

June

Almondbank & Pitcairngreen Playgroup

Newsletter



Issue 7 ~ June 2011

Hi everyone

I am your new chairperson for our lovely playgroup. I will be in command [I mean I will be working with everyone] for the new term. I would like to thank Neil and the outgoing committee for all their hard work over this last year. Having been on committees in previous years a successful term is one in which parents and the committee work together.

I also feel that we have a great playgroup and we should all be proud of ourselves and thank our wonderful staff team for giving our kids the best start in life. The parents can make great friends too which might involve drinking a bit too many glasses of wine for a good cause. [any excuse !!!!!]

The first thing planned for the new session is a name change. Since becoming a playgroup over 30 years ago, the service we provide has developed extensively and the name "Playgroup" does not fairly reflect what we do. So, after discussion at our recent AGM and many ideas thrown into the pot the name "Pitcairn Under 5s" was agreed. Subject to approval from OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) we will adopt this name. I will write to you when this goes ahead.

There is no doubt that we will have challenges that we have to deal with but our committee will all be working together to hopefully have a Fun and Exciting new term ahead.

From Catherine Green
New chairperson

What a great day this was enjoyed by all the children and parents/carers along with some of the children due to start next year. What a great opportunity for them to meet the staff and other parents.

This was organised by a small committee of parents. Gail, Karen, Marion, Kirsty, Fiona, Helen and Leahann came up with the theme of "Fun on the Green Hawaii style" The green was to be transformed into a beach. A bouncy castle was organised, various activities were supplied by "Baby Sensory". Sharon and her daughter Natasha brought their pony Betsy along and Sophie the cat and Lassie the dog came along to supervise.

Family Fun Day

On the Village Green
10 June 2011

Other activities included a ball pool, football, treasure hunt and messy dip and of course the all important B-B-Q. Thanks must go to Helen and Andy who manned the B-B-Q and kept us all well fed throughout the day, to Marion for her delicious burgers and Gail and her neighbour Dorothy for the home baking. The staff from The Pitcairngreen Inn were kind enough to donate Bacon and eggs for the day. Thanks also go to Sarah Clark who created some wonderful characters with her face paints.

Unfortunately it was just not quite warm enough for swimming but it did stay dry and the day was finished off with the children receiving some yummy ice creams and punch balloons. Don't think many made it home judging by the number of pops and bangs but everyone went home tired and happy. Especially Lassie the dog!



Morning Playgroup

Mondays to Fridays
9.15am—11.45am

The current role i is:

Pre-School: 8 Ante-pre-school: 5
Playgroupers: 6



Welcome Charlie

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Charlie Geddes 6 June
Kyle Wilson 28 June
Arran Pettigrew 29 June
Ty Hamilton 19 July



Achievers

Rona Lofthouse has completed a 12 week course for "SVQ3 underpinning knowledge" during session 2020-11 with Perth College. Rona will continue her SVQ training from August to gain her SVQ3 qualification.

Well done Rona.



Important Events

Quality Improvement Report 2010/11

Ruth-Ann, Rona, Linda, Neil and Catherine have been working on this annual document. This highlights our **activities and the children's progress** throughout the year. In addition, Ruth-Ann and Rona have laid out the plans and expected outcomes for 2011 up to 2014.

These documents will be submitted to Perth & Kinross Council by the end of June. After this has been approved by the council, sometime in September, parents/carers will each receive a copy.

Parent & Toddlers Group



Parent and Toddlers can meet in Pitcairngreen Village hall on Wednesday mornings during school term 9.30-11.30am
It's a good chance to let your kids play and for you to have a coffee.

£2.00 for first child and 50p for any more you bring.

FOR ANY MORE DETAILS CONTACT
Linda MacPherson
01738 639690

Watch this space for more news next year



Scrap Book Challenge

Each Pre-Schooler was given a scrap book to record their final year at playgroup. This could include stories about events, drawings created and pictures taken on outings or at play.

It will soon be time to show off your **masterpieces**. So if you **haven't had a chance to complete your scrapbook or order photographs you would like to include, now is the time.**

Sometime in June, we will ask you to bring them .



