



Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Monday 17th January 2022 @ 6.00pm

Attended by: Jayne Russell, Chair, Lindsay Roberts, Trustee, Hannah Neal, Trustee, Jo Galloway, Manager, Zoe Bedford Cooper, Business Manager and Kat Woodcock, Deputy Manager, Mary Drewett, Pre-School Assistant (Senco), Sadie Whiteley, Preschool assistant, Minty Mead, parent

Apologise: Marie Donoghue

By zoom

MINUTES

1. **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW BY JAYNE RUSSELL**

Thank you for joining us tonight via zoom and supporting Goudhurst Village Pre-school, which is now enjoying its 8th year and is continuing on a path to success, despite many challenges.

Over the past year the pre-school has continued to expand and grow, which given the past two years of pandemic disruption is an incredible achievement, we currently have 47 children on role that enjoy the many and varied activities each week. We are incredibly fortunate to have a fantastic team of staff who continue to dedicate their expertise to the children. We are incredibly grateful to all the staff for their dedication in such a difficult year and would like to thank them wholeheartedly for everything that they do, particularly Jo, who leads the team weekly in offering such a fantastic setting for the children of the village and wider community to enjoy. Behind the scenes Jo juggles changing sessions daily, whilst keeping the pre-school moving forward and this should be recognised and commended. We are already filling up for September 2022 and beyond and the popularity of the setting can only be attributed to the hard work of Jo and all the staff, Kat, Mary, Dee, Emily and Sadie and of course our wonderful business manager Zoe who works incredibly hard behind the scenes. A huge thanks you to you all.

We have worked very hard over the last year to financially keep the pre-school afloat, in an era where many local pre-schools are closing their doors due to the pandemic and the differential between KCC funding and pre-school hourly rates, along with the government increase in minimum wages we feel we have done very well and are proud of our achievements.

The Woodland (Forest Area) and Garden Area that was completed in 2018 to promote outdoor play and wellbeing and for the whole of last year we were unable to use the woodland facility as we sought a licence from the Diocese. This was particularly bad timing given the pandemic and need for promoting good mental health but, thankfully this has now been agreed and as of this week we can start using the area again which has been welcomed with great excitement. We are very lucky to be able to rent the beautiful

setting of the Church Rooms and to have such a wonderful outdoor space at our disposal. We would like to thank the Church Room committee for their help with rent payments during the lockdown which helped greatly.

During the year 2020-21 we have continued to fund raise and we would like to thank all our parents for their support of our Christmas raffle and scavenger hunt. We continue to invest in resources and equipment, whilst being mindful of financial sustainability for the future. We were fortunate to receive a grant to help and invest in training and equipment due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

All of our staff undergo continual training in order to improve the overall knowledge and expertise within setting. Due to our increasing popularity, we welcomed Sadie Whiteley to our team as of September 2021 who recently gained her level 3, and she is a great asset to an already fantastic team. We are currently advertising for an apprentice. The pre-school is frequently praised by outside visitors such as Kent County Council and external training providers and has a great reputation with the wider Kent community. We also work with outside agencies such as specialist teachers.

We welcomed Hannah Neal as Trustee in 2021 to join Lindsay Roberts, Marie Donoghue and myself. Along with our Business Manager, Zoe Bedford Cooper the preschool is in good hands for continuing a successful path into the future.

We have done our best to keep in good financial shape and you can view all our accounts on the charities commission. Although last year we recorded a loss of £7,860, the last year has been particularly challenging, and we were forced to eat into our reserves. We are working hard to replace these reserves this year and it is looking much healthier forecasting into the future.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to break even without our fundraising efforts. We will continue to raise money through our successful Easter fundraisers and Christmas events, to enhance the children's pre-school experience.

A big thank you should be extended to Travis Willis who offered his time and expertise to Audit our accounts for the Charities Commission again this year.

Parents are now booking their children's places with us over a year or more in advance, and this is down to the caring nature and dedication of all involved. Against the unfortunate backdrop of other Kentish settings being forced to close, in a climate of depleted early years funding that does not match the settings hourly rate, a national pandemic and more rigorous Ofsted inspections we remain strong for our community. We extend our thanks to the local community, our parents and carers, for supporting us on this journey and again huge thanks to our staff.

2. UPDATE OF PAST SUCCESSES AND FUTURE PLANS BY JO GALLOWAY

I would like to thank all of the staff for providing a wonderful, happy, safe and caring environment for your children.

We have all faced challenges brought on by the pandemic, but this has not affected the way in which the children have been during their time in the setting.

