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| **Name** | **Role** |
| Joanna Blunden | Pre-School Manager |
| Kirsty McIlwee | Chair |
| Samantha Davies | Secretary |
| Loretta Webb | Secretary replacement |
| Heather Isherwood | Treasurer |
| External Agency – Peninsular  | HR |
| Phillipa Irving | Vice Chair |
| John McIlwee - apologies | Health & Safety |
| Julie Watterston - apologies | Holding Trustee |
| Peter Sullivan - apologies | Holding Trustee |
| Ann Brigden - apologies | Holding Trustee |
| Michelle Law | Colleton Primary School Head Teacher |
| Stephanie Robilliard | Parent and Pre School Administrator |

 **MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**of the of the Little Acorns (Colleton) Pre-School CIO (‘The Charity’)
will be held online via Teams on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 8pm

**Chair:** Kirsty McIlwee

**Agenda**

1.      Welcome and apologies

2.      Chairs report

3.      Managers’ report

4.      Finance report

5.      Fundraising

6.      Holding trustees

7.      Committee changes and voting

8.      Thank you and Prizes

9.   AOB

1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming those present, with each of the committee and the holding trustees introducing themselves. A quorum was present for the meeting.

1. **Chairs Report**

Kirsty began by introducing this as Little Acorns second virtual AGM and asking for any questions to be added to the chat box which will be addressed at the end. Kirsty added that Heather has attached the AGM booklet onto the chat for anyone to look at during the meeting.

The Chair began by summarising what a different and complex year it has been for the pre-school, and expressing a massive thanks to the Little Acorns team, continuing to work tirelessly providing a full academic year without any need for closures. They have worked so hard, and I am so proud and impressed with what they have achieved in a year. It was not easy at all. We have had some challenges, and this has contributed to our pressures and has financial implications.

However, we managed to continue to move to become a charitable organisation. We are now known at The Little Acorns (Colleton) Pre School CIO and a lot of hard work went in to that process - Lisa Barclay helped greatly in ensuring that happened, thank you. Whilst we were doing that the pre-school were busy imbedding the new way of learning ‘in the moment planning’. We have also employed an external agency called Peninsula to provide HR, Legal and Health and Safety support, as well as an employee assistance programme to provide staff with easy access to well-being support. We are currently in the process of moving across to a payroll company to deliver the pensions and payroll services.

Over the next year we are looking to do less COVID management and more getting back to what we used to do as a committee and a lot more fundraising activity.

I would like to say a special thank you to Jo Blunden, our pre-school manager. She has again surpassed expectations and truly embedded herself as pre-school manager for Little Acorns. You have worked so so hard in such difficult and unexpected circumstances.

Kirsty thanked Sam Davies for her work as The Little Acorns secretary, whose twins are now attending Polehampton Infants and will hand the Secretary baton over to Loretta Webb.

Heather Isherwood has stepped down from the Treasurer role due to personal reasons and a demanding family life, but thanked the Committee for the opportunity.

1. **Managers’ Report**

Jo started by discussing staffing which has had quite a few changes for the last academic year. We said goodbye to Charlotte, Sonia, they both went on to local schools to become teaching assistants. And also Anouska and Sam left us as well.

We have welcome to the Pre School, Lee, who is our level 2 apprentice, Steph as our lovely administrator, Maria who is our new deputy manager(one of two deputy’s) and Kim who has joined as a level 3 childcare practitioner.

Jo explained that over the last year we have had to treat the decking to make sure it wasn’t slippery anymore, we also spent money fixing our sheds as they needed some TLC.

Our annual events were obviously greatly reduced due to COVID, however, we had a lovely highlight at the beginning of last year, which is when Ofsted came to visit to re-register Little Acorns as a CIO, it really was a positive experience, quite stressful at the time(!) but it was great to have an inspector come in and see what we were doing. They were very impressed with our activity and how we were dealing with the pandemic, quite a confidence boost and lovely reassurance that we are doing things right.

We held a lot of our other events on Zoom, we were determined to have Christmas parties and meetings for parents in readiness of children starting school. We managed to get the photographer in to take some school photos done of the children outside, which was lovely. We have held two forest mornings in the Colleton school fields, thank you to Mrs Law for lending us your field! We held a sports day although parents couldn’t attend, but that was a success, we had a Bertie slippers party for our leavers, which was held outside, but it worked out very well and we managed to have a stay and play for our new starters, which the previous year was a difficulty.

Moving on to COVID, we had to start the year in bubbles, we still had two bubbles running from the previous academic year. The previous year’s children started and settled at the beginning of term prior to introducing any new children to the preschool, which meant that everyone started a lot later than normal, but it worked and was worth doing for the children.
The building was scheduled to be re-treated during the Easter holiday but this had to be postponed but was completed during the summer holiday.

The after school club and early drop off were low attendance but the families needed the session so we were expected to and felt we should remain open for them.

We didn’t have any COVID cases during that year. Whatever we were doing was working so it was all good.

We were able to move into one bubble from Easter term after the Easter holidays, that was a very positive term for all. Lots of changes but the children managed to cope amazingly well. I need to thank the staff because they have all been absolutely amazing, they have worked tirelessly to keep the pre-school clean, and still are!!

Thank you also to the parents, for letting us send children home when we needed to, it has been a very frustrating time, but we have got through it!

1. **Fundraising Report**

We weren’t able to carry out our normal fundraising events as we normally would. But we were still able to raise over £1,000 through small events dotted around the year. A large proportion of that was donated by Nick Wheeler Property Maintenance who, just after Christmas does the Christmas tree recycling service, which I know he is doing again this year. It is very much appreciated.

