

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Ladybirds Preschool

Friday 6th February 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Held in St Francis Parish Centre

Present: Jean de Garis (Chair JdeG), Sharon Goldie (Treasurer SG), Bill Wilson (Secretary BW), Clive Hunter (Parent Committee Member CH), Sophie Hunter (Parent Committee Member SH) Nicola Mann-Rae (Manager NM-R)

1. Welcome

JdeG welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

3. Approval of January 2025 AGM Minutes

The minutes were duly approved.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Manager's Report: NM-R

This is attached as Appendix 1. SH suggested that the report should be emailed to parents. This suggestion was approved. SG suggested that it could go as an attachment to the Newsletter.

Action: NM-R

6. Chair's Report: JdeG

This is attached as Appendix 2.

7. Safeguarding Report

NM-R said that there were no current issues. There were two cases in the academic year 2024-5 which were duly resolved. Incidents have been duly logged, and NM-R has made use of the Wiltshire Safeguarding services. NM-R said that she has highlighted particular safeguarding issues with parents via a monthly email. This has recently been done with regard to cannabis use.

JdeG thanked NM-R for dealing so competently with this sensitive area.

8. Treasurer's Report: SG

This is attached as Appendix 3. NM-R said that around ten of the nineteen children who currently attend the preschool are likely to leave at the end of this academic year. The financial implications of this were noted as a matter of concern.

The fact that Sonia Fernandez's qualifications were gained outside the UK, and are therefore not recognised by the Department for Education, was noted. This means that, for the time being, Sonia cannot be included in ratio as a Level 3 practitioner. In order to be included in ratio as a Level 3 practitioner, Sonia will need to qualify via the Experienced-based Route

(EBR) which involves completion of at least 751 assessed hours; the number of hours required could be up to 900. Completion of 751 hours will take until November 2026; the maximum of 900 hours would delay completion until early 2027. In the meantime, cover for when Sonia would normally be on ratio as a Level 3 practitioner will need to be found, and this will have financial implications. NM-R said that she has compiled a file of materials needed to carry out her assessment and supervision of Sonia's assessed hours for the EBR. BW said that we must ensure that this file covers all the necessary ground. NM-R said that she would ask Emma Scammell at Wiltshire Council for advice on this matter. With regard to the need for Sonia to gain the necessary certification in English Language skills, BW suggested that NM-R might check to see if the Institute of Linguists provide a suitable qualification.

Action: NM-R

9. Election of Officers

The following were proposed by Clive Hunter and seconded by Sophie Hunter, and duly re-elected:

Chair: Jean de Garis until 1st May
Treasurer: Sharon Goldie
Secretary: Bill Wilson

10. AOB

The next Committee Meeting will be at 9.30 on Friday 13th February in the Hall.

Meeting closed at 10.04.

Appendix 1



LADYBIRDS PRE-SCHOOL

MANAGERS REPORT -February2026

It has been a very busy year since our last AGM and we have been excited to be able to provide a better resourced environment for the children. I wanted to give thanks to all the staff for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment to the children, their parents and the preschool. We unfortunately said goodbye to Sarah, she has been greatly missed but we were fortunate to employ Maria, she is a valued member of the preschool family.

We have increased our numbers on roll, we have seen a 30% rise of new children all accessing their funding, this is invaluable as not only does this mean we are continuing to meet our Wiltshire Council Provider Agreement of providing a valuable and flexible childcare service (especially with the SEND children), it also helps the preschools longevity. With the recent changes within the childcare sector, it is invaluable to the preschool that we continue to grow and to ensure that our staffing requirements are met in the best interests of all.

We have had some staffing challenges and have supported them both personally and professionally. We have recognised that we have needed to help staff with additional requirements as set by the DfE's guidance so that they may gain the recognised status that they need and rightly deserve. We have been proud and supportive of one staff member who has taken steps to gain further qualifications with their studies abroad and have been very grateful for their dedication to solving and rectifying some challenges during this interim period. We also must thank our Deputy for their extra support and commitment to the preschool, children, families and staff. They have taken on some extra responsibilities and helped support the manager in some difficult times. Their dedication is extremely invaluable.

It is great though that despite the challenges we have faced that we continue to provide a high-quality educational environment for our preschool families,

especially with those children who are deprived or have SEN. Staff are continuing to follow the children's lead to improve their early years journey.

We have celebrated some lovely events such as visiting the care home, our Christmas party and our trips to Salisbury including watching a production of Dear Santa. We have and continue to enjoy our dance classes and our singing sessions with Jean. We will continue this year to build up some community links with the Fairfax house, We are looking forward to visits from the community policeman, a visit from the fire service and other community links.

We are extremely lucky that we had some wonderful fundraising events. We had several parent volunteers who gave up their own time to help with raising much needed funds for the improvement of our garden. It goes without saying that every parents support with time and supporting our financial ventures has ensured that our garden looks wonderful. Thank you to those parents that also provided a large monetary donation, this really boosted out fundraising target. Secondly, a massive thank you must go to the staff and volunteers that helped support a whole year of fundraising. You all gave your time free of charge to give the children the best chance of improving their environment. Also, we pass on our heartfelt thanks to Brian and his team who built our new climbing frame, we know this was an onerous task and we are extremely grateful for all your time given freely to construct this for the children. Thank you as well to David (Sarah's Father in law) who built our amazing new mud kitchen. We have had some fantastic cooking concoctions from the children. The children past, present and future are so lucky to have the dedication you have all demonstrated in their best interests. Additionally, we also purchased some new Astroturf for our garden area, this was very much needed and thank you to the committee for helping to make this happen.

