

Annual General Meeting
of Voluntary Management Committee
of Abington Pre-school and
Abington Community out of School Club (GAPS)
Google Meet
on Thursday 8th April 2021 at 6pm
Minutes

NAME	PRE SCHOOL / GAPS / ROLE	GA PS	PS	ATTENDED / APOLOGIES
Wendy Morgan	Chair/GAPS Parent	1		y
Gina Warren	Treasurer / GAPS Parent	2		y
Selena Sephton	Secretary / GAPS and Pre School Parent	3	1	y
Alison Morris	County Council Representative Business and Governance			y
Angela Lindsay	Pre School Manager and GAPS Deputy			y
Georgina Blyth	GAPS Manager			y
Louise Woolcott	Finance Manager			y
Ruth Beach	Administrator			y
Yasmine Wilkie	Pre School Deputy			y
Ryan Moclair	Holiday Club Manager			apologies
Alan Cooke	Great Abington Primary Board of Governors Representative			y
Jade Ooi	GAPS parent	4		y
Rachel Clay	GAPS parent	5		y
Betrand Flipo	GAPS parent	6		y
Ellie Tolchard	GAPS Parent	7		y
Wendy Williams	GAPS Parent	8		y
Emma Webb	GAPS Parent	9		y
Alice Kirk	Pre School and GAPS Parent	10	2	y
Josh Kirk	Pre School and GAPS Parent	10	2	y
Emma Morgan	Pre School Parent	11	3	y
Megan Ayres	Pre School Parent and GAPS Parent (Holiday Club)	12	4	y

Rebecca Elston-Green	Pre School Affiliate			y
Kelly Kumaranthe	Pre School Parent			apologies
Emma Morris	Pre School Affiliate and GAPS Parent (Holiday Club)	13	5	y
Adriaan van Leeuwen	Pre School Parent and GAPS Parent (Holiday Club)	14	6	y
Emma van Leeuwen	Pre School Parent and GAPS Parent (Holiday Club)	14	6	y
Dorota Fabrykiewicz	Pre School Parent			apologies
Michal Fabrykiewicz	Preschool parent			apologies
Sophie Ellis	GAPS Parent	15		y
Amaris Victory	Pre School Parent and GAPS parent (Holiday Club)	16	7	y
Natalie Hanlon	Duxford Preschool			y
George Hadfield	Pre School and GAPS Parent	17	8	y
Emily Hadfield	Pre School and GAPS Parent	17	8	apologies
Dace Prizevaite	Pre School Parent		9	y
Wanqu Huang	Pre School and GAPS Parent	18	10	y
Kay Satchell	GAPS Parent	19		y
Lyndsey Drewett	Pre School Parent		11	y
Dean Fisher	Pre School Parent		12	y
Stuart Haynes	Pre School Affiliate			y
Ellen Stokvis	GAPS Parent	20		y
Neil Griffiths	GAPS Parent	(1)		y
Staff:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Harriet Allen <input type="checkbox"/> Patricia Guillermo <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Last <input type="checkbox"/> Caroline Mumisa <input type="checkbox"/> Leah Wise				

Agenda Item	Pre School	GAPS
Welcome and introductions (Chair)	Introduction by Chair and description of roles for committee and staff Alison Morris attending in advisory roles Alan Cooke (school rep)	Introduction by Chair and description of roles for committee and staff Alison Morris attending in advisory roles Alan Cooke (school rep)
Apologies (check everyone has signed in)	Ryan Moclair Michal Fabrykiewicz All other attendees signed in	Ryan Moclair Michal Fabrykiewicz All other attendees signed in

