

Appleton Roebuck Pre-School Groups  
Parish Rooms  
Main Street  
Appleton Roebuck  
York  
YO23 7DJ  
Tel: 07983 789482  
Email: [info@appletonroebuckpreschool.co.uk](mailto:info@appletonroebuckpreschool.co.uk)  
Web: [www.appletonroebuckpreschool.co.uk](http://www.appletonroebuckpreschool.co.uk)

### **Appleton Roebuck Pre-School Groups CIO**

#### **Trustees Annual Report, Year Ending 31 August 2021**

**Period start date:** 1 September 2020  
**Period end date:** 31 August 2021  
**Charity Name:** Appleton Roebuck Pre-school Groups  
**Charity Registration Number:** 1166924

#### **Charity Structure**

Appleton Roebuck Pre-School Groups (ARPG) was first registered in 1977. We have been operating as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation since 2016.

Two types of membership of the CIO are available:

1. Family membership is available to the parents or guardians of all children who attend any group run by the CIO wishing to support the aims of the CIO. Each family holding family membership counts as one member of the CIO and is entitled to one vote at any general meetings of the members of the CIO.
2. Affiliate membership is available to anyone who is interested in furthering the purposes of Appleton Roebuck Pre-school Groups.

Initially set up as a Pre-School in the Parish Rooms in Appleton Roebuck, the Group then expanded to include additional groups such as a Parent and Toddler Group (Little Apples) and, from 2013-2020, an Out of School Club (OOSC) based at Appleton Roebuck Primary School.

Appleton Roebuck Pre-school Groups is managed by a group of trustees made up primarily of Family Members (parents of children attending ARPG groups) and a small number of Affiliate Members, including the manager of one of the current ARPG groups operating with an Ofsted licence.

#### **Public Benefit Statement**

The charity works for the public benefit having as its objects the development of children and young people in particular by: promoting their care and safety; promoting their education and promoting parental involvement; promoting their health and wellbeing; providing services to support them and their families and carers; providing services to individuals holding membership of the CIO and furthering the aims of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Appleton Roebuck Pre-school is registered with Ofsted (URN: EY538161), which means we comply with the requirements of the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. These requirements relate to safety, the people providing the care and the organisation of the childcare.

We pride ourselves in offering a friendly, fun and safe environment for children to play and learn. The Pre-School had its most recent Ofsted inspection in October 2018 and was rated Good. We are proud of this achievement for a community-led organisation in a small village and is testament to the dedication of our fantastic staff.

- Appleton Roebuck Preschool Groups is situated in a village with few services for children and families. Through its groups, Appleton Roebuck Preschool Groups provides much-needed opportunities and support for children and families in the local area.

The trustees have had due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

### **Objectives and activities**

#### **Background**

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic we were still not able to re-start Little Apples, our volunteer-led parent support group. In addition, in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused our planned closure of Out of School Club to be brought forward and in July 2021, the Out of School Club Committee held a final meeting to wrap up loose ends and finalise administration.

For the period September 2020 to August 2021, Appleton Roebuck Pre-school was the sole ARPG group in operation.

#### **Objectives**

With the demands, risks and constraints of the ongoing pandemic creating an unpredictable and potentially unsafe environment, our key aims this year were:

- to ensure the safety of children, staff and families attending our groups during the Covid 19 pandemic
- provide a stable, supportive, high quality early years education for the children and families in our community via Pre-school
- review, monitor and address key risks
- seek to maintain stable finances for ARPG
- invest in and improve marketing and communications

#### **Activities**

During the course of the September 2020 to July 2021 school year, the government guidance and advice relating to the Covid-19 pandemic changed numerous times, resulting in the need for updates to our policies and changes to our operating procedures.

In March 2021, pre-school was able to open with fewer restrictions and return to our usual child-staff ratios. The children really enjoyed getting back to some normality, still spending as much time as possible outside and enjoying their new portable garden and learning about plants, gardening, insects and related topics.

With restrictions lifting in the summer, the children really enjoyed the excitement of getting together with carer/parent-helpers and going on coaches for trips to Beetle Bank Farm and York Beach Club, which broadened their horizons and stretched their imaginations.

