

DARNICK BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

Minutes for ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 24th JUNE at 10am at Darnick Village Hall

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Olivia opened the meeting and apologized to attendees for Lauren's absence.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – LAUREN WEIR

This was distributed by Olivia (in Lauren's absence) and no particular comment was made:

Summer 2025 was quiet, with very good sunny weather and some children moving on to ELC 3 places. However we held a fun summer party, and from September the numbers rose to average about 8 children each week – and sometimes as many as 15.

Events this year included:

2nd October 2025 we tidied the toy cupboard, replacing batteries, re-labelling, and throwing out anything broken or used up, and sending another bag of duplicate toys to charity.

29th October 2025 Halloween party, well attended and kids loved it. Prizes for best costume for kids and for adults.

17th December 2025. Christmas party, including a visit from Santa. We invested in some inflatable decorations which we can store for many Christmas parties to come. The event was very successful with 17 toddlers and 2 babies attending, with a suggested donation of £5-8 per child to help cover the costs of the Santa gift. We also had a game of pass the parcel which the toddlers participated well in.

7th January to 28th January 2026. Darnick hall was closed for insulation installation so we booked Newstead village hall for 4 weeks.

11th February – Valentine theme, encouraged children and adults to wear red, red food (berries, grapes and biscuits) and crafts for making cards

25th March - Book Time with Melanie from Usborne Books Melanie came and set up a book stall with plenty of books for looking at and also for purchase.

1st April - Easter Party. We all went out for an Easter egg trail around Darnick in lovely sunny weather, looking for laminated egg signs that Ellen had prepared and put up that morning. Afterwards we went back to the hall where the Easter bunny had left some chocolate eggs for everyone who had found eggs on the trail. Lots of fun in the spring sunshine.

29th April – Book Time with Melanie
Melanie returned with more books for reading and for sale.

All in all this has been a great year, with lots of old friends and new faces. Huge thanks to everyone who helped out with fundraising and general managing of the weekly sessions, and making each session great fun!

3. TREASURER'S REPORT – OLIVIA HAMILTON

This was distributed by Olivia and no particular comment was made:

We began the 2025-2026 year in August with just over £2,700 in the bank account. With low attendance, and fixed costs for hall rental and insurance, we decided to increase the fee from £2 to £3 per child and £1 per adult. Over the year, attendance numbers picked up again and we still have a relatively healthy balance of just over £2,500 as of June 2026.

We had several effective (and very enjoyable) fundraising events which made a very important contribution to our overall funding alongside attendance fees.

First was the annual Welly Waddle held on 19 November 2025 which raised approximately £100. Exact numbers were hard to identify as welly waddle funds came in mixed with regular attendance fees and the wreath payments.

On 5th November 2025 we brought in Class Fundraising kits for children to do paintings to be printed onto Christmas presents, with 20% of sales going to the group. We raised £60.86 for the group.

On 7th December 2025 we held a new wreath-making session for adults. Led by a local florist from Earlston, we kept numbers to 12 as the hall is quite small. With tickets at £35 each, we raised £102.81 for the group after expenses.

In January 2025 Greta held a children's ceilidh at Melrose Parish Church, and raised an amazing £200 for the group.

Finally in May 2026 I negotiated a £50 reduction in our insurance costs since we have no payroll and operate entirely with volunteers.

Expenditure this year has been typical on hall fees, insurance, weekly snacks, toy and craft replacements, and resources for parties.

I have noticed that other playgroups in the Borders seem to have lower weekly fees, and some charge per family rather than per adult/child, and this might explain some of the lower rates of attendance some weeks. I would welcome any ideas on whether our fees are set at the right level for the toys and facilities we provide, and if we should consider a family rate. We could at least lower the cost for babies to a more reasonable £1.

Huge thanks to everyone for their amazing generosity with time and energy and money for fundraising, and for coming along regularly and keeping the group going!

COST COMPARISONS

Caddonfoot £1.50 per family

Tweedbank £2.50 per family – also held on a Wednesday morning

WEEKLY INCOME

Darnick £3 per child £1 per adult, average about 6 children per week so £24 per week income

OUTGOINGS

Hall costs £24 per week

Snack costs £3 per week (if charged at all)

Party supplies, crafts, Christmas gifts etc £500

Insurance £197.27 per year, which is about £5 per session

FUNDRAISING INCOME

Welly waddle	£100
Class Fundraising for Christmas crafts	£60
Wreath making	£100
Ceilidh	£200
TOTAL	£460

4. REVIEW OF DARNICK MOTHER AND TODDLER GROUP CONSTITUTION

The constitution was distributed by Olivia and no particular comment was made.

5. REFLECTIONS ON PAST YEAR

The group was pleased with increased attendance and pointed out that it was a great resource for young children to learn to play, share, and interact within a group, and for parents to chat and support each other.

We were also pleased with the fundraising efforts. The Christmas wreath-making session in particular was very popular.

We discussed the attendance fee and the desire not to exclude anyone who might feel unable to attend due to costs. Olivia asked everyone to clarify to anyone they know that attendance and fees can always be discussed with her privately, and as a charity we would never want to turn away anyone who wishes to attend but pay a smaller (or zero) fee. (Olivia has since updated the Whatapp group description to mention “suggested fee” and the Facebook page includes that the first session is free.)

The group also noted the quality and variety of the toys we provide, and the exceptional parties we hold throughout the year for regular attendees.

Jess Dennison suggested a fundraising lunch in the autumn which she would kindly cater. This suggestion was enthusiastically accepted!

6. POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Olivia noted that she will probably only be able to continue in her current role for another year, so other parents or carers with younger children may wish to consider joining the committee.

7. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.