Pre-Schoolers Farewell Presentation

Thursday
30 June 2011
10.45am—11.45am

This will be held in the hall for Pre-schooler's **Parents/carers, Grandparents etc are welcome to come along at 10.45am to view the children's work and enjoy their final performance at Playgroup before they go of to school.**

Remember your cameras and tissues.



Goodbye and Good luck as you go to school

Pitcairn Primary

Aimee Trobridge

Harry Bruce

Kyle McNicol

Zac Crofts

Ruthvenfield Primary

Arran Pettigrew

Niall Robertson

Ty Hamilton

Madderty Primary

Matilda Bijum

Farewell

Ella MacDonald

Good luck in your new nursery

Training undertaken 2010/11

Health & Safety Manager's Guide

Baby & Child First Aid

Assessment in the Early Years

Creating a Stimulating Learning Environment
in the Early Years

Active Learning on a Shoestring

Building Children's Profiles in the Early Level

Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPS)
Nursery and Primary

Dance a Story

Child Protection Level 1

Child Protection Level 2

Early Morning in the Pond

Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discriminatory Practice

Asthmas Awareness and use of Epipen

Handling Children's Behaviour

CfE—Exploring Learning and Teaching at the Early Level

Developing creativity in the Early Years

CfE principles and practice papers

Active Story Books for Nursery and Early Primary

Children Moving and Handling

SVQ 3 Underpinning Knowledge

A Brief introduction to Anxiety and Depression

Moving and Handling Training

By Angela

I attended this course on Tues 7th June at Fairview. The first part of the course was about the legislation regarding Health & Safety.. We were made aware of the importance of safe handling in regards to our backs. We were shown a skeleton of our back and what happened to it when lifting things incorrectly, the back is naturally a gentle s shape, but becomes an unnatural looking u shape, if fact the shape **looks impossible for anyone's back to make. But this is why** we get a sore back sometimes, and over a period of time this can cause serious back injury. Then we moved on to practising a good steady stance, bent legs straight back. We then moved on to safely moving someone forward in a chair to getting them standing and supporting them. We practised this a few times. Then it was time for lunch. After lunch we were shown the room for younger children and shown some of the equipment and techniques to use with smaller children. Then we were shown how to use a hoist, I was hoisted onto a bed and got off again, it was good to experience the feeling of putting your trust in other people and equipment. It is important to check the equipment you are using and to use it safely and learn how reassuring it is when helping someone that you explain what you are doing. I attended this course last year and felt it was more for helping older children and adults, but this time there was discussion on the course about helping smaller children. This was a good course and it is a useful reminder to look after our backs when moving and handling equipment or children or heavy shopping or heavy washing.

WORD'S OUT BOOK REVIEW COMPETITION

By Jane

Earlier this year the children took part in a book review competition, reviewing books (kindly loaned to us by Ella) published in 2010.

The children are always refreshingly honest, and it soon becomes apparent what grabs their interest. The children often point out the tiniest detail in the illustrations that can go unnoticed by an adult, but really adds to the magic of the book for them.

We sent off detailed accounts of the children's responses to each book, and I am pleased to announce that we have been selected to review the books that have been shortlisted for a prestigious award. We were very excited to receive seven beautiful recently published books to review, which are ours to keep.

Sam and Kyle Wilson love 'I Love bugs' by Emma Dodd. In this book, I pointed out a Daddy Long Legs to Ella, who in turn pointed out a Mummy Long Legs. Oliver prefers "Hugless Douglas" by David Melling, and Harry loves the humorous illustrations in this book. Arran really appreciates the detail of the illustrations (which actually tell their own little story) of 'Cave Baby', by Julia Donaldson, although Sam is genuinely concerned for Cave Baby's welfare throughout the book, and really gets involved with the characters.

Thomas, Ella and Aimee and Matilda enjoy 'Dogs Don't Do Ballet'. This is a good book to read to the whole group since it has a repetitive theme and we all shout out "Dogs don't do ballet!"

'Wake up!' by Katie Cleminson has lots of actions and the children recently enjoyed a Dance a Story style activity in the hall using this book. 'Iris and Isaac', (Harry tells me he has this book at home), has sparked discussions about friendship and resolving issues. 'Egg' by Alex T Smith has provided a great opportunity to predict what is going to happen next. Kyle McNicol enjoys all the books and has three favourites.