Our virtual parties, plant sales, Easter egg decorating, dress up days, raised £493.30p which is a fantastic figure. And the sale of the Christmas DVD of the children’s singing and dancing raised £65 and the raffle was £203. We managed to raise £333 through easy fundraising and Amazon smile donations. We will be encouraging that more and more. We also had some lovely leavers donations from parents, thank you to the Barlow family and the Harding family who donated some money, and also thank you to the Robinsons who donated some lovely wobble boards, that the kids love.

1. **Finance Report**
2. **Finance Report**

As can be expected, we have had a difficult financial year. A lot of the things that Jo has mentioned has had an impact on the pre-school’s finances.

At the time of writing, we are looking at a deficit of £27,841. Which is £46,000 less than we were last year. There have been a lot of extenuating circumstances that have led to this point. Most of these are unforeseen costs; setting up the pre-school, buying new equipment that could be cleaned, PPE. The big difference between this year and last year is that we didn’t have any government assistance. The previous year we were given a grant from the government to be able to keep the pre-school in operation. So not only did we not get the grant, we lost income in terms of our fundraising and our fees because we had starters joining later in the year. Due to having two bubbles we had to have more staff working than we normally world to cover the number of students that were in the setting.

So, the fee income is largely in line with what we had charged the year before, but the differences are in our staff costs due to the requirements for bubbles and extensive cleaning. Our payroll supplier also had not been transparent, and we discovered they had been holding £12k which was reimbursed after this year's AGM.  So, where our operating costs looked as though they were £12,000 higher than they were the year before this was not actually the case due to the reimbursement from our former payroll supplier.  Premises costs were increased due to maintenance on the buildings, fencing and decking, but our biggest expenditure was our staffing costs and a lot of that is to do with employing more staff.  A new administrative staff member, a new deputy and also Kim.  In terms of fundraising, we’re down £2,200 from the year before, which is due to not being able to fundraise due to COVID restrictions.  The biggest increase was in expenditures.

We have invested in a new HR programme called Peninsula which has helped streamline the HR processes for the pre-school which is absolutely necessary for running the pre-school. We have invested in new iPad’s and platform for the pre-school to be able to communicate with parents. The previous portal was not user friendly and tricky to communicate, now it is much easier. So a lot of those are one off costs that won’t need paying in the next few years. Despite all of this deficit, our current asset that we have £81,846, in terms of cash at the end of the year we had £125,340, so despite the fact we are operating on a deficit, we as a pre-school are not in huge amounts of financial trouble, but we need to reign our spending in. We are currently discussing, as a committee, ways we can do that. We are in a healthy position to move forward and know where we can make savings.

A few ideas of where we are planning to make savings are:

Early drop off is an area which we are currently losing money, mainly due to numbers and staffing costs - we have to have a Manager or Deputy member of staff on site. To break even we need to have 5 children, currently we have 2 children a day, although on a Tuesday it is 4 children. It is running at a loss, and we have made a difficult decision to close the early drop off. However, Colleton have been able to host the children and continue the service. We will be working with the school to enable for early drop off to continue, from January 2022. Thank you very much Mrs Law!!

Another cost which has been a bit of a shock has been the consumables. We worked out that the cost is £6,000, £1,500 of that is PPE. That’s over 200% increase from the last year. We are working very hard to decrease those costs as much as we can, finding cheaper cleaning products from alternative sources etc. But effectivity those costs and particularly with the new variant, we are not going to be able to reduce the amount of cleaning or PPE that is required.

Heather thanked everyone for welcoming her into the Committee. Kirsty thanked Heather for her time and hard work for Little Acorns and wished her all the best for the future.

1. **Holding Trustees Report**

Holding Trustees are Julie Watterston, Peter Sullivan and Ann Brigden.

Ann Brigden has been kindly looking into the lease for the pre-school. We have 9 years left of the 20 year lease, Ann has been looking into it early to be prepared. Has been liaising Wokingham Borough Council to begin discussions about the lease ending in 2031. They wanted to explore the option of extending the lease or looking to purchase the building, to ensure the premises remain in the hands of the parent management committee as a privately run school and not become property of the Wokingham Borough Council. The council have advised that there are currently no plans afoot to alter the status of the preschool, but it’s a bit premature to discuss the outcome at the moment. The building trustees have suggested, is that they set a building funds account for future use, so that the money is put aside. Jo and I have discussed and it is a fantastic idea, we need to work on the deficit first, but fair to say that once we get through COVID, we have it in mind for the future.

1. **Committee changes and voting**

**7.1 Retirees**

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| **Name** | **Role** |
| Samantha Davies | Secretary |
| Heather Isherwood | Treasurer |

**7.2 Vote**

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| **Name** | **Role** | **Nominated** | **Seconded** | **Passed** |
| Loretta  | Secretary | Samantha Davies | Kirsty McIlwee | Yes |

Kirsty thanked Sam and Heather, who are stepping down from the Committee and gave each lady a thank you a bottle of sparkling wine from Stanlake Park wine estate.

Kirsty finished by thanking Jo as pre-school manager, Jo’s ideas for the pre-school are forward thinking and are really moving the pre-school forwards, which is very exciting.

1. **Thank you and Prizes**

Kirsty went on to announce the winner of the Rachel Blackwell award 2021 It was a very very tricky decision as there have been so many people who have gone over and above throughout the past year, even longer!

We decided that it should go to Jamie Hindle McMorris because of all her amazing hard work to do with HR, but particularly furlough and most recently in this last year, still doing the staffs pensions even though her little person left!

1. **Any other business**

Recruitment for committee roles that will become vacant (Treasurer) has been advertised, Heather suggested that someone with accountancy background would be advisable.

There being no further business or questions raised, the chair declared the meeting closed. Thanked the attendees for coming and the meeting concluded at 9.11pm

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| Chair signature: | Kirsty McIlwee | Date: | 14/12/2021 |