

Hartest Parish Council AGM 27th April 2016

Hartest Preschool Chairpersons report April 2016

Occupancy

At the beginning of September 2015 we started with an occupancy of 32% which was slightly lower than last year (1%), we are working on advertising and promoting the preschool, and we hope through leaflet drops and promoting by word of mouth we will increase our occupancy, with a prediction of being over the 50% mark by the end of July. At the start of this summer term our occupancy is now at 50% so we should be on target for over 50% due to new starters joining throughout this term.

Fundraising

Over the last year we have held a number of fundraising events. We were invited to take part in 'Harfest' which was family music and beer festival where the preschool and the school joined together a stall which promoted both settings. We hope to take part in this year's event should it go ahead. We raised £85 doing face painting over the two days. Our annual Graduation ceremony last July saw 15 children leave and move on to their first year in various Primary Schools around the county. This event raised £388 due to the sale of framed photographs, and a number of stalls which was again very popular and well supported by the parents.

The Pre-school had their own stall once again at the Hartest Village fete in the school holidays which was manned by Yvonne, Bryony, some very kind parents and volunteers all of whom were willing to give up their VERY wet (again) Bank Holiday Monday to raise around £177.

In November we held the annual Bonfire Night. This was a fantastic event and proved to be extremely successful with a crowd of just over 550 people turning up to watch our wonderful firework display. This in total raised a very impressive £2,800 a record amount over the seven years we have been running this event. Our now annual Pumpkin party was again hugely popular and raised £280, that's £110 more than last year. December saw our Christmas Concert/fair which raised £280.00. Our Easter Eggstravaganza held in the grounds of Hartest Primary school on Thursday 24th March raised £237. The feedback on this event was very good it was a fun event for the whole family and the local community; we hope to run this event again next

year, and extend our thanks to the school for allowing us to use their grounds which was a change to the grounds of The Crown where we usually hold this event.

This year we continued working with Spencer Brown who came to photograph the children, he kindly donated his commission from these photographs which was £70.

January we organised a Music quiz, which is always very popular with all generations of the village and the preschool families, this event raised £600.

We also received a very generous donation again from 'Project 7' of £300. In total this year has seen £5,147 which has been raised from fundraising and donations.

We rely on this very much to enable us to provide good quality learning experiences for the children and also to purchase good quality resources which enables this to happen.

We are hoping to continue with our successful fundraising events over the coming months with graduation, the annual village fete, open air cinema and a music or general knowledge quiz. These events are largely successful due to our pro-active committee and staff, which I would like to thank them greatly for.

Staffing

The staff team remains strong and we are all working together to promote the preschool through advertising, open days and Yvonne dropping in to local toddler group introducing herself and discussing what the preschool has to offer children and their families. We said goodbye to Vicki Litanzios who had been with us for seven years. She left us to spend more time with her family. We are in the process of recruiting a new level 3 practitioner. We have had a few applicants but sadly none suitable for our setting to date.

Staff continue to work tirelessly planning activities and ensuring that the pre-school is an exciting, stimulating and creative environment. We continue to receive positive feedback from all our families through routine questionnaires that are sent out termly.

Links with school

We continue to have good links with Hartest Primary school. Yvonne meets with Mrs Hall (Head Teacher) to discuss ways to include the reception and pre-school in joint ventures. This makes for smooth transitions from pre-school into primary school.

The children enjoyed watching the Christmas Production and Easter service which they were kindly invited to by the Primary school.

Mrs Brown and Mrs Woozley continue to work together and have established a good relationship with the preschool continuing to share resources and have planned dates for the children moving up to the reception class to attend various story sessions and activities, prior to their formal transition in September 2016. Megan and Yvonne took part in 'The mystery reader' session which they both thoroughly enjoyed!

We continue to share the Interactive Learning Diary tool with Oak class which seems to be going really well and has made the report writing transitions much easier for both the preschool and the primary school.

We would like to extend a thank you to Mrs Hall for allowing us to use the school on a few fundraising occasions.

Communication

Facebook continues to remain a positive tool for promoting our pre-school and a great way of involving parents in their child's learning by interacting with the posts and contributing to our planning. This is still monitored closely by Yvonne and the Committee and in keeping within the strict safeguarding guidelines in our Safeguarding and social networking policies.

We also email parents that do not have access to Facebook and send hard copies of information to those parents who have requested that as their preference. We text all parents immediately with any important information e.g. outbreaks of chickenpox.

We do feel that given today's society this does appear to be all our parents preferred method of receiving information.

Committee

I am now in my second year as Chairperson of the Preschool. Deborah Barwick is our secretary and Hayley Kyle is our new treasurer. We also have five other committee members who have all adopted non-executive roles, nonetheless are still very much proactive in fundraising matters.

As a result of the constant change in Committee members we are still looking at different legal structures of Charities, to see if we can secure less trustees for longer terms, as under our current constitution we are restricted having to meet specific criteria with regards to Committee members. We will also look more towards members from the local community joining the pre-school as trustees as we feel this will offer us more security for the future.

Looking forward we need to continue to recruit new children and families into our setting as well as new committee trustee members.

Bryony Thorp

Hartest Preschool Chairperson