



## Clifton-upon-Teme Nursery Ltd

### Minutes of Annual General Meeting

held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 16.00 Clifton Village Hall

**Present:**       **Members:** Robin Dean (Chairman of Meeting and Trustees), Lesley Dean, Cecilia Dean (Trustee), John Bowden (Chairman of Clifton upon Teme PCC), David Chambers (Worcester Country Councilor, Katherine Poole (Trustee), Alice Fletcher (Trustee), Abi Pethybridge-Court (Nursery Manager), Lottie Silver (Deputy Manager), Tracey Dewis (Financial Controller), Lisa Adams, Phoebe Winnington, Zoe Glackin Stratford  
(11 present – quorum is 10)

### Welcome and Introductions

Robin Dean opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM of the Nursery. He explained that Abi would be giving the Manager report and Tracey the Financial report and that Alice would be doing an incoming Chair report.

### Apologies for absence

Karen Crawford, Head Teacher-Clifton upon Teme Primary School

### Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Robin Dean asked for any comments as to the accuracy of last year's AGM minutes, none made. All members present agreed. They were signed by Robin.

There were no matters arising.

### Chair of Trustees' Annual Report

Robin Dean read the annual trustees report – this is attached to these minutes. There were no queries raised concerning this report.

### Nursery Manager's Annual Report

Abi Pethybridge Court reviewed her report – the full report is attached to these minutes.

Robin thanked Abi and her staff on behalf the Trustees for their considerable efforts in making the Nursery a thriving concern. This concluded with unanimous acclamation.

### Annual Financial Report

Tracey Dewis presented her report – this is attached to these minutes. Robin

thanked Tracey for all her hard work in support of the Nursery.

### **Election of Trustees**

Robin Dean had asked to resign after some years as a Trustee. Alice thanked Robin for all his hard work on the Nursery's behalf. Katherine presented Robin with a bouquet and a card from the staff and children. The Trustees presented her with a signed card and a rose bush.

Robin thanked everyone for their kind thoughts.

Cecilia Dean has asked to resign after some years as a Trustee. She has agreed to serve another year to give remaining trustees time to recruit to her replacement.

Katherine Poole and Alice Fletcher agreed to continue as Trustees for the second of their three year term.

Lisa Adams, Phoebe Winnington, Zoe Glackin Stratford had attended previous Trustee meetings and had agreed to become Trustees. Robin asked each of them to briefly introduce themselves. They were duly elected.

### **Any Other Business**

There was no other business. The meeting was closed at 5.15pm.

# Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

## Report of the Chairperson for the AGM on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Thank you for coming to our AGM.

Five things to put us in context.

- we are charity and the board of trustees are volunteers.
- as a charity, we do not have to make a profit for owners or shareholders, but we do not wish to make a loss.
- Indirectly – we are the biggest employer in Clifton – we have eleven paid staff, and we enable parents of our children to seek gainful employment if they wish.
- Ofsted rules on ratios of staff to children are mandatory and therefore we are not able to make cost savings on our salary bill, although we have discussed waiting lists where we have reached these ratios and having an extra child will require us to have an extra member of staff.
- we are one of the few Nurseries in the area who take babies and we are open 50 weeks a year.

I would say that over the last year I have had a number of sleepless nights about the prospects for the Nursery. I was particularly anxious in September when some of our children moved up to Primary School and are not immediately replaced by children joining us. Having said that things have improved with more children coming forward.

The fact that we are still here is down to challenging work by both the trustees and the staff. I was reading recently that a pregnant lady was looking to book a nursery place for her child and there were no places available until the child would be 2 – this was in a town. We are in a rural setting, and we are not working at full capacity.

What has happened since our AGM last year?

- We lost our previous chair Cate Mawston as she moved away from the area.
- On 9<sup>th</sup> December we had an unannounced re-inspection by Ofsted which was rated as Good – this was after a Requires improvement rating six months earlier. The improvement was due to hard work by Abi and her staff – looking back on the report there was only one item that the Nursery needed to do to improve – “further review the routine to ensure that transitions are prompt and smooth to maintain high levels of focus and engagement for all children.”
- On the same day we had a visit from Harriet Baldwin – our local PM.
- We met with Worcestershire Children First’s Nursery Education Project Manager in August when we were very concerned about our cash flow and a budgeted loss of just over £15,000 against a loss of just over £7,000 in our latest budget spreadsheet. We are meeting with Worcestershire Children First again before Christmas to review our situation.
- The minimum wage rose from £9.50 per hour to £10.42 per hour in April (an increase of 9.7%) – some of our staff are on that rate but those in management or responsibility positions get more but need to receive a similar increase.
- At the budget in the spring, Jeremy Hunt announced a considerable shake up in the funding of Nursery education – we are not clear whether this will allow us to run the nursery on a profitable footing. We are meeting with Worcestershire Children First in January to understand what the new regime means and its timing. Presently our fee-paying parents are subsidising the children who are being funded through the Nursery Education Fund because it is not fully meeting our costs. Furthermore, we do not receive NEF during the school holidays, and this can cause cash flow

problems.

