

Little Fishes Pre-School (Brackley)

Annual Report of the Trustees May 2022

The Trustees

Denise Smith (Chair); Peter Kidger (Secretary); Ian Timmis (Treasurer);
Pat Cory; Yasmeen Epps; Marian Utley.

For any questions on this report or to communicate with the Trustees, please contact the Secretary, Peter Kidger.

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Annual Report of the Trustees

On 01 September 2021 the Charitable Incorporated Organisation Little Fishes Pre-School (Brackley) assumed responsibility for the overall management of the Pre-School, which had previously been a sub-organisation of Brackley Baptist Church. The pre-school is now a legally separate entity to the Baptist Church, although the Church are continuing to support the work of the Pre-School including providing the dedicated premises on a rent-free basis. We are also grateful to the church for meeting the legal costs associated with the change.

A group of Trustees were appointed, and they have the overall responsibility for ensuring that Little Fishes is run and managed in accordance with its purposes and the requirements of the Charity Commission. One of the things the trustees have decided to do is produce an Annual Report to be made available to parents, members of the church and any other interested parties. This is the first such report.

The past year has been a positive one for Little Fishes despite the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic. At the beginning of the Summer Term 2021, legal restrictions started to ease, but then there was a re-tightening of requirements later in the year. The staff have had to adjust both to what is happening in the community and to what has been required by law. For much of the year there has been regular testing for all staff, extra cleaning of rooms and equipment and restrictions on access for parents. Well established features of the school year such as the summer term celebration and the Christmas nativity play had to be scaled back or cancelled. And then at the end of the February half-term, the pre-school was closed for the first time because of Covid cases amongst the staff, although thankfully this was just for two days. Overall, it has been a challenging year for the staff.

We are pleased however to report that the number of children attending Little Fishes has remained constant, and that feed-back from parents has been positive. Our parents are as important to us as the children, and we have appreciated their support, in providing additional things that the pre-school can use, in participating in money raising activities and in helping with some of the craft work.

In 2020, Little Fishes introduced regular afternoon sessions and lunch clubs. During the last year we have seen the number of children attending afternoon sessions grow, and this extended day is now an established part of what we are offering.

We continue to look for ways in which we can improve our facilities to help in the social and educational development of the children. One current project is developing and partly covering the outdoor space so it can be used for as much of the year as possible.

In the summer Sarah Anderson stepped down from the roles of Deputy Manager and SEND coordinator, but she remained on the staff as a practitioner. Vicki Walton was appointed as the Deputy Manager and as SEND coordinator. In the autumn our Admin Officer Sally Prescott moved on to a new job in a local school, and her place was taken by Suzanne Coles. The Trustees are very grateful to all the staff for their dedication and effort, especially during the recent trying times. It is our staff who make the pre-school a safe and loving environment for the children.

Covid related legal restrictions have come to an end in England. However, we are aware at the time of writing this report that there are still cases of people catching the virus in Brackley and so as we all learn to live with covid we will continue to do all we can to minimise risk to the children in our care so that they are able to continue to learn new things, develop different skills, and just enjoy coming along to Little Fishes.

Financial Report

Little Fishes' financial year is the academic year, and this report is for the year ending 31 August 2021. Shown below is a summary statement of receipts and payments for the year.

The summary refers to transfers from/to other funds. These are reserves for various contingencies or sums of money designated for particular uses. They are held by Little Fishes in its bank account and are not payments from/to other organisations. The funds include one that holds money from fund raising and donations. That fund stands at £3,794.

We are pleased to report that income exceeded expenditure in the year to create a surplus of £3,149.96. Given the challenges of operating through the Covid pandemic this was a remarkable achievement. The trustees decided to create a new fund to finance the building of an outside shelter for the children, and to transfer the surplus into this fund.

The main funding of Little Fishes comes from the Local Authority, and this changed from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) to West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) during the year, although this did not affect the funding. The Council grant was £44,405, an increase of £13,672 on the previous year due to increased numbers of children. There was a similar increase in fees from parents. We employed an additional member of staff for the year to meet the needs of a Special Needs Child, and the Council gave an additional grant for that purpose.

As a result of COVID-19, external fund-raising events such as the Santa Run were cancelled in the financial year 2020-21. However, we were able to make use of the Job Retention scheme and so continue to pay all staff even when the number of children reduced. The funding from NCC continued to be based on the number of children registered even when they were not all attending because of the virus. Thankfully fund-raising events have returned in 2021-22.

Summary Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 August 2021

	2020-21	2019-20
Receipts:		
Main income - fees	10,606.80	4,460.00
Main income - NCC / WNC child funding	44,404.85	30,733.29
Main income - NCC / WNC additional funding	0.00	0.00
Supplementary income	232.37	2,611.16
Transfers from other funds	195.79	1,000.00
	<u>55,439.81</u>	<u>38,804.45</u>
Payments:		
Staff costs	47,747.58	35,886.70
Running costs	3,010.58	1,480.42
Depreciation of fixed assets	0.00	0.00
Other expenditure	579.31	169.27
Transfers to other funds	4,102.34	672.58
	<u>55,439.81</u>	<u>38,208.97</u>
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	0.00	595.48
Balance brought forward	<u>10,599.59</u>	<u>10,004.11</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>10,599.59</u>	<u>10,599.59</u>