

The Friends of the Margaret Junior School

(Registered no: 1114202)

ANNUAL REPORT for 2024

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: Roger Ford, Hilary Procter, Nicholas Stokes, Margaret West (Chair), Maria Woodward and Alexander Wright (elected 2024). Freda Bass resigned in December 2024. 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 2024, the Association had 25 paid-up members. 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, which contributes a significant sum to the charity’s finances .

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. Life in Uganda has slowly begun to recover since the end of Covid but one legacy of the pandemic has been an increase in the cost of living and families continue to struggle with the rise in prices for fuel and basic commodities. Short school closures were required following the fear of a further outbreak of Ebola in parts of the country. During the year we learned of the sudden deaths of both a teacher and two pupils. It brings home the lack of medical facilities, which we take for granted in the UK. One little girl drowned when fetching water from her local well.

The new vocational training centre is now operational and was named in honour of Sarah Kasujja, the school’s founder. The Education Authority has agreed to meet the staffing costs of instructors for 10 years and local grants have allowed for the provision of metal-work equipment and machinery. This is proving popular, especially among the boys, who see it as a possible route to future employment. The shoe-making and sewing classes are also well-attended and the Christmas Appeal allowed for a significant increase in the number of sewing machines, which will facilitate learning. The centre also has a Computer Room – but so far no computers!

The pig scheme is still thriving. This was made possible in 2022 by two of our supporters, who asked for financial donations instead of wedding presents. The pigs have done well and there have been lots of piglets over the years. As well as teaching the pupils about animal husbandry, the local veterinary officer has extended the classes to involve parents, instructing them in up-to-date methods. Sales of the piglets to the District Council provided funding for building toilets for the teachers, while the Council distributed the piglets to local farmers. Just one example of how the school is involved in the local community.

It is encouraging to note the increasing extra-curricular activities being undertaken by the school. There have been visits to the museum in Kampala and the Uganda Broadcasting Service, and the school choir has been active in making recordings at a local studio.

In April, one of our Trustees, Roger Ford, visited the school, together with his wife, Wendy. They had opened the school in 2004, while working in the area, and were astounded to see the growth that had taken place since then.

Since its opening, the school campus has developed and grown in ways which could never have been anticipated. From its original two classroom home-built building, the school now is able to accommodate over 350 pupils in a range of purpose-built facilities

Currently, the Bursary Scheme embraces 35 children: 22 primary, 10 secondary, and three former pupils, who are now at university. The Trustees would like to thank those who are sponsoring the students, either individually or through the Bursary Scheme. There are many more children who would still qualify, there being 348 pupils registered at the end of 2024 : 180 girls and 168 boys. Two previous students graduated in 2024, both gaining degrees from Makerere University in Kampala. One is teaching and the other is working at an agricultural centre.

Trustees would like to thank all our regular donors. The Bursary Scheme also allows for sponsors to share the costs as part of a group.

At home we had another successful year with fund-raising activities. The annual coffee morning was supplemented by a concert at Shrewsbury Abbey, with performances from the Shrewsbury Male Voice Choir and Of One Accord. A very sunny and pleasant afternoon was spent in the beautiful garden of two of our supporters, where voluminous quantities of teas and cakes were consumed to a musical background from local musicians. Finally the biennial raffle was well supported as was the quiz, which seems to be coming an annual event. Thanks to everyone who came along or supported in any way.

Financial Review

The purpose of the charity is to support pupils and ex-pupils of the Margaret Junior School and in 2024 expenditure on the school and pupil sponsorship amounted to £36,750. This was less than in 2023, partly because of a fall in the number of University students.. In addition to paying sponsorships, the money has been spent on general funds and teachers' salaries.

Administrative costs remain low, at less than 1%, 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. A Reserve Policy has been established by the Trustees and a sum of £4000 is set aside for this purpose. This is the amount required for one semester at the Junior School.

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 a vocational training facility. The transformation from the modest beginnings in 2003 is a significant achievement and the Trustees would like to thank all our supporters, many of whom have been involved since the school first opened over 20 years ago. Additionally, other buildings have been erected by the parents and local community to enhance the educational, administrative, washing and cooking facilities. These are significant achievements and highlights the standing that the school has achieved in the local community.

The Trustees are mindful that the current arrangements are not sustainable in the longer term and we will need to address the future funding of the school and look for a greater contribution from local resources in Uganda. Roger and Wendy met with the school committee during their visit in the Spring and challenged them to find new ways of raising support and income locally, so that the school becomes less dependent upon the charity. Their report is awaited. 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 for the school.

Margaret West
Chair of Trustees.

Registered Office: 2 Whitehall Terrace, Shrewsbury, SY2 5AA. info@margaretunionschool-uganda.com
www.margaretjuniorschool-uganda.com



Charity number 1114202

THE FRIENDS OF THE MARGARET JUNIOR SCHOOL

January 1st 2024 – December 31st 2024

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024

Income

Opening Balances 01/01/24 £12,174.00

Donations		
General	£14,355.71	12,901
Restricted	£14,971.74	18,148

Fundraising	£5,699.37	4,121
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Membership Fees	£210.00	340
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Bank Interest	£105.58	91
Gift Aid	£7,659.54	6,359

Total Income £43,001.94

£55,175.94

Expenditure

Transfer to MJS £36,750.00 47,500

Postage		8
Printing	£114.00	83
Website	£120.00	50
Fundraising	£360.00	21
Lottery	£21.00	20
Subs		25

Total expenditure £37,365.00

£55,175.94

Closing balances 31/12/24

General	£7,497.43
Sponsorship	£6,313.51
Reserves	£4,000.00

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 2024.

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 19 February 2025

Name Graham Spencer

Relevant Professional Qualification (if any)

Retired Civil Servant

Address 44 Underdale Road
Shrewsbury
SY2 5DT