- Section 106 rules have changed to include Nurseries in its considerations so as we understand further new housing is to be built in Clifton, we may be entitled to some of this money. We will be talking to Malvern Hills District Council and Clifton Parish Council about this.

We own the Nursery building but we are needing to conduct repairs and maintenance, and these are becoming more frequent and more costly. At present we do not have any reserves to meet these costs. For instance, the ramp leading to the front door is unsafe and needs repairing. We are heating the building by electricity – this has increased our costs from about £2,400 per year in 2021 to about £5,000 today. Fortunately, we are paying a peppercorn ground rent to WCC.

I have been involved with the Nursery since 2018 firstly as a paid administrator and when the nursery could not afford me as a Trustee. I have enjoyed doing this, but the time has come to hand over to the youngsters and parents. I will continue to support the trustees in a consultant role if they wish.

I have asked Alice to give us her view of the future as she has agreed to take over the chair from me.

Robin Dean

Outgoing Chair of the Trustees of Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

# Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

## Report of the Incoming Chair of Trustees for the AGM on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

I felt it would be worthwhile me also taking a few minutes to share a few thoughts and some of plans for the coming year the new trustees and I have in the pipeline.

Clifton-Upon Teme Nursery and forest school has been an integral part of the Village community for the last 20 years. As a local charity, we were established by the local community to serve the local community. It is our ethos that Early Years provision is the foundation for life, and by ensuring that all our children are nurtured in their Early Years, develop strong relationships, are encouraged to show curiosity and are given the right environment to thrive, our children will grow to be strong, resourceful, and respectful members of our local community.

Our rural day care setting offers a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for children as young as three months, to five years of age, 50 weeks of the year. Set within the grounds of Clifton Upon Teme Primary School, we also run 'Breakfast Club' for the school children providing a safe environment for parents who need the additional flexibility of before school care for their child.

With more parents being encouraged to re-enter the workforce, and the introduction of additional government funded hours, we do believe that there will be increased demand for childcare spaces for children aged two and under and we are excited to work together with our local community to offer the best early years facility we can. However, at this stage with no insight into the new rates of funding it is impossible to see what financial impact this will have on the setting, but as mentioned by Robin we will work closely Worcestershire Children First to filter those new rates when available into our forecast and future business models.

The last few years have brought with them great financial instability for both families and childcare settings alike. As a charity, all our profits are re-invested in the nursery to provide the children we care for, the best facilities, and activities possible. Sadly, we have not been immune to the increasing costs of living, crippling energy bills, increased wages (which we will see again in April) and day to day running costs have seen any past profits dwindle and as a result our reserves to maintain and improve our setting has been quite diminished.

As also mentioned by Robin as of August 2023 our setting was running at a forecasted deficit at the end of this financial year. With the immediate, targeted intervention of trustees we have managed to reduce this deficit, but more work is needed. The new board of Trustees will continue to work hard to reduce costs, increase numbers and overall, remove this deficit, but we need help to do this.

In the past we had been setting aside £70.00 per month for essential building maintenance. However, as a charity we do not have the capital funds to carry out large scale projects such as replacing the ramp which gives us our ability to offer inclusive access to parents and children with disabilities or those needing pushchair access. This is a much-needed asset to our community. We will be looking to engage with the local community, our local counsellors, and Members of Parliament to help secure grants and funding, we are looking to raise a total of £10,000.00 to repair the ramp and carry out additional necessary repairs to the building fabric. We then will be establishing an ongoing maintenance programme to ensure the building is fit for purpose for years to come. With our community ethos in mind, we will award the works to a local business or tradesperson and would like to get these projects under way as soon as possible.

The new trustees and I are a mixture of both parents and non-parents, with varied backgrounds and an expansive range of skills, across management, finance, HR, health and safety, planning, marketing, and

construction. Our mission over the coming year is to build a more robust, sustainable, and secure business model allowing the setting to continue to do what it has tirelessly for the last 20 years, with hopefully a few less sleepless nights for those of us at the helm (my child gives me enough of those).

We are working together to draw up a clear action plan to target all areas of the business from marketing, maintenance, community relationships on a priority first basis ensuring the swiftest turn around.

We intend to further develop our partnerships with the primary school, our local businesses, community groups and the parish ensuring we can best support our children, our wider community.

We have a very simple vision for the future of our nursery, we want to continue to support the families within our community and provide the children in our care with a safe, secure, and nurturing environment to grow and learn.

Alice Fletcher

Incoming Chair of the Trustees of Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

# Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

## Report of the Nursery Manager for the AGM on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

We started off 2023 with Lottie Silver as our new Deputy Manager and SENCo and 29 children on the register.

