

City Kids Management Committee

Chair's Report – Gráinne Freeman

28th June 2016

It has yet again been a busy year at City Kids with new Staff and many improvements brought about by our excellent Playleader Sue Folbigg.

Update on City Kids Play Centre

City Kids has benefited from an excellent team and I would like to thank the Management Committee, our Playleader, Deputy, all Playworkers and Cambridge Kids Club.

During the past year, there have been a number of changes with key staff; Tyrone O'Rourke has left and Yasmin Charlton joined the Club on 8th April and works the breakfast and afternoon sessions five days per week. Due to the increased popularity of the club it was necessary to increase the number of play workers and so Sonia Djermame joined on 3rd May and is working in the afternoon sessions on Mondays to Thursdays, inclusive. Both Yasmin and Sonia have been excellent additions to the City Kids team and have settled in very well with the children. The organisational chart showing the Committee membership and staff is attached as an annex.

This year has seen the Club benefit from the SLA agreement with Cambridge Kids Club (CKC) which had been put in place by the Management Committee last year. CKC has helped very much with the smooth running of the club and I am very grateful to the Management Committee from last year for ensuring that this SLA was put in place.

The Committee and City Kids management team continue to work very hard together to ensure the Club's standards are kept and to continue making a difference for our children in areas such as the healthy snacks, the variety of resources and new toys and games that offer a more structured and fun experience. Sue – ably helped by a lot of input from the children - has put a lot of effort into sourcing suitable toys and games for children of all ages present at the Club. We have invested heavily in the provision of new toys and crafts and the children always seem enthusiastic and engaged in their games.

Some additional changes have also been put in place to improve service standards; some of which are highlighted below.

Policies

City Kids has grown in popularity and the Playworkers and Playleader have done an excellent job and looking after and entertaining all children. With the increase in numbers some of the sessions are now full and there are waiting lists which has led to the introduction of the "Waiting List Policy". Unfortunately we are unable to increase the numbers for most sessions as the Hall is at capacity and any increase in numbers would adversely affect the quality of the service that we provide.

We have been very lucky at the club to have Sarah as Secretary as she has written and introduced a number of policies this year to ensure the smooth running of the Club in addition to the Waiting Lists Policy.

Quiet room

Due to some excellent negotiation by Sarah the Parish has offered us the meeting room to use as a quiet room while otherwise not in use. This is fantastic as it offers children the chance to do homework, read a book or do another quiet activity without additional cost to the club.

Survey/Parent Feedback

We held our annual survey to seek the views of parents and would like to thank all of those parents that took the time to respond. In all, 27 parents completed the survey, which means that the waiting attached to each of these responses is quite high (each 1 = 4%). The key results are as follows:

26 of the parents that completed the survey would recommend the Playcentre and 1 parent would not recommend the Playcentre.

90% rated the Playleader and Deputy as above average or higher.

80% rated the Playworkers as above average or higher. 60 % rated the food as above average or higher.

75 % rated the Building as above average or higher. 90 % rated the equipment and materials as above average or higher, (no one rated them lower than average).

60 % rated the service as value for money as above average or higher, while 8 % rated it as below average or poor.

Ofsted

An Ofsted inspection was conducted this year.

The inspector highlighted the qualities and strong points of the Club (that the children have an enjoyable time, have plenty of choice from the varied and well-organised resources, that staff support the children in their play well and that they allow children to be as independent as they like but are ready to help and give advice if needed and that they are playful with the children and join in their games) and that children develop secure bonds with staff, behave well and that older children play harmoniously with younger ones, showing caring attitudes towards one another.

Unfortunately due to failings providing specific documents to the inspector a grade 3 was received. Although this grade is disappointing especially in light of the fact that the inspector was pleased with the setting and the care of the children and that only some items of paperwork remained outstanding this is not a change in grade for the Club. The Club will be re-inspected early next year and I am hopeful that the Club will receive a grade 2 (Good) at this inspection.

Fees

The fees will currently stay at the same level as the previous five years and we shall endeavour to keep fees at this level for as low as possible. Unfortunately, however, we have been experiencing some rises in costs due to inflation and if this impacts the running of the Club we will have to reconsider the level of the fees to ensure that the Club remains financially stable.

Hygiene

Thanks to the hard work of our Playleader Sue and the Deputy and Playsworkers the Playcentre was recently awarded a 5 star hygiene rating.

Half-time sessions

This year we trialled half-time sessions. These sessions have proved to be very popular with parents and therefore we have decided to make them a permanent feature for the foreseeable future.

The Club has also continued to work closely and continue to build a good relationship with St Albans School, especially with Joe Mc Crossan and Caren Munnelly, and the support has been appreciated particularly in allowing us access to the School's communication areas such as the Newsletter and the School website, and support with recruitment and more general advice.

City Kids Committee

City Kids Management Committee is a voluntary run committee of parents and carers of children who attend the club. There are one to two meetings per term generally from 6 – 7.30pm to discuss management and operation of the Club and consider any policy or other changes or requirements. It is a rewarding role, and we are fortunate to have a group of dedicated and talented members who use their skills and experience to ensure that the Club is well run.

New Committee members are urgently needed. Our Treasurer Ulie has done an amazing job and has now asked that she could stand down. She has very kindly remained until we find a replacement and has worked hard to outsource much of the role so that the role of Treasurer will be much less time-consuming in future.

Unless sufficient Committee members are in place, the City Kids Charity may need to be wound up, and there is a real risk that this wraparound service would need to shut or be outsourced. If the service is outsourced this may impact hours and will impact on fees. The Club is currently a 'not-for-profit' organisation and therefore all monies received from fees are spent on providing high quality food and toys for the children, and paying good salaries to our team to ensure that we can recruit and retain the best staff, and we also spend money on high quality food and toys. An outside organisation would wish to generate a profit and would therefore either reduce spending on these areas, or increase fees or both.

I joined the Committee last year when the last Chair Dearbhla stepped down. At the time I thought that since I was working full-time with my son only in breakfast club, there may be more suitable parents to take on the role and that it might take too much of my time. I'm pleased to say that I'm now very glad I took on the role; it's a very rewarding role and I enjoy giving back to the Club that cares for my son so well. I also realised that the other parent members of the club also worked full-time and that their children only attended a few sessions per week too. The Committee members are also very friendly and I now feel more of the School community than I did before.

Please get in touch if you can assist the Committee and would like to be directly involved with the management of the City Kids, then please contact Sarah at: CityKidsSecretary@gmail.com.