

# The Friends of the Margaret Junior School

(Registered no: 1114202)

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

### Background.

The Friends of the Margaret Junior School was established as a registered charity in May 2006. The original objects of the Association were to “advance the education of the pupils at the Margaret Junior School, Masaka District, Uganda, by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the school.” In 2011, the Charity Commission agreed to an amendment to the constitution to include support towards ex-pupils, who were successful in gaining a place at secondary school or further education. The main activities of the Association are the raising of funds from individuals and other bodies, which are then transferred to the School Committee in Masaka, Uganda, in pursuit of the charity’s objectives and for the benefit of the school’s pupils and ex-pupils. Decisions as to expenditure are taken by the school committee after discussion with the Trustees.

### Trustees.

Trustees are elected annually by the members of the Association at an Annual General Meeting. The present Trustees are: Freda Bass, Roger Ford, Hilary Procter, Nicholas Stokes, Margaret West (Chair) and Maria Woodward (Appointed 2021). Richard Macpherson retired in 2021. In undertaking their duties, the Trustees have taken due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission.

### Membership.

Membership is open to anyone willing to pay a minimum of £10:00 per annum. At the end of 2021 the Association had 30 paid-up members. This figure has remained fairly constant for a number of years. Not all of the charity’s supporters are paid-up members and we are grateful for the supporters and sponsors who have continued to contribute over many years. We would particularly like to thank all who regularly contribute through standing orders and who use the Gift Aid facility.

### Activities.

The solid support and regular contributions provide the Friends with a firm financial base, which allows the Head-teacher and Committee to plan for a more confident future rather than cope on a day-to-day basis. The economic situation in Uganda remains parlous and we continue to receive reports of increasingly high prices for basic commodities, fuel and transport. Many parents and guardians struggle to meet the payment of school fees, no matter how modest these may seem. The effects of climate change are also noticeable and the Masaka area continues to suffer from unpredictable seasonal variations. Few people have any reserves to call upon when crops fail.

2021 was a particularly challenging year in both the UK and Uganda because of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the Universities were largely able to continue, through providing online lectures and tutorials, education at both primary and secondary level was severely disrupted. Margaret Junior School continued initially but all schools were closed by the government and were not expected to open fully again until the beginning of 2022. There is concern as to how many children will return to school once they are able. This especially relates to girls, who may be kept back or who might have become pregnant in the interim.

It is not easy to get a clear picture of the severity of the pandemic in the country. Certainly, the school was badly affected as we lost our founder, Sarah Kasujja, to the illness, as well as other members of her family and the wider school community. Elsewhere, there have been fewer signs and life has gone on as normal but the government’s ability to record and monitor the situation is less effective than in the UK. The impact on families, who are affected, is exacerbated by the paucity of medical facilities in rural areas and the relatively high costs of any available treatment.

The school completed its application to be registered as an examination centre. This will allow it to issue students with its own examination certificates rather than their results being recorded under the name of the school where they sat the exam. The school was inspected and all paperwork submitted just before the Covid lockdown was implemented. The result of this application is still awaited but the School Director is hopeful of receiving this certification.

Work on the new vocational training centre was also concluded during the year and it has been agreed that this will be named in honour of Sarah Kasujja, the school’s founder. The Education Authority has agreed to meet staffing costs for 10 years and applications have been made in Uganda for grants to purchase equipment. It is hoped that the result of this local initiative will be successful early in 2022

Our community of supporters responded brilliantly to appeals that we put out during the year to help support the school with Covid-related measures and to equip those at University with laptops, so that they could continue their studies. Our fund-raising events were necessarily curtailed but those that did take place were, once again, magnificently supported.

