME</u>		
WEST BERKS FUNDING	105,310.96	95,502.18
FUND RAISING EVENTS	6,257.59	16,985.58
FEES	17,799.42	8,341.12
UNIFORM SALES	144.00	112.00
OTHER INCOME	608.50	2,220.50
INTEREST	339.48	308.38
TOTAL INCOME BEFORE EXPENSES	130,459.95	123,469.76
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
WAGES	97,092.58	99,668.02
ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS	44.07	40.52
ARTS & CRAFTS	367.08	-
STATIONERY	225.04	529.90
RENT & SERVICES	7,326.00	7,326.00
CLEANING	684.26	859.11
TRAVEL & TRIPS	523.00	827.50
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,759.24	1,953.33
EQUIPMENT & PLAYGROUND	98.23	700.43
IT	320.80	315.20
IT EQUIPMENT	383.04	1,403.11
TRAINING	197.70	1,748.06
FUNDRAISING	336.71	479.93
INSURANCE	1,667.77	1,590.20
REFRESHMENTS/SNACKS	778.15	762.43
PRINTING: UNIFORM/TSHIRTS	627.73	-
PUPIL PREMIUM EQUIPMENT	342.60	870.08
OTHER EXPENSES	963.01	929.51
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	113,737.01	120,003.33
NET INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	16,722.94	3,466.43

WESTWOOD FARM COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL**BALANCE SHEET****as at 31 MARCH 2025**

	31-Mar-25	31-Mar-24
	£	£
<u>ASSETS</u>		
SAVINGS ACCOUNT BALANCE 31/3/25	30,771.97	30,432.48
ORDINARY ACCOUNT BALANCE 31/3/25	32,848.72	31,147.55
LESS OUTSTANDING WAGES	-	(12,831.82)
	32,848.72	18,315.73
 TREASURERS ACCOUNT BALANCE 31 MARCH 2025	1,003.98	991.98
 FEES RECEIVED IN ADVANCE	- 2,520.29	- 4,358.75
	62,104.38	45,381.44
 RETAINED SURPLUS AS AT 1 APRIL 2024	45,381.44	41,915.01
LESS: NET DEFECIT IN PERIOD	16,722.94	3,466.43
 RETAINED SURPLUS AS AT 31 MARCH 2025	62,104.38	45,381.44

Westwood Farm Community Pre-School
AGM 2024-25 – 16 September 2025
Treasurers Report
For the period to 31 March 2025

Hello all, my name is Richard Churchill, and I am the current treasurer for Westwood Farm Community Pre-School and a committee member. I became treasurer in February 2023 as the Pre School was making a deficit of £12k in the year to March 2023 and was looking at a deficit of over £10k in the year to March 2024. I made a personal donation of £5k in the year to March 2024 which with match funding of £5k resulted in a surplus of £3k but the underlying results were of a deficit. This prompted a cost reduction exercise.

The pre-school is a registered charity but its primary funding sources are the funding received from the local authority and fees received from parents. The donations and fundraising income received is usually less than 10% of the total revenue but remains crucial to the Pre-School. It is often around £5k/£6k a year. Including term donations from parents the fundraising received

The accounts for 31 March 2025 have been drafted and I will arrange for a contact to conduct an independent review prior to their filing, and I would like to thank Nicki for her hard work on this.

The Pre-School has been through a rollercoaster financially in the last few years. However I'm pleased to say that 2024/25 has been a good period with the previous cost cutting along with an increase in funding has brought a good surplus for the year which has replenished reserves and put the Pre School on a good secure financial footing. The surplus for 2024/25 is £16,722.94 making the overall surplus as at 31 March 2025 is £62,104.38. We have operated in recent years with a ring fenced £30k to cover a winding up scenario and therefore excluding this sum the surplus is now over £30k for normal operations. There was a deliberate effort to create this surplus as with the increase in wage costs for the current year it was feared the Pre School would operate at a deficit.

The current year is currently operating on a forecast break even basis despite the increase in wage costs for 2025/26 which is great. I attach the forecast for 2025/26 which demonstrates this.

I will be handing over to Tina once the various appointments have been completed

I wish the Pre School well for the future period and am pleased to be leaving it in good financial health