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Like Shopping?

If you like shopping in the comfort of your own home, why not sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk. easyfundraising is a new website where you can help raise funds for Ferryfield simply by shopping online in your usual way. Joining the site is completely free, and there are over 400 brand name retailers to choose from including Next, Amazon, John Lewis, Play.com, ebay, B&Q, Directline, M&S and many more. Shop by using the links on the easyfundraising website, and Ferryfield will receive a donation of 15% from every purchase made.

For the **flower lovers** you know, you can now send flowers online via www.charityflowers.co.uk. 15% of every sale will be donated to

Ferryfield when you choose us as your preferred charity.

Another option is to come to our first ever **Ladies' Night** on Monday June 25th (see invite below). Everyone welcome! Entry is £3 at the door which includes nibbles and snacks, tea and coffee. Representatives from Phoenix Cards, Virgin Vie, Body Shop, Silverline and Partylite will be there, and we'll have Georgina Houston selling her hand-made jewellery and treatments such as back massage, lash tinting and facials available from SHL Beauty (places limited). Quiz, bottle raffle, bingo and lucky-dip will also be on offer, so a good "night out" is guaranteed for all.



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Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the AGM held in the Playgroup building, Castlehill, Wednesday June 13th 2007 at 7:30pm.

Present: Jamie Drew, Gary Thomson, Gillian Brown, Lorna Berry, Claire Purvis, Tracy Chambers, Paula Falconer, Teresa Harrower, Catherine Brown,, Alan Berry, Lesley Thomson, Sara Campbell.

Welcome and Apologies:

Apologies were received from Lisa Glasgow, Nicky Swinton, Jan Rose, Jenni Nicolson, Gina Lang, Rebecca Martin, Belinda Little, Julia Fenwick, Fiona Robertson (SPPA).

Minutes of last AGM: The minutes of the 2005-2006 AGM held on June 20th 2006 were agreed and signed off by the current Chair.

Chairperson's Report: The current Chair summarised the important points from her written report (see below). Ideas for future fundraisers from those present included a Lads' Night (races, stalls such as the Pampered Chef etc...) and a beetle drive. The Chair also mentioned that the toys not sold on gala day had been put up for sale on the website.

Playleader's Report: Teresa summarised the important points from her written report (see below).

Manager's Report: Gill summarised the important points from her written report (see below). A question regarding the use of Childcare Vouchers resulted in the reiteration that

Ferryfield would accept these, and would need to make an effort to make this more widely known.

Lunch Club Fees: It was agreed that fees for Lunch Club would increase from £4 to £5 per session in order to help cover costs, now that the Wrap-around grant has been spent. A letter will be going out in order to estimate potential numbers for next academic year.

Rota Duty Charges: Concern was expressed about parents who fail to turn up for their duty rota, without advanced warning and without relief cover in place. Getting a staff member in to cover at the last minute costs us £15. It was agreed that if a parent does not do their duty and does not find a replacement, these costs will be billed to them. The £8 charge payable to another parent for doing their duty will not change. It was mentioned that we would encourage as many volunteer placements as possible through the Job Centre, as this would help both staff and parents. Gary asked about student placements, as a scheme runs at St Andrews whereby students looking for classroom experience get placed in local schools. This will be looked into. Disclosure checks would need to be done on each volunteer.

Adoption of New Constitution: It was agreed to add age and sexual orientation to the equal opportunities statement. Committee membership has been reduced to a minimum of 3, and a maximum of 8, members, with no more than 3 Co-

opted members allowed. The dissolution clause, in which assets would now go to the Committee for dispersal rather than the SPPA, was unanimously agreed. Gary requested that an additional clause be added to our aims & objectives stating that we would provide a safe working environment and opportunities for professional training and continuing professional development for staff. Gill queried whether this would be needed as it is stated in our policies; she will ask OSCAR if such a clause is necessary before including it.

Election of Committee Members: Cathy, Rebecca (in absentia), Lorna and Gary have agreed to become members of the Committee for 2007-2008. Gena Tannock would be asked if she would like to join.

e-baby Demonstration: After doing some research on how best to set up the site, Gary realised that a charity facility already exists on e-bay which would allow us to sign up and sell our items online without having to set up our own database, content management system, hosting space etc..., and would relieve us of any problems regarding liability. Registration is free and there would be no percentages taken by ebay or paypal for transactions, though we would still need to pay for each listing (~ 15p). The main drawback is the possibility of Ferryfield getting lost amongst all the other charities, but with a good advertising campaign we could potentially get very good local support.

