

ST MARGARET'S NURSERY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE MEETING WAS HELD: **Thursday 9th November 2023**

TIME: **Start 14.00**

VENUE: **St Margaret's Nursery**

1. Welcome & introductions.

In attendance – Jayme Dunigan (JD), Laura Cory (LC), Lorna Willis (LW), Catherine Perry (CP), Kirsty Harper (KH), Elaine Kingston (EK), Victoria Lourenco (VL), Sarah Noceda Stanislawski (SNS), Dawn Richardson (DR).

2. Apologies for absence – Hannah Potter.

3. Agreement of minutes from previous AGM held on 10th November 2022. Previously circulated by email and all agreed.

4. Retirement & re-appointment of Trustees.

The current Trustees are Jayme Dunigan, Kirsty Harper, Lorna Willis, Catherine Perry and Victoria Dean Lourenco.

LW retired but was re-appointed, voted by CP and seconded by KH.

JD retired but was re-appointed, voted by VL and seconded by KH.

5. Adoption of Annual Accounts. As attached - Previously circulated by email and all agreed and adopted. Signed by Lorna, Kirsty and Jayme.

6. Nursery & Trustee Report Read by JD

The last year of the nursery has started to see activities get back to normal after Covid, with more trips happening and the nursery being able to mix with the school.

September 2022 started with low numbers and stayed a low year; this I feel was down to the birth rate of 2020 as it seemed all nurseries had low numbers, some like Kingsdown didn't survive and closed at the end of the academic year. I've tried hard to keep staffing costs low, I was able to do this by using 2 students George who was with us all year, and Ella that started in the summer term.

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We also use bank staff, which enables us to cover without having a fulltime member of staff saving us on wages. We have Ava and Daisy; however, Daisy will not be able to help us anymore.

We were able to go on a few trips last year which I feel makes our nursery stand out from others. From a marketing point of view, it makes us unique as many of the surrounding nurseries don't offer these kinds of activities. Forest School and Beach school was offered to all the children so everyone was able to attend free of charge. We used grants from Dover District Council to cover the cost. This year we were unable to get the same grants so have decided to run this ourselves using the land provided by Tracy Evans free of charge.

Staff Training is all up-to-date. Laura has completed her EYITT training and now is qualified to have 13 children instead of the 8:1 ratio for the 3–4-year-olds. This means that with myself, Katie and Laura in the building we are never below ratio, even though we do not work to this it means in some emergency cases, like if someone goes home sick or staff sickness we are covered. Saving on wages again.

At the end of last term, we had to say goodbye to Tracey Purchase. Tracey decided to retire as she is traveling more, she will still drive the mini buses when possible and volunteer if needed. She is greatly missed after many years of working for the nursery.

With the closure of Kingsdown Preschool there was some monies left over. It was just over £12000 to be split between the collaboration. I would like to use some of the money on a sign for the building, I think with the building looking amazing after the refit it would be the icing on the cake.

As I have just mentioned, the building was completely re wrapped and it is now totally watertight. It looks amazing and I'm really pleased with the work. The builders SPDaniels were professional, very accommodating to all our needs and the finished product was of a high standard. This should stand for several years the only thing we will need to be looking to improve is the roof, however this still has a good life span left.

Fundraising has already started strong this academic year. We have raised just over £800 from the quiz night. Everyone that attended had a really good night and enjoyed the questions, so thank you to the quiz masters. As well as the quiz we held the Jumble sale yesterday which we estimated raised around £1800, we still have fill the bag weigh in.

Myself and Kirsty have applied for a few grants already this year but we have only been able to achieve one from Wicks and hopefully the cost of living from Dover District Council. The Wicks grant will be used in the garden, we are waiting for Ross Purchase to put in his quote to change the end of the garden into an allotment area for the children. The cost-of-living grant is for the visits from Wild Science, they will be visiting whether we get the grants or not.

We have a jam-packed year ahead of us with lots of trips, open days and activities with reception class. Dates of these have been sent out to the parents.

7. Finance Report. Previously circulated by email and read by LC.

Good afternoon, and thank you for giving up your time to attend our AGM. I hope you all have had a chance to look at the accounts I emailed everyone. These were for the period 1st April

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2022-31st March 2023 and they need to be adopted at this AGM by those present. There is a copy here if anyone wants to take a look? Total Income for the year was £141,237. Total Expenditure was £155,687, meaning a Net movement of funds of £-14.5K. The cash in bank figure at the end of the financial year was £131,031.

I've attached a breakdown so that you can compare costs with the previous 2 years.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities (includes depreciation)

	Total 2023	Total 2022	Total 2021
Staff Costs	113,310.00	112,478.00	103,388.00
Nursery Materials & Sundries	1,198.00	1,425.00	1,119.00
Trips	2,873.00	429.00	1,650.00
Food (includes School Lunches)	3,985.00	5,391.00	1,852.00
Staff Training	155.00	2,014.00	799.00
Property Rent	2,850.00	2,852.00	2,843.00
Insurance	1,771.00	1,645.00	1,565.00
Repairs & Maintenance	14,528.00	5,706.00	1,423.00
Security	2,368.00	2,311.00	1,584.00
Play Equipment	508.00	1,320.00	790.00
Telephone	998.00	815.00	956.00
Computer Expenses	2,859.00	3,407.00	3,052.00
Subscriptions & Registrations	427.00	394.00	319.00
Sundry Expenses	541.00	490.00	0
Advertising	572.00	91.00	0
Bad Debts	0.00	888.00	0
Bank Charges	1.00	6.00	5.00
Depreciation of Portacabin	5,795.00	5,795.00	6,294.00
Depreciation of Equipment	312.00	367.00	432.00
Governance Costs	636.00	606.00	606.00
	155,687.00	148,430.00	128,677.00

