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Registered by Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Registration Number: S000532
Registered Charity No: NIC102114

Annual Report
for
Financial Year
ending
30 June 2024

Noah's Ark Playgroup

Office Bearers and Committee Members 2023/2024

Chairperson: Mrs Kerry Geddis

Secretary: Mrs Laura Hawthorne

Treasurer: Mrs Jocelyn Girvan

Committee Members: Mrs Jenny Hull; Mrs Gail Walker; Mrs Katie Uprichard, Mrs Renette Castles; Mrs Sarah Sergeant, Mrs Rachel Cameron, Mrs Jenny Moore, Mrs Zane Dowey, Ms Melanie Wilson.

Playgroup Leader's Report
for
Noah's Ark Playgroup's Annual Report 2023/2024

Having been associated with Noah's Ark since 1995, when my own children first attended and having served as Playgroup Leader since 2003, I have seen a lot of changes over the years and a lot of children and their families have passed through our doors in that time.

On behalf of all the staff at Noah's Ark, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome each and every one of you to our playgroup family. Our members of staff work tirelessly to provide a safe, clean and positive environment for everyone. That continued hard work ensures that every child and their family has a welcoming and happy place to come each morning. A place, where we want everyone to feel at home and to enjoy the Noah's Ark experience.

As staff, we can provide the learning experience and the loving, safe environment, but our playgroup would not exist without the support of our families. So, thank you to all of you, who, by sending your child to Noah's Ark, supports our playgroup – a playgroup which was established in September 1992, so we are now operating in our 33rd year, which is such an achievement in itself.

Thank you also to the support of our Management Committee. We need a committee for two reasons – first of all, because we are a registered charity and secondly, we are a community playgroup and we must be committee run in order to receive funding from the Trust, which amounts to £6 for every day that we are operational - a total of about £1000 per year.

As you will know, that amount of money does not go far, so as well as our fees, we need to fundraise throughout the year to keep the playgroup open and we do that fundraising, with the help of our Committee. We have another financially challenging year ahead, when costs are continually rising. We always aim to keep our fees as low as we possibly can, but like other non-profit making organisations, we still need to pay our bills. Regular fundraising ensures that we can keep our fees at a minimum.

I would like to thank our committee, for all their help and support over the past year and thank you to everyone, who has agreed to stay on to help us for another year. It can be difficult to get volunteers on board and we are so grateful to all of you. A special thank you to our long standing office bearers, Kerry Geddis and Jocelyn Girvan, who have been a steady support to the playgroup over many years.

I thank our outgoing secretary, Laura Hawthorne, for her help, support and friendship over the past 5 years serving on our committee and the last 3 years as our Playgroup Secretary

and we wish her, Mark and their family all the very best as they move on to ventures new. We wish them all God's richest blessings.

I would like to warmly welcome all new committee members for the incoming year. We wish you all well in your new positions and thank you for coming on board. We hope you find the experience rewarding.

I also want to thank my dear friends and colleagues – Hilary Craig, Ray Coleman and Hannah Gardiner. We have a great team of staff here at Noah's Ark and I thank them for their help and support each day. I know the care and attention that each staff member gives to each and every child in their care every day at this playgroup and how much hard work and dedication we all put into ensuring the success of this playgroup as a whole. A lot of work is out of hours and voluntary and it takes special people to want to do that year after year. Noah's Ark Playgroup is our second home. As members of staff, it is our greatest wish, that when you and your child come to playgroup each day, that you also feel 'at home' with us. We hope that you do.

Elaine Hutton - Playgroup Leader

Secretary's Report for Noah's Ark Playgroup Annual Report 2023/2024

Over the summer of 2023, the playgroup was generously gifted a wide selection of paper, card and office supplies from Mr John Rodgers, who is a past parent.

The playgroup year started off with staff returning for 2 days of training & set up on Wednesday 30 & Thursday 31 August. Induction visits for the new children took place on Friday 1 September.

Our new term started on Monday 4 September with 16 children on our register. Our members of staff were Playgroup Leader - Elaine Hutton, Deputy Playgroup Leader - Hilary Craig, Playgroup Assistant - Ray Coleman and Relief Assistant - Hannah Gardiner.

All 4 staff members completed Anaphylaxis Awareness and Epi-Pen Training.

During the month of October, parents received a Settling-In Report for their child, keeping them informed of how well their child was progressing, after their first month at the playgroup.

