

St Michaels Playgroup

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th March 2017 at 8.00pm

1. Apologies for absence/all present to sign in

Apologies for absence were received from Jason Long.

Those present at the meeting were Sharon Jackson (Manager), Julia Paton (Deputy), Chloe Fitzgerald, Gina Kellett, Suzanne Long, Alison Perrin, Annette Adkins, Jenni Blackford (Chair), Gail Healey (Secretary), Mei Li, Claire Walsh, Kelly Flanagan, Navdeep Shah and Meriem Edouiri.

2. Chair's welcome

Jenni opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming.

3. Matters/updates arising from last minutes

All matters arising were covered in the Manager's report, see no. 5 below.

4. AGM

4.1 Annual Statement of Accounts (Appendix 1)

In Jason's absence, Jenni presented the annual Statement of Accounts. The accounts were examined by all present and there were no questions arising from these. These will now be signed off by the independent auditor (Alex Walsh) and submitted to the charity commission by Sharon/Jenni.

4.2 Presentation of the Trustees Report (Appendix 2)

Sharon presented the Trustees Report for the year ending August 2016. The report was examined by all present and there were no questions arising from it.

4.3 Appoint new committee

Jenni gave a thorough explanation of the role of Trustees and Members, noting that all Members and Trustees need a satisfactory up-to-date and placement-specific DBS. The roles were summarised as follows:

Members

- Anyone wishing to vote on matters affecting Playgroup needs to be a Member.
- This includes voting on the appointment of Trustees and on any changes to the constitution.
- Members are invited to come to General Meetings and the AGM and vote on resolutions put forward by the Trustees.

- Members have a legal responsibility to use their vote in the best interests of Playgroup.
- There are two types of membership: Family and Affiliate.
- Family Membership is for anyone who has a child currently attending playgroup. The term of office for a Family Member automatically ends at the end of the last term their child leaves playgroup.
- A Family Member who wishes to remain a Member after their child leaves can apply to become an Affiliate Member.
- Affiliate Membership is for anyone who has an interest in furthering the purposes of Playgroup as described in the constitution.
- Both Family and Affiliate Members can end their term of Office at any time by writing to the Trustees.
- Family and Affiliate Memberships might also be terminated according to the rules of the constitution (Clause 9.1)
- Anyone wishing to become a Member should make this known to the Trustees. They will then be nominated at a General Meeting or AGM to become a Member and all Members and Trustees will vote according to the rules of the constitution.
- If, following the vote, a Member is appointed, they will be asked to sign an Agreement to become a Member of St Michael's Playgroup Form.

Trustees

- Trustees can only be nominated from Members so anyone wishing to become a Trustee must first become a Member.
- Trustees will be nominated at AGM's only, unless a Trustee has resigned part way through their term of office and a replacement is required in order to maintain the minimum number of Trustees allowed according to the constitution. This is 3 Trustees.
- There must be no less than 3 Trustees and no more than 12. It is advisable to keep membership to 5 or above however, in order to prevent the number falling below three if someone did need to resign before their term of office is finished.
- Trustees should serve for two years and can be reappointed for up to five consecutive terms (10 years).
- The role of a Trustee is to make sure that Playgroup is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit as detailed in the constitution. The Trustees should work with Playgroup Staff to plan and carry out these purposes.
- Trustees should also make sure Playgroup is complying with its governing document, charity law requirements and other laws that apply such as any laws affecting organisations working with children as well as employment law.

- Trustees must always act in the best interests of Playgroup when making decisions and make balanced and adequately informed decisions thinking both for the short and long term of Playgroup.
- Trustees should declare any conflicts of interest and remove themselves from any discussions in which this conflict of interest might affect their decision making.
- Trustees should manage the resources of playgroup and put reasonable safeguards in place to protect resources.
- Trustees should ensure Playgroup is complying with statutory accounting and reporting procedures.
- The day to day management of Playgroup will continue to be carried out by Senior staff ie Sharon and Julia.
- However, they will no longer be Trustees so will be unable to vote on matters and resolutions put forward at General Meetings and AGM's. Rather, they will advise Trustees according to their knowledge and expertise.

