

## AGM 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### Attendees.

Caroline, Julie, Cathie, Alison, Hannah, Gemma, Lorna, Shane, Alicia, Rachel, Lauren, Jessie, John Watkins, Phil Clooney, Chloe Carrington, Sarah Ward, Beth Binns, Vicky Stoddart.

### Apologies.

Kim, Leanne.

### Managers update.

Staffing - It has been an eventful and busy year at First Steps. We said goodbye and wished Sarah Wallis all the best at the end of May 2017. We took on temporary and bank staff to cover sickness and maternity leave. We welcomed Emma Walker into the team in June 2017 and later in that month we took on our apprentice Jessie Williams. In July 2017 said goodbye to Becky as she moved on to pursue her forest school training and putting it to good use. We welcomed back Emma Reeve from her maternity leave in August 2017. We have just said goodbye to Annie Charles this month as she spreads her wings into her next adventure. We would like to give a warm welcome to Kim Nutting who is starting with us of immediate effect.

Training-Elaine Belcher completed her level 3 team leader in November 2016

Lucy Stanley completed her level 3 in team leading in July 2017

Lauren Moore is well on her way to completing her level 3 team leading training.

I have been doing my level 5 managers training and hoping to complete in the new year 2018.

Jessie has started her level 2 in childcare.

Emma Walker is interested in starting her level 3 training.

Well done everyone on your efforts ladies, to continually improve your knowledge and skills.

As a team we at First Steps are motivated and continue to strive to work together to provide an environment that children are really flourishing, learning and developing new skills.

Thank you!!

The staff group continue to be encouraged by short training courses which enhance their skills to provide more and more great childcare ideas at First Steps.

50 years celebrations - in 2018 the playgroup will of been running for 50 years, we are in the process of organising some exciting events, to include as many people who have been involved in First Steps over the years as possible.

Outgoings and fundraising - This year we have been on a variety of trips including visits to the Baptist Chapel, St. Giles Church and a visit to St. Giles Day Centre, visits to the park. All these visits have given the children learning opportunities and to have fun! We would like to thank the parents who keep volunteering to support the trips we arrange as without this we wouldn't be able to give your children these fantastic experiences.

We have had a lot of various fundraising activities this year which have proved to be a big success.

The Setting - We have just had 31 children transfer to local schools (July 2017) and now have 50 children on role this term. We do have some available spaces but have children on the waiting list to start once they are 2 years old.

We have had very successful stay and play days / evenings, where the feedback has been very positive!!

Looking ahead to the next year we aim to keep improving the setting by implementing new ideas and activities from the parents and children.

The other area we are developing in is by using more peer and paired observations so we can closely monitor our own development including our teaching skills. This will only enhance the quality of First Steps further so we can provide the best safe learning environment we can for all the children we care for at the setting.

We are very excited to have started the healthy tots programme and hoping to get an accreditation for this in the future. You will be seeing more physical play activities, healthy eating and emotional wellbeing.

Looking forward to the next twelve months. I would like to thank all the staff for their continued hard work and support & volunteering their time to support fundraising events, because without these events we would struggle to keep sustainable. Also the time given to buying resources, making play dough and researching ideas for interesting learning opportunities for the children. It is all really appreciated!

Thank you to the committee for volunteering their time to run First Steps, because without you there wouldn't be this excellent facility for us staff, the children and their families of the local areas.

A big thank you to all our committee leavers, Shane Budby, Kim Adcock, Leanne James.

A special thank you to Caroline Macherczyk & Julie Hubble for supporting First Steps for the last 3 years.

### Chairs update.

The 2016/2017 year has been a year of many changes for FSP.

We have said farewell to a few staff members and also welcomed some new faces, and some returning faces, to the team.

During the last year, I haven't spent as much time in the setting as I did in the previous year but I have still been in enough to recognise the fantastic efforts that all the staff continually contribute to make FS the wonderful setting it is.

In the last year, the 30 hour funded initiative has come into effect. This has had a massive impact on us as a setting, including how we offer the places we have available for children - for example opening the Monday afternoon session up to all ages, not just those that will be attending primary school the following academic year.

This funding initiative looks to be very good financially for FSP as we try to keep our fees affordable anyway, and with opening for more sessions and making all sessions accessible to all ages, hopefully we will begin to see the benefits in the near future. However, for a true picture of the financial impact, we will have to wait another year to be able to have a reasonable period for comparison. I would like to thank the staff for all the extra hard work they have put in during this transition to 30 hours. Not only does it mean an increase in children in the setting, but dependant on the mixture of children in attendance on any particular day, it can be quite challenging at times - which I have witnessed myself.

Online learning journeys, Tapestry, have now been in use for well over a year and are still being well received by parents, and the staff are now able to use this platform more smoothly. I'd love to be able to say seamlessly but as is always the case with technology, not everything always goes to plan! However, any hiccups along the way are dealt with promptly and with the minimum of fuss.

Unfortunately, we haven't managed to make any further progress in the outside area during the past year - due in part to issues with the wall, which are beyond our control. However, the kitty for the

garden project remains to be spent; it's awaiting some fresh ideas from the new committee and staff members.