All staff completed Diabetic Awareness training. Elaine and Ray also updated their Food Safety in Catering certificates.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 17 October at 8pm at the playgroup. 11 people attended and a committee of 12 people was duly elected: Chairperson: Kerry Geddis; Treasurer: Jocelyn Girvan; Secretary: Laura Hawthorne; Committee Members: Sarah Sergeant, Renette Castles, Jenny Hull, Katie Uprichard, Gail Walker, Jenny Moore, Zane Dowey, Melanie Wilson and Rachel Cameron. After the short business part of the evening, a light supper was served.

The playgroup gratefully received a donation of pre-loved toys from the Hawthorne family.

Annual Reports for 2022/2023 were printed and copies left in the hallway for parents or visitors to take.

The playgroup was closed from Monday 30 October – Friday 3 November inclusive for the half-term break.

The first Monitoring Report from the Playgroup Leader was emailed to the Committee on 6 November.

It was decided that our Christmas fundraisers would involve selling Fireside Quiz sheets; organising a Marks & Spencer Christmas Hamper Raffle; holding a sponsored Christmas

Jumper Week; as well as selling Playgroup Calendars to help raise money for playgroup funds. It was agreed that we would also purchase engraved pens and distribute them to parents to sell in the spring term. As in previous years, staff made a Wish List of sundry items, required for the playgroup, which parents could buy in lieu of staff Christmas presents. Our committee member Zane Dowey kindly offered to make Reindeer Food and hot chocolate cones for us to sell for playgroup funds.

The playgroup gratefully received the gift of a mobile phone from Relief Staff member, Hannah Gardiner. Our old mobile had stopped receiving updates and we could not afford to purchase one, so we were delighted to be offered an updated phone for our use.

Our December newsletter was sponsored by the McCullough family.

During the first week of December, the playgroup children posted their letters to Santa and there was great excitement as we put up the Christmas tree and decorated the playgroup for Christmas. A post box was also left in the hallway for children to post cards to their friends.

Parents received their child's observations, which were sent home for them to read, as well as a short progress report on their child's first term.

Every Christmas, since the playgroup opened in 1992, we have been delivering hampers of groceries to local pensioners. A total of 18 bags of groceries, donated by parents and staff, were delivered by the playgroup staff, on behalf of the children, to the local pensioners early December. A Christmas card, handmade in the playgroup by each child, was included in the hamper of food.

In return, we received donations from some of the pensioners for our playgroup funds, with thanks to Mrs Rutherford, Mr King and Mr Steen.

The term finished with a Christmas Party Week, at the end of which, each child received a Christmas gift and party box. Each child also received 2 selection boxes - one donated by the Dowey family and the other donated by Waringstown LOL 83. The party food was kindly provided by the staff and committee and a great time was had by all.

Our last day of term was Wednesday 20 December. We had 23 children on our register.

Our fundraising in December raised the following amounts of money for playgroup funds:

- Marks & Spencer Christmas Hamper Raffle - £221
- Christmas Fireside Quiz Sheets - £148
- Christmas Jumper Week- £33
- Calendars - £165
- Donations from pensioners - £60
- Reindeer food and Hot Chocolate cones - £82
- Christmas donations for new outdoor toys - £230 (We later purchased a new JCB dumper.)

We also received a donation of £100 from Mr. & Mrs. Quigg, who give money to charity each year, instead of sending Christmas cards. We are grateful that they chose our playgroup this year.

Our sincere thanks to the committee for donating the hamper and food items for our Hamper Raffle. Thank you also to those who donated prize items for the Fireside Quiz i.e. Mr Sean Hughes, from Foyduff Service Station in Middletown, for donating a luxury box of sweets; The Mace, Waringstown, for donating a food voucher; and Mrs Alex Keegan from AK Hair Design, Waringstown, for donating a hair voucher. Thank you to everyone who sold quiz sheets or raffle squares for us. Your help and support was greatly appreciated.

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Our new term commenced on Thursday 4 January 2024 with 28 children on our register.

Our January newsletter was sponsored by Mr Stephen Girvan from Valley Engineering Services.

The annual grant from the Trust was received and this amounted to £1074.

A photographer from CS Moments in Ballymena came to the playgroup on Tuesday 23 January to take individual professional photos of each child. A total of £134 was raised for playgroup funds.

The Playgroup Leader's second Monitoring Report was emailed to the Committee on 31 January 2023.

Fundraising for this term would be playgroup photographs; selling printed pens and an Easter Hamper Raffle. It was also agreed that we would hold our usual summer term 20p/smartie tube fundraiser and we discussed having a sponsored 'Cycle/Dance with Teddy' fundraising event at the end of the year, during our Teddy Bears' Picnic Week.