We had a very intense year last year, ensuring we put lots of focus in teaching and learning and ensuring the environment was set out in a way that would benefit the children's learning outcomes. This year the focus has been to maintain this and to ensure the staff are accessing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to support them moving forward.

We have had 2 new staff join this year. Louisa Cox who is contracted to do 2 full days, Louisa is Level 3 trained in Childcare as well as Level 2 Forest School Lead. We also have Maggie Bueno who comes in 3 days per week to do lunch cover.

Staff continue to have their supervisions and opportunities to have a chat and voice any concerns or ideas.

Inclusion has been a focus for us this year. We have had several children enroll who require additional needs. We have been liaising with outside agencies to ensure we are supporting the children the best way for their individual needs. The journey has also been an opportunity for staff to develop their CPD in a specialist area they had interest in but had not worked in before. With the right interventions and the early support, it has been rewarding to see these children progress.

Developing community links is important to our vision and ethos. We have taken a group of children to the Warm Welcome Toddler group in the village hall a couple of times, and this is something we would like to continue to do going into next year. We have had regular visits to the church with the pre-school children and we have a few events lined up over the next few weeks that also strengthen these collaborations.

In the summer we organised a ground force day and we were overwhelmed by the support and generosity of the parents at nursery as well as the wider community. We had support with gardening, hedge cutting, painting, wood cutting, swing building and several trips to the tip. As well as completing necessary maintenance it was also amazing to see new families in the village socializing, working together, and building their own friendships.

In the summer, the children also took part in a sponsored walk to raise money for resources and a new experience for the children. We raised £407 and the children enjoyed following a map around the village and then coming back to nursery for a drink and a cake. We are grateful to the local businesses that donated to our raffle.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend nursery for a four-week period due to an operation, that meant that forest school had to go on hold. But the children still enjoyed lots of outside learning opportunities. These sessions will start rolling again weekly in December.

Coming into September we hit uncertainty with the sustainability of the setting, being honest with the staff and having to cut their hours back did bring a low staff morale. We had supervision meetings with

them individually and allowed them to air their concerns and listen to their ideas in a safe environment. Actions were taken from these meetings and the staff responded well and became more positive about the future of the setting.

There have been a few maintenance issues at work, and this has also impacted staff morale. Staff put a lot of effort into making sure the environment is safe and secure for the children as well as inviting and engaging. They feel they did not get support to fix the large issues and sometimes don't understand the fact that there just aren't funds available. We are still on an uncertain path and our future focus now is to market the setting and to reach as many families as we can by building our social media platform more effectively. Whilst doing this the management team will continue to observe and assess our teaching and learning and put actions in place if needed to ensure when children come to the nursery, they will receive the best possible opportunities and experiences to allow them to thrive as a unique child. We are ending the year with 29 children on register, we did lose 10 to the school in September.

Abi Pethybridge-Court

Incoming Chair of the Trustees of Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023



# Clifton upon Teme Nursery Ltd

Financial Review 2022-23 for the AGM on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The accounts for the year end June 2023 are all submitted, and a copy is available here for you to look at.

We receive income from parents, and we also receive income from the Government which is called Nursery Education Funding (NEF). The amount of NEF we received in 2022/2023 was £55730.66 compared to 2021/2022 where it was £35861.00 and together with parent funding which was £87994.05 this year compared to £83978.37 has resulted in the total income of £143,724.71.

For those parents who receive NEF, we are suggesting they make a voluntary contribution to help with snacks etc and this has resulted in a £320.00 parent contribution although we now charge extra for snacks and light meals because of the increased prices for food.

We are also registered with Amazon Europe where a small commission is paid, and this has amounted to £198.95.

The total expenditure was £151,126.00 which resulted in a loss of £6882.98.

During Covid, we also took advantage of a Government Bounce Back Loan which we used to improve the nursery, and this still has 2 years to run.

Looking at the 1st quarter of the current year, July-September, we are showing a loss of £6,337 although the NEF is less in these months due to school holidays.

The issue we have going forward is the small increase in the NEF and a large increase in National minimum wage for the 2nd year running. We have increased fees in line with the National minimum wage, but it is the NEF that is currently falling short. It may also be that the parents are waiting for the extra childcare hours on offer from April 2024 before enrolling their children meaning that numbers will not increase much until then.

We are constantly reviewing the budget and the staff and trustees are working hard to market and advertise the nursery with lots of fundraising ideas.

We have also been in contact with Worcestershire Children First to try and find out what the fee structure will be for next year but as, yet nothing has been confirmed from April onwards although they have given us approximate figures which we have entered our budget. They are also carrying out a sustainability report at our request, but we have not had any feedback on this yet.

Ideally, we would like to forecast the next 12 months but without confirmed rates this isn't proving very easy.

We are staying positive and with constant reviews of finances this should help to make any future decisions.

Tracey Dewis  
Company Accountant  
30<sup>th</sup> November 2023