

02.12.2024



Statement of support for the improvements being made to St Gabriels Church Hall

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee that governs Wanstead Park Preschool who are the principal users of St Gabriels Church Hall.

We rent the hall from the Church for 39 weeks each year for 7 hours a day and run a Preschool for up to 36 children within the hall and its garden. The Preschool originated more than 40 years ago as a group of parents who used the hall as a large indoor space for their young children to gather and play, it has evolved over the years and today it is a much-loved, Parent Led, Ofsted registered, Charity, providing fantastic care for the youngest members of the Aldersbrook Community.

We are very fortunate to have the support of St Gabriels who allow us to pay a modest rent for the premises. Without such generosity it would not be economically viable to continue to operate the preschool, however this in turn has meant limited income for the hall.

The improvements made by the volunteers in the last year have been amazing. From a lick of paint making the hall feel fresher, to the transformation of the kitchen and female toilets which have made a huge difference to the day to day preschool operation.

Our staff are very much looking forward to further improvements to the hall, the next phase will be storage and improved access to the garden. We are a pack away setting and until a year ago our resources had to be packed away under the stage each day which was no easy feat. We have a storage room now but this is still not ideal as it shared with other hall users and is currently a giant jenga puzzle but we are moving in the right direction! Being able to have bigger more accessible storage will allow us to properly packway our Preschool specific items and not leave them in the main hall where they could



be damaged by the 450+ other weekly hall users. We could also finally invest in some bigger items that we have not been able to store before.

Changing the access to the garden will also bring big positive changes to our setting. At present the children and staff exit through a side door, down some steps, into the carpark and then take a short walk to the garden gate. Having an access ramp will be easier for the younger children and will allow us to better cater for children with mobility issues. We have one child joining us soon and she will need to access the garden by exiting through the front door and go around the building before joining her friends. This will mean that for a few minutes, at least 4 times a day, another staff member will need to stop what they are doing to provide enough cover to allow the children going to the garden safe passage. A ramp will simplify the process for everyone.

In conclusion Wanstead Park Preschool is wholly in favour of the planned continued renovation of the hall, both for ourselves and the many many other weekly community users of the space.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions

Kind regards

Tineke Zonneveld

On behalf of the Trustee board, Wanstead Park Preschool