



## Barleyfields Children's Centre Parent Forum

24 November 2009

St Martin's Parish Centre, Knebworth

### Notes of Meeting

Present: Sue Smith, Barleyfields Children's Centre      Apologies: Tanya Bedford  
 Jo Critchley  
 Fiona Deans  
 Martine Game  
 Teresa Harris  
 Caroline Long  
 Emma Rea  
 Melanie Rothwell  
 Francine Ryder  
 Emine Woods

Item	Notes	To Do
1	<p>Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that parental involvement with the Children's Centre is extremely important. It is key to planning and delivering effective services, is crucial as parents are experts on their family's needs and means that services are likely to be useful and well-attended. However, the most important aspect is that parental involvement leads to improved outcomes for children.</p>	
2	<p><b>Notes of the last meeting</b>            The notes of the last meeting were discussed and in particular the 'Swap Shop' notice board. It was agreed that this would be trialled once the Children's Centre building was up and running to see if it was a useful service. While it was agreed that it could be beneficial to all concerned, there may also be issues around storage of items etc.</p>	<p>Sue to promote once building is completed.</p>

Item	Notes	To Do
3	<p><b>Community Events Protocol</b></p> <p>Sue explained that she receives requests to send out information about events and services to parents and she wants to ensure that these are considered carefully and that all those asking for this to be done are treated fairly and equally. After discussions at the Partnership Group, Sue has therefore drafted a protocol. The parents liked the idea of information about events being available on the What's On page of the Barleyfields Children's Centre website (<a href="http://www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/barleyfields">www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/barleyfields</a>) and would also like a monthly community events newsletter. Everyone felt that the criteria were fair and unreasonable.</p>	<p>Sue will take the draft protocol to the Advisory Group for approval.</p>
4	<p><b>Are we including ALL families?</b></p> <p>Sue raised the question of how Barleyfields Children's Centre can support all families in our area. We are successful in reaching families from across the area in that the services are attended by families from Old Knebworth, Knebworth, Woolmer Green, Oaklands and beyond, but are there young parents, working parents, grandparents, carers, fathers, families from ethnic minorities and families with children with disabilities who do not know about the Children's Centre or whose needs we are not meeting?</p> <p>There was discussion in respect of Dads and other male carers coming along to events. Parents said that Dads often feel uncomfortable with so many women at the groups and that it would be nice to have family events that would appeal to Dads too so that they can get to know each other.</p> <p>It was felt that it is important that Mums-to-be and Dads-to-be know about the Children's Centre during the pregnancy as otherwise there is a time-lag before getting to groups, especially if Mum has had a C-section. It is hard to find out what is happening locally. Parents said that midwives and health visitors are key to families finding out about the Children's Centre but that it would be good to have posters up in the hospitals too.</p>	<p>Sue to follow up on information provided by midwives at booking in visits and by health visitors as new birth visits. Sue will also find out about posters being displayed at local hospitals.</p>

Item	Notes	To Do
4 continued	It was also suggested that money issues may be stopping some families attending. Although much of what the Children's Centre offers is free, they may not be aware of this.	Sue will address this via information on posters and the website to make families aware of the Children's Centre Charging Protocol.
5	<p><b>Volunteers</b></p> <p>Sue said that the Pre-school Learning Alliance, who are the lead agency for Barleyfields Children's Centre, are a volunteer organisation and that this fits very well with the Children's Centre agenda. The Children's Centre is developing this aspect and would welcome the opportunity to talk to any parents who would be interested. Volunteers would have a CRB check and would benefit from a proper induction so that they are fully supported.</p>	If any parents would be interested, please get in touch.
6	<p><b>Task and Finish Groups</b></p> <p><i>Baby-friendly List</i> – It was felt that this would be very useful and should cover places that are good for lunch, baby changing facilities, lifts, toilets etc. Twiglet magazine has something similar and we could develop a more local list from there which would help new mums.</p> <p><i>Children's Centre Opening</i> – Sue said that she would really like to put together a small group of parents to work with her on the children's centre opening which will take place next spring.</p>	<p>Sue will develop a form which will be available at groups and on the website for parents to feedback their (positive) experiences.</p> <p>If anyone would like to be involved, please let me know.</p>
7	<p><b>Links to Advisory Group</b></p> <p>Fiona and Martine both agreed to continue as parent representatives on the Advisory Group. Sue explained that the Advisory Group's role is to support and challenge the Children's Centre. It is important that the views of parents are represented so that the Children's Centre can meet the needs of the local community and there are four places for parents. Caroline Long and Teresa Harris offered to take up the other places and attend the Advisory Group. This was agreed by the other parents.</p>	Sue will send details of the date and agenda for the next meeting.
8	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Melanie said that no one has come forward to run the Busy Bees Toddler Group on a Wednesday at Woolmer Green. She would like to ask the Children's Centre to consider</p>	

Item 8 continued	Notes	To Do
	<p>running / supporting this Group so that it doesn't close. Caroline is willing to continue to be involved but cannot do it alone.</p> <p>Parents would like the Children's Centre to run family events on Saturdays and another picnic type event in the summer.</p> <p>Caroline said that the families attending the Knebworth Drop-in would like this to be weekly.</p> <p>Fiona suggested themed discussion groups covering topics such as weaning, potty training, sleep, safety, behaviour (tantrums and biting), MMR/swine flu jabs/inoculations. These would be attended by mums and dads beginning to deal with these issues and by parents who have been through them already and who can pass on their experiences. Sue said that, as these would not be attended by a health professional, the Children's Centre would have to provide the current thinking/information on the topic so that parents are informed of advice from health, but that there is certainly much to be said for parents sharing their experiences and learning from each other.</p> <p>Teresa said that she would like to see more courses such as first aid. Sue said that she agrees this would be a very good idea and that this will be much easier when we have the new building.</p> <p>Teresa also suggested sharing information about special offers at certain shops. The Children's Centre could not endorse particular products but it may be possible if it is sharing of information between parents.</p> <p>Sue thanked everyone for coming and for their input. The next meeting will be arranged for the end of February 2010 and will, hopefully, take place in the new building.</p>	<p>Sue to meet with Jo, Caroline and Mel who currently run Busy Bees.</p> <p>Sue to put into development plan.</p> <p>Sue to consider once family outreach worker is in place.</p> <p>Sue to consider format and how these could be organised in the new year.</p> <p>Sue to look at arranging courses / workshops in the new year.</p> <p>Sue to consider how best to take this forward.</p>