Minutes of the last AGM/EGM (reviewed and accepted by membership then signed by the Chair)	Previous AGM minutes from dec 2019. No comments Approved 10 votes WM approved	Approval of AGM minutes on 21 March. No comments. Approved 9 votes WM approved
Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda		
Managers' reports	Pre School Report Angela Lindsay See Below WM echoing thanks to all staff during lockdowns	GAPS Report Georgi Blyth See Below AAS Report Ryan Moclair See Below WM thank you to Ryan for robust risk assessment.
Chairs /Trustee's report (including sharing of key findings from Smart Practice Childcare Consultancy Report)	Chair report Finance report Louise Woolcott See below Any questions? No CIO explained	Chair report Finance report Louise Woolcott See below Structure of setting explained.
Members discuss, agree and adopt reviewed policies		
Vote on new Abington Preschool and Out of School Club Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Votes yes - 9 Votes no - 0 Abstain - 3 Approved	Votes yes Votes no Abstain Approved at GAPS AGM
Vote on Dissolution of current charities with transfer of assets to Abington Preschool and Out of School Club	Votes yes - 6 Votes no - 0 Abstain - 6 Approved	Votes yes Votes no Abstain Approved at GAPS AGM 18/03/21
Appointment of a Childcare Operations Director to oversee both settings	Votes yes - 9 Votes no - 0 Abstain - 3 Approved	Votes yes Votes no Abstain Approved at GAPS AGM 18/03/21
Members adopt the Constitutions		
Treasurer's report Finance Manager Presentation of accounts Acceptance of accounts	GW presents accounts for approval. Submitted to Charity Commission previously.	GW presents accounts for approval. Votes yes - accepted

	Approval of accounts - accepted	
Resignation of current committee	WM - stand down GW - stand down SS - stand down	WM - stand down GW - stand down SS - stand down
Agenda Item	Pre School	GAPS
Nominations and election of new committee members for current charities (5 trustees minimum)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emma Morris Affiliate Seconded Wendy Morgan 2. Megan Ayres Seconded Wendy Morgan 3. Adrian Van Leeuwen Seconded Wendy Morgan 4. Dean Fisher Seconded Wendy Morgan 5. Alice Kirk Seconded Wendy Morgan 6. Emily Hadfield Seconded Wendy Morgan 7. Sophie Ellis Affiliate Seconded Wendy Morgan <p>Gina is happy to support although she has stepped down. Natalie Hanlon (Duxford Preschool Operations Manager) happy to support.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sophie Ellis Seconded Wendy Morgan 2. Emma Morris Seconded Wendy Morgan 3. Wendy Williams Seconded Wendy Morgan 4. Emma Webb Seconded Wendy Morgan 5. Alice Kirk Seconded Wendy Morgan
Nominations and election of trustees to form CIO (3 trustees minimum)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sophie Ellis Seconded Gina Warren 2. Emma Morris Seconded Gina Warren 3. Wendy Williams Seconded Gina Warren 4. Megan Ayres Seconded Gina Warren <p>Emily Hadfield TBC</p>	
Agenda Item	Pre School	GAPS
Agree date and time for the first meeting of the new committee <i>(Officer roles can be decided at the first meeting)</i>	RB to send out doodle poll to new committee members for the date of the next meeting.	RB to send out doodle poll to new committee members or the date of the next meeting.

Close Meeting <i>Record time meeting ends</i>	19:32 AGM closed	19:32 EGM closed
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Wendy Morgan – Chairs’ report 8th April 2021

Please view alongside Chair Presentation [Abington Annexe Website - Committee](#)

Welcome to the GAPS and Abington Preschool AGM.

A year to the commencement of the start of Covid 19 lockdown and as you are all aware it been exceptionally difficult for everyone personally and professionally. The result is that this meeting is in many ways very different to any of the previous ones. Generally we present an annual report, vote to elect a new committee and follow a standard AGM agenda. As you will all be aware at the last AGM we were not quorate for pre-school AGM and were unable to elect a committee for GAPS.

This situation is no wholly unexpected. This has not been the first time that we have had to call another AGM because of low attendance. It is also not the first time that we have had considerable difficulty electing a committee.

Undoubtedly there are a number of reasons for this. The election of trustees across the entire charity sector is recognised as challenging and the situation that the Abington Annex finds itself in is not unusual for a childcare charity. Many of these issues (such as issues of time pressure and legal responsibility) are not with our gift to change.

However there are some issues that are without our control and it is these that I want to talk to you about this evening. This will then lead us into the main purpose of this meeting: that is a decision on the future of the settings.

