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# The NICMA steps to excellence...

We like playing games together

l love going to the park with my friends We do different things every day

4

Lorraine Makes me laugh

1







Everyone is my friend at Lorraines house. She bakes lovely buns too!

6

I just love
my Job!
And thanks
to NICMA
for all their help

5





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It has been a pleasure to take on the role of Chair following Liz McCorkell's resignation during the year due to other commitments. It has also been a pleasure to work with Bridget and her dedicated team. NICMA would not be the organisation it is without their commitment and hard work.

# Chair's Report

As an organisation, NICMA believe that the provision of high quality, stimulating childcare in home settings is a right for all of those families in Northern Ireland who want it. We work towards that aim by supporting both childminders and parents and offering a range of services including Information, Advice and Vacancy help, training & quality initiatives, business skills, support networks and more. Childminding is still the largest form of full and part time daycare used to help families manage their work responsibilities.

Children who are cared for by a childminder, in a family home environment, benefit from the individual attention that they receive, especially babies and toddlers who need continuous, personal relationships that may be missing from other types of daycare. The small number of children cared for in a childminding setting also enables the carer to know each child's individual needs and stages of development and so meet their needs in appropriate and specific ways.

Children are cared for in their own communities, enabling them to build and develop their own local connections. Flexibility of care, vital to working parents, is one of the unique elements of childminding – children are cared for on a full time or part time basis; they can be taken to and collected from school and provided with a home-from-home atmosphere at the end of a tiring school day. This individual type of care means that parents and children can develop a trusting relationship with their childminder ensuring that the care provided is appropriate to individual needs.

That withstanding, we all face difficulties with the current economic situation – and childminders and NICMA are no different. Some childminders are facing difficulties sustaining their business if all vacant places are not filled; others may be turning away business. Unfortunately, identifying the demand for childminding and then responding in terms of supply, is very much an inexact science and therefore we have areas of the country with over provision and areas with underprovision.

NICMA has continued to support the Childminding sector throughout the year with a range of initiatives and developments to enhance the quality and supply of childcare. Nevertheless, we still have a way to go if we are to achieve parity with the childminding sector in Great Britain. We hope that the forthcoming Minimum Standards in Daycare and Childminding, along with a new Childcare Strategy will go a long way to ensuring that all children in childcare receive a high quality, stimulating experience.

I wish my successor Jim Currie every good wish as he takes over the role of Chairperson.

Barbara Wilson

Barbara Wilson Chair





This year we continued our focus on raising awareness of the issues facing the Childminding sector which culminated in the launch of 'The Way Forward for Childminding in Northern Ireland' by Edwin Poots, Health Minister. The report focuses on four main issues which continue to affect the provision of high quality childcare:



## Director's Report

Lack of access to childcare can still be a barrier for parents who wish to enter employment or training. And although registered childminding is by far the most popular and affordable form of childcare, in recent years the number of childminders has fallen. Since 2002, over 500 childminders have left the profession with a consequent loss of more than 1700 childminding places. The shortage in childcare provision has been well researched & documented over the years with the most recent research highlighting that 38% of parents questioned felt that there was a lack of childminding provision in their area.

Delays in the Childminding registration process can be a real barrier to recruitment of new provision. NICMA's last survey of newly registered childminders indicated that it took on average, 7 months for a prospective childminder to become registered. That puts many potential childminders off the process and they just give up and move onto a different career path. We also believe that the registration delays are one of the main factors in the continuing prevalence of unregistered childminders, who are in fact operating illegally and therefore putting children potentially at risk. Thankfully, as we compile this report, additional funding awarded towards the end of the year has meant that current backlogs have been addressed.

The skills deficit here means that childminders in Northern Ireland lag far behind their counterparts in England & Wales with regard to qualifications and training e.g. 50% of childminders in England & Wales have an NVQ qualification – in NI that's just 10%. There is also no mandatory requirement for childminders to have any sort of **introductory training** prior to caring for children – and whilst most childminders are parents themselves and have their own parenting skills, looking after other people's children and being paid for it requires much more in the way of skills and knowledge.