Charlie enjoys hearing a story and then looking at the book on his own, spending lots of time examining each page.

My personal favourite is 'Cave Baby'. I have a greater appreciation of the amazing detail of the illustrations, now that Arran has pointed them out to me.

However the competition is really about what the children think, and following several weeks of exploring the books with the children.

The overall favourite is 'Hugless Douglas'. This has been such a productive competition to take part in and really encouraged the children's literacy skills. The winner of this competition will receive a visit from the author whose book gets the most votes. We'd love it to be us!

Sports Morning Thursday 23 June 2011

Running Race

Position	P-School	P-school	A-P-School	A-P-School	Playgroupers
1st	Matilda	Kyle M	Annie	Noah	Kyle W
2nd	Zac	Ty	Thomas	Charlie	Kirsty
3rd	Harry / Arran	Niall	Ella	Sam	Lily

Egg & Spoon Race

Position	P-School	P-School	A-P-School	Playgroupers
1st	Matilda	Arran	Ella	Jayden
2nd	Harry	Niall	Kirsty	Oliver
3rd	Ty	Kyle	Lily	Kyle

Obstacle

Position	P-School	P-School	A-P-School	Playgroupers
1st	Niall	Ty	Ella	Oliver
2nd	Kyle	Harry	Thomas / Annie	Noah
3rd	Matilda	Arran	Kirsty	Kyle

Toddlers

1st

Zara

2nd

Esme



Egg and Spoon Race



Obstacle Race

The arrival of the rain did not deter us from having our sports day
we just held it in the hall followed by a teddy bear's picnic.

Tesco Vouchers

Thanks



A very BIG THANK YOU to all who sent in their Tesco vouchers. The final total received was 4900. We spent ages going through the extensive catalogue, consulted with the children about what they thought we should get and finally made our decision.

We have ordered 6 pairs of waterproof trousers (maybe we'll get the jackets next year!) A herb tray and stand, buckets and spades to help develop the garden and large bowls for collecting bugs, leaves etc.

There due to arrive sometime in September. Thanks again.

Learning Together: Do Lions Hibernate?

Conversation between two members of team Husky Dog when we were looking for bugs on the green.

Child A: We can't seem to find any bugs.

Ruth-Ann: I wonder where they are because there must be thousands of bugs on the green?

Child B: I know! They're hibernating.

Child A: Yes because caterpillars hibernate and they go in their canoe and become butterflies.

Child B: *All* animals hibernate

Ruth-Ann: Do they?

Child B: Yes, lions hibernate

Child A: No they don't

Child B: Yes they do

Child A: No they don't, they shelter

Child B: I'm sure they do

Child A: Well I'm going to the zoo and these lions don't hibernate 'cause there's a funfair.

By the time this conversation was finished the two members of team Husky had planned a day out at the zoo (funfair being the priority) and I had so many ideas for activities my pen **couldn't keep up with my brain. I was also left wondering**, what do lions get up to at the funfair? Are their lions writing to the council about noise pollution? The mind boggles.

Working in small teams is an excellent way for children to share their ideas, experiences and knowledge to extend their learning. Although children may have many learning experiences from an activity what we aim to promote in small **teams are children's communication skills. For example**, confidence to share ideas, listen to the needs of others.

In the playgroup we have been working on ways to make show and tell experiences more meaningful. During a recent show and tell one of our preschoolers was in charge of story time, Jane sat on the floor with the children. When **question time began the child did everything to avoid Jane's raised hand- avoiding eye contact, changing the rules "I'll only ask you if you don't raise your hand" etc.**

It was both fascinating and highly amusing to watch. For that moment the child had a role within her peer group. What would happen if she allowed an adult to ask a question? Would the adult take over? Would the adult ask a question **that was too hard to answer? I don't know why the child didn't want to answer Jane's question but what was obvious is that children respond well to having roles and responsibilities within their peer group. However even with the best of intentions adults take over, we're aware of time constraints, we want to tell the children something before they leave, we haven't read a story yet etc, etc.**

Small team work allows children to grow in confidence working alongside a peer that is not so familiar to them. During story time pairs will be encouraged to share experiences with each other before sharing them with the group. This has worked very well with all children keen to participate.

