**Chairperson’s Report September 2020**

Well, what a year it has been! I would like to begin by saying a big thank you to all the Plymtree Pre-School Staff, Parents and Committee this year, in what has been a most unusual year. Of all the challenges that could have arisen this year, never did I think we’d have to contend with a global pandemic and national lockdown, which as you know, forced the closure of Pre-School from March – June. This was hugely challenging for all and completely unprecedented, but the most important thing to remember is that we reopened. Our children were able to have a whole fantastic term at pre-school before the summer holidays started, and this academic year we are open again and welcoming a new cohort of children.

Credit for achieving this goes to pre-school staff led by Clare, and so my extra special thanks go out to them. Having such an experienced and committed team during this time has made things so much easier. The work that they put in during lockdown to communicate and engage with our children, and then the care, time and effort taken to ensure that we could reopen in the summer, is hugely valued and appreciated. Furthermore, I’d like to personally say a big thank you to Clare who has helped me manage the day-to-day operations throughout the year, prompting me regularly whenever I forget something, and without whom, pre-school really couldn’t function.

Despite lockdown, we have actually had another successful year of fundraising. Our first Christmas Fayre event was an enormous success, raising over £1300 and securing an excellent turnout of people both from within Plymtree and further afield. Massive thanks to Donna for initiating and driving the idea and to the wider committee for being brave enough to try something new and controversially move away from the Halloween Disco! We also took the brave decision to continue with Race Night in the last few days before lockdown, and despite a significantly lower turnout than usual, the evening was a success with over £1700 being raised and solid support from key members of the community. A massive thank you to Sarah for once again taking the lead on this event and to the entire committee for their help and support on the night. This money, means we can continue to provide some great activities and equipment for the children, as well as training and development opportunities for the staff.

This fundraising money is also particularly important this year, as lower than normal enrolment numbers means 2019-20 has been slightly challenging for us financially. We started the year with a cohort of just 10 children, although this did rise to 16 by the summer term and this September we have 12, which is still a little lower than we would like. We did start to increase our marketing activity in Autumn 2019, advertising in local village magazines and receiving a number of word-of-mouth recommendations (thank you Anna!). However, lockdown really limited our opportunities in this area and so a renewed focus on marketing efforts in 2020/21 would be sensible. Especially with new competition from Fordmore and other settings.

Finally, thank you to all the Committee members this year. I appreciate that we have all taken on our roles voluntarily and with limited time to spare, so my gratitude for all your hard work and time this year.

Daryl Spicer
September 2020