

Bradpole Preschool Chair's Report 2020

This is my second Chair's report and when I first thought about what I would write, I thought that this would be rather a different affair, as 2020 has been. BUT, as it turns out, some things remain steadfast: that is our dedicated staff at the Preschool. While this committee year saw the departure of Ruken to begin her teacher training, Preschool have fortunately gained Hannah, who is settling in well and already meeting the many and varied challenges the Preschoolers bring! Throughout the year, it has been my pleasure to talk to Kathryn and the staff and hear how they continue to care and nurture our children in a safe environment. The children are enthusiastic about their time at Preschool and it's clear to see their progress in the documents produced. Despite the challenges presented by the Covid virus, the staff have continued to remain cheerfully engaged with the children and build fantastic relationships. We are very fortunate to have them!

As most of you will know, Bradpole Preschool is not a business and as such, fundraising is a vital element of the committee's activities. This all started promisingly with a record breaking Christmas Jolly event, a fundraising paper based quiz and Fizz Bang Science fun. Innovations of paying online for tickets etc, aimed at freeing up the staff at preschool from this, on the whole worked well. It's also good to remember back to lovely Preschool community events of Christmas Nativity, Christmas Jolly, a Christmas Party for the little ones - that adults attended at the end to see Father Christmas too - and Fizz Bang Science - to a time when we were all safer to be together!

There were exciting plans for other activities, such as the Easter Egg Trail and a curry and quiz night, but unfortunately, all plans had to be stopped.

When the implications of Covid became clear, it was soon evident that something needed to be done, or the Preschool would be in a perilous financial position - the savings would pay the staff wages until October. As you will have seen from the financial summary, during lockdown, government funding continued to be paid, but the fees parents paid to top up hours beyond this halted. This, in combination with the cancellation of fundraising activities, led to a campaign to fundraise in a different way - so a mud kitchen was built and raffled, a crowdfunder page set up and a virtual quiz held, a recipe book was created and treat bags for kids sold.....Thanks particularly go to Ed Bailey and Jemma Battrick, Emily and Harry Driscoll, Macarena Styles and Sianne Page-Smith. Birthday fundraisers from Verity and Emily and Hannah's crowdfunder page along with the efforts of little ones, Ethan and Dexter soon added up too. We received many donations, including a large donation from Gavin Dixon Finance Ltd. Parents and supporters of the Preschool came through and we are so grateful! Emily Driscoll and Jo Hughes also applied for several grants that were available and so the Preschool's future is secure and we are now looking to the future.

I would like to say thank you to the committee for their hard work. Luckily, most of them from this year are happy to stay on board, although we sadly say farewell to Macarena as her daughter is now at school. Now, we need more people to join now for a fresh wave of inspiration and support!

Helen Fry
October 2020