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Before I start this I would like to extend the committees thanks to all the staff who have continued work to provide child care throughout these challenging times. We recognise that this has not been easy. Thank you for hard work, flexibility, perseverance and determination. Thank you for all you have done for our children.

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Thank you all parents for attending the meeting.

Thank you also to Alison Morris from County who has been supporting the setting and is here to answer any specific advice we have about the CIO and restructuring.

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You don’t need me to tell you what an extremely year we have all experienced. I

recognise that everybody attending this meeting (including staff who have been invited to attend to hear the chair's report) have had an exceptionally challenging year. These challenges have been exacerbated with the additional responsibility of childcare.

The particular challenges of the covid pandemic have exacerbated a number of longer term challenges for Pre-School.

You may recall, if you attended the AGM last year, that I highlighted the financial pressures across the entire early years sector. Primarily this arises from the government funding model which is widely accepted as deficient. (quote below from Early Years Alliance campaign for fairer funding)

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"The move to 30 hours (childcare entitlement) was a huge change for the sector. Unless it is funded properly, it simply cannot work in the long term. The only way the government can achieve this is to understand how much it costs to deliver quality care and education and then ensure that funding levels match this.

"Take staff costs, for example, which account for 70-80% of overall costs for providers. By 2020, the national living wage will have increased from £7.20 to £9 an hour, and yet childcare providers are somehow expected to be able to meet these rising wage costs on the same funding they will have been receiving since 2017.

"If rising business costs aren't matched by increases in funding, providers will once again have to choose between increasing the cost of paid-for hours or going out of business. Either way it will be parents or providers who end up paying for a promise that the government made."

We recognise that as a charity providing pre-school care to a rural community we have a responsibility to ensure that we provide good quality childcare at an affordable rate. This we feel is in the best interests of the children. While we have some very expensive new housing being developed in the village we recognise that we have to meet the needs of the entire community. This is a tricky balancing act. We need to ensure that the business remains viable but that it continues to offer affordable, good quality care to those that require it – both parents and children.

Unfortunately the scale of this challenge is laid bare by the following chart.

As you can see prior to 2017 we were making a small profit. Previous committees, as well as this one, had made the strategic decision to place this profit in a reserved fund. The reserve fund also includes the restricted funds.

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As an unincorporated charity all members (both trustees and parents whose children attend the setting) are liable for any debts the setting incurs.

As a committee we have ensured that we have one term running costs (including redundancy pay) in a restricted fund to ensure that we are all protected from financial liability as far as possible. The retention of this level of funding is

conservative but not inappropriate and we felt this was in the best interests of the children, parents, trustees and staff.

We also have additional reserves however. Over the years we had been building these up with the eventual aim of replacing the building with one more fit for purpose.

However since 2017 we have been eating into these reserves in order to keep the setting going. There are three main issues related to the difficulties of the setting all of which need to be considered.

The first is the impact of the government funding model, the second was the impact of the decision by the school to increase our rent and service charge. The third reason is the operating hours of the pre-school as it runs currently (school hours only).

As regards the first factor - government funding. We continue to support the Early years alliance campaign for fair funding. In fact you may recall that in 2019 we had a visit from our then MP in order to highlight the issue and ask her to raise the issue in parliament. We have also attempted to reduce our costs as far as possible through cuts to training budgets, charging for snacks and consumables and eliminating spending on toys and educational equipment as far as possible (one year we only spend £2.50 on replacing toys).

As regards the impact of the rent and service charge. We recognise that the school will have budgeted for this income. We also recognise that primary education faces challenges in obtaining fair funding. We are not unsympathetic to these challenges. Therefore we have paid the invoices submitted for payment.

However our charitable aims make it clear that we should be using funds raised by the setting for the good of the children using the preschool setting. We have therefore petitioned the BOG to reconsider this increase, emphasising the impact this is having on the setting. Because it was not possible to reach an accommodation both parties were happy with we asked County to mediate.

