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Minutes

Tuesday 17th October 2023 @ 8pm

Document	Minutes of AGM meeting
Location	Church Lench Village Hall
Date	Monday 17 th October 2023
Time	8.00pm
Attendees	Paula Lloyd (Chair, PL), Jo Beasley (Secretary, JB), Carly O'Connor (Manager CC) Sue Perkins (SP), Suzanne Thomas (ST), Laura Phipps (LP), Derek Ferguson (DF), Celia Hall (CH), Steph Higham-Lloyd (SHL), Amy Sinclair (AS), Nicola Masters (NM), Nicky Coote (NC), Liz Ferguson (LF), Millie Benbow (MB), Jo Benbow (JBw)
Apologises	Kirsten Protherough
Minute taker	Jo Beasley (JB)

Meeting start 8:00pm

1. Apologises

- Kirsten Protherough

2. Welcome

- Thank you to all attendees. Small change to the agenda, inclusion of election of affiliate members (point 7), A.O.B (point 10)

3. Minutes from last AGM

- Former committee member upset by comments mentioned at last AGM, apologises sent to Simon Newton and amendment will be made by JB to rectify comment (letter received from Ofsted regarding a EY2 applicant whose suitability could not be determined)
- Amendment of outgoing resignations, Simon Newton to be added to list.
- Query from LF re minutes from last AGM not being distributed, CoC made attendees aware that copies were available to be obtained from preschool prior to the AGM.
- Minutes not signed off due to attendees not being seeing them prior to the AGM.

4. Chairpersons report

- Attached (Doc 1)

5. Managers' Report

- Attached (Doc 2)

6. Treasurers report

- Attached (Doc 3)
- Further to the attached report, AP will request a Charity Commission audit after receiving concerns from incoming members over finances.
- LF queried errors on the Receipts and Payments accounts- AP admitted not giving her full attention to the role and therefore some parts of the report may be classified incorrectly.
- ST queried where were all the receipts going? Were they going to the accountants rather than AP. ST also questioned what the debtors amount alluded to but the committee were not aware of a debt of £743 so AP confirmed it could be a misclassification which needs checking.
- CH queried why the VH rent was lower LY compared to LY.
- DF queried if there is expected to be a similar financial loss expected TY and also asked how many children are currently on role plus their days/hours, CoC explained that due to significant changes in funding it is not possible to predict an end of term figure as things change term by term but that due to an increase in children on role and that preschool was unlikely to incur recruitment or agency fees that by the end of the school year preschool should be in a stronger financial position.
- Report not signed off- MB suggested that it is sent back to the accountant to be reviewed.

7. Election of affiliate members

- PL offered the chance for the potential affiliate members to introduce themselves and explain why they would like to become members.
- Suzanne Thomas (nominated by JB)
- Sue Perkins (nominated by AP)
- Liz Ferguson (nominated by PL)

8. Outgoing committee resignations

- Paula Lloyd, Alexis Papandreou, Jo Beasley, Kirsten Protherough, Jess Arthurs Pitts resigned prior to AGM.

9. Election of new members

- Prior to election Nicky Cootes queried what the repercussions could be for the new committee if missing information/documents appear,
- MB confirmed that incoming committee roles would be decided after the meeting.
- Nicola Masters (LF proposed, seconded JBw)
- Millie Benbow (LF proposed, seconded NM)

- Liz Ferguson (MB proposed, seconded NM)
- Amy Sinclair (MB proposed, seconded NC)
- Laura Phipps (NM proposed, seconded ST)
- Suzanne Thomas (LF proposed, seconded LP)
- Steph Higham-Lloyd (MB proposed, seconded NM)

10.AOB

- Although AOB was added as point 10, LF wanted to ask her questions prior to the election of new members so we could draw a line in the sand, a copy of her statement is attached (Doc 4)
- The responses to LF questions are on the attached document (in bold to highlight the response)
- MB queried handover- PL confirmed CoC should have all the required information, but any other information may be obtained from old committee in a future meeting.