Our February newsletter was sponsored by the Uprichard family.

The annual update of our Fire Risk Assessment for the playgroup was carried out.

Also this month, the Annual Monitoring Report for the Charity Commission was completed and submitted.

5 Noah's Ark printed pens were distributed to each family to sell, raising a total of £350 for playgroup funds.

The playgroup was closed from 12 – 16 February inclusive for the half term break.

Staff members, Elaine and Ray, completed Insulin Pump Training.

The playgroup gratefully received donations of pre-loved toys from the Banks and Dowey families.

Our March newsletter was sponsored by the Jackson Family.

In celebration of World Book Day at the start of March, a book token was distributed to each child and children were invited to bring along their favourite book and dress up if they wish.

The playgroup closed on Monday 18 March for St Patrick's Day.

Staff members, Hilary and Hannah, completed their Insulin Pump Training. Hilary also updated her Food Safety in Catering certificate.

We raffled an Easter Hamper, which was made up of donations from the staff and committee and raised £384 for playgroup funds. Our grateful thanks are extended to everyone who sourced or donated items, which included a Family Pass for Streamvale Farm, a voucher for the Fat Gherkin in Moira, a large Luxury Lindt Easter Egg, a varied selection of Easter crafts, treats, drinks, Easter eggs and sweets.

Children's observations for the term were sent home again to parents at the end of March.

In the last week of term, the Easter Bunny paid his annual visit to the playgroup and caused great excitement by leaving the children a crème egg in the Easter baskets they had made. We thank Ray Coleman for donating the eggs for the children.

We sold hand knit 'crème egg' cover characters, kindly donated by Mrs Barbara Simpson and Mrs Lydia Banks, and raised £57.80 for playgroup funds.

Our term finished on Wednesday 27 March with 32 children on our register

After 10 days of closure over Easter, the summer term commenced on Thursday 11 April 2024.

The playgroup received a donation of A3 paper from the Danske Bank in Armagh, with grateful thanks to their staff member, Leanne Harkness, for arranging this.

Committee Members were emailed their third Monitoring Report from the Playgroup Leader on 11 April.

Due to the increase in minimum wages and the soaring cost of general expenses over the past year, it was agreed that unfortunately it was necessary to increase fees for the

remaining 2 months of the year by £1 per session, then a further £1 per session increase would be implemented for the 2024/2025 year. The annual update of policies was also agreed. It must be said, that this is the first time, in over 21 years, that fees have been increased within a playgroup year.

The Trust Annual Inspection took place on Tuesday 16 April. This year's Inspection Area was "Quality of Staffing, Management and Leadership". It was a very positive inspection. All went well and credit must be given to the continued dedication and hard work of the staff. A copy of the Playgroup's current Inspection Report is always available in the hallway for parents' perusal.

At the end of April, Mr Stephen Girvan from Valley Engineering Services kindly carried out our annual PAT testing free of charge, with our grateful thanks to him.

We received a donation of colouring pens and pencils from Mrs Susan Rodgers. We also received donations of paper handtowels from the Patience, Wright and Irwin families and a donation of a pre-loved ride-on bus for outdoor play from the Uprichard family.

The playgroup was closed on Monday 6 May for the May Day bank holiday.

Our Relief Staff member, Hannah Gardiner, completed the Belfast Marathon in 3 hrs 56 mins and the children were delighted, when she brought her medal into Noah's Ark to show them all.

Questionnaires were distributed to families, along with the May newsletters, asking parents to evaluate our service. Feedback was positive and encouraging for the staff.

Open Days were held on 3 days from Monday 13 – Wednesday 15 May inclusive.

The playgroup was closed again on Monday 27 May for the Spring Bank Holiday.

The final Monitoring Report for the year was emailed to the committee on 10 June.

During the last week of term, as part of our Teddy Bears' Picnic Party Week, we held a 'Sing and Danceathon With Teddy' fundraiser, raising the magnificent total of £1019 for playgroup funds. Each child received their own medal for every day that they took part.

At the end of June, parents received their child's End of Year Work Folder and Booklet, which is a selection of each child's work undertaken during their time at Noah's Ark. A progress report and complete set of observations were also included in their booklet. Every child received a party bag and the gift of a book, as a reminder of their time at Noah's Ark.

Our playgroup year ended on Thursday 27 June with 33 children on our register.

