

## Whitchurch Pre-School loses £20,000 during Covid-19 lockdown and has new building plans.

*An update on the impact of Covid-19 on our village Pre-School, our exciting plans for a new building and how the local community can support us.*

The Pre-School re-opened for key worker children on 15<sup>th</sup> June and, a couple of weeks later, for the children going to school in September. It has taken a huge amount of work from the staff and the volunteer parent committee to get the Pre-School ready for opening.

We all continued to work extremely hard throughout Lockdown to provide our children with physical and virtual activities including activity packs from the staff, Teddy Bear Pilates with Tania and Outdoor Learning activities with Claire. Alongside this, our experienced and talented staff were offering parental support and guidance to try to make this challenging time easier for our Pre-School community.



The fundraising team has been using creative ways to raise funds and have delivered two successful online events. On 2nd May, we held **QuizFest**, a quiz night social for Pre-School parents to mark the date of WhitFest. At the beginning of June, we took our ever-popular **Bingo night** online (normally hosted by The Ferryboat) and raised a fantastic £431 for Pre-School. This event brought together 50 people from the local community, lots of fun was had and some great prizes were won. Huge thanks to the local businesses who donated prizes to the event: Warmingham & Co, The Ferryboat, The Co-Op, Camper Cafe, Birch Bread, the Pangbourne Cheese Shop, Little Bowden Wellness and Royal Oak Hair Design.

Since reopening once again, every child has been incredibly happy to be back, despite not having been in Pre-School for three months. And the parents have welcomed our efforts to provide some kind of Pre-School for the children who will shortly be going to school in September. We are also continuing a slimmed down virtual Pre-School for other days, and for the children who cannot join us in Pre-School.

Early years settings, both those run for profit and not-for-profit, are struggling to break even. We have been exploring how we can make our Pre-School financially viable so it can continue to provide for the next generation of Whitchurch children. With the growing interest in **Forest Schools** and the recorded benefits of children spending time outdoors, we have been working with our trainee Forest School leader, Claire Jeffs, to create a wild outdoor place for our Pre-School.

**We're renting a double plot from the Whitchurch Allotment Association** and are turning it into an exciting place for the children to use from the autumn term. We believe investing in the Forest School ethos will be attractive to future parents and help the Pre-School remain financially viable. If you want to know more about the project or even get involved, please have a look at our website [www.whitchurchpreschool.org/allotment](http://www.whitchurchpreschool.org/allotment). We have plenty of tasks for volunteers and a list of tools and equipment we need for the site.

**Our final major project is building a new Pre-School.** The Pre-School has nurtured a generation of children from Whitchurch and its surrounding area. We want the Pre-School to benefit future generations, but our building is no longer fit for purpose. Bought second-hand twenty years ago, it is costing us more and more each year to maintain. We now need to bite the bullet and replace it. We are looking for volunteers who want to get involved in this project. Do you have experience of project managing building projects like this

or would you like to get involved applying for capital grants? We would love to hear from you. Please email Mel Uglow at [chairpersonwhitchurchpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:chairpersonwhitchurchpreschool@gmail.com) for more information.

If you would like to support this cause in a different way, then we also have a **crowdfunding page** where we are looking to raise funds to enable the build to go ahead before our existing one crumbles.

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/whitchurchonthamespreschool>

Thanks again for all your continued support of our small, village Pre-School. It makes all the difference.

*Mel Uglow – Chair, Whitchurch Pre-School, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

**Join our mailing list** to be the first to hear our latest news and community events by emailing [fundraising.whitchurchpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:fundraising.whitchurchpreschool@gmail.com)

**Save the date:** WhitFest is being held on **Saturday 8th May 2021** on the Village Green. To get involved with this exciting community festival, please contact Hannah Dunbar on 07971 116704.