Little Berries Pre-School AGM
Tuesday 15th February 2022 at 6:30pm
AGENDA

PRESENT: Mary, Lauren, Dahl, Steph, Agata, Shawn, David, Kelly, Brooke, Liz, Tracey, Anca , David, Lawrencia, Weronika, Tarig, Zoe

Zoom: Emma Carla, Frankie, Krishna, Matthew, Lucy, Kudzai, Cath

APOLOGIES: Justyna, Kat, Anne-Louise, Emma

1. Annual Report from Mary Elia (Manager)
2. Previous Financial Year Accounts Summary
3. Elect the Trustees of the Charity for the next year

   Registered person to phone Ofsted and inform them of any changes
4. Elect the Fundraising Committee
5. A.O.B.

Agree Committee Meetings Dates for the next year:

March: (Summer planning) - 16th March 2022 @ 6:30pm
June: (Autumn planning) - TBC
September (Winter planning) - TBC

Summary by Mary of the way a charity pre-school operates. Emma is going to be our secretary. We are looking for a Treasurer. 4 additional trustees required from the parents. Trustees form the Governing Body of the pre-school. However, very little is required from the trustees as the pre-school has systems in place to cover the responsibilities. We are looking to set up a Fundraising Committee. Ideally, we would like to fund all trips and parties for the children. Fundraising has been low over the last few years due to COVID. We have been able to subsidise but not cover the costs fully. We are looking for new ideas to return to covering the full costs of such things.

Register: please indicate on the registration sheet if you are interested in being a trustee or part of the fund raising committee.

Annual Report from Mary Elia (Manager)

Manager report for AGM 2022

Covid & lockdowns

The last couple of years have felt very surreal! Its unbelievable to think that it hasn't even been 2 years since we went into the first lockdown!

Working through the pandemic has undoubtedly presented many challenges; the main one being staffing levels. When staff test positive this ultimately impacts on our ratios and therefore, the number of children we can have in attendance. Back in the day when extremely clinically vulnerable people couldn't work, we automatically lost 3 members of staff and meant for the most part we could only accommodate key worker children.

I want to thank my teams who have not only put fears of their own safety aside to care for your children but who also continue to rise to the many challenges that working through covid presents!

Intake

Another academic year behind us and we said goodbye to 30 children from LB1 & 9 from LB2; we wish them well on the next 'leg' of their journey!

We were at capacity last year for both preschools, with waiting lists for both, and in the very same situation this year.

The forecast this academic year is that most children on our waiting list will unfortunately not get in until September at the earliest.

Projects

LB1

Develop the sensory room further to be used as a quiet space, for mindfulness, and for delivering our communication and language interventions.
Develop the garden so it can be used feely by the children all year round.

LB2

Storage solutions
Create a sensory room, predominantly for our children with additional needs, so they have a space for sensory exploration with dimmed lighting.

Holiday club & extended hours

This was born out of the councils request to offer flexible childcare in this area. Ideally, they want a nursery here, however, the preschool is thriving and always has done, so for now they've left us alone. That said, we offer holiday clubs to meet demand for working parents. It does however continue to present some financial challenges as we are not always at full capacity on each day (we need 12 children in each day to cover costs).
To counteract the overheads, we have reverted to being preschool based most days, but the staff do miss the trips we used to put on!
For now, we must remain committed to the delivery of holiday clubs and extended hours to meet the demands of SCC!

LB1 building

We had been in negotiation with Southampton City Council about a new lease which would see us taking on full responsibility of the building, maintenance, and utilities.
We were sent Heads of Terms in August 2018 which we were negotiating; unfortunately, before these negotiations could reach a mutual agreement, we were informed by SCC that the 'service' would go out to tender …we await notification?!

Communication

Could we please ask that you all activate your Tapestry accounts for progress information about your child. This is more important than ever before as the new Early Years curriculum changes introduced in September 2021 state that practitioners should spend less time uploading observations and records and more time interacting face to face with the children. 'Like' our Facebook page for details on all upcoming events and emails also provide relevant information, so please do not delete before reading.

Ofsted

We were 'due an Ofsted inspection last year for LB1, but the pandemic has put them years behind ...we will continue to deliver outstanding practice regardless.

Staffing

This academic year, we have taken on a new member of staff at LB1 and after half term, a new member of staff will begin at LB2. We also have another new member of staff at LB2 who covers the playroom whilst an existing member of staff delivers 1:1 to one of our children with additional needs.

Recruiting good quality staff is impossible at the moment!

Training

Individual training is undertaken in line with practitioner's professional development.

We continue to support practitioners in workplace training and continue to work on all areas of our Development Plan (copies are available on request) and welcome any feedback, suggestions, or ideas. Outcomes from parent & staff questionnaires are fed into our provision and practice and practice is regularly reviewed.

Meetings

Staff & planning meetings continue every 2 weeks; these provide us with a great opportunity to gather and discuss any uprising issues and developments etc.

They also allow us to plan for our children and arrange trips, workshops, end of term parties etc.

Lauren, Paula & I continue to attend Early Years Childcare Briefings, Early Years conferences and any other meetings/conferences we feel are beneficial to the smooth running of the preschools.

Paula & Lauren who are the settings Special Educational Needs Coordinators, continue to attend 'Every Child a Talker' (ECAT) & SENCo meetings/conferences to help shape practice.