The fourth main issue is the difficulty that parents find in accessing the right information on childminding places. Recent local research found that 50% of parents found it difficult to access information on available childcare. Making that decision about leaving your child in the care of someone else is not an easy one for any parent - they need access to information; need details of childcare vacancies that meet their specific family needs – and they need support in their search.

We will continue to focus on the main issues affecting the development and sustainability of high quality childminding services.

Bridget Nodder Director

Bridget Nodder



Jenny Adair Assistant Director

Field staff promote the benefits of homebased childcare for families, share member vacancy details and promote registered childminding as a career option.

# Childminding Development

NICMA's Childminding Development team has worked tirelessly throughout the year to promote the benefits of registered home-based childcare which has supported an increase in provision, increased access to local childminding information and advice and enhanced childminding practice.

#### Key Outcomes

Throughout the year there has been a **6% increase** in the number of registered childminders across Northern Ireland. **4042** (unofficial statistics - Trust Early Years teams) childminders were registered with the Health & Social Care Trusts at the end of March 2012 with **64% [2580]** opting to become NICMA members.

111 Information sessions this vear including 25 Information Road Shows across Northern Ireland from August -September 2011. The main purpose of the road shows was to raise parental awareness on accessing NICMA's Information and Vacancy service. Local media coverage was utilised to advertise the roadshows well in advance and 400 + individuals attended. Following the roadshows, staff and local support groups reported an increase in childminding

vacancy enquiries.

The Development team hosted



#### Location of Childminding Support Groups

There are currently **39** Peer Support Groups and Drop-in's currently operating across Northern Ireland offering much needed support to registered childminders with **12%** of NICMA members attending. New models of peer support have been successfully established, including extending the **Buddy Group model** which has been adopted by childminders in Lisburn, Hillsborough and Belfast. Cluster support sessions have also been offered to support engagement with members in the Western Trust area. This has been very well received and we hope to develop this initiative on a regional basis in the New Year.



#### Southern area

Armagh
Banbridge
Dungannon
Kilkeel
Clogher Valley x 2
Newry
Lurgan x 2
Portadown x 2

#### Northern area

Cookstown x 2 Larne Carrickfergus x 2 Crumlin Coleraine Cushendall Newtownabbey x 2 Antrim

#### Belfast

North Belfast Carryduff

#### **South Eastern area**

Aghalee & Ballinderry
Ballynahinch & Downpatrick
Bangor
Colin
Hillsborough
Lisburn x 2
Newtownards

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#### Western area

Enniskillen Omagh x 2 Dromore Foyle x 3



# Childminding Week

The theme for **Childminding Week 2011** was '**Tuning into Children'** and several 'Jo Jingles' sessions and Music Making Workshops were organised by NICMA group members for their minded children. These were all very enjoyable events with children taking part in singing nursery rhymes, marching, dancing and playing with their home-made musical instruments.

Childminders from Banbridge and Dungannon attended 'Rhyme Time' sessions in their local Library and members from Lurgan attended a 'Wriggles & Wiggles' programme.

Network childminders in Clogher Valley chose Childminding Week to launch their new CD; 'Sing a Rainbow' which will support the development of the children's speech and language. Foyle childminders and children had a morning's fun at Barrontop Open Farm.

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An introduction to the Kodaly concept of teaching music to young children was presented by Mrs Helen Black to childminders and children from the Aghalee, Ballinderry and Moira areas.

The members of G-OLD Childminding Network enjoyed a magical musical adventure around the grounds of Cookstown Primary School. The children followed a trail of magical musical notes around the playground to reach their 'Pot of Gold' – a chest of musical instruments







#### Childminding Registration Delays

As part of the Early Years
Implementation groups Plan for
improving the statutory function of
registration and inspection, NICMA
received a small amount of funding
from the Health and Social Care Board
to assist in reducing the backlog of
childminding applications in the
Northern, Western and South Eastern
Health and Social Care Trust areas.
This allowed NICMA to administer
and deliver pre-Registration
Briefing Sessions in order to provide
prospective childminders with

detailed information on a career in childminding. This allows them to make an **informed choice** before proceeding with registration and filters out those who are not committed to the process. In turn, it is intended that this will reduce the workload and resources of the Early Years teams because those proceeding with registration have made an informed choice to do so. **4 pre-Registration Briefing Sessions** were delivered in the Western Trust and **1** in the South Eastern Trust before the end

of March 2012 with **63 prospective childminders attending**.

