

Chairs report– Ovingham and district under 5's

It's been just over a year since I was elected Chair and in that time the charity has made progress on several fronts. First, we have improved the financial outlook from the 20/21 position where, because of the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, we declared a loss of £28,370. Although the accounts for the year 21/22 are yet to be finalised, we anticipate declaring a reduced loss, which will be in the region of £6000. In the current financial year, we expect to make a small surplus. Despite this representing a poor financial performance in recent years, we were fortunate to have amassed modest reserves and therefore able to continue to operate. The trustees are confident of the charity's ongoing viability and the outlook is much more positive as a result of the hard work of the staff and the volunteers.

From this stronger position we are developing exciting plans for the expansion and refurbishment of our building. The trustees are concerned that our building is almost 25 years old and in need of refurbishment. To this end we have secured modest funding from Northumberland County Council to extend and refurbish which we hope will add additional longevity to the building. We are hoping to start the work in summer 2023, subject to securing trades. The extension will provide space for an additional 8 FTE places, and we expect demand for places to increase through 2023 following several closures of pre-school providers in the area. Offering these additional places should restore the reserves of the charity, allowing greater investment in staffing and resources.

During 2022 we reviewed various operational and governance systems and as a result several initiatives have taken place. First, we have installed a new cloud-based IT system, ensuring records are kept in a secure and easy to use way and alongside this, we have launched a new website with access to newsletters, terms dates ad other essential information.

The governance of the charity is overseen by a committee of volunteers comprising of 3 trustees, one of whom is a parent, 4 nursery staff and 2 parent governors as laid out below. The committee met on 9 occasions in 2022 and there were an additional 2 trustee meetings.

Name	Role
Michael Price	Chair & Trustee
Mark Dawson	Vice Chair & Parent Trustee
Ronnie Hall	Finance Officer & Trustee
Elaine Puntton	Nursery Manager
Wendy Taylor	Deputy Nursery Manager
Sarah Milligan	Nursery Practitioner

Catherine Kirkpatrick	Nursery Practitioner
Sarah Weaver	*Fundraising Officer
Charlie Downing	Secretary

**I want to thank the outgoing Fundraising Officer, Jill Summers, for all the work she put into the role and to welcome Sarah Weaver to the committee.*

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to remind parents that we are a charity and hence, rely on the support of parents and the community. These are difficult time for all early year's providers, with inflation considerably outpacing government funding, which is the core of our income. Hence, I would encourage all parents to consider what they can do to help us in the forthcoming year – please get in touch with me or Elaine, if you would like to join the committee or can help in some other way. I am particularly keen to hear from anyone with connections to trades who could help us with our plans for extending and refurbishing the building.

I want to thank staff for the work they put in to give each child the very best experience, day in day out. I also want to thank the committee members for the work they have put in as volunteers, particularly Charlie Downing, our secretary, who has been instrumental in helping to review the way we operate. It is pleasure working with such a committed and enthusiastic team.

Dr Michael Price, Chair – Ovingham and district under 5's.

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Manager's report - Ovingham & district under 5's

I would like to start by saying thank you to the wonderful committee for all the work they have done, and this year they have been really exceptional. Mike Price, who took on the role as Chairperson this time last year has worked endlessly to ensure our financial sustainability. The rest of the committee have worked hard to raise funds and because of this we are now very excited for the intended work to begin on the nursery expansion. We are very lucky that they are all intending to stay on in their roles to support the nursery.

Staffing

We now have four permanent members of staff after saying a sad farewell to Ashley Joscelyne, when she left the nursery to continue her studies at university, pursuing a career in teaching. She will be sadly missed, but we wish her lots of luck for the future.

Due to redeployment of staff to support a child in the setting with additional needs we are now recruiting an apprentice to join us, and help ease the staffing structure.

Also, a big thank you to Jennifer Dawson for filling in as Bank Staff.

Staff Training

Staff have accessed online training provided by Northumberland Early Years SLA including:

Food Hygiene

Designated Safeguard Lead Refresher

New to the role of Safeguard Lead

Making the most of the School Readiness Passport

Pediatric First Aid (face to face course)

Early Help Assessment

The role of the SENCO

Early Years SEND and Inclusion Networks

Managing Challenging Behaviour

The Benefits of Loose Parts Play

Sarah has enrolled on a fully accredited level 3 SENCO course run by OFSTED. It's great that she is able to attend, as thousands of practitioners applied from all over the UK. The course will discuss issues around Special Educational Needs across all aspects of education. As the course is attended by many professionals from all services for children, this will help increase the profile of the nursery at a strategic level.

Feedback Forms

The feedback forms which were given out at the end of the year came back from parents with a result of: 91% of parents stating they **Strongly Agree** that their child is happy at nursery, and is happy with the care their child received.

Fundraising

We have only been able to hold a small number of fundraising events (mainly due to the ground works taking place in the school) a huge thank you to all who helped organise or contributed to the Christmas tea-towels, and Raffle. We had our local photographer in attendance for Christmas and the end of year photographs; as ever she was very generous with her commission contributions.

Going forward we are looking to reinstate our Annual Bunny Bounce, and cake stall, plus support the efforts of the committee fundraising officer and assist with their fundraising events.

Education

September's transition to school for the reception class went well and they seem to have settled into school life quite comfortably. We plan to integrate more with reception class from next term to extend the transition period.

The nursery curriculum mainly uses 'in the moment planning'. This way of planning ensures that the child is always at the forefront of the skilled Early Years Practitioners minds.

Following attendance of training we all think loose parts play is fantastic, as it allows us to not only offer open-ended activities to the children, but we can also do our part at re-using items which would have otherwise been thrown away. All the items used for our loose parts play are either donated or sourced locally.

Tapestry is going well and although we may only have a small proportion of families contributing to Tapestry in the way of evidenced – photographs and written observations from home, this is something we will continue to focus on. Parental input and feedback is essential to give us a wider understanding of each child's learning styles and experiences. The verbal feedback from parents about using Tapestry has been positive and says it gives them an insight to what their child has been doing whilst at nursery.

Parents as Partners

We endeavour to improve our parental involvement levels. This is the first year in a long time that we have been able to carry out a more planned settling in period for new children, with very flexible start/finish times, home visits for children with specific learning concerns, and face to face parental meetings to discuss the children's development. We are in the process of introducing volunteer reading sessions, to bring parents or grandparents into nursery to enhance our love of books.

With Covid restrictions relaxing we were pleased to be able to hold our annual summer trip to Daniel's Farm, using the train, and it was such a lovely day. We were delighted that parents could join us and help supervise the very excited children.

Numbers

Our numbers for this academic year, although slow to progress are pleasing and evidence that Ovingham & District Under 5's reputation is continuing to attract new families to the setting. Out of the 108 sessions we offer, at present we have 12 x 3hr sessions available over the week, these all being afternoon sessions predominantly Tuesday's and Thursday's.

We also envisage our numbers will increase when the planned extension is completed.

Thank you

Finally, I would like to thank my staff team for being so passionate, for sharing my vision and supporting me through so many changes over the past year, their hard work is invaluable to the setting. To the committee for their endless support in the setting, on the phone, and during committee meetings. And lastly, to all the families who attend and support the nursery with their children – the fact is we couldn't do any of this without you.

Elaine Punton