During the year, the Trustees decided to review the sponsorship scheme and we were grateful to everyone who contributed to the consultation exercise. As a result, it was agreed to move away from individual sponsorship, which linked sponsors with individual pupils, and to replace it with a Bursary Scheme, giving sponsors the choice of supporting children with primary or further education. We felt this would be a fairer system, as well as avoiding the “guilt” felt by some who were unable to continue support post-primary. Existing arrangements will remain in place until they expire but all new sponsorships will start within the revised scheme. This has allowed two students from the Junior School to obtain places at secondary starting in 2022. Currently the Bursary Scheme embraces 51 children: twenty-nine primary, seventeen secondary and five former pupils, who are now at university. The Trustees would like to thank the individual sponsors and the local Lions Clubs in Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire, who have supported this scheme. There are many more children who would still qualify, there being 300 pupils registered at the end of 2021.

The charity’s main income continues to come from donations and fund-raising events. The latter were severely curtailed during the year and our main event was a “guess the time taken” walk over the Shropshire Hills, which raised over £3000. We also had a successful and very enjoyable outdoor lunch, prepared by one of our Syrian friends. We hope that the pandemic will abate during 2022 and allow more “sociable” events to take place but already plans to run our successful raffle are well under way.

The Trustees would like to thank all our regular donors and will review future events in the light of developments. Imaginative ideas for fund-raising are always welcome.

## **Financial Review**

The purpose of the charity is to support pupils and ex-pupils of the Margaret Junior School and in 2021 expenditure amounted to just under £56,000. This was a significant increase over previous years, largely owing to an increase in fees at secondary and university level. In addition to paying sponsorships, the money was spent on general funds and teachers’ salaries, as well as funding Covid measures. Even allowing for the costs of revamping the charity’s website, administrative costs for the year were only 1% of income, allowing all the money raised to be spent on the school and its pupils. Supporters can remain confident that the Trustees will continue to strive to ensure that money donated goes directly to support the school and its pupils. The Trustees do not have any plans to build up reserves but to ensure that monies raised are spent wisely and effectively, in liaison with the School Committee in Uganda.

## **Future Plans**

Since the “Friends of the Margaret Junior School” was first incorporated as a charity in 2006, priority has been given to building up the infrastructure of the school. This has resulted in the purchase of the land; the installation of a supply of clean water; the building of pit latrines and two four-classroom blocks; the provision of basic hostel accommodation, a multi-purpose examination room and, as mentioned above, a vocational training facility. Additionally, other buildings have been erected by the parents and local community to enhance the educational, washing and cooking facilities. These are significant achievements. More recently, solar panels have been installed, and during 2019 electricity reached the school and the surrounding area. This will allow the school to enter the world of information technology and provide new opportunities for the children.

The Trustees are mindful that the current arrangements are not sustainable in the long term and we will need to address the future funding of the school and look for a greater contribution from local resources in Uganda. The recruitment of younger Trustees is something we would like to achieve and closer links with other similar charities will also be considered.

The Trustees would like to thank all our donors, sponsors and members for their loyal support of the school.

Margaret West  
Chair of Trustees.

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Charity number 1114202

**THE FRIENDS OF THE MARGARET JUNIOR SCHOOL**  
**January 1st 2021 - December 31st 2021**

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2021**

**Income**

**Opening Balances 01/01/21**

Donations	General	£ 15,264.70	8991
	Restricted	£ 22,485.01	23943
Fundraising		£ 3,724.89	3064
Membership Fees		£ 240.00	275

Bank Interest		£ 0.85	3
Gift Aid		£ 8,498.57	6357

Total Income

**£ 14,887.33**

**£ 50,214.02**

**£ 65,101.35**

**Expenditure**

Transfer to MJS	£ 55,900.00	43,948
Postage	£ 15.84	23
Printing	£ -	0
Website	£ 450.00	0
Fundraising	£ 69.00	360

**Total expenditure**      **£ 56,434.84**

**Closing balances 31/12/21**

General	£ 2,676.40
Sponsorship	£ 5,990.11

**£ 65,101.35**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Friends of the Margaret Junior School  
Registered Number 1114202**

I report on the Accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2021.

**Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner**

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:-

- examine the Accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention that has not been met; and

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - o to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - o to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 28 February 2022

Name Graham Spencer

Relevant Professional Qualification (if any)

Retired Civil Servant

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