**Ashford Branch Annual Members Meeting 2015 – 5th May, 8pm**

** Singleton Barn, Hoxton Close, Ashford, Kent, TN23 4TY**

Attendees: - Emily Baker, Kim Challoner, Paula Cowperthwaite, Becky Harradine, Louisa Jones, Lindsay Storer, Laura Sutcliffe, Sarah Toms.

Apologies: - George Baker, Alison Bampton, Karen Lawrence, Gemma Lewis, Katherine Stephens, Anne-Claire Trickett.

Review of the Branch’s performance during the past 12 months (up to end April 2015) including financial performance.

The Branch Co-ordinator would like to thank all those who have volunteered and helped out in the last year. Fantastic work!! We hope to implement some positive changes and we are currently working on some exciting plans for events for the year 2015/2016. Our Bumps and Babes group has been generously funded until August 2015, and we will be actively seeking other means to secure its future. Ideas and new volunteers very much welcome!

* Emily Baker

**Membership Report – Becky Harradine**

Membership data as of 20th April 2015 shows the Branch as having a total of 220 members, made up of 120 households.

The membership data at the last Annual Members Meeting showed 101 households. Therefore we have seen in increase of 19 households in the last 12 months.

Membership renewal rates are low for the branch. Analysis of the data shows that where members are paying by Direct Debit, their membership renews, however for those members who made an initial one off payment, do not in the main renew on expiry.

Going forwards I hope to be able to regularly contact our branch members whose memberships are coming up for renewal to promote the benefits of continued membership with the aim of increasing our membership renewal rates.

**Treasurer's report - Paula Cowperthwaite**

Our main expenditure this year has been the Bumps and Babes groups, largely funded by the National Lottery. A grant of £9475 was awarded in April 2014 of which some unspent funds will need to be returned. The branch had pledged to fund £1000 of hall hire, but this cost only reached £548 by year end. Proceeds of £1689.90 were taken from £2 donations which meant the group raised £1141.90 for the branch as the other costs were all met by the Grant.

We also continue to meet rising costs for newsletter production. A small amount of printing costs (£288.60) were met by the Lottery Grant as a way of publicising the Bumps and Babes group, but over the year the newsletter has only made £31.90 profit. This would have been a £250 deficit if not for the grant. Unfortunately, due to me not understanding the intricacies of Intrabiz earlier in the year, I have not allocated all expenditure to the correct edition so am unable to provide a quarterly breakdown.

Our Nearly New Sales continue to be successful. The Spring 2014 sale made £1294.78 for the branch, £230 from advertising and £1714.64 from sales. Expenses were £419.86. There were 243 attendees. The Autumn 2014 sales made £527.19 for the branch, £91.66 from advertising and £892.20 from sales. Expenses were £365.01. There were 95 attendees.

We have launched the Sling Library this year. After a slow start in Tenterden, this will be moving to Ashford in the next financial year. The library is currently showing a deficit of £372.31, but the start up costs are considerable due to the price of slings. Funds from NNS will be used to get the library up and running.

The branch has transferred £1895.62 to Head Office through Transfer of Funds.

Other committee expenditure has amounted to £142.

Over the financial year the branch has made £710 profit and the closing balance for the general reserves is £290.05

**Newsletter report – Katherine Stephens**

The last newsletter went out to 119 families in the Ashford area, an increase of 25 from the last report. Five copies were sent to Bumps and Babes and 10 to Karen Lawrence. Five copies were sent to Gemma Lewis, Early Days teacher. It was also sent to 13 advertisers and contributors. If any members would like extra copies to place in their local children’s centre, toddler group or place of work please inform the Editor for future issues.

Anne-Claire Trickett continues to do a fantastic job on advertising and in the spring issue we had four pages filled with full page, paid, colour adverts.

The content of the newsletter has continued to change and grow. Our current regulars now include; ‘Birth Story, ‘Baby Sleep Q&A’, ‘The Messy Page’, and ‘We ask, you say’. Future ideas for the newsletter are always welcome.

The Editor would like to thank the newsletter team of Becky Harradine, Anne-Claire Trickett, Gemma Lewis, Emily Baker, Karen Lawrence and Kim Challoner for all their help. Thanks also go to all the contributors, proofers and advertisers as well as the Facebook group.

The copy deadline for the summer 2015 issue, due out in June, was 30 April 2015.

**Nearly New Sale Report – Lindsay Storer**

The spring 2015 Nearly New Sale proved to be very successful. We were 50% up on the door in comparison to October, which is a vast improvement. This is the second time that we have collected the rails the night before and I think this is proving to be beneficial by making set up on the morning of the sale run more efficiently.  We had 43 sellers this time and the majority volunteered to help on the day. It is also the second time we have opted to sell the raffle tickets on the day rather than prior to the sale, this worked well at the last sale, but not so well this time. I think we need to have more visual prizes to put out on the raffle table to entice people to buy. Refreshments were also down on last year, I plan to campaign for more cakes as all the homemade cakes sold very early on leaving not much choice for the latter part of the sale. Feedback from sellers has been positive.  We are going to set a date for the autumn sale in due course, as well as looking at a possible change of venue.