We also want to acknowledge and say a great big thank you to Charlie the caretaker, not only has he been a long-standing friend of the preschool. He has also been invaluable in arranging, purchasing a new greenhouse and preparing the garden area at his own expense and his own free time for the benefit of the children and the preschool. This is not only a great opportunity for the children to learn more about growing their own food but also provides the opportunity for the preschool to become more environmentally friendly. We can't wait for it to be erected so that we can start our new gardening projects.

The staff and I will continue to improve our knowledge and training over the coming year, this will be to the benefit of all. Staff continue to engage with learning opportunities as and when they arise.

Our goals are to continue following the child led approach, improve our community links, build stronger relationships with the families, increase our resources and equipment in lines with the children's needs, continue with our extra-curricular activities, undertake further training both externally and in house and improve advertising and increase numbers on roll for September as we have a large cohort of school leavers in the Summer term.

I would also like to thank the Committee for their continued support, working behind the scenes. We are always looking out for new committee members so that we can continue to provide the support to the preschool as a whole.

I am excited to continue in my role as Manager of Ladybirds and to continue to support everyone who is a part of our preschool family.

Nicola Mann-Rae (Manager)

Appendix 2

Ladybird's Pre-School AGM

6th February 2026

CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE AGM

This is my fifth and final annual report as Chair of Ladybirds as I shall be retiring as Vicar of St Francis in May this year.

First, I should like to thank my fellow committee members.

Sharon, as Treasurer, does an outstanding work keeping a clear eye on our accounts and the general management and running of Ladybirds.

Bill, as Secretary, has not only written Agendas and Minutes and circulated them, but also been an invaluable help in drafting policies and enabling good governance of Ladybirds.

Both have been really committed to the smooth, safe and successful running of Ladybirds.

Other committee members, **Sophie** and **Clive**, have brought wisdom and enthusiasm to our decision-making.

Next, I should like to thank the Ladybirds staff.

Nicola, is approaching the end of her second year as manager of Ladybirds.

There are always changes and challenges to address in leadership.

I especially thank her for her compassion and care of the children in her charge.

She brings energy and kindness to the role.

Other staff, **Kylie** and **Sonia**, have made invaluable contributions to the safe and effective running of Ladybirds. We're delighted that **Maria** has also joining the team this year.

I want to express a heartfelt thanks to these excellent and dedicated staff members.

In the year ahead many of the head-winds outlined in recent years are still present:

- a difficult financial background to our wider economy and running any UK business
- a national shortage of early years education professionals
- children leaving in the summer of 2025 made it hard to balance the books

But positively, we have a dedicated, committed staff team who work together well.

The Church Fabric Team have continued to improve the Ladybird's site.

We were able to replace the astroturf in October which was excellent.

Little by little new names are being added to the school roll, re-building our numbers.

Finally, I should like to thank parents for entrusting us with their precious children.

Ladybirds bring their energy and enthusiasm for life to everything they do.

It is a delight to work with them.

I come in and lead singing with them on the guitar. It is always great fun.

Ladybirds Pre-School offers a wonderful local service.

There are good facilities and a dedicated staff team.

We want to see it thrive and attract many new children in the months ahead.

Early years lay foundations for a child's future:

- what they experience in their homes and opportunities they are offered at Ladybirds
- set a template in their young minds about values:
 - self-worth, caring for others, sharing, taking turns, enjoying play,
 - creativity, and simply standing in awe at this amazing, wonderful world.

Thank you to all who contribute in different ways to the success of this Pre-School.

Jean de Garis

Vicar of St Francis Church

Chair of Ladybirds Committee

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report

Sharon presented the accounts, a copy is available on request to the Secretary (secretaryladybirds@gmail.com).

The Accounts for Financial Year 2024-2025 (**1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025**) have been successfully completed and independently examined with no issues raised.

Income was £74K, while expenditure was £77.6K, there being a loss of **-£3,577**. This is yet again another financial year loss. The figures recorded on the Charity Commission for England and Wales website show that the Pre-School has made losses over the last 5 years to a total of £35K. This is not sustainable.

Fundraising was successful during last Financial Year with £1.5K raised which enabled improvements to be made to the garden area, the purchase of a climbing frame, a mud kitchen and other ancillary items, picnic tables with parasols, water tray play equipment, outdoor plants, a children's bench, hanging baskets and plants and herbs. Additionally £323 was raised at a Summer fete; this money allocated to the replacement of the astroturf in the garden area.

1st August 2024 started with 22 children and the year ended 31st July 2025 with 22 children, however, many of them left at the end of Term July 2025 to go on to primary education. This left 13 children to start the new Term on 1st August 2025.

Current Financial Year (1st August 2025 – 31st July 2026)

Half-way through the current Financial Year, there is circa£39.5K in the Ladybirds bank accounts. There is, however, a **projected loss for this Financial Year of circa£14K**. This includes estimated pay rises in April which are yet to be discussed and approved by the Committee.

At the start of the Financial Year the numbers of children reduced substantially (22 down to 13) as many had left for primary education at the end of last Financial Year. This has substantially decreased the Wiltshire Council funding being received.

The astroturf was replaced during this Financial Year at a cost of £5K.

A new bank staff member, Maria, was recruited after the previous person left, and Maria is picking up hours to cover a staff member due to employment rule changes meaning that her qualifications have to be re-examined and verified before she can be counted in ratio again. This work will be ongoing for a considerable time, going into the next Financial Year (around November 2026).

As it has been reported at the previous AGM, the Pre-School is operating on the margins of financial stability. It will continue to do so unless the number of children attending

increases and remains stable. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation through the year and will make recommendations and take action when needed, however, at the moment, losses each year are being supported by reserves and continuing losses year-on-year will seek to fundamentally undermine those reserves and affect the Pre-School's stability in the longer-term.