In the South Eastern Trust, NICMA also worked with the Early Years team to develop cluster support sessions to facilitate completion of applications and to ensure readiness to proceed with registration. 11 individuals in the process of registration attended the first session at the beginning of March 2012.





Barbara Quinn, Training Manager

## Training Department

NICMA believe that training is an essential activity for all registered childminders as it provides them with the key skills and knowledge that they need to perform their job effectively. The training department encourage childminders to avail of relevant training by developing courses and workshops which reflect current childcare methodology and trends.

We also aim to secure funding to allow childminders to access training either free of charge or at least subsidised.

This year, despite the economic downturn, we continued to successfully attract funding for training from a variety of sources. Nearly £69,000 of funding was awarded to be able to deliver all training free of charge.

Throughout the year, a total of **65** courses were delivered and **880** places were filled.

	880 Childminders/Learner		
Total	65 courses		
	11 Childminders		
Developing Good Business Practice	1 Course		
	<b>19</b> Childminders		
Marketing your Childminding Service	<b>2</b> Courses		
	17 Childminders		
Implementing Policies & Procedures	<b>2</b> Courses		
	12 Childminders		
High/scope	<b>1</b> course		
	<b>18</b> Childminders		
Learning through Play	1 course		
	<b>24</b> Childminders		
Cluster Support	4 courses		
	<b>46</b> Learners		
Child Development	<b>3</b> courses		
	<b>211</b> Childminders		
Paediatric First Aid	<b>15</b> courses		
	285 Childminders		
Child Protection/ Safeguarding Children	<b>19</b> courses		
	168 Learners		
Introduction to Home-based Childcare	12 courses delivered		
Programme for 2 Year Olds	<b>69</b> Childminders		
SureStart Developmental	<b>5</b> courses delivered		

"Very
interesting
the whole way
through all four
sessions.
It gave me a
great insight
into all aspects
of childcare."

Brendan Bailie, childminder from Bangor



Two of NICMA's 'Introduction to Home-Based Childcare' courses were delivered by Kaisia who is our Polish tutor. We are experiencing a rise in the demand for information sessions and courses for members of the Polish community.

In addition to the above training the Childminding Development Officers delivered:-

- 12 workshops to Childminding Support Group members - Art and Craft, Using Your Imagination, Fire Risk Assessment, Business Side of Childminding, Marketing Services, Messy Play.
- 18 Pre-registration training courses to 374 attendees

The Childminding Network Co-ordinators delivered:-

• **50** training sessions on a variety of subjects with 269 places filled.

This year we developed our **Training Priorities** paper, which we will use to focus strategically on the identified training needs of our members for the next few years. We developed a précis version for external agencies. To obtain a copy please email **barbara.quinn@nicma.org** 

"A very interesting course. I gathered up lots of ideas from the tutor and the other girls on the course about different activities to do with the children."

Noeleen Wray, childminder from Strabane

#### SureStart Childminding Networks

We now have Childminding Networks in 8 of the SureStart areas. Sadly, Clare McGillion who was the Childminding Network Co-ordinator in Strabane SureStart resigned and her post was not renewed. We also said goodbye to Geralyn Maguire, Splash SureStart.

Within the 8 Networks we have 143 childminding network members who offer 639 + childminding places. 48 children were placed with childminders whilst their parent availed of training or employment opportunities and 67 children were provided with 1725 hours of childcare under the respite placement service.

Childminders who are Network members are encouraged to gain their Quality First level 3 award. This year we had 57 completing or working towards achieving this. Childminding Network Co-ordinators also provide Drop-in facilities for Childminders and their children. This year a total of 210 sessions were held and 49 childminders and 91+ children attended them. 57 support group sessions were held with 136 attending. Attending the support groups and drop-ins helps to lessen the isolation often associated with childminding and allows the children to avail of large group play opportunities.



Network Childminders are encouraged to continue to develop their childminding practice through training. This year despite the fact that there were limits in regards to available funding for training, 50 training sessions were held and 269 places were filled.

