

## Committee Meeting Minutes - 17/11/21

**1. Present:** Janet Cushing, Jonny Cooper, Holly Ling, Amy Livingston, Matt Franks.

**2. Apologies:** Lykke Hansen, Pascal Wyse, Ruth Mattison.

**3. Minutes of the last committee meeting:** Agreed.

**4. Business Manager's report discussed:** The setting is currently full with 51 children on the waiting list. Janet thanked the committee and parents for their sterling efforts over the past year promoting the Pre-School on social media - particularly local facebook groups. This will be continued over the coming academic year.

Jonny asked about the ratio between fee-paying and funded children: Janet confirmed that the majority will be funded from January 2022, with the remainder funded from April 2022. There is a possibility that two children may leave, as they are now of school-age, and so this balance could change depending on the age of the children from the waiting list who replace them. Janet advised that the setting aims to replace funded children with funded children where possible, but that many three and four year olds tend to have secured places elsewhere by this point in the year.

Grant funding has increased slightly. As a representative on the Local Authority Task and Finish Group (T&FG), Ruth is able to gain valuable insight into grant levels and funding. Although precise funding will not be confirmed until March 2022, the Pre-School has a reasonable idea of what upcoming grant levels will likely be, which enables the setting to decide fee levels moving forward.

The Pre-School has budgeted for increases in costs within the annual financial forecast for the academic year 2021/2022: in addition to the rent increase from January 2022, Janet shared that major structural work is needed to the Pre-School setting including underpinning to address subsidence and drains work. Additional cleaning demands are ongoing due to government guidance on Covid-19 preventative measures. There have also been increases in fuel and heating costs. Despite all this, the Pre-School expects to break even for this financial year and is hopeful to make a small profit.

**5. Pre-School Leader's report discussed:** Janet reflected on the highly positive start to the academic year: two stay-and-plays were held for new and returning families as part of the settling-in routine and all staff feel that children have settled really well, more quickly and notably more confidently than in previous years.

Jonny shared how effective, insightful and touching he has found Tapestry from a parent's perspective, which the rest of the committee wholeheartedly agreed with. Janet commented that all staff have enjoyed using it and have found it much quicker and easier as a mode of recording observations, with the added benefit that videos can be shared. Matt offered support with ongoing training and technical support, as he has professional experience implementing VLE systems.

Janet thanked families for sending in autumn treasure - children really enjoyed seeing it used within the Pre-School. Janet also noted that the WiFi hotspot and bluetooth speaker have not only modernised the curriculum, but have also supported children with their enquiry skills to help them ask questions and generate answers.

Janet highlighted the fact that Covid-19 may present unforeseen obstacles to future plans, but that 'we can do what we can, as we can, when we can'. Jonny acknowledged the remarkably different feel this term compared to the start of the 2020-21 academic year - much positive progress has been made and the committee thanked the Pre-School for their hard work in supporting the children to settle so well following a tumultuous period.

**6. Christmas:** Janet reflected that in previous years children sometimes got a little stressed by the Christmas nativity when delivered 'live' to parents: staff felt that telling the story of Christmas by creating a video for families instead worked very well last year and clearly benefited the children as a more inclusive and relaxed type of performance, so the Pre-School have opted to continue with this approach. Janet is hopeful that the video can be published on Tapestry this year for families to view.

Janet anticipates that it should be possible to hold the proposed Christmas coffee morning, raffle and concert on Thursday 16th December entirely in the Pre-School hall. The committee agreed that this would be a lovely way for parents, children and staff to celebrate together and that a dress-up concert would have a relaxed party feel to it.

Janet to confirm Christmas coffee morning arrangements with parents via email and Facebook; Jonny to advertise further via the parents WhatsApp group.

Holly offered to lead on securing prizes for the raffle from local businesses, with support from Amy: the committee agreed that a maximum of 6 decent prizes was a sensible aim. In the past, parents have also donated towards a hamper. Further parental contributions to be explored (e.g. a couple of parents work at Tesco and could enquire with their community liaison team what might be possible).

Jonny to arrange for a letter on raffle ticket sales to be sent home in book bags, with tickets also available for purchase on the day of the coffee morning. A donation box and a 'blind auction' will also be used, as both have proven successful in previous years.

Jonny and Amy both offered to help at the coffee morning with refreshments and the raffle. Further volunteers will be sought by Jonny via the parents WhatsApp group.

Janet confirmed that she will arrange purchase of Christmas books for children, funded from the proceeds of committee coffee mornings. The committee has agreed to help wrap books and return them to the setting ahead of the end of term.

**7. Fundraising:** Coffee morning to be arranged next half-term - date to be confirmed with Janet in January and publicised via WhatsApp / Facebook / email.

The committee also discussed producing a Pre-School tea-towel for purchase by parents - potentially towards the end of the academic year.

**8. AOB:** New committee members were confirmed as: Holly Ling (Vice-Chair); Amy Livingston (Secretary); Matt Franks (Trustee). Jonny Cooper to continue as Chair and Lykke Hansen as Treasurer.

Jonny thanked the new members for their support of the Pre-School. Janet advised that Ruth would be in touch with paperwork in due course to enroll new committee members and complete all necessary checks.

