

Stoke Baby and Toddler Group



Annual report to the Parish Council 2024

We have had yet another successful year, with the older children moving on to Nursery and Schooling, but many new faces joining us, including siblings, new youngsters who have moved to the village and more via recommendation.

Numbers continue to vary weekly, but now rarely fall below 18 per week and sometimes up to 26 little ones, along with parents, grandparents and carers. Some visit regularly, others occasionally – often mums who have returned to work like to come if they have a Wednesday free and it is always lovely to see them. Occasionally parents bring Grandparents as well, so they can see what the kids get up to!

We have heard of some mums who avoid walking past the Hall, as their little ones do not understand that there isn't "perpetual play" inside!

We provide a wide range of toys and crafts, including sand, water and mud (generally outside, when weather is appropriate!) and our weekly crafts prove popular with the young ones – and their carers! We have made cards, hats, amazing but undefined sculptures, seed planters, bug hotels and a whole range of very useful items. We were again pleased that our annual Easter garden, made by the Toddlers, was proudly displayed in the Church.

It has been lovely to meet some new grown-ups as well as the children: it is important to remember that the group is for them too and seems to be very useful for new families moving into the village.

This Christmas we were again very lucky to have another visit from Father Christmas and all the children were given a book and some treats. Our volunteers, Sue, Margaret, Jan and Rita continue to give fantastic support and spoil us by serving us with a range of healthy options for snacks.

We continue to cover running expenses (less hall rental), but due to price increases of fruit and craft material, have not been able to save for significant equipment updates. We obtain toys etc by scouring Car Boot sales and local Buy/ Swap sales – and by donation, which works, but not always easy to find in good condition.

Our commitment to keep prices as low as we can remains very important to us, as we aim to be as inclusive as possible. We do believe that £1.50 per family including coffee for

'biggies' and drink / healthy snacks for the 'littles' represents good value, but we make it clear that this is only payable if the family can afford it.

Once again, we remain extremely grateful to the PC, who have supported us by covering the Hall rental for the year. Without this support, we simply could not continue.

Many thanks, once again for your support.

Karen Pearce – Chair

Tim Pearce – Secretary

Lucina de Gregorio - Treasurer