Chair's Report :

This has been an interesting and eventful year for Ferryfield. Academically we have continued to build on our existing successes, with a consistently high number of children enrolled and activities to suit all ages. Feedback on our services and facilities has been very positive, both from the parents' point of view and from EQUATE. Our main worry, and it never goes away!, is a lack of incoming funds. This is due to a number of factors, first among them being funded children leaving halfway through term to attend nursery. It seems that no matter how hard we try, parents prefer to take their children to Westfield rather than leave them at playgroup. While we know that this decision lies with the parent, it is nevertheless frustrating, especially as we offer an education on a par with the nursery school. Is it due to the fact that parents are tired of having to be involved (duty rota, fundraising)? Are they not aware that funded places can be accepted at playgroup?

Other reasons for the serious lack of income are fundraisers gone wrong. We have attempted several large scale fundraising activities this year, including the Summer Fete, ceilidh and coffee morning. The ceilidh had to be cancelled at the last minute due to poor ticket sales. The Fete and coffee morning both brought in very small sums of money- certainly not enough to pay for one staff member's salary for even one week. The smaller fundraisers such as sponsored nursery rhymes, filling Smarties tubes and the raffle were more encouraging, but we still face serious parental

apathy when it comes to volunteering and fundraising. Fundraising remains a constant struggle, and without it we can't pay our bills. As an invaluable local community service, we can't afford to sit back and see what happens.

Thanks to Lesley and Gary Thomson we intend to launch eBay, an online shop selling donated goods, with all proceeds going to Ferryfield. We had a stall at the Cupar Children's Gala on the 2nd June, which hopefully will have made more people aware of our existence. Our thanks to the now-defunct Toy Library and the Cupar Childminders' Association for the donation of toys and videos which we sold on the stall; they raised £55. Our next big fundraiser is an End-of-Term Ladies' Night on the 25th June in the Theatre Block. An open invitation is extended to anyone wanting to browse the stalls (Virgen Vie and Silverline among them), have a manicure or facial with SHL Beauty Therapy, win prizes at bingo or attempt the brain teasers. We would encourage every parent to invite friends, family and colleagues and send this academic year off with a bang.

On a happier note, Wraparound Care, after a shaky start, has taken off well, and is running three mornings a week. We had a visit from the original founder of Ferryfield, Isabel Blair and one of the first playleaders, Isabel Waddell, who came for tea on June 1st, as part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations. Newsletters with news, events and other information go out once and sometimes twice, a term, and we have also

launched a website with opening times, parental info, and other news for those who prefer to access information online. The occasional paragraph has also appeared in the Cupar News section of the Fife Herald. We embarked on a new scheme entitled Friends of Ferryfield just after the Easter holidays; former staff, parents and other interested parties have been invited to become a friend of the playgroup by paying an annual subscription fee. In return, they will receive regular news updates, invitations to participate at playgroup activities, and more. The scheme has started slowly, but we hope to have more positive replies as our mailing list expands. Fundraising for other charities include a joint Comic Relief Day with Cupar Pre-School and Triangle playgroups held in March, and we are currently organising our involvement in the Barnardos Big Toddle for June.

Thanks to the efforts of the Castlehill Association and local councillors, we are still in our current premises after having received a notice to quit from Fife Council before Christmas. We have now been assured that we will not be forced to move out until appropriate alternative accommodation can be found. The whole situation made us very wary, but thankfully there is no longer a need to panic. However, it did make us aware that eventually changes will need to be made. With this in mind, we have attended discussions with Cupar Pre-School and Triangle playgroups regarding a possible amalgamation. This is still very much at the exploratory stage, and for the moment will not

proceed any further; but it will be kept on the agenda for future consideration. All three playgroups agreed to increase fees to £3.00 as of April 2007, to go up to £4.00 at the start of 2007-2008. This decision was not taken lightly, and will help all playgroups to cope better financially.