**9. Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 2nd March.

## **Committee Meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

### **Business Manager's Report: Autumn Term 2021**

#### **Setting numbers**

The setting is currently full. We have five funded 2-year-olds, seventeen funded 3- or 4-year-olds and eight fee paying children. Five of our fee-paying children will have turned three this autumn term and therefore will be funded from January 2022. As it currently stands come January 2022, we will have two funded 2-year-olds, twenty five 3- or 4-year olds and three fee paying children.

#### **Waiting list numbers**

There are currently 51 children on the waiting list. The vast majority of the families on the waiting list have heard about the Pre-School through word of mouth/recommendation. If current parents can continue to share their experiences of the Pre-School to other families, this will ensure that the waiting list stays healthy.

#### **Pupil Premium**

We currently have three children who are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium.

#### **Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) 2021/2022**

FEEE budget for 2021/2022 for funded 2-year-olds increased to £5.82 per hour from £5.76 per hour. The amount we receive for funded 3- & 4-year-olds decreased by 10p from £5.20 per hour to £5.10 per hour. The borough continues to fund the term after the child's birthday for 2, 3- and 4-year-olds.

#### **Task and Finish Group (T&FG) for FEEE**

I am currently a rep on the T&FG for the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector which is run by the Early Years team at Waltham Forest Council. The aim of the T&FG is to set the budget for the FEEE for 2022/2023. I attended a meeting on 3 November and there are a further two meetings scheduled for Wednesday 15 December and Thursday 27 January 2022. We will know by the end of March 2022 how much funding we will receive for the next financial year once the proposal from the T&FG has been approved at Schools Forum.

#### **Rent Rise**

I am still expecting an email from HPBC regarding a rent increase from January 2022. I have budgeted an additional 25p per hour in my financial forecast for the hire of the hall from January 2022 to July 2022.

#### **Finances**

I have just completed the annual financial forecast for the academic year 2021/2022 and I am at the moment discussing the forecast with Janet before it is shared with the Committee. I am hoping that the Pre-School will make a small profit at the end of the academic year.

## **Committee Meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

### **Pre-School Leader's Report: Autumn Term 2021**

**Returning/Starting Pre-School, September:** This year, we had 11 children who returned to Pre-School after the previous academic year; and 19 new children.

This September, we made some changes to our settling in procedures for new children and families. We hosted two stay and plays at the beginning of the term so that parents/carers could meet their child's key person and they and their child could experience the setting in an informal way. Following the stay and plays, children then started their sessions within their normal attendance routine. Whilst we acknowledge that the first week may have been emotional and difficult for some, in general, the children adapted more quickly and settled earlier than in previous years. We have noticed a clear difference in how quickly the new children have become used to our routines, more confident in the setting, and more able to interact with staff and each other.

We have welcomed two new families to Pre-School since the beginning of term. Children/families who start mid-term or mid-year are also welcomed with an initial, short stay and play session, before then starting their usual attendance pattern. Again, we have noticed that this helps the children to settle more quickly.

With a few tweaks around timings, we plan to continue to support new children and families in this way over the rest of the academic year and for September 2022.

The children who have returned to Pre-School have settled back in quickly. We hosted a stay and play for returning families on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. One parent attended.

**Tapestry:** we have rolled out Tapestry to all parents. The majority of families have activated their accounts. We are working to help those who have not yet done so. Most families who have commented to staff have welcomed and enjoyed using Tapestry.

Children's Learning Development Checks have been published on Tapestry; and we are hosting parent consultation meetings on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November.

**Coffee Morning:** with thanks to the Committee for organising the coffee morning on 20<sup>th</sup> September. The money raised will go towards Christmas activities.

**Curriculum:** our curriculum in the first half term looked at supporting settling-in by looking at 'This is My Life'. We also celebrated Black History Month, using African Tales as our inspiration. We also enjoyed Get to Know Animals in the last week before half term, an event that had been delayed from the summer. Thank you also to families who found autumn treasure over half term. The children have enjoyed using the items in the setting and as part of our displays. This half term we are looking at science, technology, engineering and maths, before we focus on Christmas. The investment in a wifi hotspot and a Bluetooth speaker have enhanced the curriculum and teaching significantly (as well as enabling staff to access Tapestry in the setting).

### **Forward Look:**

**Christmas:** we plan to tell the Christmas story; do lots of Christmas crafts; and have a fun party feel in the last week of term. We are hoping to film a short video of the children as they think about and interpret the Christmas Story. The video will be posted on Tapestry. We will then host two stay and play dates on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> December. We will be doing Christmas crafts that week, and encourage

parents/carers to come and get stuck in (literally). Parents are asked to attend one session only to allow for numbers.

In the last week of term, we are hoping the Committee will host a coffee morning and raffle on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December. Parents will then be able to come and join us and the children for a celebration concert. We plan again to send children home with a Christmas bag with their makes and a few Christmas treats. We would ask the Committee again to agree to giving each child a book as a small gift from the Pre-School.

**COVID 19:** All activities are subject to Government and Local Authority advice on COVID-19. They are permissible at this point but guidance can/does change at short notice. If arrangements do change, we will give as much notice as possible.

**Janet Cushing**  
**Pre-School Leader**