

St Colum's Portstewart AGM 2024

Wednesday 16th October 2024, 7pm

Attendees: Natasha Davidson, Oisin Duffy, Pamela Sweeney, Darren Quigley, Emily Armstrong, Sarah McAuley, Michelle Long, Aine McNytre, Clare McManus, Andrew McGlenn, Emma Cheema, Eilish McManus, Sinead Mullan

Apologies: Lisa Hemphill

Chairperson Address

Charity number: 102674

Background

St. Colum's pre-school has been serving pre-school children and their families in the Portstewart and surrounding communities since 1992. We are extremely proud of the work that we do and the links that we have with the local community. In 2011 our Pre- School Centre became a Cross – Community Playgroup, drawing children from all religious backgrounds and ethnicities
Structure, Governance and Management

St. Colum's Pre-School Centre is governed by a constitution that was originally adopted on 6th October 2011. This document was developed in alignment with the guidelines from Early Years and the Education Authority. Our dedicated committee members manage the centre in accordance with this constitution, ensuring we uphold principles and provide the best possible environment for our children.

Purpose and Public Benefit

At St. Colum's Pre-School Centre, our mission is to promote play-based learning for all children under statutory school age in Portstewart and the surrounding area. The primary benefits of our service include increasing awareness of age-appropriate play-based learning among parents and caregivers, as well as providing early education for children prior to entering primary school. These benefits are evidenced through feedback from parents, insights from Early Years Advisers, and regular evaluations conducted by Social Services and the Education and Training Inspectorate. Our services are designed to be beneficial and do not lead to any harm.

The key beneficiaries of our mission are the children under statutory school age and their parents or caregivers within the Portstewart area. Trustees believe that our purpose fully meets the public benefit requirement.

2023/24 Achievements

St. Colum's Pre-School Centre, a registered charity and community pre-school, is dedicated to fostering children's social, emotional, and early developmental growth. Despite the financial challenges faced in 2022/23, the charity closed the year in a stronger financial position, thanks to successful grant applications and ongoing fundraising initiatives.

21 funded pre-school slots are filled for the this term, and there's keen interest in extra afternoon sessions (pre-pre).

During the June 2024 inspection, the setting received excellent commendation for its management and leadership, with no recommendations for changes required. Staff were mentioned for their 'caring, professional' attitude and how they responded to children 'quickly and appropriately to each child's needs'. The setting was described as a 'warm welcoming and child friendly' setting. Trustees

wish to thank staff for their continued effort, which often goes above and beyond the duties of their roles.

Trustee Report

Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2024.

The Trustees of St Colum's Pre School Centre, Portstewart present their annual report for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Aims And Objectives:

The main aim of St. Colum's Pre-School Centre is to promote the social, emotional and early educational development of each child. Our Pre-School Centre offers a safe and secure environment where children have the opportunity to achieve these goals. Our Mission Statement is focused on "encouraging our children to think for themselves and to feel their work is valued". We work in partnership with parents/carers, families and other bodies and/professionals to provide a wide range of experience to our Pre-School Centre. Children develop skills throughout 6 areas of the curriculum to become a well socialised, happy, considerate child who is more able to cope with "big school" in P1

Review of activities:

Through the implementation of a planned Pre-School Curriculum, we offer children a broad range of learning opportunities, through both play and other experiences. Our qualified and experienced staff are committed to the needs of the pre-school child and encourage and build upon the experience and range of skills which the child has already developed. This is achieved by observing and evaluating the children at play, through encouragement and in recognising the individual needs of each child. By implementing our programme of pre-school education, we offer children the opportunity to be curious, to investigate and appreciate the circumstances and environment in which they live. It is envisaged that each child in our care will have learned to form stable relationships, developed a sense of responsibility and consideration for others and grown in self-confidence, independence, and self-control.

