



# Pottersbury Pre-School

## 2021 – 2022 annual report for the Pottersbury Annual Parish Assembly

I opened my last report last year with “I think we can safely all say that it has been a challenging year for everyone!” and I think we can all agree that the last 12 months have been more of the same!

We reopened for the new academic year in a much better place than we did in September 2020. A few of our sessions were nearly at full capacity and we had a healthy number of children in the setting. We have seen our numbers increase in January and we have another 7 children starting with us after the Easter holidays which takes most of our sessions up to fully booked.

Highlights throughout the year include the children’s amazing Harvest Festival, Christmas performance and the Christmas party. This year we were finally able to welcome parents back to join us for these events which was so lovely to share. Thank you to Anne and St Nicholas Church for hosting us for both. WE are having an Easter bonnet parade and play session in Preschool on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April for parents and children to enjoy too which we are excited about.

An almost complete turnover of committee in June included our Treasurer of many years standing down, and the majority of those responsibilities being taken on by Kate (Manager) and Anne (Administrator), with a few teething problems along the way. The AGM will be held in the summer term and we are keen for new members to join the committee in the coming months or at the AGM, as we have committee members who have indicated they will be stepping down at the AGM.

We are continuing the process of transferring to a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The change in our charity status requires that we have a pre-registration visit by Ofsted.

As part of their covid support package, the Local Authority guaranteed funding levels until the end of summer 2021, at what would have been expected pre-pandemic, which gave us some level of financial security. With a focus on reducing unnecessary costs, were able to end our financial year in July 2021 with an operating profit, which has meant our reserve is now at the recommended level to ensure we could meet financial obligations (such as redundancy costs) should the preschool find itself in a position of having to close.

In early 2022 we reviewed our breakeven cost analysis and fees structure. With operating costs steadily climbing, including National Living Wage rates, and only expecting a small increase in the hourly rate for government funded children, we took the decision to increase our fees slightly for non-funded sessions. The increase amounted to £1 for a three hour session, and 25p for each half hour wrap-around session. This was our first fees increase for five years.

Unfortunately, the expected increase to the hourly government funding rate from April 2022, has in fact been effectively a cut of 1p per hour. West Northants have taken the “Notional SEND” funding out of the base rate and all settings have to allocate this funding to purely special educational needs spending, and to report on what it has been used for, along with the expected benefit to the child(ren) for which it has been used.

Our committee formed in June really got behind the fundraising efforts in the lead up to Christmas, and that, together with Kate’s amazing London Marathon run, raised a total of over £3000! Our staff have been looking for some suitable climbing apparatus to spend part of this on, and some versatile and durable storage units have been ordered, to allow children to self-select toys and equipment. Thank you to the local community for supporting our “Advent widows” in December as well as the amazing turn out to our Christmas Fayre.

The summer term will see us preparing our four year olds for the transition to school in September, and we continue to work closely with John Hellins and the teachers to support the move for those children who have a place there. We will also be holding our annual Sports Day in the summer term.

From a staff perspective, this is my last term with the Preschool. I am stepping down from May 27<sup>th</sup> and we are currently recruiting a new setting manager to lead the setting. I want to thank the team for their hard work and dedication over the most challenging 12 months. It’s been one of the most challenging years and our hard work and passion to create a “normal” environment for the children has shone through.

Kate Morris

Preschool Manager