

## Our New Preschool Has Opened Its Doors!

After months of campaigning, fundraising, and planning—and weeks of construction—the new preschool building officially opened on Friday, 17th January, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by local Lib Dem councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers.

On this joyful morning, Tim Suiter, Chair of the Preschool Committee, addressed the attendees to share the story behind the project. He reflected on years of dedicated fundraising by past committees and recounted the pivotal moment during Easter 2024 when they discovered that the central roof beam was rotten and would not survive another winter. This urgent revelation sparked a passionate campaign to save the preschool, resulting in the additional funds needed to complete the construction.

Tim also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the community, emphasising that this achievement would not have been possible without their unwavering support. From organising fundraisers and volunteering time to donating vital resources, the collective efforts of the community brought the dream of a new preschool to life.

The new building has been thoughtfully built with energy efficiency in mind, incorporating sustainable features to reduce its environmental impact while creating a comfortable, eco-friendly environment for children and staff.



*2 Tim Suiter, Chair of the Preschool Committee, giving his speech at the opening ceremony.*

This marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter, promising a positive and enriching environment where children can thrive and the community can continue to come together in support of its youngest members.

### The team responsible for making it happen!

Offpod, the company entrusted with this ambitious endeavour, brought their expertise and determination to the forefront. Despite this being their first project of its kind for a preschool, they embraced the challenge and delivered an exceptional build in just a few weeks.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated group of preschooler parents took charge to ensure everything ran smoothly. Tim, Becky Galea, Leigh, and Becky Bell, all active members of the Preschool Committee, went above and beyond by forming a specialised building



*1 Local Lib Dem councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers cutting the ribbon*



*3 Top row, L to R: Chris from Offpod, Tim Suiter and Becky Galea. Bottom row, L to R: Chris Bell, Becky Bell, and Lawrie.*

committee. Their commitment and oversight were instrumental in keeping the project on track and aligned with the preschool's vision.

Chris Bell, a preschooler parent with extensive building experience, volunteered his professional expertise to supervise the project. His hands-on approach and role within the building committee provided invaluable guidance, ensuring every detail met the highest standards.

Additionally, Lawrie Gatherum, parent of a former preschooler and a skilled architect, generously volunteered his time and expertise to advise on the building design. His insights played a crucial role in creating a functional, welcoming, and innovative space tailored to the needs of young learners.

A huge thank you for all your hard work and congratulations on such an amazing achievement!

Jo Malcolm, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025