

St Martin's Toddler Group Annual Report 2019 – 2020

Leader: Jenny Wood

Treasurer & record keeper: Peter Gandolfi

Weekly Volunteers: Peter Gandolfi, Mary Tozer, Mo Sparks and Val Hemmings

Occasional Volunteer: Anne Green

Toddler group continues to run in The Brass Crosby Room on Tuesday mornings 10.30 – 12 noon during school term times. Our charge of £2 per child allows us to donate £20 to the church each week towards running cost of the facilities, have enough money to pay for weekly food and equipment and have a small surplus for emergencies and toy replacement.

Numbers fluctuated during the academic year September 2018 – September 2019 after many children left at the same time in September 2018 to start school. This coincided with the introduction of new data protection rules necessitating the destruction of our parents/carers email addresses so we couldn't send out our newsletters to remind parents/carers, old and current, to attend. As this is the main way in which we advertise our group it has taken a year to build up a reliable number of children again each week. During the first 2 months of 2020 our numbers have finally picked up and we now regularly have 15 – 18 children attending, most of whom are very regular attenders. There is a very friendly and happy atmosphere at the group and many parents/carers say that they enjoy it as much as the children. We are considering whether we need to advertise toddlers on social media sites at the start of the next academic year in September 2020 when we will lose children to school or pre-school, but do not want to end up turning families away as we are insured for a maximum of 25 children a week. We will decide after watching our numbers during the summer term.

2019 had several staff changes. Firstly, at the end of the summer term our longest serving volunteer, Jenny Leach, retired. She had helped Sarah Ford to set up Toddlers 8 years previously and will be very much missed. Secondly, on the 19th November our founder, Sarah Ford, retired from leading the group after 8 successful years to take up full time employment. She will also be sorely missed. Thirdly at this time 2 volunteers, Sue Shannon and Denyse Griffiths, took the opportunity to retire from helping in the group and we thank them for all their hard work. Lastly on 26th November Jenny Wood, having seen an advert on the Churches Together in Orpington Facebook page, took up the reins as leader. Jenny worked at Tower Pre-School whilst Sarah Ford's 2 sons were there and, as she retired from the leadership in December 2012, she gave Sarah a job as volunteer which in turn led to Sarah completing some training and working at Tower for 7 years. It appeared we had come full circle as Sarah handed over the leadership of Toddlers to Jenny and it is certainly a lovely connection. Jenny is a Christian with many years' experience working with young children in church and state settings and attends Green Street Green Baptist church. She views the role of Toddler Group leader as an answer to prayer and believes that toddler groups are a lifeline for many parents/carers and a fantastic opportunity to socialise for young children.

The Toddler volunteer team would very much welcome more volunteers, male or female, on a weekly or cover basis to spread the load and enable the group to continue in case of staff sickness or holidays. We have great fun as a team and always find time for a cuppa, a chat and one of Mary's homemade cakes together before the sessions begin and a meal out at the end of each term.

The Toddler Group accounts are integrated into the St.Martins Accounts. They have been extracted and are presented on page 13 of the Statement of Financial Activities - Business Reports Section 6.