Trips/Visits/Events

Despite the pandemic, we've still managed to put on the following:

Nativity performances

Christmas Craft workshop (fundraising event)

Christmas party

Photographers

Music with Miranda

Mums in for Mother's Day

Dads in for Father's Day

Grandparents in for Grandparent's day

Parents sharing their religious festivals with us

Easter Craft workshop (fundraising event)

Easter bonnet parade

Trip to Paultons Park

Walks to the Common & Sports Centre

Visits to schools (transitions)

Visits from teachers

Sports day

Graduation ceremony

End of year party

Fundraising (across both preschools)

Fundraising has been down on previous years because of the pandemic; as life returns to a more 'normal' place we urge you to support us as much as you can; the money raised from fundraising helps subsidise preschool trips, parties, and our weekly peripatetic music teacher.

Any ideas or suggestions for fundraising events will be gratefully received!

Parent feedback

The feedback gained from parents through our 'Parent Feedback Questionnaires' has been very positive towards all areas of practice!

Parents love the reassurance of Tapestry; seeing that their child is happy & settled if they've left them upset!

I have revised the parent feedback questionnaires this year to make them more child centred and streamlined the questions bringing them in line with Ofsted's expectations of provision delivery.

FYI: We also promote parents coming in and joining us for an hour or longer should they wish and partake in the children's activities/learning.

Future projects

More fundraising ideas to fund children's parties & outings.

Ongoing training for all practitioners to ensure we continue to improve outcomes for all children.

Finish updating the website.

Complete the bronze physical activity section of the 'Healthy Early Years Award' for both preschools.

Conclusion

I'd like to say a HUGE "thank you" to all the staff for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment & also to you the parents & Committee for helping, volunteering, supporting decisions which have allowed us to move the preschools forward! Here's to another successful year!

ADDITIONAL NOTES OUTSIDE OF MAIN REPORT:

Projects: Mary explained the current restrictions with outsourcing support, such as speech & language, play therapy etc. The pre-school have been advised that services will not return to usual levels until 2024. In an attempt to cover some of these external services, we have started work creating a sensory room at LB1 and would like to do this at LB2 also. If anyone knows anyone who could help with any of our current projects, please direct them to get in touch or let us know so that we can speak with them.

Holiday Club: We can accept external children for our holiday club. Any child aged between 2 and 8 can join. Please spread the word in an attempt to increase our numbers for this provision.

Garden Fundraising: Apology made for the muddy clothes that children sometimes come home in due to the state of the garden at LB1. The council do not support the up keep of this area. Mary explained that as we don't own the building and it could go to tender at anytime, we are hesitant to use pre-school money to correct this area. Hence the current fundraising campaign. Please spread and share our fundraising page for this purpose.

Communication: Due to the changes stipulated in the report, there won't be as many observations on Tapestry. Parents evenings will continue to be offered 3 times a year. If there are any concerns outside of this, please don't wait for these. You can speak to any staff members at any time.

Staffing: We generally receive around 30 applications for every post advertised. Only 1 or 2 of these are appropriate for interview. We have just recruited a male and they are like gold dust in Early Years.

Events: We welcome families to come in to pre-school to share religious festivals, professions or simply to read the children a book. You are always very welcome. LB2 used to go weekly to a nursing home which hasn't been able to happen due to COVID. We hope that one day we will be able to do this again, as it was loved by both the children and the care home residents alike. We often need volunteers to help with walks etc. We try to work on 1 adult to 2 children. Sadly, we had to cancel the last one, so please do volunteer if you can.

Website: We can now edit the website ourselves. Please bear with us while we familiarise ourselves with this and get it up to date, but very soon this will become a much more valuable tool in our communication.

Lunchboxes: Oral health in the city is very poor. We are working on lunchbox choices to promote oral and physical health. Sometimes it may be that we ask children not to eat items in the lunchbox for this reason. Please speak with any member of staff if you have any concerns.

Previous Financial Year Accounts Summary

Very financially secure. We always ensure that the pre-school has enough savings in event of redundancies. We ensure we can continue to pay everybody for a subscribed period. We are plodding along and doing alright. Accounts were presented to attendees at this juncture.

Elect the Trustees of the Charity for the next year

Registered person to phone Ofsted and inform them of any changes

Lucy Javanshir & Frankie Fisher are happy to discuss becoming Trustees.

Secretary: Emma Fay.

Treasurer: Tracey Forshaw.

Other Parent Trustees: Lucy Javanshir, Frankie Fisher, Liz Barnes, Weronika Szewczuk

Elect the Fundraising Committee

Shawn Turner will become the Fundraising Lead. Everyone else who agreed to form the fundraising committee. This just requires putting on events. Any parents/carers can join this committee and subsequent meetings. After the success of today, Mary would be happy to move to zoom for meetings. Meeting page on Facebook - Shawn will manage that. Emails shared amongst one another if happy. Lovely way to make friends and meet people.
Next meeting 16th March at 6:30pm.
Let us know if there are days that work better, we will try to accommodate.

A.O.B.

National Lottery - previously received £10,000. Certain time frame before we can re-apply. If anyone knows of anything else, do let us know as we will try and tap into anything we can. Jewsons previously donated materials for example. A lot of companies have charity support that they do. They won't always advertise it. Garden is long term project - needs £15,000. Priority now is the sensory room. Not much needed in way of resources. Hoping to develop areas in garden. We're looking for time, not just money. Carpenters, builders etc. Spades, pots , flowers, down pipes, anything children would like to play with.
Carla's husband is a carpenter and they are having an extension built (Thank you Carla!). She will take photos of items available and send direct to Mary.