Our remaining fundraising totals for the year were as follows:

- Newsletter Sponsorship for the year raised £410
- Loose change collected throughout the year in our charity box at NISA Petrol Station totalled £96
- Sale of new uniforms amounted to £484
- Sale of pre-loved uniforms amounted to £180
- 20p fundraiser raised £266.80
- Sale of handknit children's woolly hats raised £90
- Sale of wooden bookmarks raised £26
- Donations given throughout the year amounted to £237, with grateful thanks to the Uprichard family, the Patience family, the Moore family, the Cameron family, the McClimond family, the Higgins family and the Dowey family.

Our sincere thanks also go to all those parents, staff and committee members, who donated money, resources, cleaning products, amazon vouchers, printing paper, as well as craft and art materials during the year.

The playgroup staff and committee are very grateful for all the donations and fundraising support received throughout the year and they thank everyone involved.

And that concludes the Secretary's Report for the year ending 30 June 2024.

Laura Hawthorne – Playgroup Secretary

Noah's Ark Playgroup
Charity no: NIC102114
Treasurer's Report for Financial Year
Ending 30 June 2024

Noah's Ark Playgroup is a non-profit making registered charity. All money received by Noah's Ark goes back into the running and the upkeep of the playgroup. Because we are committee run and have a written constitution, we receive, from the Trust, a small grant of only £6 for each day that we are open (which amounts to approximately £1000 each year). We receive no funding from any other official body.

However, as you can imagine, this grant alone would not sustain us, so, along with income from the fees we receive from parents, we also supplement our income during the year with fundraising. We are delighted to report that our fundraising total for 2023/2024 was up £1400 from the previous financial year - a rise of 47%.

The number of children attending was good right from the start of the year and fee income for 2023/2024 was up by 27% from the previous financial period.

Parents and local businesses have also kindly supported us during the year with monthly newsletter sponsorship and donations, of which, we are always very grateful.

Our total income for the financial year ending 30 June 2024 was **£46,914.40**

This consisted of the following:

Fees received from parents - **£40,841.00**

Milk refund- **£385.80**

Fundraising (including the sale of uniforms) - **£4,376.60**

Annual Trust Grant - **£1,074.00**

Donations - **£237.00**

Our total expenditure for year ending 30 June 2024 was **£45,649.55**

This consisted of the following:

Staff costs (4 staff members) which includes salaries, pensions and payments to Inland Revenue - **£37,537.24**

Premises (including maintenance, rent & telephone costs) - **£4,985.25**

Milk - **£480.00**

Insurance - **£572.64**

Consumables - **£781.51**

Fundraising costs, including purchase of uniforms - **£485.24**

Early Years' Membership subscription - **£91.00**

Equipment - **£114.93**

Other expenses (which include groceries, cleaning materials, bank charges, postage costs, Christmas & end of year gifts for children, first aid supplies, purchase of stationery i.e. sessional register and accounts book) - **£601.74**

It must be noted that we reduced our outgoings for the year with staff working voluntarily during the month of September. Staff also generously donated sundry items throughout the year such as groceries, cleaning materials and craft items.

The profit of income over expenditure for the year was **£1,264.85**

Our total assets at the end of the financial year were listed as **£7,386.55**

And this consisted of:

Equipment valued at - **£241.59**

Cash in the bank - **£7,121.76**

And petty cash in hand - **£23.20**

Our playgroup accounts are checked and independently verified each year and we thank Mrs Carol McAlister for doing this for us.

A copy of our audited accounts is available for perusal.

Jocelyn Girvan - Playgroup Treasurer

Noah's Ark Playgroup NIC102114**Income and Expenditure Account****For Year Ending 30 June 2024**

Income		2024		2023
Fees received from parents	£	40,841.00	£	31,996.00
Milk Refund	£	385.80	£	424.23
Fundraising	£	4,376.60	£	2,967.47
Grants	£	1,074.00	£	1,050.00
Donations	£	237.00	£	180.00
NI Cancer Fund for Children *			£	195.00
(*donated by parents)				
		£46,914.40	£	36,812.70

Expenditure		2024		2023
Salaries (inc. NICS/PAYE/Pension)	£	37,537.24	£	37,106.04
Premises (rent, maintenance & phone)	£	4,985.25	£	4,307.40
Milk	£	480.00	£	383.67
Insurance	£	572.64	£	519.38
Consumables	£	781.51	£	463.90
Fundraising (incl purchase of uniforms)	£	485.24	£	535.33
Equipment bought during year	£	114.93	£	104.50
Membership Subscriptions	£	91.00	£	87.00
Other Expenses	£	601.74	£	1,451.03
(see page 4 attached for breakdown)				
		£45,649.55	£	44,958.25

Profit/Deficit of				
Income over Expenditure	£	1,264.85	-£	8,145.55