We are immensely grateful to all the staff for taking on extra responsibilities throughout the pandemic. The collective effort of the staff team as well as their individual kindness and generosity meant we were able to provide a safe, happy and inspiring early years education even in very difficult external circumstances.

We are also extremely grateful to the families who use our services, particularly for their support and understanding during the most difficult times of the pandemic.

In this exceptional year, the trustees made the decision that our Halloween and Christmas trail events, which fell during periods of Covid restrictions, should provide much-needed Covid-safe entertainment activities for children and families rather than solely focus on fundraising.

### **IT, Website and Marketing**

This year, we invested in a new website and email provider. This has greatly improved our marketing offer and helped make the organisation more efficient. Our thanks go to Perks Marketing who gave many hours of pro-bono branding, marketing and design work as well as providing a low-cost contract to provide improved email and website hosting services. The resulting new website is easy to update and maintain, allowing us to provide families with more information and update them current information, which was not previously possible. In addition, a recent investment in software allowed us to become more efficient by streamlining invoicing and administration.

### **Survey**

In early 2021, we conducted a survey to better understand and respond to the demand for childcare and family support groups in our community. We reached out beyond the current membership of ARPG and received 33 responses. The results showed that there was a demand from families for longer preschool hours and for preschool holiday cover. In addition, there was a real desire for more community-based groups and clubs for local families, with sports and nature clubs being the most popular themes.

### **Financial Review**

Appleton Roebuck Pre-School Groups remained financially stable during the period September 2020 to August 2021. This stability was achieved despite loss of income from Out of School Club, disruption caused by the pandemic and return of an overpayment of £4000 to North Yorkshire County Council from Pre-school.

In response to the effects of the pandemic, Appleton Roebuck Parish Council significantly reduced the rental charge of the Parish Rooms. In exchange, we took on extra duties including cleaning the Parish Rooms. We are grateful to the Parish Council for this thoughtful and generous assistance, which allowed us to operate during the pandemic without jeopardising our financial stability.

In this financial year, our ability to raise money through fundraising was limited due to the pandemic. Income from Pre-school childcare fees was the dominant strand of income this year. Overall, income generated from Pre-school childcare fees was relatively high due to the number of children attending Pre-school.

We know from previous reviews that the numbers of children enrolling at our small village Pre-school is influenced by the number of children of eligible age in the local area as well as the working hours and patterns of local families, the effects of marketing and of word-of-mouth recommendations. We also know that enrolment and income will always be higher as the school

year progresses, as greater numbers children in each school year group reach the age that they are able to attend.

As the key factor of the number of children of eligible age is not within our control, it is essential that we have sufficient reserves in place (currently £15,000 of reserves, reviewed annually) and have a wider strategy that ensures we remain financial viable during years with lower numbers of eligible pre-school children in the local area: for example, having a strong income generation strategy and effective marketing strategy as well as ensuring we continue to operate our groups at a high standard in order to retain existing families and ensure we receive word-of-mouth recommendations.

### **Fundraising**

During the year, we raised over £2500 through fundraising events and donations, including a gift of £1000 from Tesco. We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped raise both income and morale, especially Laura Swain (volunteer marketing and fundraising); all those who gave prizes and gifts, including Acaster Nursery who generously made in-kind donations of plants and compost for the children's garden in a year when outdoor educational activities were so important; and the many members of our village community who decorated their houses for our Halloween and Christmas Trails.

### **Banking**

Our current accounts remain with CAF Bank, which is dedicated to providing banking facilities to charities. Our savings account remains with Scottish Widows, which holds reserves based on 3 months' staff wages.

### **Funds Held**

The Closing Balance in our Accounts as at 31/08/21 are as follows:

- CAF Pre-School Current Account £12,549
- CAF Fundraising Current Account £37,239
- Scottish Widows Savings Account £15,000

### **Conclusion**

Thank you to everyone involved in Appleton Roebuck Preschool Groups over the financial year 2020/21, whether it be as a donor, member of the CIO, committee member, member of staff or supporter of events.