

# The Friends of the Margaret Junior School

(Registered no: 1114202)

## ANNUAL REPORT for 2025

### 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. In April 2025, the Chair of the Friends, Margaret West, sadly died and her place as Chair was taken by Maria Woodward. In addition, the present Trustees are Roger Ford, Hilary Procter, Nicholas Stokes, Alexander Wright, and Sue Oliver (elected 2025). 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 2025, the Association had 18 paid-up members and 29 sponsors. Not all 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. In 2025 over £29,000 of the charity’s income came from donations from individual supporters and bursary sponsors, with a further £2400 from fund-raising activities

### Activities.

The solid support and regular contributions provide the Friends with a firm financial base, which allows the Head-teacher and School 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. Health facilities in Uganda remain at a basic level when compared to the UK, and malaria and HIV/AIDs continue to take their toll. The school plays its part by providing facilities to support immunisation and vaccine programmes for the pupils and members of the local community.

The 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 shoemaking and sewing classes are also well-attended and the Christmas Appeal allowed the charity to provide an additional eight sewing machines, which will facilitate learning. A new facility, which started towards the end of the year, was a carpentry course, made possible by a grant from The Friends. In time the school hopes to introduce instruction in the use of computers but security and maintenance measures first need to be agreed.

During the year match funding from the District allowed the school, with help from the Friends, to purchase 30 new school desks and two new water tanks.

The school is fortunate to have land adjacent to the classrooms for agricultural activities. Food is grown for use in the school kitchen and animal husbandry is taught to help the students to look after the school cow and pigs. As well as useful teaching aids they contribute to further income and dietary supplements. The pig scheme is still thriving 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. As well as educational visits, made possible by the school's rather aged minibus, the school choir and dancers have taken part in several regional and national competitions. They were particularly honoured to be invited to sing before the Kabaka (King of Buganda).

Currently, the Bursary Scheme embraces 32 children: 22 primary and 10 secondary pupils plus three former students, who are now at university. The Trustees would like to thank those who are sponsoring them, either individually or through the Bursary Scheme. There are many more children who would still qualify, there being 335 pupils registered at the end of 2025.

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. These mainly consisted of coffee mornings and garden parties as well as the now "annual" quiz.

## **Financial Review**

The purpose of the charity is to support pupils and ex-pupils of the Margaret Junior School and in 2025 expenditure on the school and pupil sponsorship amounted to £46,300. This provides for a regular and confirmed contribution each school term and, in addition, the charity has been able to assist the school with some unplanned expenditure e.g. replacement books and educational equipment. In addition to paying sponsorships, the money has been spent on general funds and teachers' salaries.

Administrative costs remain low, at less than 0.5 % of expenditure, 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 £4,000 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 Ford met with the school committee during their visit in Spring 2024 and challenged them to find new ways of raising support and income locally, so that the school becomes less dependent upon the charity. As a result, school fees were increased but there are still some parents who have difficulty in paying. 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.

Maria Woodward  
Chair of Trustees.

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Charity number 1114202

## The Friends of the Margaret Junior School Annual Accounts 1st January - 31st December 2025

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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 2025.

**Respective responsibilities of Treasurer 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 :-

- (a) examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (b) follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (c) 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

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

Signed.....*John Ingham*..... Date...09/02/26.....

Name John Philip INGHAM

Relevant Qualification (if any)

Retired – Senior Detective Police Officer (West Mercia Police).

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