An Invitation to join St Michael's Playgroup as a Member was issued.

The following people accepted this invitation and were proposed, seconded and agreed upon by a unanimous vote of the current Trustees: Jennifer Blackford, Gail Healey, Mei Li, Claire Walsh, Kelly Flanagan and Jason Long.

Agreement forms to become a Member of St Michael's Playgroup were signed by Jennifer Blackford, Gail Healey, Mei Li, Claire Walsh, Kelly Flanagan and Jason Long. These were retained by Sharon who will send relevant copies to all members.

An Invitation to become a Trustee of St Michael's Playgroup was issued.

The following members accepted this invitation and were proposal, seconded and agreed upon by a vote of the new Members: Jennifer Blackford (chair), Gail Healey (secretary), Claire Walsh, Kelly Flannagan and Jason Long (treasurer). Each of these members received 4 votes from the pool of other members present at the meeting, apart from Jason who received 5 votes.

Agreement forms to become a Trustee of St Michael's Playgroup were signed by Jennifer Blackford, Gail Healey, Claire Walsh, Kelly Flanagan and Jason Long. These were retained by Sharon who will send relevant copies to all trustees.

It was confirmed that Sharon will hold the register of members and trustees, organise the DBS checks and see that playgroup has an appropriate data protection document.

4.4 Changing Charity Status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Jenni gave a thorough explanation of the proposal to change the structure of Playgroup to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This was summarised as follows:

- This is an incorporated form of Charity which is not a company. This means we will only need to register with the Charities Commission and not Companies House.
- Playgroup will continue to benefit from being a Charity.
- Trustees will no longer be liable for the debts of Playgroup should any be incurred as the organisation will exist as a legal entity in its own right and separate to the board of Trustees.
- The Pre-school Learning Alliance has produced a Model Constitution for Childcare Providers which is the constitution I am recommending we adopt.
- Alliance members who choose to adopt the model constitution in its entirety will gain automatic approval of their governing document on registration with the Charity Commission.
- The Pre-school Learning Alliance has a guide to completing the registration form so if the resolution to convert to a CIO and adopt the Model constitution is passed I will work with Sharon and the Pre-School Learning Alliance to begin the process.
- The process can take up to six months mostly due to the 26 weeks it can take to register with Ofsted so if the resolution is passed we will begin the process as soon as possible and keep Members and Trustees updated of our progress at General Meetings.

A vote on the resolution to become a CIO took place, all 5 members present agreed on this.

A vote on the resolution to adopt the Pre-School Learning Alliance Model Constitution took place, all 5 members present agreed on this.

Sharon and Jenni will progress these changes and update the committee.

5. Manager's report

Sharon thanked all the staff for their continued hard work, especially appreciating the fact that they always go beyond the minimum of what is expected of them.

Playgroup report

It was reported that there are now 27 families on role (29 children) which is a good number. Of these, 15 are 2 year-old funded children and 7 are 3 year-old funded children, the remainder are paying families. 5 children have been invited to join from Easter and their visits will take place over the next week during normal playgroup sessions. Information has been received stating that the Funding Payments will be changing from April 2017 and this will need to be looked at in more detail.

Staffing/Training

Sharon clarified that staffing at playgroup now consists of the manager (Sharon Jackson), the deputy manager with key children (Julia Paton), 3 playgroup assistants with key children allocated to each of them (Chloe Fitzgerald, Suzanne Long, Gina Kellett), a 3-sessions per

week assistant (Alison Perrin) and a one to one support for 3 mornings per week (Annette Adkins).

Termly staff meetings are attended by all staff. In addition, Sharon, Julia, Chloe, Gina and Suzanne attend half termly planning meetings.

Courses attended

Sharon has attended her 'senco' (special educational needs coordinator) training which ran over 4 weeks consisting of 4 afternoon sessions plus 10 hours of independent study. Sharon's documents have been submitted for the accreditation part of the course but she was pleased to report that she has passed.

All staff have completed an online 'prevent duty' training which took about 45 mins.

