

# LAUREL PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING GROUP

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Present:** Janet Robinson (Group Leader)

Jennifer Holly (Playleader)

Chris Holly (Chairman)

Ian Mostyn (Treasurer)

Anita Woodman (Secretary)

Kirsty Warburton (Parent)

Carren Chappel (Parent)

Catherine Lansdale (Parent)

Brenda Fairhurst

**Location:** Laurel Playcentre

### **1 Apologies**

Received from :

Gillian Mostyn (Committee member/Parent)

Eileen Holden (Committee member/Parent)

## **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

These were read, and as there were no matters arising, the next item on the agenda was attended to.

## **3 Chairpersons Address**

Chris Holly read his address.

Please see attached.

## **4 Treasurer's Report**

Ian has only recently been appointed treasurer and is still getting the accounts and files up to date. He will report back to the Committee as soon as possible.

Ian will be looking into whether the fees can be gift aided.

Ian will be reclaiming the tax back on any interest received.

## **5 Playgroup report**

From Jennifer Robinson.

Please see attached report.

## **6 Nomination of and voting for Committee members and officers**

Chris Holly and Ian Mostyn agreed to continue their roles of Chairman and Treasurer. Anita Woodman resigned as Secretary.

Anita Woodman proposed Catherine Lansdale as Secretary, it was seconded by Carron Chappel.

Kirsty Warburton and Carron Chappel resigned from the Committee.

**7 Any other business**

The Committee are responsible for the setting of fee levels for the coming year. The decision was postponed until Ian Mostyn has finalised the accounts.

The new policies were accepted by the Committee.

The proposed holidays were accepted by the Committee.

**8 Date and time of first new Committee meeting**

To be confirmed at a later date.

## June 2008 Chairperson's Report

I would like to start by thanking everyone who has made the effort to attend tonight and all those who sent their apologies. Hopefully you are aware that without a committee to manage the pre-school on the business side, the pre-school will cease to exist. It is important to point out exactly how important the committee is to the survival of the group, especially this year as we will be losing so many committee members. There is a fine line to walk between scaring people off joining and making this point, but without the support of more parents, the same people are left to plan the future of the pre-school, the staff wages, and the general running of the group. The more people who are involved the less there is for an individual to do. I think it would be helpful for us to consider how we can attract more committee members over the coming weeks, with a view to holding events in the new term.

Next, I would like to thank Janet Robinson our group leader. Janet has continued to manage the day-to-day running of the group very well during this last year. I think it is fair to say that we have a strong and committed group of happy staff working in the pre-school under her management. I would also like to thank the staff. We have been fortunate to have had a period of consolidation in terms of staffing this year, with no new staff starting, and the existing staff continuing to work well together. It is a credit to both them and Janet to see how well they all work together, sharing general housekeeping tasks without complaint and generally supporting each other in all circumstances. Unfortunately we have lost a member of staff in Kelly, who left shortly after the start of the year for pastures new. We wish her well in the future and I know she still keeps in touch with some of the staff.

The staff have trained together over this last year to complete Equalities named Co-ordinator training. This was funded by a grant from the Transformation Fund, and the money has also helped towards buying some new resources linked to the training and to buy a Makaton training package for the staff to study together. Currently the whole staff team are undertaking some training on the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which will take effect from September. Although the EYFS has been spoken of disparagingly in some circles, I know that both Janet and Jennifer feel strongly that it will only bring positive changes to the practices of the pre-school, and that those changes will not be as drastic as some sections of the media would have you believe.

Jennifer has begun her Early Years Professional Status training and will move to her assessment stage in September. As I mentioned last year, this has attracted a fund of money from the Transformation Fund, and now called the Graduate Leader Fund. This sum has covered Jennifer's wages since September and will continue to do so for the next couple of years. We have recently applied for the new funding and it should be available then until 2011. By using this for Jennifer's wages we have effectively freed up other income to be spent on other resources for the pre-school. At the end of the financial year in August I will speak with Janet about exactly how much is available for spending on resources and we will look to order these as soon as possible afterwards. Additionally it will mean that we should always be able to operate with one if not two members of staff in addition to the numbers needed to cover the ratios. This improves the quality of the care we can provide for the children.

The pre-school has a strong reputation locally and with the Early Years Team in Bury, thanks to the efforts of the staff, and we should be proud of this. A growing number of new enquiries are coming from word of mouth recommendations, which is extremely flattering, and I hope that our reputation will continue to go from strength to strength. However we will continue to place adverts locally to encourage new applications and new visitors to both the pre-school and the baby and toddler group. We are also attracting a number of enquiries through the website, and I am hoping that after this meeting the new committee will be able to form a plan of other resources they would like to have on the website, with particular attention to the committee side of things.

I am extremely pleased to announce that at long last we have recruited a volunteer to act as Treasurer. Ian Mostyn has taken on responsibility for processing the payroll for the staff and will also be collating the accounts. For transparency purposes, Brenda Fairhurst and a colleague will then audit the accounts for the pre-school. For the last three years, Anita Woodman has acted as Secretary to the committee, and has done a very good job. Unfortunately she will be stepping down this year as her youngest moves on to school. Later in the meeting we will be asking for volunteers to join the committee and if anyone wishes to be considered as secretary please make yourself known at that time. The position can be undertaken by more than one person to ease the workload, if that suits better. We will be happy to discuss the role with you further before you make a commitment.