In 2023/24 activities of note included

- **Staff Training Initiatives:** Staff have completed various training programs, including anaphylaxis and epi-pen training, and training on retained primitive reflexes as a sign of brain imbalance. They will continue focusing on professional development throughout the year, particularly in SEN. This includes training on environmental factors that support SEN (which informed updates in the pre-school décor). Additionally, training on pre-school transitions and the restructuring of SEN support from the Education Authority has been completed
- **Shared Education Programme:** We are excited to participate in the shared education program with Portstewart Primary, where we will visit each other's settings and collaborate on various activities. This initiative fosters community connections, encourages social development, and enriches learning experiences
- **Updated Setting:** The setting was refreshed with softer, muted colours and new blinds, creating a calmer and inviting atmosphere for the children. This cost was thanks to fundraising efforts by committee and successful grant application. We wish to place our thanks to the contractors who completed during Feb half term

- Introduction of a Breakfast Club: In response to parent feedback, a breakfast club was introduced for the new academic term, providing early morning supervision to support working families.

Pupil Numbers & Fees:

For the academic year September 2023 - June 2024:

St Colum's Pre School Centre had 24 fully funded Department of Education places.

Funding subsidised by offering pre-pre- school age children places for 3 afternoon sessions a week, at £5.00 per child per week. All spaces availed of by Feb 2024. (In take commences after the child turns 3 years old for three afternoons a week)

2024/25 Numbers And Fees

As of this September (Academic year: 2024- 2025:)

21 children attending the morning sessions

16 registered for places for the Pre Pre.

The pre-school age children attend 5 days per week, for a morning session, supported by 3 staff.

We note the appointment of Michele Long as Acting Deputy Leader role for the academic year 2024/25. We have also sought to create a register of bank staff to cover sickness/training and will seek to continue to do this throughout the year.

Financial Review: Accounts y/e 31 August 2024

Income: £87, 692.11 (2023 y/e: £76,876.06)

Expenditure: £80,569.32 (2023 y/e £85,473.75)

This year saw an increase in funding from the education authority (2024: £51,600) which was supplemented by voluntary parental donations totalling approximately £7,100 in the year.

Net Income/(Expenditure) 2024: profit of £7,122.79

Context of previous years:

- 2023: Loss of £8,597.60
- 2022: Profit of £4,671.69
- 2021: Loss of £4,009.80

Key expenses were salaries of approx. £53.1k (2023: of £52,582.33) and rent of £4,000. Other notable increases include an £800 rise in heat and power costs, and an additional £200 for insurance per year compared to 2022/23

Both operating overheads and financial expenses remained high in 2023/24 with running costs (including HMRC, pension costs , insurance, supplies, utilities, EYS, & bank charges) totalling approximately £24.6k.

For context in 2022 that figure was around 14k (2023: 23.1k) reflecting how the setting has had to manage a challenging financial position over a 2-3 year period

As of the end of August 2024 the total bank balance of the pre-school sits at £10, 443.15

Fundraising:

The trustees are pleased to report a successful fundraising year, with events raising approximately £4,100. When adjusting for the £9,000 account transfer from the previous year, this year's fundraising is on par with last year's performance. The committee organised several successful events, including coffee mornings, raffles, and door collections, all of which contributed to this achievement

2024/25 plans and performance

The Trustees remain positive about the future of the Centre. The 2023/24 year saw full cohort of preschool children with 24 numbers fully funded places. The setting tried to offset spending where possible however had no option but to increase snack money to £6 per week, from May 2024. This was voted on at Committee, who felt as snack money had not increased in line with Cost of Living/food increases, there was no option but to increase by small amount per week in order to cover costs.

Admission/Registrations 2024/25

Morning Plan to advertise on social media the remaining 3 spaces for the morning session

Afternoon The afternoon sessions received healthy interest both last year and, in the year, ahead, with the additional area of income expected to continue until June 2025.

January Applications With pre pre places expected to be filled by early in Term 2, we are expecting a similar reflection in applications for Pre School places for 2024-2025, with confidence the setting will achieve a healthy intake again for the morning sessions in Sept 2025.

Standardisation

The Minister of Education has announced his plan to standardise the Pre-school Education Programme to full-time (22.5 hours per week) for all children aged 3-4, as part of the Executive Early Learning and Childcare Strategy. This aligns with recommendations from the Fair Start Report (2021). The Department, along with the Education Authority, is working on a Pre-School Standardisation programme to gradually implement this change, aiming for around 100 settings to offer full-time pre-school education by September 2025 or shortly after. Staff and Committee are planning accordingly and will hold discussions in 2024/25 years as how best to progress/align our setting in light of the above.