Fortunately this has resulted in some degree of success with the principle that we have been overpaying rent agreed. Unfortunately the impact of the Covid Pandemic has resulted in a delay in the final agreed funding arrangements. So while there is good news on this front (and my thanks to Louise who has worked tirelessly on this) I am not currently in a position to inform you of what the exact impact of this. However I understand that we are due a refund of the overpaid rent.

The final issue – that of the current structure of the opening hours is part of a wider discussion about the future of the setting. Which I want to come back to at the end of this presentation once I have presented the information about GAPS.

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GAPS

The situation with GAPS is in some ways significantly different. We are not

constricted by funding restrictions and we can cover our costs by increasing fees to parents. You may recall that in 2017/18 we did this in order to cover the additional increased rent cost (show graph).

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However as you can see GAPS ran at a significant loss this year. Some of these factors were outside of our control – for example we were not able to obtain a rent holiday for the time we were shut. In addition we had other fixed overheads which we had to cover while we were not able to open because of the Covid shutdown.

Other costs have been incurred because of decisions that the committee have made which they felt were in the best interests of the children, parents and staff. For example legally we would have been able to combine the school class bubbles following emergence from the first lockdown. This would have reduced our loss. However while finances are important, the committee felt that it was important to support the integrity of the school bubbles in order to support children's welfare.

We did not want to cause any confusion to children, increase the risk of transmission to children, families and staff. We wanted to reduce anxiety as far as possible. We wanted, at a period of such change, to provide as much consistency for children as possible.

This was not an easy decision. As committee members we had to balance the competing demands of the setting and we made the decision that we felt was in the best interests of the community and the children we serve.

While it is entirely appropriate that the committee make these strategic level decisions, the current organisational structure of the annex also results in more of a draw on committee members time than would be ideal.

We, along with a number of other childcare settings found the entire Covid period difficult to manage. And this was impacted on by our current organisational structure.

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Our current organisational structure has evolved with time. However it is not suited to a setting with an annual turnover of close to ¼ of a million pound (taking in to account both settings) which is overseen with volunteer committee members.

We, in keeping with a number of other charity settings find it difficult to recruit committee members. It is a cruel irony that our constitution states that the majority of our committee should be parents of children using the setting. Working parents, who may have less free time, are expected to take on the legal and administrative challenges associated with being a trustee.

Over the years the setting has grown and developed with additional provision being offered. For example child care for two year olds, holiday club, holiday provision for three year olds, breakfast club.

The current system is a complex structure with complex and unclear lines of accountability. The complications inherent in working as a volunteer trustee, having to become familiar with new and emerging legislation and a lack of skill in sector specific management and appraisal have all had their toll this year.

We are not the only setting having difficulty meeting these challenges. Many settings have taken the opportunity to merge with the local school and this has proved to be a successful and fruitful working partnership.

In the summer we formally approached the school who informed us that they were keen to work with us. On the basis of the schools initial welcoming of this proposal we were hopeful that this would be a beneficial relationship. Indeed an external consultancy report requested by the school identified that the incorporating the setting under school management could be the best fit.

We were therefore disappointed that after we had devoted considerable time and resources into this development the school informed us that they had decided against the merger.

This leaves us, the community, with a very challenging situation. In line with other settings we find it difficult to recruit and retain trustees. However we need members of the community to take on these challenges in order for the charities to continue to provide a service.

It is the view of the trustees, county and the smart practice consultancy that the setting needs to be restructured in order for it to continue to remain viable.

To this end we are proposing the following:

To set up a CIO

To dissolve the current charities and transfer the funds to the new CIO.

To appoint an appropriate skilled operations director to manage the setting on a year long basis.

Apologies for not attending the meeting

Holiday Club

Running for Abington Students only. Last Half term we only offered children from key workers from the school which didn't give us enough numbers to run.

Was a slow start but now working at a profit.

Louise signed us up to HAF which is bringing in children from low-income families to have 16 hours free with free healthy meals. This has boosted numbers. It is also allowing them to see the product with some paying for further days on top.

We have only run with 2 bubbles (class 1-2 and class 3+ and pre school) taking over half of the annexe each. This has worked really well with children and staff showing great engagement.