I would like to thank this year's Committee for the sterling work they have done. Thanks to Jamie Drew, Chair from August to December 2006, whose enthusiasm and networking skills went a long way to increasing Ferryfield's standing within the community. Thanks also to Paula Falconer, Claire Purvis, Tracy Chambers and Sara Campbell who have all contributed so much to Ferryfield activities. I would like to wish them all the very best as they and their children move on. Thanks to Gillian Brown, our Admin Manager. Without her know-how, Ferryfield would have closed down by now. She has provided advice and support to us all, and it is much appreciated. And of course, thanks go to the staff, Teresa Harrower and Lucy O'Connor who make Ferryfield what it is and whose efforts to keep the playgroup one of the best in town have not gone unnoticed. Thanks also to Christine Armitt (now employed elsewhere) and Fiona Docherty for their enthusiasm and help.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Ferryfield Playgroup as a whole. My decision to send my daughter here was made after much careful thought. The size of the playgroup and the personal attention she enjoyed in her first few weeks went a long way to mak-

ing her comfortable and accepting of the change from a home environment. She obviously loves coming here and enjoys the interaction. The atmosphere of trust and care here has persuaded me to leave her at Ferryfield for another year, where she will continue to develop and gain confidence with time. Yes, there are strings attached to having her here; no, I don't like washing paint pots on Fridays or selling raffle tickets door-to-door. But I prefer to be involved and know what's going on, and be a part of my child's education. There'll be time to let go later... so I'm taking advantage of it now.

Catherine Brown, June 2007

Admin Manager's Report:

We have had a year of highs and lows at Ferryfield. The high points have been that we have had healthy numbers of children attending for most of the year, including a few pre-school children whose parents decided that Ferryfield was the best place for their children to spend their pre-school year (a compliment to our provision and our staff). The low points have been the uncertain period we had over the Castlehill Association Lease and there have been a couple of times where funds have been so tight that we have just managed to meet our costs and no more.

The financial Statement shows a deficit of £2152. This is lower than last year, but no organisation can continue to absorb such losses and so we will need to work hard to break even over the next year. The cost of running Playgroup is approximately £90 per morning. This is

for essential costs ie: minimum staffing, rent, gas and electricity. Any shortfall in this income must be met through fundraising or raising fees. As you are already aware, fees have increased recently and will be £4 per morning from August and we hope that this will help.

Grants and Donations received totalled £4593 and include payments for a Playfriend who worked on a one to one basis with a child during the 05/06 session. We received £500 from SPPA to help with running costs and generous donations from Round Table, Rotary and others have all helped with our running costs. The net amount raised from fundraising is £1400. I am constantly looking for sources of revenue and will continue to do so but, the truth is, it is very difficult to get grants towards running costs.

I would like to thank Café Moka for their generous sponsorship of our Newsletter. Thanks also to Cathy for producing the Newsletters and setting up our Website.

We have recently signed up with Charity Flowers Ltd. (charityflowers.co.uk) - 15% of every sale is donated to a charity and Ferryfield will soon be one of these charities. I hope to have our code and leaflets from the organisation shortly in the hope that Ferryfield members and friends will use this company.

I have also registered Ferryfield with easyfundraising.org.uk. If you shop online through this website then Ferryfield will receive a donation (up to 15%) from every purchase made. There is a huge list of shops

and services, including More Than insurance, Next, M & S, WH Smith, ebay, Debenhams, John Lewis, B & Q, Expedia, Toys r Us, Amazon, Woolworths, Vodaphone, HMV... the list goes on! Please pass this information on to your family & friends!

If any members have other ideas for bringing in extra income, please let me know and we can look into it.

I am very proud of what we have achieved at Ferryfield – Teresa & Lucy do an excellent job and I congratulate and thank them for their efforts and achievements. The challenges given to us by all of the inspecting bodies are met and dealt with quickly and effectively. We have so far managed to meet their targets and follow their guideline whilst still keeping our own identity. We believe that many parents choose Playgroup because what we offer is more suitable for their children and we aim to keep it that way.

Thanks also to our Lunch Club staff and volunteers. After an uncertain start, Lunch Club has been a successful extension to our provision and I hope we can continue this service in August.

As we approach our 40th Birthday in September I hope we can look forward to an even more successful year and that “life can begin” for new ventures and ideas for Ferryfield Playgroup.

I must thank Cathy and her Committee for their efforts and support throughout the year and thanks also to Jamie who was Chairperson from September 2005 until December 2006.

As we all know, without the Committee we wouldn't be here.

The children have been wonderful and I have enjoyed watching them develop from toddlers into confident youngsters ready to enjoy their next step.

Finally, thank you to all of the parents who have supported us this year in your many different ways and thank you for allowing us to play a part in your children's early education – we hope they enjoyed it!

Gill Brown, June 2007

Playleader's Report:

We have had another successful year at playgroup. Numbers have been healthy throughout the year and we have enjoyed working with all of the children.