Childminding Network Co-ordinators continue to offer advice, support and mentoring to all potential and registered childminders who are resident within their areas.

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#### SureStart Developmental Programme for 2/3 Year Olds

This year we secured funding from the Department for Education to deliver the SureStart Developmental Programme for 2/3 Year Olds to **75 Childminders across all 5 of the Trust areas.** One of the criteria stipulated for this funding was that childminders must reside within a SureStart ward to be eligible to attend. A total of 69 Childminders successfully completed the programme.

"I have really loved and looked forward to coming to each session. This has really made me think of what I do on a daily basis with the children and moving forward I will look at things differently".

In addition to this we delivered cluster support to childminders who had previously completed the programme. This ensured that their knowledge was updated.

"I found module 2 on the value of play for 2 year olds particularly enlightening and very useful in stimulating play among both the minded children and my own children. To have the ideas and information laid out as it was in different modules made understanding the development needs of 2 year olds much easier to grasp. A very thought provoking and stimulating course."





# Childminder Of The Year

MARIE BRISTOW, a childminder from Strabane, is the 2011 Cow & Gate Childminder of the Year after being presented with the award at the hotly-contested final in Belfast's Baby Grand.

Marie was chosen from the six finalists after being whittled down from almost 100 original entrants. The judges of the awards; the Chair of the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA), Barbara Wilson, and BBC anchorwoman and 'young mum' Sarah Travers, chose Marie as the childminder who best represented all that is good about registered childminding in Northern Ireland.

Marie was nominated for the award by Kevin and Claire Gallagher whose two children, Matthew (4) and Grace (18 months), Marie looks after. Claire says, "Both the children absolutely love Marie and really enjoy their time with her. We had trouble finding a childminder who could take Matthew on as he has special needs and is severely hearing impaired but Marie wasn't at all daunted by the prospect of being his full-time childminder.

"Matthew has a very controlled diet that Marie manages with ease and as he has limited use of his limbs Marie has even started attending a gym to increase her upper body strength for when Matthew gets older. She truly is the most deserved winner of this award and I'm thrilled Cow & Gate have decided to reward her," Claire added.

Alison Hanna of Cow & Gate said, "Congratulations to Marie for having been selected the Cow & Gate Childminder of the Year. At Cow & Gate we are very proud of our association with NICMA and support its aim to have childminders recognised and valued as skilled, qualified professionals."

Bridget Nodder, Director of NICMA, said, "We are very grateful to Cow & Gate for its long-standing support of the association and for running these awards, which are recognised as the Oscars of childminding. Marie has attained the highest standards in her childminding profession and is to be congratulated on her achievement, and what better way than to become an 'Oscar' winner!"

Having been presented with her unique, handcrafted trophy and a cheque for £500 Marie said, "I am absolutely delighted to win this award. Childminding is a job I love and having both Matthew and Grace in my life is a joy.

"I'd like to thank Cow & Gate for recognising childminders and NICMA for all the support given over the years. The final in Belfast was an emotional one but a brilliant day out. To win the award was amazing and having my family and friends with me made it all the more special," Marie added.

"To win the award was amazing and having my family and friends with me made it all the more special"



Joan Hewitt, Finance & Administration Manager

"I contacted NICMA regarding outstanding monies which I was having difficulty obtaining from a parent. NICMA advised me that because the amount was over \$300 that I should contact the Legal Helpline for advice as this was part of my membership package. The Legal Helpline requested copies of contracts, invoices, letters requesting money from the parent. I was advised that all the paper work for my childminding business was all in order and on my behalf they proceeded with the claim. I am now delighted to say that after a few weeks the matter has now been resolved and all monies which were due to me have now been recovered!

Fiona, Childminder, Belfast

## Membership Services

The number of enquiries NICMA received in year (22,416) is down on last years statistics and whilst this could be seen as a negative outcome, we believe that it also reflects positively on the success of our website. 26% of the recorded decrease is a reduction in parent enquiries which is due to the increased use of the NICMA Childminding Vacancy service on the website as the first port of call for parents when looking for a childminder. Part of this also must be apportioned to the economic climate where many parents have been made redundant hence no longer need childcare. The other 11 % is a decrease in enquiries from childminders. As our Membership numbers have remained virtually static to March 2011 ie. 2580 compared to 2607 for the same time last year, the decrease may be due to the vast amount of information now available to download from the NICMA website.