Annette completed the 'steps' training in December 2016 and all the other staff completed their refresher in January 2017.

Julia attended the 30 hour briefing and both Julia and Sharon will attend the Early Years Network.

Courses to be attended

Two staff will be attending the 'early years' conference at the end of March.

Sharon is going to choose two staff to attend the 'keyperson' training in April.

Sharon and Jenni will attend 'the role of the committee' course in April.

Julia will hopefully be completing the 'senco' course in May.

Annette will be completing her safeguarding course in May.

Julia and Sharon will attend the termly 'senco' briefing.

Sharon will be attending "Do you know your early years setting" course in May.

Sharon will look into other courses for Gina.

Policies

Since the last meeting Julia has updated the 'safeguarding policy' to add in the 'prevent duty'.

Updates are now being considered by Jenni, Sharon and Julia for the 'grievance' and 'disciplinary' policies. Sharon will progress having these checked over by an expert in employment law.

Other News

Sharon reported that she has made an ENF (exceptional needs funding) application for a child which has passed the first panel and she is now awaiting a decision from the second panel as to whether this will be successful.

Arrangements with the new payroll company (Bedfordshire payroll) are working well and the pensions are now up and running. They had discovered a slight error with the staff holiday pay which had resulted in underpayment but this has now been rectified by back payment. This did create a large piece of work but Sharon and the payroll company are now confident that this is all correct.

Jenni has been looking at the staff contracts which historically had been very basic and she has now drafted a new version which is being checked by a qualified human resources person. Jenni will ensure these are sent to the trustees for scrutiny.

Playgroup is currently liaising with Mr Johnston (Head of Margaret Wix School) about the new 30-hour offer to see if a partnership could be possible. The feasibility of this would need to be clarified with Hertfordshire county council and then a survey of parents would need to take place to see how many would be interested or qualify.

Margaret Wix school has increased the rent from £16 to £48 per day. Although this sounds steep, it was noted that this is comparable to other settings and comes with various advantages as playgroup will now be the sole users of the setting. It was questioned whether the fees should be increased to meet this cost but it was decided that this should not be necessary. Additionally, it was noted that the workplace pensions which have now come into effect will have an impact on this year's finances.

Health and Safety

The parking situation around the playgroup setting has remained better since Margaret Wix school have continued to close the gates at drop off and pick up times. This is extremely beneficial.

The outdoor canopy has now been fixed (the winder had snapped) and this was covered under the guarantee.

New door strips have been purchased to enable free flow play whilst still keeping the heat in and the cold out.

Margaret Wix school have installed new mats in all the rooms including those that playgroup uses.

6.Treasurer's report

All matters relating to this were covered in the Annual Statement of the Accounts, see 4.1 above.

7.Fundraising/events report

It was reported that:

- The photography session from October 2016 raised £65 in commission
- The cake sale from October 2016 raised £48.10
- Children in Need, wear something spotty, in November 2016 raised £26
- Christmas 2016 fundraising made £80 (raffle) and £30.80 (cake sale)
- A cake sale in February 2017 raised £26

The money raised at Christmas will be used towards a new bike for the outside space and for sensory toys, a bubble lamp and a wellie rack. The money raised by the cake sale in February will go towards stationary including items such as printer ink, paper, photos and journals.

It was announced that the upcoming events are:

- Friday 24th March – Red Nose Day, wear something red and pay £1
- Week beginning Monday 3rd April - Easter cake sale and raffle
- Friday 7th April - Easter fun morning and bonnet parade – all children will be invited for an indoor picnic, Easter bonnet parade and egg hunt outside, weather permitting. £1 to enter a homemade bonnet and there will be a prize for the best boy and girl bonnet.
- Summer sports day Sunday 9th July – more details to follow

Julia thanked all those involved for their continued support in fundraising for playgroup.

8.Safeguarding/health and safety information

All matters for this item were covered in the Manager's report, see no. 5 above.

9.Any other business

Website

It was reported that playgroup's website has been given a slight overhaul incorporating some new photos.

10.Date of next meeting

The next committee meeting will take place on Monday 12th June 2017 at 8pm.