With the legacy of Covid and the knowledge of reduced child numbers, we were well aware that the financial year ending March 23 was going to be challenging. We were incredibly lucky to be the recipients of donations from the village Jubilee Celebrations and the proceeds from a valiant bunch of parents who completed a commando course on our behalf. The Trustees and Nursery Staff organised a Quiz Night and Jumble Sale. Along with a number of smaller in-house fundraising activities. We were also fortunate to be the beneficiaries of a Parish Council Grant

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and a Dover District Community Grant. All these sources bought in a much-needed additional income of approximately £14K. I would like to express our thanks to our Trustees who work tirelessly behind the scenes for the benefit of the Nursery, without them our Nursery would not exist.

We spent £11.5K replacing the ramps and decking, and £1800 on new heaters. In addition, we spent £4K on staff training. The Trustees & Management understand the importance of all staff training being up to date. In the financial year ending March 2023 staff underwent Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding, E-Safety, Food & Hygiene, Equality & Inclusion, Makaton, Improvements & Standards and Communications & Language. We also supported Individual members of staff to gain their Early Years Teacher Status and Early Years Practitioner Qualifications.

In April 2022 the government increased the minimum wage from £8.91 to £9.50. In order to try and minimise the cost to the charity the management kept a close check on staff hours. When two members of staff left it was decided prudent not to replace them. This coupled with a 4% reduction in staff hours managed to keep the wage bill to just a small increase on the previous financial year.

In April 2023 the government again increased the minimum wage from £9.50 to £10.42 a 9.7% increase. Many nurseries and pre-schools are having problems in recruiting and retaining high quality staff. We realise the success of the nursery depends on having a qualified, valued and committed work force. In order that we continue to retain our staff we feel that paying a fair wage is essential. So, in this financial year we had to increase the non-funded hours to £6 per hour to help cover this increase in costs and have investigated ways of reducing hours without impacting standards. The chancellor recently made announcements that the Living Wage is set to increase to over £11 an hour from April 2024. This coupled with the government's intention to provide "free" 15 hours of funding to all 2-year-olds from April 2024 could prove financially tricky for the Nursery. Calling it "Free Funding" is actually very misleading, it may be free to parents, but it is not for the Nursery. On the contrary it is likely to be an additional cost. As of yet KCC have not yet decided how much an hour they intend to pay us for the free 2-year-old funding. If it less than the £6 we currently charge per hour than the nursery will lose out.

Child numbers for this academic year have been looking promising. Numbers have been boosted by the unfortunate closure of Kingsdown Nursery. Income for Terms 1&2 looks set to be about £45K compared to £32K last year. However, before we get too excited, we have already had considerable expense this year. We have paid £48K on repairs and maintenance. £47.3K of this was on the refurbishment of the outside of the building. Despite endless requests to KCC and numerous grant applications we were unable to secure funding for this so we have had to use reserves that we have built up over previous years to pay for this. I estimate that at the end of this financial year our Income will be about £152K and our expenditure will be about £190K, a net movement of funds of about -£38K. So, the additional money that Trustees, Staff and parents fundraise for us is incredibly important in keeping us sustainable. We will also need to continue to apply for Grants whenever they become available.

We are in the final stages of negotiating a 15-year lease with KCC which hopefully will be completed within the next few weeks. Once the lease is eventually signed this will hopefully reduce costs and lessen bureaucracy and provide greater security going forward.

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If everyone is in agreement, I would like to adopt the accounts at this AGM for the financial year ending 31st March 2023. Once signed and adopted I will file the accounts and annual return with the Charity Commission.

Just before I finish, I would like to say a special thank you to Tracey Purchase. As many of you know Tracey retired from working at the nursery after over 20 years of being involved, whether it was in the early days on the committee or later when she became a much-valued member of staff. We will be forever grateful for the time, love and commitment she has shared with us for over 20 years.

In conclusion, without the continued support from staff, parents, trustees and members of our local community our running costs would have been considerably higher. We will endeavour to foster these good relationships over the coming months. We understand that the current economic climate will continue to bring additional challenges to operating in the childcare sector and the Trustees and Nursery management will have to continue to be prudent in any decision making.

8. Nursery Report. See point 6, Combined Nursery and Trustees Report – Read by JD.

9. Any Other Business.

A few potential fundraising ideas were briefly discussed, including:

- A barn dance – Catherine will start to look at options.
- A Christmas hamper / raffle – Victoria is creating the poster and Jayme and Catherine will start collecting prizes and arranging to sell tickets etc.
- Crowdfunding – A good idea to generate village support and donations, for specific future projects e.g., garden projects or a roof maintenance as and when needed.

10. Vote of thanks to everyone attending.

11. Date for the next AGM – Thursday 7th November 2024 at 2pm.