



AGM Minutes

AGM: Friday 13th October 2023, 7.30pm – Cobnuts Kindergarten

Attendees

Julian Ritchie
Diane Frewer
Cassie Callaghan

Frances MacGregor via online Zoom
Rosa Townsend
Jacky Witt

Welcome

Minutes and Matter Arising

Minutes agreed from the last AGM.

Chairman's Report

Cobnuts Steiner Kindergarten continues to thrive as a popular kindergarten setting, offering an alternative approach – based on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum – to mainstream early years provision. The setting has proved to be financially resilient over the year, with many sessions close to capacity.

The four Trustees together with a co-opted colleague and the Kindergarten Teacher/Manager form the Management Committee. This group supports the work of the Teacher through reviewing and monitoring policies and practices, with a particular focus on Child Protection. At each Committee meeting we also hear about the practical work of the children and staff and explore ways to improve the provision and address administrative issues. In Committee Meetings over the last year we have found ways to address management issues more efficiently so as to have more time to understand and support the life of the community.

The celebration of the yearly cycle of festivals is an important part of the life of the Kindergarten. Two festivals (Michaelmas and May) are opened to friends and families of kindergarten children past and present, as well as families attending the Parent and Child Group. Families considering joining us often attend these events. These social occasions take place in the garden of Cobnuts, and this year as usual were lively and well-attended.

Finally, on behalf of the Trustees I should like to thank Diane for her leadership of the Kindergarten and to acknowledge all the extra time she gives to nurture and sustain the health of the kindergarten community.

Teacher's Report

Well what a friendship group the children formed. One minute we were seeing them as small "little ones" and the next leaving to attend school!

They bought their own imaginative play which usually involved sticks and a lot of rushing around outside. They would be very eager to get into the garden each morning to start to play together, which was wonderful.



The younger children were amongst this all but slightly on the periphery and now I can see that they too, are building their own friendships and play together which at the moment is very different to last year's cohort.

Jodie settled well as she covered Lauren on maternity leave but received serious news late in the year on her husband Paul's health. Due to the seriousness of his condition Jodie was unable to continue working.

Anne and Ailish were able to help and covered until Lauren returned from maternity leave at the start of May this year.

Jodie and Ailish are happy to help cover and are presently in to cover my jury service stint along with Anne, Rosa S and Jenni.

Anne has continued to be a great support and still volunteers regularly along with Jenni and more recently Rosa S and Rosa T. We have also had Grandma Trudy who has also kindly given her time up to come in on a couple of occasions. I am so very grateful to all of these people.

Eileen continues to spread her magic, knowledge and mischief making! Lauren spreads her own buoyancy and fun within the group and captures some lovely observations of the children just being themselves.

Our open days and activities continue to be well supported and locally the news has spread about our Kindergarten with many families requesting for their child to go on our waiting list. I am gradually filtering children into Cobnuts from the waiting list but as many requests have been for children to start at two and a half years of age I have to be aware of the different adult to child ratios for this age group and the extra care they need.

The management team meet regularly and are forever moving forward on behind the scene things such as policies, risk assessments and website updates.

The first term is definitely busy especially with younger children but it will be interesting to see each child develop and how they mix within the group sharing friendships and play ideas together. We have seen a little caring friendship bloom recently, which is so lovely to see and I hope it flourishes throughout the year, but who knows what will happen next!

Parent and Child Group Report

Friday Group

There has been a steady flow of families at the Parent and Child Group on a Friday, with the average of around 6 families in attendance. The most we have had is 9 families, some with several children, which was lovely and very dynamic. The relationships built over the past 6 months that I have been with the group have been wonderful with me now seeing a few of our families moving on to the kindergarten. This transition has been joyous to both observe and be a part of. Many of the crafts this term have been easily accessible to the younger hands and we continue to be mindful of this when looking at our planning.



Treasurer's Report (Rosa)

Jacky continues to complete the bookkeeping work for which I am very grateful.

After finishing last year with a loss of about £600, we have finished this year with just over £100 credit.

However, HMRC appears to have overpaid our gift aid claim by about £600 and we may see this glitch corrected in the current year's accounts. Perhaps this serves to highlight just how close the margins are. Having said that, we have a healthy 'buffer' in our accounts such that we could sustain a marginal loss like this for many years.

As with last year, we increased staff salaries in April in line with increases in the national minimum wage. Our staffing costs over the first part of the year were higher than normal due to sick pay as well as pay for covering staff. We have also tended to pay a third member of staff for the Thursday session rather than relying on a volunteer.

Our extra expenditure on wages has been largely offset by an increase in income from fees. A healthy proportion of our session slots have been filled. The funded hourly rate did also increase for the summer term (£4.55 ph; £5.68 for 2 year olds). We have good numbers for the autumn term and a waiting list. We expect both wages and funding to increase next year.

The cost of utilities has come down somewhat from last year's peak. We have spent significantly less on training, equipment and printing.

Accounts accepted: Julian

Seconded: Diane

Election of Officers

Chair: Julian Ritchie

Treasurer: Rosalie Townsend

Secretary: Cassandra Callaghan

Proposed: Diane

Seconded: Jacky

Election of Trustees

Julian Ritchie, Frances MacGregor, Rosalie Townsend and Cassandra Callaghan

Proposed: Diane

Seconded: Jacky

Any Other Business

None

Signed:

Date: