

St Helen's Pre-School Little Stars



March
2018

Email (for enquiries, event details or fund-raising queries): littlestarsalveston@gmail.com

Newsletter: **Committee News Special Edition!**

Easter Egg Trail 2018!



24th March – 8th April
(over school holidays)

"Princesses &
superheroes" theme

£2.50 for the
map/trail sheet (from
the Alveston Parade
Stores)

Reminder!

Please mention to any of
your friends who may
need Pre-School places in
the coming terms:
**we are now taking
children from 2 years old**
(see next page!) and we
currently have **places
available from 2 through
to 4 years of age.**

Thanks!

Well done all who braved the
snow to come to the Coffee
Morning on Saturday 3rd
March (& those who baked
through the blizzard!): we
raised **over £120** – which
will go towards the roll-out
of the "Tapestry" online
journal at Pre-School and
new IT tools to help us run
this.

As a Charity, that relies on fund-raising for any income (above that from the free EY hours and/or payments from parents), the Pre-School is run by a Committee of parent volunteers. We want to take this opportunity to explain to all Pre-School families more about the Committee and what we've been up to in recent months!

The Committee has been working hard trying to secure funding to help keep Little Stars running and improve the equipment and facilities that the staff have for running fun programmes during the year! We've been successful with:

- Over Christmas we had some good news, with the **Parish Council** granting us £400 (that has to be spent on new equipment and advertising). You may have seen our new fliers (with this month's village *Helmet* magazine) that is part of our latest marketing campaign.
- In the New Year we heard that **Horizon Nuclear Energy** had given us funding of £1,500 to spend on our "Garden Project" (to redevelopment the outside area at the Jubilee Hall)
- We have recently been awarded a "Sustainability Grant" of £5,000 from **South Glos Council**, which subject to much scrutiny, will ensure our cash flow (between EY free hours grants this spring) is balanced against our running costs through to the summer. The Grant also comes with advice and support from the Council's Early Years experts.

All of the above is good news (obviously!), **but** to set these figures in context, **the running costs of the Pre-School for a six-week term is on average about £6,800**. The costs include paying our fantastic staff (including Pensions and National Insurance) and the rent for the Jubilee Hall, as well as smaller running costs like paper, glue, cooking ingredients and hot chocolate! All this expenditure has to be paid for by the income from each session: which is either the free childcare hours ('Early Years (EY) grant') or from parents paying (where children do not qualify for free hours).

However, during the autumn the Pre-School had very few children for some sessions, and as a result we ran at a **weekly loss** (in financial terms). Whilst we have welcomed new children during 2018, we still need to ensure we attract more children (or have existing children attend more sessions!) to secure a **sustainable future** for Little Stars.

We welcome any new approaches, including by parents who may need our support in establishing their eligibility for **free grant hours for their children** (we can help check this: the forms might seem confusing!).

We also ask you to help **push our fund-raising events** that the Committee organise: partly for funds for new equipment, but partly because having Little Stars mentioned in and about the Community helps with our marketing! **Please encourage your friends and family to be involved in the Easter Egg Hunt during the holidays, and please do mention that it is organised by the Pre-School!**



New Year: New 2 year old starters!

Little Stars welcomed its youngest new children in January – with the pre-school now accepting new starters at 2 years old (rather than our previous policy of only taking children from 2½ years old).

Anyone with a child who is soon to celebrate their second birthday should enquire about which sessions they want to start with! Remember, there's different themed sessions across the week, including Forest School, Cookery and Music!

Thank you!

Thank you very much to those families who have paid their £10 termly craft donation. It is important to realise the vital nature of such donations to enable the staff to plan, prepare and purchase materials for the exciting themed crafts they like to get the children involved with. Sadly, if few families do not make this one-off £10 donation each term, we will have to reconsider the activities currently being planned for after the Easter break.

Also thank you to those who have approached their employers (and support from our members of their family's employers) in terms of grants and donations of equipment or skills. These are a huge help and mean that other fund-raising can go on much needed new storage equipment and new play sand and nature activities!



One of the highly practical things we have bought from recent fund-raising efforts is the new "Forest School trolley" (above). This is a superb addition to the "out and about" equipment for Forest School.

We also benefited greatly from free "pre-loved" equipment from the closing down of Horfield Playgroup (from Horfield Methodist Church) – our thanks to staff (and family members!) who went to collect, and to that Playgroup!!!

Parish Grant for New Equipment!

We were delighted to receive a grant from Alveston Parish Council for £400 in January. This will assist the Pre-School to purchase new equipment to replace some of our aging items and improve the content of our sessions. Little Stars are keen to acquire the "Tapestry" online tool for recording children's achievements and generating "e-learning diaries". This software is used by St Helen's CE Primary School (successfully trialled in Reception Class this year) and so we hope to strengthen our links and assist with transition information from pre-school to school by starting to use this common software package.

Smaller donations!

A reminder that the following are always needed, so we are seeking donations of items:

- Craft materials: paints, card, coloured sugar paper.
- Rice and Pasta
- Flour and Cornflour
- Play sand

If you or someone you know works in / with a stationery or printing business, or with craft materials, and they wish to be a "sponsor" of the Pre-School by gifting us resources we can use: please let one of the staff or committee members know!

Your village Pre-School needs YOU to help!

Positions vacant: we are seeking parents, friends or grandparents as a volunteer for these roles:

Webmaster, to manage our website & update our digital marketing campaign. **Urgent!**

Secretary, to sit on the Committee (for next academic year).

A huge (but sad) thank you!

We are sad to say goodbye to Debbie this term, who leaves us after just over 2 year at Little Stars. She was indeed a "star" leading our Music Tuesday sessions and we wish her all the best for the future!

Payments to Pre-School:

BACS payments for all donations and for session fees should be paid to:

Sort Code: 40-44-41

Account: 31209779

Jubilee Hall, Alveston, BS35 3QA

Tel: 07717 216 762

Visit: www.sthelenspreschool.co.uk

Email: littlestarsalveston@gmail.com

