Diane’s oral history includes her memory of the village playgroup and village life. This extract includes starting the playgroup.

“We came over here in 1983 I was new and we was getting to know everything, so I found the playgroup where I took Gareth, Lee were already at school then, and found it amazing. They needed mum helpers then, so I started helping out whenever I could and was always interested in what they were doing. We did all sorts of different things to what I’d done before in the other playgroup, because I’d no experience, whereas here you were working with experience, so it were nice to pick up on it all. I then became an assistant for five years and thoroughly enjoyed it. Did other little things in between: went on school trips, playgroup trips. We used to go all over taking ‘em to Temple Newsam, Lotherton Hall quite often. We took play equipment and everything with us, and they used to play outside, go look at the animals. Is it Cannon Hall? We went to see all the pigs. All things like that, the animals. I started to run it then in the 1990s, and I had assistant called Michelle, who has only recently given it up herself, so she’s worked all those years. Well, she’s passed now. But she worked all those years and she carried on working until this year. So, and she were really good as well. So, we had a leader and two assistants at all times, and then we liked to have two parents, but that weren’t always possible because parents either worked, or they were busy, on a rota system. But we still had enough, it worked quite well with that. And I started doing courses at college just to get a bit more information on how we could improve and work with the children to develop them in different ways. We’d raise lots of funds for new toys all the time and equipment. It were just vast, what you needed all the time, and changes. And yes, you could get second-hand and people did donate them, but you needed more up to date and more modern, which people, obviously, couldn’t afford theirselves, so we did a lot of fundraising for that. And then it became apparent that the older group, that were ready for the school the following year, needed a little bit more stimulation. So, we started that on a Wednesday morning, moving the older children into a different room or a different part of the room.

We wanted to know that when they got to school that they knew they’d have a routine rather than all free play. It’s changed now a lot. It was quite structured. So, we started doing a little register with them. We did do a register, but we did a separate one with those. We used to put their name up on the – on the stage, the front of the stage, so they could recognise their name. We did a few word cards. We’d stick things on and – so they knew the shape of things, a lot of shapes, because jigsaws and shapes is a big learning curve for the children, it’s for maths and everything. They get to know the shapes they get to know a lot. Little things like that, really, made a big difference, and the parents loved us doing that. They thought it just helped that little bit more, especially recognising their name, because although – when you’re at home you do think you’re doing a lot with the children, they soon get tired and don’t want to do it.”