



Potterspurty Preschool Report including finances for Parish Council Annual Parish assembly April 2023

As a setting we have had a fantastic year with regards to activities over the last 12 months, in May we said goodbye to our Manager Kate who had been at the setting for the last 5 years and we thank her for all her hard work over this time. Claire joined the setting after May half term and has been with the setting for nearly 12 months now along with Jo who joined as the new Deputy Manager. They have made some great changes to the setting, and we look forward seeing what else they can do going forward.

The summer term saw the children getting out and about in the community going to see the horses, exploring the meadow and seeing the new baby ducklings at the pond. Opportunities like these we call these are mini adventures. We also had the chance to take some children to forest school which is organised by Acorn Foundation. The children had a great time and learnt lots of new skills. To finish the term, we celebrated our school leavers by having a graduation ceremony and end of year party.

During the summer holidays we also revamped our garden on a budget adding in some new areas like a bug area, outdoor painting, a bigger mud kitchen and a sand pit you can get in. A big thanks to the local community for donating bits to the project.

Autumn saw new children joining the setting and loving the change in the colours of the trees as well as exploring Autumn objects like conkers and pumpkins, talking about size, weight, colour, and textures. Following the children's interests the great outdoors we were able to organise a trip to Salcey Forest where the children got to play with the fallen leaves, explore the area and also play in the wooden houses. Was lovely to see parents and committee members joining us. Inside we spent time enhancing our provision adding more open ended resources that will spark their imagination. Before we knew it Christmas was upon and what a magical time it was, the children helped to decorate the Christmas tree daily and did a variety of Christmas crafts as well as putting on a fantastic Christmas concert at the church for all the parents to see.

We are now in 2023 and already we have done so much!! January saw us getting involved with the big bird watch, we went on lots of walks to see what birds we could see, listened to different bird songs through Alexa and done some observational paintings of our favourite birds. Being out and about is what the children love best especially puddle jumping and getting the opportunity to play in the snow where we made a snowman and did snow angels. To finish this term before the easter holidays we enjoyed a lovely trip to Rookery Farm where the children were able to see some goats, sheep, chickens and a few other animals including lots of new-born babies. They had a fantastic time exploring the different animals playing on all the outdoor equipment and using their gross motor skills on the soft play.

Well, the last 12 months have been fantastic with regards to activities and experiences for the children but have proven difficult financially for the preschool, with rising costs and some unplanned expenditure. As a result of repaying a bill for historic gas usage to the school, some additional unexpected staff costs and general running costs rising, along with effectively a frozen hourly rate for government funded sessions for eligible children, we made a net financial loss of just over £8,000 in our year ending 31st July 2022.

Fortunately, we had, over the previous few years, built up sufficient reserves to cover this loss. Our current focus is on getting as near as possible to break-even this year, with a view to rebuilding our reserves back in the next financial year.

We are grateful to our Management Committee, who have put a lot of thought and effort into fundraising in the Autumn term, with more planned leading up to Easter and then into the summer. Please look out for the initiatives we are running and support us where you can. We are also very grateful to Tracy at The Cock Inn, who has pledged to support our fundraising for 12 months, and ran a Christmas Raffle for us, and has been donating proceeds from some of the fabulous quiz nights held at The Cock since January. Again, there will be community events coming up at The Cock in the coming months, with proceeds going to preschool, so please look out for these and support them where possible. So far this financial year, our fundraising total stands at just over £2500 – from this we have already purchased some fabulous resources for the children, and some of these funds will be used for essential upgrades to our lighting, much of which has started to fail, and to replace some aging office equipment.

We are still waiting to find out what the recent budget announcement re Early Years funding will mean to us in real terms. At the moment we know that the funding hourly rate has increased by around 2.5% from April 2023. However, in order to attract and retain good staff, preschool staff wages remain linked to the National Living Wage, and so will increase by just under 10%, also from April. With staffing our largest expenditure, this increases the pressure to reduce costs in other areas, and committee and staff are looking at where economies can be made, without impacting on the fabulous care and early education we provide to the children at the setting.

On behalf of the setting, we would like to thank all our staff, parents, children and committee for all their continued support this year.

Claire Bailey – Preschool Manager

Anne Henson - Business Administrator