Most significantly once the format for this kind of working is more firmly established amongst the children hopefully they will become even greater, resilient and secure **communicators; which should be interesting, they're all fairly robust already.**

Library Visit by Angela

In May two librarians from the Perth library came to visit.

They had two big bags with them and we were excited to see what was inside. They started with a familiar song with a twist, which was Old MacDonald had a fish farm, to go with this there were a toy farmer and lots of soft toys to match with animals & fish in the song, next was a story about a boy who had a telescope which we made with our hands, we looked up, down and all around.

They continued with more stories and then from another bag came a magic blanket that we all held on to and made it move and sang a song. The visit ended with another story.

This visit was enjoyed by all the children who listened, sang and joined in. The visit was aimed at the ante preschool, who all received a bag of goodies from the library, but was enjoyed by all ages.



Expedition 1—The Woods by Rona

Playgroup has acquired a sledge which has been turned into the 'Expedition Sledge'.

This resource was put to the test on a Friday with a walk through the fields into the woods. The sledge had snack, cup, wipes, milk, water, spades, binoculars, paper, crayons, tissues and the parachute.



The children all took a turn pulling, which involved problem solving round corners or over stones, sharing and co-operation it also involved the majority of them realising that if they did not help to get the sledge up to and over the fence there would be no snack!

Eight of them ran back up the field to help the two 'huskies' by placing themselves around the sledge and picking it up and moving at speed to where they had chosen for snack.

Once everyone was over the fence we set about finding a suitable site for snack. Various venues were considered but eventually two large logs facing one another with the parachute slung between three trees for a roof proved to be a popular choice. Snack definitely is tastier in the open air with seconds being asked for all round.

We had a short time for an exploration of the woods looking for tracks, nests, birds etc then it was all too soon back on the track towards Playgroup.

This was an exploratory expedition to find out if the sledge would work and it was a resounding success so look out for more adventures in the great outdoors with our expedition sledge.



Expedition 2—The River by Rona

Our second expedition with our sledge saw us heading for Cromwellstore and the River Almond.

We had our maps and all enjoyed spotting the road signs and various landmarks. We had risk assessed the entire area before hand but were very fortunate that the parent on duty was Alan and he could advise us on the best place to cross the road at the top of Bridgeton Brae and once down at the river informed us he was a Swift River Rescue Technician 1 which cheered me up no end as I can't swim! So we were all in very capable hands.

We found a nest with a large egg at the side of the river which prompted many ideas on what would hatch from it; dinosaurs, baby bird, very big baby bird, crocodile.

Snack was sitting in the sun on the parachute at the river surrounded by singing birds, crawling beasts and lots of chat it was very pleasant and the children were very relaxed and interested in their surroundings.

On our way back Alan found a nest of black hairy caterpillars and we found a hedgehog carcass. We looked for the red squirrel but they were hiding up the tree. We did have to huddle into the fence to let a large tractor past then fortified

by several pieces of chocolate we made it back to Playgroup just in time for all the Mums and Dads to collect the boys and girls.

This was a great expedition as it was all new and exciting with different things to see and do – **hopefully it won't be to long** before we go again.



Committee



Fundraising News

Hi All,

I managed to take a back seat while my middle Son Tommy was at Playgroup but now that Sam is here, I seem to have found myself in the role of Fundraiser this coming year!

That being said, I am full of enthusiasm for the job and think that with some creativity and elbow grease we can all really have some fun and raise some much needed cash for Playgroup.

As a registered charity, we need to do some fundraising which helps to keep the fees down and provide some more "luxuries" for the children. I really appreciate that people get fed-up when being asked constantly to put their hand in their pocket which is why we will be trying to think of some imaginative fundraising to gather cash from out with the Playgroup. Any suggestions will always be gratefully received so let me know if you have any please!

