

Report to Ashby St. Mary Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 22nd April 2010

Thurton & Ashby St. Mary Pre-school celebrated its 40th Birthday last year by holding an afternoon tea party for special guests, past and present members of staff, committee members, parents and children. Audrey Chapman cut the cake and told us about the way the group was formed in September 1969 and everyone who came shared their own memories and stories. The photograph albums showed many years of fun laughter and learning for generations of children and we hope to continue for many years to come.

15 children left pre-school at the end of the summer term to go to school so we knew numbers would be low through the autumn and spring terms. As a consequence we could not sustain three members of staff and reluctantly accepted Anne Whiting's resignation after 15 years dedicated service to our group and community. The children all drew a picture for Anne's leaving book and there were lots of flowers and presents on the last day of term to say thank you for all she had done for pre-school over the years.

In the autumn term we had a child join with special needs and with the help of a support worker has settled in well. We are one of two groups in the area to have been nominated to receive special equipment on a loan basis through the Play At It scheme, which will include a touch screen computer and other special needs toys, which all the children will be able to access.

We have also been lucky enough to secure a Capital Grant to spend on equipment and resources for ICT, Outdoor Play Inclusion and Replacement. We must show that this money is being spent to support the children's learning and development and our Support Teacher will be reporting on how the Grant is benefiting the setting.

Unfortunately the Grant cannot be spent on wages or rent so the committee must maintain a high level of fundraising, our autumn events including the Christmas Bazaar were very successful and we would like to thank the community for their continued support. We have other events planned including an Auto Jumble in May and another Open Day in July to promote the group.

We are looking forward to working closely with the new head teacher of Thurton School to develop links and a programme of transition for those children starting next September. Last year the children spent a morning in Mrs. Pratts' reception class using the computers, painting and experiencing the interactive white board finishing with a story. It helped the children to feel happy and familiar with their new school and teachers before starting.

The Parent, Baby & Toddler Group has been opening alternate weeks but numbers have been very low so it has been decided to combine this with a new music group being run by Andrea Wilson called Notelets which will be starting on Wednesday mornings alternating with Little Fish. We hope this will attract new families and build into a successful group.

We have had a year of mixed fortunes but are positive about the coming year, as numbers have again increased. We are looking forward to buying some new resources and replacing some older equipment to allow the children to flourish grow learn and achieve at Thurton & Ashby St. Mary Pre-school. Sandra Rennie Playleader