SEN commitment

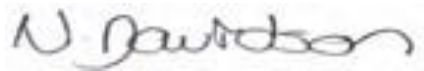
Staff have voiced a long term project of a sensory room which the Trustees support and will align with fundraising targets for 2024/25. This has been started with some new resources but will continue to be a goal for committee alongside funding/grant opportunities.

Commitment to Sustainability

We are dedicated to supporting our families through initiatives such as our preloved uniform scheme, helping to reduce waste and promote sustainability. We also promote healthy eating with snack time and aim to reduce waste by planning buying accordingly.

Summary

The Trustees of St. Colum's Pre-School Centre express confidence in the centre's current standing and future prospects, despite challenges posed by increased costs. Thanks to grants, fundraising and effective management of resources, the centre remains financially stable. The Trustees commend the staff for their dedication, as highlighted in the positive feedback from the June 2024 inspection. Looking ahead, the Trustees are focused on ensuring full enrolment for the upcoming academic year, preparing for the potential implementation of the Pre-school standardisation in 2025, and supporting initiatives such as the sensory room project to enhance the centre's facilities. Continued community engagement and fundraising will be key priorities to sustain the centre's growth and success

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

Signed on behalf of all Trustees:
Natasha Davidson, Chairperson
DATE: 12TH October 2024

Finance Report

Income & Expenditure Account Summary

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Income | | |
| Education Authority | 51,600.00 | 41,515.55 |
| EA - Pathway | 11,075.00 | 11,075.00 |
| EA - Other | 6,719.88 | 0.00 |
| Parental Donations / Fees | 7,180.50 | 5,213.00 |
| Registration Fees | 0.00 | 480.00 |
| Rent Rebate | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| BSO Milk | 224.90 | 0.00 |
| Recycling Income | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Bank Interest | 7.49 | 6.29 |
| Grants | 6,668.00 | 0.00 |
| Gift Aid | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Early Years Rebate | 0.00 | 5,022.48 |
| Pension | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fundraising | 4,216.34 | 13,563.74 |
| Parish Loan | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total | 87,692.11 | 76,876.06 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Salaries | 53,188.51 | 52,582.33 |
| NEST Pensions | 4,025.88 | 4,384.03 |
| HMRC | 6,028.51 | 4,938.25 |
| Rent | 4,000.00 | 4,000.00 |
| Heat/Light/Power | 1,782.00 | 866.67 |
| Telephone/Internet | 762.14 | 756.33 |
| Insurance | 1,184.80 | 1,061.82 |
| Repairs/Maintenance | 2,778.65 | 636.98 |
| Travel | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Outings | 69.00 | 0.00 |
| Equipment | 2,211.17 | 2,977.18 |
| Milk | 138.00 | 228.90 |
| IEY Specialist | 1,587.30 | 1,282.00 |
| Early Years Salary Service | 662.80 | 535.64 |
| Sundry / Petty Cash | 1,219.33 | 840.00 |
| Training | 332.37 | 495.00 |
| Supplies | 0.00 | 323.00 |
| Recycling | 512.54 | 479.99 |
| Bank Fees | 86.32 | 85.63 |
| Transfer to c/a | 0.00 | 9,000.00 |
| Entertainment | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total | 80,569.32 | 85,473.75 |
| Net Income/(Expenditure) | 7,122.79 | -8,597.69 |

Bank Reconciliation Statement

| | Core | Fundraiser | Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Opening Balance | 1,454.75 | 1,865.61 | 3,320.36 |
| Net Period Income / (Expenditure) | 4,365.28 | 2,757.51 | 7,122.79 |
| Closing Balance | 5,820.03 | 4,623.12 | 10,443.15 |

Nominations for Committee 2024

| Position | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| Chairperson | Natasha Davidson | Natasha Davidson |
| Secretary | Pamela Sweeney* <i>(Not seeking nomination for 2024)</i> | Sarah McAuley |
| Treasurer | Oísín Duffy | Oísín Duffy |
| Committee Members | Ita Harley | Emily Armstrong |
| | Jessica Lenehan | Darren Quigg |
| | Sarah McAuley | Sinead Mullan |
| | Carly Quinn | Eilish McManus |
| | Lisa Hemphill | Emma Cheema |
| | Aisling Rafferty | Andrew McGlenn |
| | Emily Armstrong | Lisa Hemphill |
| | Clare Holly | |
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