We have not run with the hall which meant that we did not have the schools equipment. Without extra equipment, staff had worked really well to come up with activities for the children to keep them entertained.

Thankyou

Ryan

Preschool Manager Report Angela Lindsay

AGM Preschool Report

As with everything it has been an exceptionally challenging year with Covid.

I think all staff will remember coming into work the day after we found out we would be closing. The day was filled with uncertainty, stress and emotion. The hardest thing was saying goodbye to families knowing it could be the last time we saw some of them and it was.

We stayed open for keyworker families and it took a little while for things to settle and for families to know what they wanted and if they really needed us. There were only a couple of families that needed Preschool and after a while we moved into the school, which helped with staffing as not all staff were able to work. This was hard for staff as we were asking them to work in an unfamiliar place and with people they haven't worked with before, but everyone at the school was lovely and supportive and Preschool staff wanted to make sure they were helping the families that really needed us.

After many changes in the guidance and not a lot of notice we were able to open up to more families in June. This was a challenge because we wanted to make sure we were still helping our keyworker families but also wanted to be able to welcome more families back safely even though not all staff were able to return to work. We made sure we put in the necessary safety/ cleaning procedures and had a good risk assessment.

PRESCHOOL

This has been a difficult year for the Early Years sector with a 33% increase in the setting closures across the UK in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Despite this, Preschool have finished the financial year of 2021 in a profit of £5,612.

This is an amazing achievement, not just due to the current pandemic but also considering that for the previous 3 years there was loss. This loss has been improving over the 3 year years and this year has seen a profit.

The continued hard work of the staff, to deliver Early Years education on a tight budget must be thanked.

The year started busy, with the preschool quickly running at capacity, with careful staffing numbers in place.

Whilst the setting was only open to key worker families, the majority of the staff were furloughed and or flexibly furloughed and total payments of £13,352 have been received from the government scheme this year.

Whilst partially closed, the setting continued to receive full Early Years funding which has helped to cover the continued costs including rent, service charges and consumables, as well as staff wages. This has been the main source of income. The income that is usually received through non-funded fees has decreased by 51% from £31,215 to £15,425 due to the setting not being fully open for the majority of the year.

The generosity of the local community and the parents has been amazing this year with a total of £1,596 in fundraising, donations and grants as well as a very successful Facebook GoFundMe page which is still open and currently on £751.

Reserves of £37,553.00 are ring fenced to cover the required 3 months running costs and redundancy.

SUMMARY

As a summary, the Preschool has ended the year in a positive position, despite the tough year that everybody has had.

Thank you again to all the preschool staff who have worked so hard under these difficult circumstances and to be able to complete the year so well financially is amazing.

Accounts attached for verification and signatures.

Report end, Louise Woolcott, Finance Manager



Bank Accounts

GAPS - The bank accounts are currently - £11,232.08 (community)
£29,939.45 (tracker)
£12,831.45 (CBS savings)

ABINGTON ANNEXE SPORTS - **£4,606.35**

TOTAL 58,609.33

GAPS

The setting has had a difficult year due to the pandemic. As a result of this the end of year has seen a loss of £14,791. This is due to the setting being closed and then running with less child numbers for key worker families only. As a result there has been a 43% drop in income and only a 27% drop in expenses. A Rapid Response Sustainability grant was successfully applied for from Cambridgeshire County Council to cover 75% of running costs for the Spring term. The staff were fully furloughed whilst the setting was closed and are now gradually coming off partial furlough as the families start to return to the setting. The numbers are still lower than usual throughout the setting.

Fees have been increased by 40p from 12th April 2021 following a fees review, to ensure that the setting starts to break even each week moving forward.

ABINGTON ANNEXE SPORTS

The holiday club has run for families of Abington Preschool and Primary School only and has proved very popular and successful, running in a profit each time. £5000 of the loan was paid back to GAPS on 20th November 2020. There is a remaining balance of £4983.56 on the loan which is still owed back to GAPS.

In conclusion, with the fee increase, continued care with the expenses and children returning hopefully the setting will start to see an improvement in the financial situation.

End of report
Louise Woolcott, Finance Manager