NICMA welcomed **525 new members** to the organisation during the year but also said goodbye to some of our long standing members who have retired or moved on to pastures new.

As indicated above, the NICMA website continues to be a hit with parents and childminders alike, and at the end of the year, 950 Childminding members were using it to advertise their vacancies; we look forward to this figure reaching the 1000 mark in the coming year! We have also seen an increased use of our Facebook page with 789 people choosing to follow us.

The price of membership was held constant for the 5th year in a row, a testament to NICMA in these times of recession that we are able to do this for members and still run a quality service. We also continued to offer the £10 loyalty discount to NICMA members of 10 years or more, 526 members were eligible to avail of this. Members in the Western Health and Social Care Trust were able to benefit from a £12 discount per person which is a valuable subsidy provided by the trust. On top of these benefits 154 group members availed of a £5 group discount on their membership.

#### NICMA Fact Sheets and Childminder Policies

Over the course of the year NICMA developed a range of 'Fact Sheets and Childminder Policies' to help support childminders in running a professional home-based childcare service. Many of these policies will be a requirement when the Minimum Standards for Daycare and Childminding are implemented and will certainly help childminders when they are preparing for inspections.

**NICMA Factsheets** have also been developed for information purposes and will assist childminders in developing policies to enhance their business. All fact sheets and policies are available to download from the members section on the NICMA website **www.nicma.org** 

"NICMA thank you so much for all you do for us I just sing your praises."

Dawn, Enniskillen



# Summary of Annual Accounts and Report 31 March 2012

NICMA's financial position for the year ending 31 March 2012 is reported in the statement of financial activities indicated as follows:

Throughout 2011/12, the Departments of Health, Social Services & Public Safety and Education continued to support NICMA for both Core Services and for the delivery of the Programme for 2 year olds to childminders. This grant aid enabled us to maintain and develop the support services to childminding members, parents and stakeholders. The 5 Health and Social Care Trusts also helped to fund our development work thus enabling the Childminding Development team to extend the promotion and development of the childminding sector across all of Northern Ireland. Childminding Networks attached to 8 of the SureStart programmes have operated successfully in delivering a local childminding service for families. These Networks are funded by the Department of Education through local Childcare Partnerships and have become an integral part of NICMA's work. Funding from the Health & Social Care Board enabled NICMA to help support registration delays in 2 of the Health Trusts as well as to increase the percentage of childminders able to access First Aid and Safeguarding training.

At 31st March 2012, NICMA income had dropped substantially on the previous year largely as a result of the completion of the Rural Childminding Project which had shown a significant influence on NICMA's accounts over the previous 2 years.

The current economic climate remains unstable and it is difficult to gather much return on investment which was shown by the small reduction in our bank interest. The charities reserves policy is based on the equivalent of six months running costs to support the

organisation, thus, although we aspire to achieve the ideal level of approx £350,000, NICMA reserves at 31st March 2012 were £194,702.

The Childminding Information and Advice service continues to be a vital service for both parents and childminders offering very much a 'one-stop shop' for all childminding related queries. Although NICMA has had to 'freeze' the annual membership fee in line with the reported struggling finances of our members, our membership income now represents 31% of our total income.

In conclusion, at year end we have managed to balance our expenditure with the income fairly well and are to report a very small deficit of funds which we must absorb through our reserves.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to conclude with my thanks to all stakeholders, members, staff, volunteers, and funders for all their support of NICMA and childminding in Northern Ireland.

Norma Shearer Honorary Treasurer

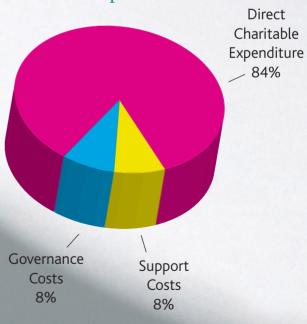
\*A full and detailed copy of the accounts is available on request.

