

Dingley's Promise 32nd AGM

Thursday 29th October 2020, 6pm
(Via Zoom Videoconferencing)

In the Chair:

Dave Ormrod

The meeting started with a short film in which parents encapsulated their views of Dingley's Promise in one word, and the featured words were **Normality, Lifeline, Unique** and **Family**. This film is available on our website.

Chairperson's Welcome:

Dave Ormrod opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He said he hoped that the unusual circumstances and videoconferencing format would not detract from the content and hoped that everyone would leave impressed, uplifted and inspired to continue their support of Dingley's Promise's great work.

Attended and Apologies:

See list at the end of the minutes.

Parent's Perspective:

Helen Amner-Munslow, our Parent Voice Trustee, spoke about her experiences of her daughter attending the West Berkshire Centre. Throughout lockdown, the constant contact from Dingley staff had been a lifeline for them, particularly in the absence of support from other organisations. Helen accepted that the family could never provide the level of expert support that Dingley provides, but having resources available designed around her daughter's needs did make progress possible. Her daughter was also to recognise her key worker's voice on Zoom calls, a big step forward. Helen also gave an update on how the West Berks Centre had welcomed back children after the Summer break. Her daughter had settled in quickly ("almost as if she had never been away") and the new welcome procedures were working well.

Minutes of the last AGM:

Minutes of the AGM held on 6th November 2019 were agreed as a true record via a motion proposed by Catherine McLeod and seconded by Karen England, and will be signed and filed after the meeting by the Chair.



Chairperson's Report:

The Chair presented his report, and started by saying that 2019/20 had been a very successful year.

- Reached over double the number of children (300 +) than in any previous year, by a combination of:-
 - Centre-based learning through play (LTP) sessions
 - Outreach through our Family Support Workers
 - Training (paid for and free) for mainstream pre-school practitioners
- Managed a four-fold increase in higher needs children attending LTP sessions, and a 10% increase in 1:1 support
- Increased transitions to mainstream by 10%, and 65% of all transitions were to mainstream or shared provision
- Partnered with national charities to deliver a training and consultancy project to 83 Local Authorities for DoFE
- Managed our finances to return a small surplus (0.3% of revenue), thus retaining the security of our Reserves and a small development fund
- Expanded, and added new skills and experience to our Trustee Board
- Our response to, and management of, the challenges posed by COVID-19 has been exceptional (and recognised as so by funders, supporters and families):-
 - Risk assessments on staff, children and return to operation
 - Home working facilitated with laptops and secure remote working software (fully funded)
 - Regular contact with children and families via telephone and Zoom calls
 - Online resources made available

In terms of future direction, we will focus on:-

- More of the same, to increase reach and impact.....expansion of services, development of new services, new geographies (if funded)
- Embracing the opportunities that our higher profile has created
- More partnerships and consultancy to influence SEND strategy (This will almost certainly require investment in resources)
- Seek to improve our centres – refurbishment and/or new locations
- Further Trustee Board development



Treasurer's Report and adoption of the latest set of accounts:

The full set of 2019/20 accounts can be seen on the Dingley's Promise website, the Charity Commission, and soft copies had been distributed prior to the meeting. Accounts are examined externally.

Peter Brogden, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report:

2019/20 was a successful year financially. Income grew by 1% over the previous year and control of costs delivered a surplus of £2,300 versus a deficit of £31,000 in the prior year. A good recovery, resulting in starting 2020/21 on a stronger basis.

Cash flow was positive at £42,000. Cash in hand at the year end was £210,000, so we are well secured for meeting costs in the current year.

Expenditure in 2019/20 was down by 4% on the previous year, largely due to unfilled vacancies, but this did not detract from operational effectiveness.

Interestingly, we saw Earned Income increase by 28%, largely through growth in the Nursery Grant. Our spread of income sources is wider and better balanced than previously. In the annual accounts you can see a list of all the donors who contributed to DP in the year. It is amazing just how wide our support is, a testament to our impact in the community.

Our Net Assets are in a good position, slightly increased over last year. Undesignated Funds increased from £114,000 to £142,000. These are funds which we can utilise as we need within the charity. Net Current Assets stand at just under £150,000 in cash and cash equivalents which support the operations going forwards.

We started the current year in a good position to weather shocks and we have subsequently been extremely successful in attracting fund to support our services through the COVID crisis. At this point the current year, 2020/21, is looking good from the financial perspective.

Lorna Fairburn proposed the adoption of the 2019/20 accounts and this was seconded by Matthew Bond.

CEO's Report:

Catherine McLeod MBE, CEO, presented the CEO's Report, initially explaining that we look at our organisation as having 3 pillars – Children, Families, Settings.