Lunch Club Numbers have steadily risen over the year for the 3 lunch club sessions, with up to six children arriving from Westfield by taxi. We would like to thank Fiona & Christine (who has now left us) our Lunch Club Playworkers for their efforts over the year. We especially thank Lorraine Campbell who has assisted every Tuesday with the taxi pick up from Westfield – we could not have kept the service going without her support. Thanks also to Christine Dunnett (our relief worker) who has stepped in at short notice to help at Playgroup and Lunch Club on occasion.

Inspections We have been visited by both Care Commission and Equate during the session '06-'07. Both agencies were very impressed with standards.

Planning One area that was highlighted was the short term planning, Equate made suggestions on how to improve the planning, these were adopted after Teresa had visited Newport Playgroup.

PLP's Since August '06 all children at Ferryfield Playgroup now have a PLP, in line with council guide lines. The children love their PLP's and staff are now familiar with the paperwork involved. Feedback from parents, however, has been mixed with a disappointing uptake of appointments for parent interviews. We are required to hold these meetings and thank those parents who took the time to attend.

Visitors to playgroup-

Michelle Duff and Storm Hughes were with us as Aware students in December and enjoyed their time with us, helping the children get ready for Christmas.

Suzanne Eadie is an introduction to childcare student from Elmwood and has been with us every Friday since last August. She is enjoying it so much she now attends on a Thursday as well!

Shuria Uddin is with us as a Volunteer working to gain valuable experience to further her prospects of gaining employment working with children.

Christian brought in her puppets to show the children how to clean their teeth properly and the children had great fun watching the show. She also helped the staff to successfully introduce the tooth brushing programme.

Janis Walker, from the Pre-school Educational Home Visiting Service, was very impressed with the way the children were focused and settled when she visited playgroup. PSEHVS recommends suitable playgroups to parents of children with additional support needs.

Sheila, a tutor from Elmwood College, brought a class of students to visit Ferryfield playgroup. This was so the students could see how a good playgroup is setup and how adult/child interaction works best. We are delighted that Sheila chose Ferryfield as an example of good practice.

Training Attended *Lucy:*

Developing a Quality Curriculum, Meeting the Care Standards, Food Hygiene, Additional Support Needs, HIV HepB HepC & AIDS, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Behaviour Management.

Teresa: Developing a Quality Curriculum, Getting Ready For Inspection, Additional Support Needs, PLP training, Food Hygiene, Support For Learning, Books For Children and Behaviour Management.

Parties The children joined in with parties at Halloween, Christmas and a joint effort with all 3 playgroups for Comic Relief day. The 3 playgroups getting together was a great

success and hopefully one we can repeat in the future.

Topics Covered Bertie Bear, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, Planting & Growing, Bird Feeding, Counting Rhymes, Dinosaurs, Wheels, Our Bodies, Hairdressers & Beauty Salon and Puppets. Also religious festivals and important days as they arise.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Gill and the committee for their continued support throughout the year, especially during the uncertain period.

Teresa Harrower & Lucy O'Connor, June 2007

Fundraising and other events

For the first time in several years Ferryfield had a stall at the **Cupar Children's Gala** held in Duffus Park on Saturday, June 2nd.

By selling second-hand goods and toys we managed to raise over £55. Our thanks are extended to the Cupar Childminders' Association who donated boxes of videos and toys that were previously in use by the now defunct Toy Library. Thanks also to the parents and carers who gave items to sell.

Isabel Blair, who **founded Ferryfield** in her home on the street of the same name, came to visit us on June 1st. Ferryfield first opened its doors 40 years ago and has been going strong ever since! Accompanied by Isobel Waddell, one of the first playleaders, they were offered a tour of the premises and then sat to have communal

snack with the children and staff (including a chocolate caterpillar cake, which was gratefully scoffed by all the children!). Isabel was very impressed with how the playgroup is being run and its premises, and pronounced herself proud of its several achievements over the years.

On June 8th we held the **Barnardos Big Toddle** in the theatre block. Teresa and Lucy were inspired to set up a fantastic obstacle course for the children to complete including climbing, sliding, riding, bouncing, crawling, running, gymnastics and balancing. Each child completed the course at least five times in order to do their required half mile, and there was lots of fun and laughter as chaos inevitably took over! Participants got a "Well done!" completion certificate, medal

and sticker confirming their fundraising efforts. Barnardos projects go towards helping children and their families in difficult communities both locally and internationally, and Ferryfield is very proud to be able to donate 75% of the monies raised to these worthy causes (amount yet to be confirmed). The remaining 25% will help to pay our running costs until the end of semester.

Congratulations
graduates!!



Happy Summer to all!!!!