Statement of Financial Activities	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2012	Total 2011
Incoming Resources					
Voluntary Income	234,993	-	390,511	625,504	839,239
Activities for generating funds	16,053	-	77,423	93,476	122,014
Investment income	1,148	-	-	1,148	1,382
TOTAL INCOME	252,194	-	467,934	720,128	962,635
Outgoing Resources					
Charitable Activities	175,453	-	489,840	665,293	862,647
Governance	59,537	-	-	59,537	53,497
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	234,990	-	489,840	724,830	916,144
Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources for Year	17,204	-	(21,906)	(4,702)	46,491
Transfers between Funds	(6,716)	(19,731)	26,447	-	-
Fund Balances Brought Forward	204,131	19,731	5,380	229,242	182,751
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	214,619	-	9,921	224,540	229,242

#### 11/10 T



#### 11/12 Expenditure



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# Acknowledgements

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of a large number of organisations who have funded staff posts and supported Childminding initiatives over the last year. We would like to extend our thanks to those organisations. In 2011/12 our stakeholders include

Abbey SureStart Arke SureStart

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Blossom SureStart

Care Assessment Partnership [CAP]

Carntogher Community Association

Childminding members Clogher Valley SureStart

Craigavon Inter-cultural programme

Creative Activity

Dairy Farm/People First

Department of Education

Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety

Duffy Rafferty/Cow & Gate Nutricia

Eastern Childcare Partnership

Eastern Health & Social Services Board

G-old SureStart

Little Hands SureStart

NICMA Board of Trustees

NICMA Childminding Advisory Council

NICMA Childminding Support Groups

Northern Childcare Partnership

Northern Health & Social Care Trust

Parenting NI

Paul Berry Training

Regional Health & Social Care Board

Shantallow SureStart

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

Southern Childcare Partnership

Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Southern Investing for Health Partnership

Splash SureStart

Strabane SureStart

Western Childcare Partnership

Western Health & Social Care Trust





### NICMA Staff Team

Bridget Nodder Director

Jenny Adair Assistant Director

Valerie Earney Director's Secretary / Information and Advice Team

#### **Childminding Development Team**

Liz Brown Childminding Development Officer, ECCP
Fiona Clendinning Childminding Development Officer, ECCP
Michelle Grant Childminding Development Officer, SCCP
Maria Magee Childminding Development Officer, WCCP

Clare McGillion Childminding Development Officer, WCCP [to Oct 11]

Clare McKay Childminding Development Officer, NCCP

Fey Clark Childminding Development Officer, NCCP [to March 12]
Lyn Bradley Development Team Secretary / Information and Advice Team

#### **Training & Quality Team**

Barbara Quinn Training Manager

Rosemary Black Training & Quality Development Officer [to Aug 11]

Susan Anderson Training Officer
Maeve Milne Training Officer

Claire Vitti Training Administrator / Information and Advice Team

#### **Childminding Network Team**

Maria Kelly Childminding Network Co-ordinator, ABBEY SureStart
Una Leonard Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Clogher Valley SureStart

Joanna Legg Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Shantallow SureStart and Little Hands SureStart

Michelle Grant Childminding Development Officer, Arke SureStart
Tina McKeown Childminding Network Co-ordinator, G-old SureStart

Geralyn Maguire Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Splash SureStart [to Feb 12]

Katie Turkington Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Blossom SureStart

Clare McGillion Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Strabane SureStart [to Oct 11]

Maria Magee Daycare/Training Co-ordinator, Clogher Valley SureStart

#### **Finance & Administrative Team**

Joan Hewitt Finance & Administration Manager

Catherine Trimble Finance & Web Development

Niky McGrattan Membership Administration / Information and Advice Team

#### **Board Of Trustees**

Liz McCorkell Chair [resigned Sept 2011]

Barbara Wilson Vice Chair and Chair from September 2011

Norma Shearer Treasurer

Denise Morgan Resigned Sept 11

Jim Currie

Ruth Miller Resigned Sept 11
Nikki McConnell Resigned Sept 11

Margaret Fletcher Teresa Geraghty Alison McNulty





20/08/2012 11:34







