

Report for Stowupland Parish Council Meeting – 18 May 2022

Good evening, my name is Victoria Freer, and I am the Chairperson of Stowupland Pre-School. I am joined by Sarah Faliveno, our Secretary. Thank you for your invitation this evening. We are here to deliver the report on behalf of the setting.

Our Preschool continues to be a thriving asset for the local community and surrounding areas.

The last few years haven't been easy. Like everyone, we had to adapt quickly to a new way of operating once COVID hit and numerous lockdowns and regulations changed and eased. I am pleased to report that due to the excellent work of our Manager, Kayleigh Simpson, and her fantastic team, we were able to quickly adapt and open for key worker children, with all the necessary procedures, risk assessments and policy in place to keep staff, parents, and children safe.

Throughout the pandemic, these necessary arrangements meant that we were able to stop any outbreaks of COVID happening within our setting. It hasn't always been easy to manage but we would like to thank parents for their understanding and patience in helping us by following the procedures we set out.

Looking to the present day, I am pleased to report that we are at full capacity, with a waiting list in operation. We feel this is a real testament to the setting we have and our excellent reputation. On the 22nd June, we are hosting our first open day where prospective children and parents can come and visit the preschool and see what we have on offer. We are all really looking forward to welcoming families into the setting so they can see first-hand the excellent facilities we have on offer.

We feel very fortunate that our setting is in such a beautiful environment. Our outside space has really grown and expanded these last few years – and this is down to the work and support we have received from Cllr Keith Welham and local groups in the area. We have loved watching the children enjoy the wooden pirate ship, reading in the story hut and having the independence to retrieve bikes from our new bike shed. Our inside space has also had a revamp, again with thanks to Cllr Welham and Cllr Green, from their locality grants. As a small charity, we rely on grants and fundraising to help us to continue to provide the rich environment necessary for our children to flourish and grow before heading to school. So thank you again to Cllr Welham.

This time of year is always extremely busy for us. We are in the process of supporting those children who will be leaving us to start School in September. It is always a bittersweet moment; saying goodbye to those children but also knowing how they will thrive with their start at School. Before the children leave us for the Summer, we will be throwing them a leavers party with lots of fun, games, and food.

After the summer holidays, and a much-deserved break for our staff, we shall return to the setting ready to greet our new children and families and welcome back some of our current children.

As someone who took on the role of Chairperson only eight months ago, I continue to be bowled over at how much time, hard work and commitment is involved by Kayleigh and the other staff members in running such a vital service for many families in the area.