

11th May 2026

Dear Councillors,

Re: Little Steps Toddler Group, North Barrow

Please find the Annual Report below:

- Little Steps Toddler Group continues to run on a weekly basis during term time (Fridays 10-11:30am)
- The group is run and supported by volunteers.
- We have a core group of families who attend very regularly as well as a much greater number of families who drop in when they can. We currently host between 5-15 families (including me and my helpers), each week.
- Families come to us from North and South Barrow, Lovington, Castle Cary, Alford, Lottisham, Sparkford, Pylle, Keinton Mandeville, Hornblotton, Evercreech, Horsington, Bruton and Queen Camel.
- 4/6 pre-school children registered to join Lovington Primary in September 2026 are regular attendees of Little Steps.
- Local childcare options continue to be limited. Brue Farm, Lovington has closed its waiting list for the upcoming year.
- Families tell us that they appreciate the opportunity to meet, share and support others whilst enjoying the healthy and varied snacks, crafts and freshly made cakes and coffee.
- We continue to be concerned about maintaining our income and so aim to seek external support where we can. Our current account balance is £230.
- We have a concession on North Barrow Hall hire which is greatly appreciated. We currently pay £11/hour, totalling £27.50 a week. This means we need 10 families at £3 each, a week to break even.
- We also use our fees to buy the children's snacks and coffee, the end of term party food and Christmas gifts delivered by Santa and Rudolph!
- We were very grateful for the Parish Council donation of £250 (May 2025) which has supported running costs this year. We would welcome another opportunity to apply for a further donation this year.
- We were recently successful in securing a Tesco's 'Stronger Starts' grant. This means that we have a donation station in Shepton Mallet Tesco's into which the public can add tokens. This will run between end April- July 30th and the tube with the most tokens is awarded the highest donation. This was awarded on the basis that we provide a healthy snack, imaginative crafts and a clean, sociable, safe place for children to play and parents to connect.
- An application has also recently been submitted for "The Elmgrant Trust" and another for the "Pickford Trust"
- I will be stepping away from leading the group after 8 years as my youngest child will be starting school in September. We are currently looking for extra volunteers to take the group forward.

Please do not hesitate to seek further information.

Heather Trott