Also, I cannot do this alone so any help would be very much appreciated! This could include asking your employer whether they are able to match fundraising totals or donate things when we have raffles etc. Last year, a "Bag Pack" was arranged at Asda which was very lucrative but could have been even more so if there had been more willing volunteers. We will be trying to arrange more of these events at local supermarkets so if anyone has any contacts, please let me know.

Julie Pounder had the great idea that we could provide a tuck shop for the parents and children who attend the Sheppard Swim School on a Saturday morning at Glenalmond College so she, Su Bijum and I did this last Saturday and raised £49.35 for Playgroup with little effort. In fact, it was rather nice having some time to chat away from our kids on a Saturday morning (or am I not supposed to say that)!!



We thankfully managed to resist the sweeties as some of you may have heard on the grapevine that myself, Julie, Su, Helen and Ruth-Ann are doing a sponsored slim in aid of the Playgroup from 1st June till 31st August. It is of course not too late for anyone to join us in our quest or to sponsor one of us should you feel compelled! You will more than likely see us out walking for exercise over the holidays but don't offer us a lift please as we will only be tempted! I must say that I am really proud of all of us so far as there are already some great weight losses and a fantastic feeling of camaraderie between us.

Anyway, I hope you all have a fantastic holiday and come back refreshed, full of ideas and ready to get stuck into some great fundraisers!

Thanks so much in advance, Jen

Glenalmond Golf Challenge *by Neil*

The Thursday and the Friday had been roasting; wall to wall sunshine, 24 degrees. (That was possibly 'summer' in case you missed it). Saturday was 10 degrees colder but despite the er, 'light rain' (ok, it teemed down after about 9.30), I think we can conclude that the Glenalmond Golf Challenge was a roaring success.

Massive thanks to Glenalmond College for the use of a great course in good condition, and to the following for the donation of prizes: Niall McGill at Noah's Ark Golf Range, Allan Knox, golf pro at King James VI Golf Club, Lisa at Forgetmeknot Physiotherapy Massage and Murrayshall Golf Course. Thanks especially to Mike Duff for recruiting so many players.

The money raised (after expenses) was £505. We'll also be able to claim £132.50 in gift aid on that sum, so the total money raised was £637.50.

Winners list:

- Strokeplay Champion: Willie Hutchison wins a 4 ball match at King James VI course;
- Net score winner: Andy Green wins 10 baskets of balls at Noah's Ark Driving Range;
- Longest Drive winner: Paul Robertson wins a Bottle of Famous Grouse;
- Nearest the pin, Hole 2: Dave Martin wins Forgetmeknot Physiotherapy Massage sports massage voucher;
- Nearest the pin, Hole 4, Gordon Rattray wins 10 baskets of balls at Murrayshall Driving Range;
- Rubber Egg Trophy: Alistair MacKinnon with a magnificent 13 at the 1st hole (the booby prize for the highest score on a single hole)

Congratulations to all - those who missed out can try again at the next fundraising golf challenge for Playgroup!! Hopefully next time we can increase the number of competitors in an effort to raise even more for Playgroup funds. :-)

Committee



Fundraising News

RAG-BAG COLLECTION

Next pick-up
October 2011

We get money for your unwanted clothes, paired shoes, belts, bedding, anything but duvets and pillows.

All items should be in plastic bags and shoes tied together.

They also do soft toys now and books! They have to be bagged or boxed separate from clothes. No magazines or newspapers,

If you have items you would like to donate but do not have room to store till October, Su Bijum is able to store them in her garage for you.

Please contact Su on
01738 730450

Bungee Jump

By Gail, Ruth-Ann and Karen



"Do you know they've opened up a bungee jump centre at Killiecrankie?" asked Gail

"I'd do that" said Karen

"Me too" said Ruth-Ann

Do you ever say something and think nothing of it only to find yourself involved in a fairly risky activity? I do it all of the time. When Karen and Gail came back to me the next day with a date I knew I'd done it again.

We had tremendous support on the

day with 25 people coming along to watch. Gail had asked not to go first but the bungee pro's had a different idea so Gail went first closely followed by Karen.

Gail and Karen found teetering on the edge the most terrifying experience of the day. Personally I found watching Karen and Gail jump pretty scary stuff.

Gail said afterwards that there wasn't time to scream. Fiona's video footage of my jump proves that there was plenty of time to scream.

