



# AGM Minutes

**AGM: Friday 11th October 2024, 7.30pm – Cobnuts Kindergarten**

## Attendees

Julian Ritchie  
Diane Frewer  
Cassie Callaghan

Rosa Townsend  
Jacky Witt  
Sarah Lowsley

**Apologies:** Anne Gillespie

## Welcome

## Minutes and Matter Arising

Minutes agreed from the last AGM.

## Chairman's Report (Julian)

The highlight of the year was the success of the Kindergarten in the much-anticipated Ofsted inspection in June 2024. An Outstanding grading was given overall and for each of the categories: The quality of education; Behaviour and attitude; Personal development; Leadership and management. The following extracts from the report illustrate some aspects of the high quality of the education offered.

*Staff have extremely high expectations for all children, who are making exceptional progress. Staff follow children's interests and provide exciting activities, such as apple picking in the orchard or planting carrot seeds together.*

*Every moment of children's time at the kindergarten is used purposefully. Staff unfailingly implement their clear intention to give children the skills, resources and motivation to follow their own ideas. As a result, children are engaged and behave exceptionally well.*

The report also explicitly acknowledges the effectiveness and value of the Steiner Waldorf approach to early years education. The result is testament to the skills, confidence and hard work of Diane and the team.

In other regards the year has been one of stability, both in staffing and the work of the Trustees in the Management Committee. The Cobnuts community celebrated the yearly cycle of festivals as usual: Harvest time featuring apple pressing; the Lantern Walk at Martinmas; the Advent Spiral; and May time. Stardust puppet theatre gave a well-received performance of the Rumpelstiltskin fairy story in February.

Looking to next year there is a desire to widen the involvement of the parent body and so we will also hold social community gatherings, which will look forward to the upcoming festivals so that plans can be laid and offers of help received.



## Teacher's Report (Diane)

The number of children attending was less than expected for the Autumn Term '23. We had children who didn't start again in September and a couple of others that moved on all due to circumstances at home and work and not anything connected to the Kindergarten. Eileen, as a third person continued working with us throughout the term. Our numbers rose during the spring term and again in the summer term, with eighteen children on the register, although not all children were enrolled for a full week. The children were ready for play, so much imagination but in ways only open ended play equipment (or actually just things) would support. Who would think that a pair of winter gloves was the mainstay of play outside and inside this year! We had our Ofsted Inspection that went so, so well. We couldn't take it in and we were overwhelmed momentarily when we heard the grade the inspector gave to Cobnuts. Lauren and Eileen were great on the day and really showed their understanding of the children, but let's not forget the children who shone so brightly and of course the management team who make sure that everything is in order for us to operate as an Early Years Setting. We find ourself now with a cohort of much younger children, many with English as an Additional Language (EAL) we have thought about how to deliver our stories and songs to these children but are already hearing little ones repeating phrases such as "indoor time" and "I heard a little mouse one day" although, I do suspect that this little child was ready to go home, but just a little early for that particular activity! I am lucky to have Eileen and Lauren who are friendly, happy and so supportive and understanding of the children, our community and all the whole team at Cobnuts. This feeling is topped up when Anne and Ailish join us. Well we move on in the year welcoming more little children, more nappies, wet socks and sneezes, but please does this last one have to be aimed at us!

## Parent and Child Group Report (Jacky)

The parent and child group has continued to meet every Friday morning during term time at the kindergarten. The number of families attending has ranged from 2 to 10, with an average of 6 families per session.

Several children have moved on from the parent and child group to the kindergarten, with others planning to do so when they are old enough. There is a friendly core group of families attending, with new attendees being welcomed. I have enjoyed running the group over the year.

## Treasurer's Report (Rosa)

I thank Jacky again for her diligent work on the bookkeeping.

We have finished the year with a loss of about £1k. This is a larger loss than last year, where we would have been around £500 down except for a mistake in our favour. In the grand scheme of things however it is not catastrophic and can be covered by savings.

In April we increased the staff salaries again in line with the increase in the national minimum wage (£10.42 to £11.44), which increased our staff sessional rate from £47.00 to £51.50 (9.6%). There was also an increase in funding from the summer term. The new rate is £5.16 ph (£7.55 for two year



olds; increased from £4.55 last year - 13.4%). Based on these rates, we would need to fill 37 slots per week with 3+ year olds to cover the cost of our teacher and assistants' salaries (or 10 children per day).

We need an additional 3 children to cover the cost of another paid adult. This is a slight overestimate because of the higher funding rate for children under three; however, we do also have other outgoings to cover. The committee has agreed that our extra adult is important to the provision, especially while we are skewed towards a younger age group, so we will continue to absorb this cost even while we aren't filling the spaces to cover it. The good news is that we do have enough places available to cover our outgoings - so filling them should be our priority. Charging for extras (e.g. food) is potentially another viable option going forward.

Compared to last year, other costs (e.g. utilities and food) have generally increased.

Accounts accepted: Julian

Seconded: Diane

## Election of Officers

Chair: Rosalie Townsend

Treasurer: To Be elected

Secretary: Cassandra Callaghan

**Proposed:** Diane

**Seconded:** Jacky

## Election of Trustees

Rosalie Townsend, Cassandra Callaghan, Anne Gillespie and Sarah Lowsley

**Proposed:** Jacky

**Seconded:** Julian

## Other Business

Discussion around extra funding income for the kindergarten. Should charges for food be considered. Are there other avenues of funding we could explore.

Thanks were given to Julian and Frances for all their hard work with the kindergarten. We hope they will continue to support and be involved in other ways as they step down from their roles as trustees.