Meeting closed 20:49

Document 1

Chairpersons Report- AGM 17th October 2023

We started the academic year as an inadequate setting following the Ofsted visit at the end of the last academy year. We also received the managers notice advising she didn't intend to return following the end of her maternity leave in October. We wished her all the best.

The position of manager was duly advertised, and following a recruitment process we were delighted to offer the position to our current manager who came with a wealth of knowledge and experience being a qualified teacher, previous business owner and having experience on various committees and having worked at charity settings. She had also just gained a good rating at her current setting who had also been through a similar Ofsted inspection as us.

The staff make up continued to change as the effects of covid coupled with the Ofsted visit and changes in the EYFS framework resulted in the setting receiving notice from existing members of staff. Bank staff and agency staff were used to allow ratios to be met.

With children's numbers low as a result of the current Ofsted rating, low birth rates within the immediate area and covid this resulted in not all members of staff needing to be replaced. The recruitment process proved difficult as people didn't want to leave existing employment even though many local settings were closing, no one appeared to want to 'jump ship'! Recruitment had to result in agency applications which resulted in a successful candidate being employed initial as a level 3 member of staff with the view to becoming deputy manager and SENCO as the current deputy had also advised she would be leaving us but didn't hand her notice in until we had recruited which we were very grateful for.

We would like to thank all our staff, previous and existing, for their dedication over their period of employment.

The low numbers of children resulted in short falls in income and due to the Ofsted rating we were unable to take on any new children other than children we had taken enquiries from. On a positive note, and after liaising with Worcestershire County Council they allowed us to keep our funding income as they looked at it on an individual basis rather than just on the downgrading of the settings rating. We were extremely grateful for this as if the funding had been stopped it is most likely the setting would have closed.

The manager worked tirelessly to ensure we were ready for re-inspection by Ofsted which we knew would take place prior to the Christmas holidays. All training was updated to include further safeguarding training. Ofsted did re-inspect and we were pleased to gain the rating GOOD which any setting would be glad to receive due to the change in rating levels.

Following the re-inspection this allowed us to start to advertise again and grow. Slowly but steadily, we have been able to do so.

As numbers steadily increased, we recruited a flexible part time member of staff who fitted into the existing staff makeup incredibly. The staff team is highly thought of by the children and parents. The numbers are whilst overall in line with what we require at the setting due to lots of parents still working from home and the current economic climate this has resulted in parents only requiring part time hours rather than full days/weeks. This means that either current children need to increase their hours, or we need to increase numbers to take this into account. Until this happens there is likely to be a shortfall in the income.

The usual fundraising of events and raffles have not been possible as after careful liaising with the manager it was deemed that parents were, as we all are, struggling with the current economic pressures. Fundraising took a different direction by way of applying for grants. A special thank you to a parent who secured a grant from her employer.

We would like to thank the VH committee for their support particularly the chair, secretary and treasurer who have taken their time to sit down with us to understand our requirements of a pack away setting. They were surprised at the regulations which we had to adhere to and were also helpful in explaining that they have looked at the occupants of the local villages for their own reasons and it is the case that the villages are no longer made up of families with preschool/school age children, it is generally made up of older occupants. They sympathised with our struggle. This made it clear that our advertising needed to focus on families outside the villages. We cannot rely on parents waiting to use the setting simply to try and ensure place at Church Lench First School.

There must be a huge thank you said to the local community who supported us with making donations of toys and equipment. To our families who support us each and every day by using our setting. To the local schools with whom we have contact to support our children with their school transitions.

Finally, thank you to the staff and committee without whom we would not be able to operate. Particularly to our manager who has not only worked tirelessly to ensure our setting was rate as GOOD but also for her organisational skills which many don't see. She has ensured that compliance is adhered to, so all information is stored and contained within the setting, this will ensure a smooth transition for the incoming committee as all documentation, paperwork and logins are kept safely secured here at the VH.

Document 2

Managers' Report- TLPS AGM 17th October 2023

Good evening,

I was appointed manager of the preschool in September 2022 and when the year began there were seven children on roll, with a total of five staff members, one working full time and the rest part time. Throughout the autumn term the team and the setting were heavily supported by the committee, and we continued to work on improvements identified in the previous Ofsted report, and update training for staff members.

During November three part time members of staff moved on from the preschool and we successfully recruited Jennica into the role of childcare practitioner. Ofsted returned for a follow up inspection in early December, which I am pleased to say went very well and the preschool was graded with a strong good grade. The inspector praised the improvements made by the committee and staff team and was very complimentary of the setting and how happy the children are. I would like to say thank you and congratulations to the staff team, committee members and parents for their support and commitment to the setting. Also, thanks to the village hall committee who made improvements to the hall to ensure we were compliant in safeguarding.

As the autumn term came to a close the deputy manager left to concentrate on family matters, we wish her well. After a successful induction period Jennica was successfully promoted to the role of deputy manager.

We began the spring term and after a successful advertising campaign and weekly stay and play sessions the numbers of children on role started to increase.

I would like to thank Hannah who supported and worked with us as a bank member of staff in the spring term, until moving on to a more permanent role elsewhere. We wish her every success for the future.

Recruitment of another member of staff was a challenge due to the reduction of applicants in the childcare sector overall, but we were fortunate enough to employ Cristina in March as childcare practitioner. This allowed us to take on more children as the summer term began and we settled into a happy, steady routine. We continued to advertise on social media and took part in a forest school day with Church Lench First School at Yeates Community Orchard. This ensured a good number of applications was made for September 2023.

As the summer drew to a close, we hosted a lovely sports day which was supported by Alex from SupaStrikers, who we thank for a fantastic year of monthly sports sessions at preschool. Also, thanks to Charlie for live music for the little ones, who has been visiting since the spring term. The children absolutely love her live music sessions.

We were fortunate enough last year to be awarded two charitable grants, providing vital funds for preschool. A huge thanks to the parents and committee members for

taking the time to apply for these on our behalf. Without these vital funds we would not be able to continue to provide such great resources and experiences for children.

A thank you to MiQuill catering this year and also to the VH committee, who have been supportive and ensured the hall stays a suitable venue for the preschool.

We ended the year with a lovely summer picnic event which was well attended and I give a final thanks to the parents and carers and their beautiful children who make the preschool the happy and fun place tat it is. We ended the academic year in July 2023 with three staff members and 17 children on role. Three of these left to go to school, one of which went to Church Lench First School.

Document 3

TREASURER'S REPORT

For Annual General Meeting on 17th October 2023

Academic / Financial Year ended 31st August 2023

The Accounts

The accounts have been prepared by Fruition Accountancy and are presented to be approved by the Committee. See attachment (PDF sent alongside minutes)

Principal income sources

Our principal income sources remain our fees from the Government and parents/carers. Additional income is from fundraising, donations and grants.

Principal expenditure

Our staff costs (combining salaries, HMRC employer contributions and employer pension contributions (NEST)) are our largest operating cost followed by rent for the village hall and insurance. Our next significant costs are consumables and new equipment.

Investment

We have no long-term investments. Our cash reserves are held in two Lloyds' deposit accounts.

Key figures: 2022/3

Treasurer's account balance:	£1,957.88
Reserve account balance (09.08.23):	£30,156.04
Combined account balances:	£32,113.92
Income over expenditure during 2022/23:	£-18,457
Adjustment for internal transfer	£0

Review of 2022/3

In terms of 2022/3, the key highlights are as follows:

- Combined account balances of £39,279.51.
- Expenditure exceeded income by £18,457. Therefore, the preschool is currently operating at a large loss.
- Low income was driven by the lower number of students on role, an ongoing effect post pandemic as well as lower birth rates in the UK since 2019 (ONS statistics. See appendix a).
- Rent / health / insurance expenditure of £5,564 (2021/22 £6,760). This is lower than normal year on year comparisons as the VH committee continue to work closely in accommodating our needs.