Children, where we had concentrated on:-

- Learning Through Play
- COVID continuity, structure
- Impact of lockdown
- Focused recovery

Families, where our priorities had been:-

- Family Support Work
- Outreach
- COVID remote support
- Parent feedback



Settings, ours and those we can influence, through

- Level 3 inclusion training
- Lockdown introduction
- Transition Training
- 974 trainees to date across 115 LA areas

In terms of looking forward, we have both priority and aspirational aims:-

- Priority
 - COVID recovery for all children
 - Entry-exit pathway roll out
 - Reading refurbishment
 - Use technology more widely
 - Deliver EDI action plan
- Aspirational
 - Bid to expand to new geographies
 - Build wider training offer and create a movement of 'Inclusion Champions'
 - Support local authorities to develop
 - More services like ours

Election of Directors:

Dave Ormrod stated that no Trustee Directors in place at the last AGM needed to stand for re-election at this meeting. However, there have been four Trustee Directors appointed through due process by the Trustee Board since the last AGM and these appointments must be confirmed at this meeting. They are:-

- Giles Beattie – Governance & Risk
- Peter Brogden – Treasurer
- Michael Scheepers – Strategy
- Pritpal Virk – Marketing

These appointments were proposed for confirmation by Dave Ormrod and seconded by Karen England.

Dave Ormrod also stated that we are in further discussions with three more potential trustee/directors.

Since the last AGM, four trustee/directors have moved on:-

- Richard Cronin
- Nick Richards
- Jacqui Thornton
- Jason Daniels

And Dave thanked these four for their service to Dingley's Promise.

Dave also stated that he had continued in his Chair role longer than he had intended due to COVID-19 delaying the recruitment of new trustees and a potential new Chair. He was now targeting end-March 2021 (the 2020/21 year end) for his departure.



Any Other Business:-

Dave Ormrod invited comments and questions and a number of people came forward with the following:

“What an amazing job you're all doing. I was a bit shy in coming forward with it being my first time - but I hope it not be my last. My thanks to you, the Chairman, Trustees and all the staff.”

“I just want to thank you and all the management team for your hard work and support that you give to children and their families locally and nationally and also staff in Dingley. I really enjoyed listening to all our works, responses and achievements during last year and wish everyone all the best for the next year.”

“I just want to say again how very proud I am to be part of such an amazing organisation and fabulous team! Thank you for recognising and mentioning myself and my colleague. I know she will be feeling just as appreciated and valued as I am!”

“I would like to add one more pillar, which is the management. So apart from children, families and settings, I would like to also say that the management starting with Cath, Dave and all the Board members - they really worked hard to ensure that we keep giving our best. Thank you.”

Finally, Chris and Naomi Khoo, two of our Patrons, added: “It's been a wonderful AGM and Naomi and I are honoured to continue as Patrons, and we'd like to congratulate the Chair, the Chief Executive all the Trustees and the executive team, the staff and all Dingley's supporters. Cath spoke about three pillars - children, families, and the settings, and I'd like to summarise the excellent news we've heard with five vowels - a, e, i, o, u.

* A is an advocate for over 300 children with special needs;

*E is embracing them and their needs and developing skills, and how amazing to actually get them to use technology - to use Zoom - and their parents as well; and then

*I for improvement - what a stunning figure that over 70% are going to mainstream education - and as Cath said not just at the end of a fixed programme, but when they are individually ready - that's amazing; and in terms of

*Outreach - that was another mind boggling figure - over 1000 family contacts this year, and 974 trainees and 115 local authorities - that is amazing for a small charity - a

*Unique achievement in achieving early years learning through play - and all during the months of the pandemic, and Treasurer to keep us financially viable and the excellent prospects for next year - all that we can say is well done, congratulations, and very best wishes. Long may it continue!”

Catherine McLeod played a video in which parents and children expressed their thanks to all of our supporters.

Summary and Thanks:

Dave Ormrod thanked everyone again for attending and contributing, and expressed his gratitude to his trustee colleagues, the management team, staff and volunteers for their hard work during the year.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.05 PM



Attending

Alexander Barfield
Arlette Bell
Carol & Clements
Catherine McLeod MBE
Chris & Naomi Khoo
David Ormrod
Deborah Holland
Elizabeth O'Keefe
Giles Beattie
Helen Amner-Munslow
Helen Hart
Joanna Wastell
Julia Cox
Karen England
Laxmi Patel
Lorna Fairbairn
Lynne Doherty
Malcolm Richards
Masako Eguchi-Bacon
Matthew Bond
Michael Scheepers
Nadia Masoodi
Paula Chambers
Peter Brogden
Pritpal Virk
Rachel Eden
Russ Fowler
Shakila Savithri Rengan
Theresa Bowers
Zora Morgan

Apologies

Alok Sharma MP
James Puxley LL
Jeff & Penny Branch
Jon Yates
Lady Catherine Stevenson DL
Maria Miller MP
Mary Riall High Sherrif
Nicola Moss