I'm glad that Karen and Gail went through with organising this. It was an amazing experience. I can't wait to see how we top it next year.



Photos by Leahann

It's Never to Early

to order your Christmas Cake!
Helen Trobridge is taking orders for Christmas cakes. This will allow parents/carers who will be leaving us soon to place their order and not miss out.

If you had one last year you will know how delicious they are.

See Helen for details

Raised So Far in 2010/2011

ASDA Bag Pack	£327.00
Shark Dive	£411.00
Gift Aid	£53.75
Scrap metal disposal	£25.00
Rag Bag	£70.00
Spree Books	£40.00
Eggs	£120.00
DVDs	£30.00
Cakes By Jane	£45.00
Methven Fayre	£75.00
Cake Sale	£15.00
Christmas Cakes By Helen	£25.00
Christmas Fayre	£561.25
Donation from VHC	£100.00
Caring for Kids	£200.00
North Inch Trundle	£417.00
Gift Aid	£104.25
Rag Bag Collection	£144.85
Bungee Jump	£536.00
Gift Aid	£134.00 approx
Golf Challenge	£505.00
Gift Aid	£132.50
Tomato & Pepper plants	£10.00
Glenalmond Tuck Shop	£49.35
Photos	£46.46
TOTAL	£4117.41

Congratulations

to all the committee members for a tremendous fundraising result. There have been a lot of different ideas this year which have all accumulated to make this fantastic total.

The funds raised will go along way to assist the playleaders provide great activities for the children next session.

Thank you and well done!

Session 2010/ 2011 Term / Holiday Dates

Summer Term
Closes Friday 1 July 2011

Session 2011 / 2012

Autumn Term

In-Service Day
Monday 15 August

Term dates for children

Tuesday 16 August 2011
To Friday 7 October 2011

Autumn Holiday

Monday 10 Oct to Fri 21 Oct 2011

Winter Term

Mon 24 Oct to Fri 23 Dec 2011

In-Service Days

Thurs 17 & Fri 18 Nov 2011

Christmas Holiday

Mon 26 Dec 2011 to Fri 6 Jan 2012

Spring Term

Mon 9 January 2012 to Fri 30 March 2012

In-service Day
Wed 15 Feb 2012

Half-Term

Thurs 16 & Fri 17 Feb 2012

Spring Holiday

Mon 2 April to Fri 13 April 2012

Summer Term

In-service Day
Mon 16 Apr 2012

Tues 17 April to Wed 27 June 2012

May Day

Mon 7 May 2012 (TBC)

A word from Ruth-Ann

Hello All

I would like to say thank you to our outgoing committee members who have been a fabulous support during a fairly busy and unusual year. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new committee members.

Being on the committee is a significant responsibility but a good working committee is necessary for the continuation and development of the playgroup; we really appreciate parents & co-opted member Donald who are able to participate in this capacity.

Being on the committee can also be **great fun and after reading Catherine's introduction I'm sure all of us are looking forward to social events planned for the next year.**

At this time of year we are preparing to say goodbye to our preschool children. It has been a real joy to work with all of you and to see the children grow into caring and confident people who are more than ready for their next adventure. Remember adults as well as children you are all welcome to come back and visit.

For those of you returning or joining us next term we are looking forward to a positive new year together.

A final thank you to the team - you are all fabulous. I am very lucky to work with such an imaginative and enthusiastic team- **I'm looking forward to all the exciting plans you have for when we return and I'm looking forward to 6.30pm on Friday when we have our "team building" event.**

Have a great summer everyone!

Dates For Your Diary

Thur
30/06/11

Pre-schooler's Presentation Day. Parents and Grandparents welcome to attend 10.30am - 11.45am

Fri
1/07/11

Last Day of Term

18/07/11

Proposed change of name to "Pitcairn Under 5s"
Letters will be sent to confirm.

Tues
16-08-11

First day of Autumn term

Oct 2011

Rag Bag Collection

Contact Email Addresses

Chairperson	Catherine Green	catherinegreen0601@btinternet.com	Fundraiser	Jen Miles	jennifer_e_miles@yahoo.co.uk
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