We continue to encourage the children to become independent and confident, providing activities that will bring excitement and encouragement to learn.

Changes to the EYFS came into effect in September 2021, meaning that we have changed the way we record the children's development, focusing more on the children who require help, whether it is for Speech and Language needs, or more additional

needs. In this respect we have been and are working more with outside agencies, which include, Health Visitors, Speech and Language, Senif Practitioners and Specialist Teachers. We are continuing to see high levels of demand for places and are already full for morning sessions for this coming September and bookings are being taken for 2023. We aim to start play visits and consultations again in the next term and hopefully begin to hold events to bring us altogether again. I would like to finish, by thanking the Trustees and parents for your continued support of Goudhurst Village Pre-school.

3. FINANCES BY ZOE BEDFORD-COOPER

Goudhurst Village Pre-school's Financial Summary Hello I am the pre-school's business manager, my role for the pre-school is to manage outgoing and incoming invoices, manage the financial accounts along with our chair Jayne Russell, payroll for the staff, GDPR and funding for 2 year olds, 3 and 4 year olds and the 30 hour funding. The Pre-school is financially accountable to the charity commission, as we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. At the end of each financial year, we submit our accounts to the charities commission which are available to be viewed by the public. We have to have our accounts checked by an accountant and very kindly Travis Willis has given his time for free to complete the Independent Examination of the accounts and given further advice on financial issues as the pre-school continues to grow. We are very thankful to Travis for his support for the last few years! For the financial year 2020-2021 we showed a loss of just under £8000. We bought many items that the pre-school needed. Some of these items were two second-hand iPads and two new wooden tables. We also were granted a Contain Outbreak Management Fund due to COVID from the Kent County Council. We were awarded £2500 which we have to spend on items that will help our children and staff with changes that have been caused due to Covid, and will also help us with training for our staff and any cover that is needed if staff have to be off due to COVID. So far we have ordered some story bags which are a brilliant, sensory way to engage children with a story on their own terms. By offering a collection of different materials, resources, and activities that they can choose from on their own, children get to drive their own learning! We have also signed up for training for our staff which includes mental health. Our forecast for this financial year 2021/2022 so far is showing a profit of £6000. The numbers of children attending the pre-school are fantastic, but again due to Covid we haven't been able to do many of our annual fundraising activities. The fundraising we have managed in the last year is our Christmas raffle which raised over £400 and our Scavenger hunt (last April) which raised just over £1600! We are very grateful to all the local companies who donated prizes and to all the families who brought raffle tickets and sponsored the children in the scavenger hunt. This year we have been hit by COVID still and as of yet are unsure of what fundraising we can do over the next academic year. As the pre-school continues to grow our contingency grows to cover staff redundancy if any were to occur, so we keep provision for such circumstances in our deposit account. Our fees have stayed the same (£5.50 per hour) since September 2020. But as a result of a rise in minimum wage for our staff, inflation and to keep in line with other childcare providers in the area we have made the decision to raise our fees from the summer Term to £5.75. We hope parents are understanding of this small increase. We openly encourage parents to assist the pre-school in their day to day

activities by paying a voluntary contribution. This will be set out in a separate invoice to your session invoice. This voluntary contribution helps pay for arts, crafts and other additional activities which benefit every child in the setting. The voluntary contribution we have received so far from September 2021 is just over £600. Over the last year the amount received for voluntary contributions has risen and it is important that we thank you for this as it makes a huge difference to the activities we can offer on a weekly basis. Furthermore, we have implemented the new invoice software from September meaning that we no longer print off invoices for parents which has saved a lot of paper therefore helping the environment as well as cutting costs. We continue to use payment contracts to help spread the cost of your childcare. We understand that large amounts can be difficult to pay off in one lump sum. Thank you to those who have adhered to the terms in their individual payment contracts, and as always please let me know if you would like to set up a payment contract or talk about your existing one. We will continue to offer a maximum of 10 places for 30-hour funding, this is due to the government not matching our hourly fee and balancing the needs of parents with the financial stability of the pre-school. Although COVID is still very much in our lives we hope that the pre-school will still manage to go from strength to strength. We also hope we will be able to arrange more fundraisers as restrictions hopefully ease. Overall, we are in a stable position, especially compared to many other pre-schools struggling within this county. We have made a successful pre-school and look forward to continuing on that path in the future. Thank you again for all your help and support

4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was reiterated how amazing it was that everyone has pulled together in the last year and that the pre-school has survived and continues to grow in popularity despite the pandemic.