Thank you to Karen for her continued support

**Advertising Report – Anne-Claire Trickett**

We currently have 6 advertisers. 4 of them are long-standing advertisers: Aldington Osteopathy, Puddle Ducks, Baby Massage with Gemma and Musika. We would like to thank them for their continuous support. Unfortunately, Jojo Maman Bebe and Jumping Beans have decided not to renew their advertisements with us.

It is however, very exciting to see new advertisers joining the newsletter. For our summer newsletter we have been joined by Celebrity Circuits and Lynn’s Reflexology. We hope they will find advertising with us a great opportunity to secure more business on their side.

Having taken over Laura’s role in August 2014, I have seen the number of advertisers vary. Some new businesses only had a limited budget for marketing and have decided to put advertising on hold for the time being. We are glad they chose us in the first place and we hope that they will decide to renew their advertising membership in the near future.

The support of advertisers is very important to the survival of our newsletter and we must try to keep our advertisers interested.

The Nearly New Sale in October 2014 didn’t attract as many advertisers as I had hoped. We only had 2 stalls and 4 people distributing leaflets, after several dropped out. This generated £130.

However, after reviewing our advertising tariff, the April 2015 Nearly New Sale attracted 5 stalls, and 6 people distributing leaflets. This generated the same amount than the previous sale due to the decrease in price, but it is very positive to see such an interest. We might have already secured other advertisers for the next NNS.

Once again, I would like to thank all the lovely advertisers for their support and all the other volunteers who have got me in touch with new possible advertisers.

**Bumps and Babes Report – Gemma Lewis**

As always Bumps and Babes continues to be busy, we often have mums with bumps popping in to meet us and find out what the group is like. They always leave saying what a lovely friendly group it is and they will be back once their baby has arrived. I regularly hear comments such as ‘this group really helped me in those first few weeks’, ‘it is great to have a reason to get out of the house’ and ‘I have made so many new friends from this group’

Weekly attendance varies from 12-23 with a variety of ages from bumps through to nearly one year olds. We have tiny babes in arms and those that are mobile and need to be constantly watched. Whatever the age of the baby the mums are all happy to share experiences and support each other.

We are planning a Bumps and Babes reunion picnic along with the Cheeky Monkey’s Tea Party, date and venue to be confirmed soon.

**Teachers updates:**

**Alison Bampton - Breastfeeding Counsellor**

The year has flown by. Demand for BFC support has been slow. We currently have three qualified Breastfeeding Counsellers in the Ashford area; Leah Carter, Ana Woodward and myself. We have met frequently for supervision sessions and to talk about how best to develop the Breastfeeding Counselling role for our Ashford (and surrounding area) parents. I continue to attend Bumps and Babes in Ashford once a month. I currently have two antenatal classes confirmed in 2015.

It would be wonderful if we could discuss breastfeeding support at the AMM.

**Karen Lawrence – Postnatal Leader**

It has been a delight to be part of the branch and work alongside mothers as I did the drop-ins, Introduction to Solids workshops and the Sling Library.  Although it took time to take off the sling library had an influence over attendance in Tenterden, over the year I saw at least about 35 different mothers. I have not taught Early Days courses in Ashford and I do not bid on them as Gemma is in the area. Unfortunately, the national decline for these courses is immense.

**Gemma Lewis – Postnatal Leader**

Unfortunately all the Ashford early Days courses have been cancelled due to low bookings. I have offered to run the courses from my home to keep costs down but unfortunately this has not helped.

**Branch Charter**

All NCT Branches must operate in accordance with the Branch Charter. The following actions are needed:

* To agree the roles and responsibilities required to run the Branch
* To agree the size and composition of the Branch team/committee (all these roles to be filled by NCT members)
* To invite volunteers to join the Branch team.

**Main Committee**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Current holder** | **Stepping down** | **Proposed by** | **Seconded by** |
| Co-ordinator | Emily Baker | No |  |  |
| Treasurer | Paula Cowperthwaite | No |  |  |
| Parent Support Co-ordinator | Emily Baker | Yes (will remain in role until new volunteer found) |  |  |
| Membership Secretary | Becky Harradine | No |  |  |
| PSA Link | Becky Harradine | No |  |  |

**Extended Branch Committee**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fundraising Co-ordinator | Position vacant |  |  |  |
| Newsletter Editor | Katherine Stephens | No |  |  |
| Nearly New Sale Co-ordinator | Lindsay Storer | No |  |  |
| Advertising Co-ordinator | Anne-Claire Trickett | Yes |  |  |
| Sarah Toms |  | Paula Cowperthwaite | Emily Baker |
| Bumps and Babes Co-ordinator | Gemma Lewis | No |  |  |
| Sling Library Co-ordinator | Karen Lawrence | Yes |  |  |
| Louisa Jones (from June 2015) |  | Karen Lawrence | Emily Baker |
| Cheeky Monkey’s Co-ordinator | Emily Baker | No |  |  |
| MSLC Representative | Alison Bampton | No |  |  |
| Father’s Contact | George Baker | No |  |  |
| Website Co-ordinator | George Baker | No |  |  |
| General Volunteers | Kim Challoner  Emma Collins  Susie Hall  Karen Lawrence (NNS)  Mark Lawrence (NNS)  Laura Sutcliffe |  |  |  |

Signatories for the branch currently are: Kim Challoner, Paula Cowperthwaite, and Marion Gaudell. This will be transferred to Emily Baker, Paula Cowperthwaite, Becky Harradine, and Sarah Toms in the near future.