Thank you to all the families who helped to support the pre-school during this last year. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and we hope that more will join you during the coming year.

## May 2006 Treasurer's Report

Until April of this year the treasurer's role has been split between myself, a professional accountant and the staff. Since April Ian Mostyn has taken on the payroll processing and has been collating the accounts to produce an annual accounts report for the year ending August 2007.

The administration of the payroll taken on by a local firm of accountants, Neal Frain has been paid for by the Inland Revenue's incentives for small businesses to file their tax returns online.

The staff have been overseeing the arrangements for payment of small expenses, through Jennifer Holly, using a petty cash system. Janet Robinson has been issuing fee letters and banking monies received.

As Treasurer, I have overseen expenditure on equipment and resources, and helped to determine the figures for wages of the staff and the fees payable by parents.

Due in no small part to the funding for the EYPS training and recruitment incentives, the finances for this year should be quite healthy. This will enable us to buy new resources and start to rebuild our reserves. The level of funding under the Nursery Education Grant has been increased again this year but not significantly. However there will be another rise in minimum wage in October and holiday entitlement is also increasing, all of which impacts on the income of the pre-school.

I think it is important to note for those who have not been involved on the committee or staff side of the pre-school in the past, that the staff have worked and continue to work extremely hard for below market rate wages. Anyone who has been involved before will know that this is not new. The staff do not work here for the financial reward, but rather for the reward of seeing your children grow towards their potential, before they leave to attend nursery or school.

As decided at the last AGM, the financial year now ends on August 31<sup>st</sup>, and the accounts will be prepared at that point. The accounts for the year ending August 2007 will be available shortly for examination and we will then have them audited.

Later in this meeting we will need to determine the level of fees payable by parent from September. It is important that we remain affordable for

the parents but bring in enough income to provide for the wages of the staff, arguably the pre-school's greatest asset. The fees also need to remain competitive.

I would like to end on a plea to all parents and their extended families to continue to support the fundraising activities of the pre-school. Without these events it extremely difficult to maintain our standards and at the same time keep our fees one of the lowest in the area.

## Laurel Pre-School Annual Report - AGM 2008

First of all, thank you for attending the AGM this evening.

### Review

Here are some of the events during the past year in Pre-School.

In September, there were 19 children on the register, of whom 2 moved away before Christmas. Numbers rose to 22 with the January intake. Nine children will leave for Primary school this term. The waiting list for September this year currently stands at 9.

Kelly, who had been with us for 2 years, left in October. Denise worked as a volunteer, while she was studying for NVQ Level 2.

Lately, Kathryn has found her way back to the Pre-School, covering for staff leave.

Staff have completed training on Safeguarding Children. We have all attended a course in Equalities.

Being trained in-house has meant that the tutor could tailor the course to the requirements of our setting.

This term we are studying the Early Years Foundation Stage, of which more, later.

Jennifer is currently undertaking training to gain Early Years Professional Status.

Paula is attending Special Educational Needs training.

As if that was not enough, we plan to learn Makaton, a sign language, designed to help communicate with children who have limited spoken language,

I would like to point out that the staff undertake this training voluntarily, and in their own time. I take this opportunity to

thank them for their dedication and commitment, and for their work and support during the past year. Thank you.

Last September we held our second Annual Parents' Information Evening. Again, it was successful in giving new parents an insight into the way the Pre-School functions.

November brought us an unannounced visit from the OFSTED Inspector. She spoke very highly of much that she saw during the 2 days she spent with us. Her overall assessment was 'satisfactory', meaning 'sound - attaining the standards'. Most of the recommendations were already in our plans.

Our end-of-term concert was 'The Little Snowflake'. The concert had 2 unique points. Not only did the children design and make their own costumes, but it is the only Christmas show so far, to feature 'The Dingle Dangle Scarecrow'.

### EYFS

After consultation, the Government has produced new guidance for Pre-School child care. The Early Years Foundation Stage combines Early Learning Goals, Birth to 3 Matters and the National Standards for under-8's Day Care.

This is to be implemented by all providers from September 2008.

It will simplify the way we work, inasmuch as planning for all our children, will follow one set of guidelines.

We shall continue to plan for each child, according to their interests and level of development, always 'Learning through Play'.

When we receive advice from central or local government, we adopt their recommendations in a way which fits in with our methods. So changes are gradual. We continue to provide a

safe, welcoming environment in which to present an interesting and stimulating curriculum, helping each child to develop. While children are learning at Laurel Pre-School, they are gaining knowledge and confidence to enable them to move on to their next educational setting.

### Friends of Laurel Pre-School

As parents, you have chosen Laurel Pre-School as the best place for your child. By becoming a Friend of the Group, you could make a contribution for the benefit of all the children. It is worth a try.

### Thanks

On behalf of all the staff, thank you to you, the parents, carers and Friends of Laurel Pre-School, for your continued support. Working together will ensure that Laurel Pre-School maintains the high standards that your children deserve.