2018 sees FSP hitting the big 50!! It takes a lot of hard work from the staff members and the committee to keep a small charity such as FS running for that long - so massive congratulations are due to all who have been, in the past, are currently, or will be after tonight!! You have or will, all play an incremental part in nurturing our setting and keeping it close to the heart of our local community.

This year sees a few members of the current committee leaving and some new faces joining. Although this can be worrisome for staff and new committee members alike, it is essential to keep fresh faces and ideas coming in, to help FS thrive going forwards into the future. And the new members can't be any worse than me, can they?!

On a personal note, this is my third and final year as chairperson. I have learnt so much during my time, it has de been a learning curve! About management, childcare, the efforts that people will go to and put in for something they truly love, and about myself.

As a parent, and I'm sure most of the committee will second this, I really want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the staff at FS for the part you have played in helping to raise my children. I know a lot of people view childcare as just looking after a few kids, but seeing it from this side, I know it's a lot more than that. You don't, and haven't, just looked after my children. You have cared for them like your own whilst they were under your care, more like a gaggle of Aunts. The term 'childcare practitioner' just doesn't cut it when it comes to you ladies. If you see my children in the street, every time you stop and make the effort to ask about their lives and what they're enjoying at school. You have helped them to develop from the quiet, shy and anxious children that didn't want to take their coats off because it meant they were staying, into children who are happy, clever (if I do say so myself), confident in themselves and

their abilities and (mostly) kind to others, little men they have become. I'd also like to lay their attitudes at your feet too but I know that is all me!! It's like mini-clones when they get mad. For sure, Vincent would be back here in a heartbeat if he was allowed. Knowing that my children were safe and happy here, made leaving them a lot easier to do - especially when it came to leaving Isaac, as not only was he my first born, he was also very anxious when he first started.

To the committee as it still stands, thank you for your support over the past few years. You have all been fab at regularly attending meetings and contributing at fundraising events, and have never failed to help me when I've asked. To those leaving, I wish you all the best for the future and don't be a stranger. To those starting, don't panic!! The team here are fab. If you feel out of place or overwhelmed, just speak up. We've all been where you are, and the remaining committee members will help you out if you need it. And remember, without people like you making the effort and giving your time, FSP would not exist. I'm going to miss you all.

#### Treasurers update.

Coming to the end of my first year as treasurer I have seen so many changes it has been hard to keep pace. A HUGE thanks to Alicia for managing the day to day administration through such changing times.

The introduction of the new Minimum Wage proved difficult and hard decisions had to be made on wages. Nobody had a wage reduction but it was disappointing that we could not maintain the uplift system which differentiates staff based on qualifications and experience. At one stage we had to borrow from the reserve account to pay one month of wages expenditure, this is how close we got to having to close for financial reasons.

That said, the introduction of the 30 hours Government funding proved excellent news for First Steps. Whilst the news reports

were bleak with many other nurseries and playgroups predicting closure, it has been good for us, mainly as our standard fees remain relatively low. It did mean some changes in working practise and working hours but it has made a huge difference to our financial position, helped by high numbers of children attending. We were able to buy new uniforms for the new school year in September 2017 which boosted staff morale and from October 2017, we were able to reintroduce the uplift system for wages which was well received.

Unfortunately Alicia inherited a backlog of uncompleted work on the month on month income and expenditure data and each time she has tried to get on top of this, yet another change such as the ones outlined above has happened. This means we still do not have a full month on month comparison but that said, some changes were so huge that comparison to previous year to date numbers would be almost useless. Now that things have settled a little, hopefully we can get back into a routine of having regular financial data on which to forecast and make decisions. Whilst snapshots have been produced by Alicia, these need to be taken in the context of a variable timescale for Government funding income which comprises such a major part of our income. On expenditure, wages remain by far the greatest expenditure averaging 87% over the last full financial year.

There will be the challenge of a new minimum wage introduction in April 2018 but until we see the proposed rates we cannot judge how this might affect us. Government funding may also change of course.

From a shaky start I believe we are now on a much better financial footing but still need to be wary of expenditure to ensure we remain that way.

### Resignations.

Alison has received letters of notice of resignation and Alison accepts the resignations of Caroline, Julie, Shane, Leanne and Kim.

#### Applications.

Chair position, Beth Binns.

Vice Chair Position, Phil Clooney.

Alison nominated Beth as chair and Hannah seconded.

Alison nominated Phil Clooney as Vice Chair and Hannah seconded.

Secretary, Chloe Carrington.

Hannah nominated Chloe Carrington as secretary and Lorna seconded.

Sarah ward, Vicky Stoddart and John Watkins to join committee as committee members.

Gemma nominated Sarah Ward and Lorna seconded.

Gemma nominated Vicky Stoddart and Lorna seconded.

Gemma nominated John Watkins and Lorna seconded.

#### Any other business.

All committee members need to complete DBS, EY2 form.

All new committee members need to read code of conduct and roles and responsibilities.

Ofsted need to be notified of change of committee members.

Vicky to prepare new board for in setting of the new committee, all members to pass over photo and statement to Vicky.

Email addresses of new members to be shared between new committee.

All new members to take relevant paperwork along with ID into bank.



Date and time of next committee meeting.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30pm at the old school hall.