



## **Chairperson's Report**

2015/2016 was the busiest year Plymtree Preschool has ever had and there is no doubt that it has been a very successful one.

After the stability of last year, this year saw some big changes in terms of Pre-school staff. After five and a half years of working for Pre-school, Nicky Morgan handed in her notice as Senior Play Leader shortly before the start of the new term. Although we all fully understood Nicky's wish to spend more time with her own family, we were all very sorry to see her go and knew that she would be a hard act to follow. After advertising for Nicky's replacement, we were delighted to promote our own Elaine Gubb from Play Assistant to Senior Play Leader and she has thrived in her new role, ably taking on the duties and responsibilities of Senior Play Leader. Filling Nicky's role with Elaine left us having to recruit a new Play Assistant and with Karin Forsyth's resignation at Christmas, the need to find someone became all the more pressing. After two rounds of advertising, we were very pleased to secure Angela Rogers as (I think) Pre-school's first apprentice. Angela should complete her apprenticeship next year and we are very much looking forward to having her on board as a full member of staff.

As an employment lawyer in my day job, I had certainly not expected to have to deal with so many employment issues at Pre-school and I must give huge thanks to everyone on the committee for their input with adverts and recruitment decisions and particularly to Sarah, Steph, Georgie and Rowan for sharing the burden of interviewing. Clare, for her sins, had to sit through all of them and I am very thankful for the time she put into that process as well.

We were also sorry to say goodbye to Music Claire this year, as she took up another role in a school. We quickly found a replacement for her through Music Leah. She's been a great addition and her sessions have proved very popular with the children.

Over the course of the year, we had our largest ever number of children on the Pre-school roll, in part due to the closure of Clyst Hydon's pre-school, Puddleducks. It is testament to the strengths of our Pre-school and its staff that we were able to bring several children across from Puddleducks and to integrate them into the life of our Pre-school with very few mishaps.

We had some hugely successful fundraising events over the year, including our first Halloween party which was very well attended by all ages of children and by those from the village and outside and a re-run of last year's very popular Race Night. Huge credit goes to Georgie for coming up with the idea for both events and then for masterminded them so superbly and making sure that all the arrangements were in place so they ran as smoothly as possible. I'd like to thank all the committee as well for their help and support with both events and those parents, families and friends of Pre-school children who gave up their time freely to help us as well – it couldn't happen without all of that support. I know we are looking to repeat both the Halloween party and Race Night this year and hope they will be as well attended again. Around those events we held smaller fundraisers including a sponsored fancy dress walk, Christmas cards designed by the children, a Phoenix card sale and ragbag collections. Thanks go to everyone who has contributed to those fundraising efforts. Due in no small part to our fundraising, our bank accounts are in a very healthy position which has enabled another summer outing for the children and the staff to buy regular new toys and equipment for Pre-school.



This time last year Rachel was delighted to report on the purchase and construction of the long-awaited shed. Sadly, a March storm destroyed the shed, leaving us having to buy a new one less than a year later. An insurance claim and much research later, we now once again have a new shed – let's just hope it weathers the storms this year!

With the help of Gemma's partner, we have been able to create and implement a new, updated logo for Pre-school and I'm delighted that we now also have our own Facebook page and our new website up and running. Sarah deserves a lot of credit for the time she has put into creating us a website which looks so much more professional and engaging than the previous and many thanks go as well to Steph for her efforts in setting up and updating Facebook. All these efforts go to enhancing Pre-school's image in the wider community and are not to be underestimated.

On a personal note, I am, despite the volume of things that seem to have cropped up this year and despite feeling my way in the dark through large parts of the year, going to stay on as Chair for another year. I'd like to extend my own thanks to everyone on the committee for their hard work over the last year, particularly to those who've agreed to stay on with me for another year! We are very blessed to have a committee with such breadth and depth of experience, without which my job would be so much harder. Thanks go, too, to Clare for working so closely with me and for reminding of things that should have been done and to Clare and all the staff for their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication, all of which helps to make our Pre-school such a great place for children to start their learning journey.

Ellie Hibberd

September 2016