- Consumables spend of £4,395 (2021/22 £400): This increase reflects items last year being categorised as stationary. As you can see, the stationary spend this year is £0.
- New equipment spend was £1,000 (2021/22: £0). This is an agency fee for staff and has been misclassified.
- Accountants' fees are a large but necessary outlay. The decision to outsource the accounts came about in the midst of the pandemic, and it was affected to help streamline the treasurer's time in this voluntary position.
- Net fundraising income of £68 (2021/22: £974). I would suggest a renewed fundraising drive is adopted by the incoming committee, and an annual target should be decided.
- Donations of £0 (2021/22: £37).

Reserves

Preschool in the post covid world led to number of staff members resigning and leaving. All efforts were made to recruit the necessary staff in the traditional way, however most early care practitioners were unwilling to leave stable long serving positions post pandemic. It was therefore decided by the committee that a portion of the funds that were in the reserve accounts (precisely for this purpose) were to be used to pay agency and recruitment fees.

Alexis Papandreou

Treasurer

Appendix A.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsummarytablesenglandandwales/2021#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20there%20were%20624%2C828,trend%20of%20decreasing%20live%20births.>

“In 2021, there were 624,828 live births, an increase of 1.8% compared with 2020 (613,936). However, the number of live births in 2021 is lower than the number of pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) births in 2019 and is in line with the long-term trend of decreasing live births.”

Document 4

Statement for the Preschool AGM on 17 October 2023

My name is Liz Ferguson, and I am interested in standing for the preschool committee.

An initial search of the Charity Commission website raised significant concerns about whether the committee has fulfilled its statutory requirements over the last few years. Therefore, I have taken advice and would like the to raise the following points. It is important for the answers to be documented in the minutes. I am reading a prepared speech so that the questions and answers may be easily minuted after this meeting. The documented answers will form a basis from which any new committee can work. Please note these are not personal attacks but are simply factual questions that any member who is considering joining the committee would need answers to.

Charities registered in England must send an annual return to the Charity Commission every year. Given preschool's income is over £25k, this return includes a trustee annual report, accounts and an independent examiner's report (amongst other things) (source: [Prepare a charity annual return - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-annual-return))

As of 17th October, preschool's annual return reporting is overdue by 474 days. The two years for which information is overdue is academic / financial years 2020/1 and 2021/2.

Statutory Requirements

Document	Question	Answer
Trustee Report 2020/1	Has the Trustee Report been written?	No
	If yes, by whom and when. If no, whose responsibility was this.	PL taken responsibility for this
	Has the Trustee Report been approved, signed and dated?	No
	If yes, by whom and when. If no, whose responsibility was this.	PL taken responsibility for this
Accounts 2020/1	Have the accounts been presented and approved by the committee?	To be investigated
	Have they been signed and dated?	As above
	If yes, by whom and when? If no, whose responsibility was this?	As above
Independent Examiner's Report 2020/1	Have the accounts been externally examined?	Yes
	If yes, by whom. If no, whose	Fruition Accountancy

	responsibility was this.	
	If yes, where is the certificate?	Requested not received
Upload 2020/1	If available, why haven't these documents been uploaded?	

Document	Question	Answer
Trustee Report 2021/2	Has the Trustee Report been written?	No
	If yes, by whom and when. If no, whose responsibility was this.	Committee
	Has the Trustee Report been approved, signed and dated?	No
	If yes, by whom and when. If no, whose responsibility was this.	Committee
Accounts 2021/2	Have the accounts been presented and approved by the committee?	No
	Have they been signed and dated?	No
	If yes, by whom and when? If no, whose responsibility was this?	AP took responsibility for this
Independent Examiner's Report 2021/2	Have the accounts been externally examined?	No
	If yes, by whom. If no, whose responsibility was this.	AP took responsibility for this
	If yes, where is the certificate?	
Upload 2021/2	If available, why haven't these documents been uploaded?	

Constitutional Questions

Area	Question	Answer
Committee	What is the current number of committee members?	5 confirmed members LY
	If the number is less than 5, has the EYA been informed in writing? If yes, who will provide this correspondence to the incoming committee?	
	How many are current parents?	1
	Do the non parent members hold affiliate membership?	

Financial reporting	At each Committee meeting, was an up to date written statement of accounts presented to the Committee?	AP replied 'not at every meeting'
	If yes, are these documented? If not, were the statements requested by the rest of the Committee?	