

The Belarus Fund
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The Belarus Fund
Registered Charity No.
1116762
*Supporting victims of
Chernobyl in Belarus*

In Partnership with



*The White Flower
Charity*

Trustees Annual Report 2020-2021

Introduction.

This year has been the most challenging yet for our charity. We have had to face unique circumstances and evolve different ways of doing the work of the charity. From the outset, we have adapted our approach and enabled the work of the charity to continue uninterrupted and so, despite everything that has happened, we have been successful both here in the United Kingdom and in Belarus.

It is a credit to our colleagues and volunteers in Belarus, the supporters of the charity, and to the volunteer team here in the United Kingdom that the charity has continued to operate and to achieve its goals despite the difficulties created by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic.

Communication.

Communication has always been key to the functioning of our work and this year has become even more significant because:

1. The trustees have been unable to meet face to face.
2. It has not been possible for teams to visit Belarus.
3. Planning needed to be done at arm's length.

There have been two Zoom trustee meetings and these have successfully dealt with the business of the charity, enabling matters to be considered and decisions to be made.

Skype and Zoom have been used to maintain contact with our volunteer visitors in Belarus. Through these contacts and the use of email, we have been able to have a two way exchange of information. This has meant that in some respects it was business as usual but conducted in a different way.

Carrying out the work of the charity.

What has been most frustrating is not being able to visit Belarus during the year. We have received feedback through Nicolai and Oleg (in Belarus) that the folks there have missed our visits and are longing for the day when we can safely return.

Nevertheless, the following have continued:

- Reviewing Projects
- Considering new projects
- Discussing fundraising
- Receiving feedback on fundraising and other activities
- Planning visits to Belarus
- Monitoring the finances of the charity
- Regulatory requirements
- How to achieve best practice
- Planning for the future

These represent the core tasks of the charity in order to meet its objectives. However, it is important to recognise the impact of this work on the lives of those who benefit in Belarus and those who devote their time in that country to those people and what a privilege it is to share that work with them, albeit at a distance at this time.

Objectives of the charity.

To employ a variety of fundraising methods to achieve a target of £20,000

The actual amount raised was £39,746.89. We are adhering to the target of £20,000 as this is what would be needed to keep the support scheme running without funding other projects. This is also in the light of difficulties currently faced in raising funds through events.

Through our regular donors, we are able to exceed the target of £20,000, so we are confident of being able to meet this target in the coming year. However, uncertainty remains.

The people in Belarus thank God for the generosity of all the donors in the UK.

To recruit volunteer helpers for the work of the charity in the UK

The number of volunteer helpers in the UK has decreased slightly as people have died. The number of people providing financial support has slightly increased. The work of the charity has continued unabated. Covid-19 has had an impact particularly on the fundraising events, most of which have not happened. However, it is worth noting that the number of volunteer helpers in Belarus has been increasing over the last two years.

To identify appropriate projects in Belarus

No major additional projects have been undertaken as our colleagues in Belarus are operating under the Covid-19 restrictions and advice in Belarus. There has been a small increase in the size of the support scheme which remains our largest undertaking.

To liaise with the White Flower charity in Belarus through visits and electronic communication.

Travel restrictions have prevented team visits to Belarus. Contact has been maintained through the use of Skype, WhatsApp, email and, most recently, Zoom. Through the Zoom meetings, we have been able to involve more people and receive more feedback.

To transfer funds to Belarus to finance identified projects agreed by the trustees.

The necessary funds have been transferred to Belarus but bank fees have been incurred.

To supervise projects working with children, adults, people with disabilities and older people in Belarus.

This work has continued carried out by our colleagues and volunteers in Belarus, who have kept us fully informed. We have advised the folks there to minimise physical contact and to follow the government advice within Belarus. We receive regular reports, photographs and videos from Belarus.

To operate appropriate administration systems and reporting mechanisms to ensure the proper deployment of resources and the proper running of the charity.

The administrative systems and reporting mechanisms are robust and support the running of the charity and in informing trustees who have been unable to meet face to face. Meetings are held online.

To liaise with other charities and funders where appropriate.

We have continued our work with our American partners and, jointly, we have financed work eg. Funding special food for Lisa and providing medical help for Lena and Luba.

To report activities to the Charity Commission.

This is done through the trustees report and Annual Return to the Charity Commission.

To operate appropriate financial systems.

The financial systems of the charity are transparent and robust. Detail expenditure is recorded electronically and in a bank statement file. All receipts for expenditure in Belarus are received by email attachment. Expenditure is monitored at the end of each month, thus enabling the charity to remain in credit. These record in detail the income and expenditure of the charity, gift aiding and small donations gift aiding. A copy of the balance sheet for 2020-21 accompanies this report.

Public Benefit Statement.

Much of the work done by the charity is ongoing and is listed below:-

1. The White Flower charity continues to work as our partner in Belarus, serving as the vital link to the network of projects around Belarus.
2. The ongoing support of an architect, who is a trustee of the charity, to assist a church to convert a derelict building into a church and community centre, at no cost. The main church building is now complete. The church runs a range of community activities and is involving the local community who live around the church building.
3. The Borisov Abandoned Babies Home continues to receive funding for prioritised needs and welcomes our continuing involvement.
4. Funding individual people on the support scheme receiving monthly monies from UK sponsors. Some families receive an additional support amount because of the complex needs within the family.
5. Continued funding for a youth camp for the social development and life skills of young people in danger from drugs and prostitution. Also to prevent people trafficking.
6. Support for outreach work done by the Hope of Salvation Pentecostal Church in asylums around Minsk. They also undertake camps for children at special times of the year, for example, at Christmas. They selflessly give of their time and it is a privilege to be able to support this important work.
7. Family food parcels in the Grodno region. These are distributed in the "Forgotten Villages" in isolated locations in the border regions with Poland.
8. Art and Craft materials for young women to earn a living. Life is difficult for these sisters as their health continues to deteriorate. One sister had a hip replacement which did not go

well despite us funding a quality new hip joint. Remedial action is now required. The second sister has had one successful hip replacement funded by the charity. And the second hip will be replaced in the new financial year. The cost of these hip replacements has been shared with DCHA our American charity partner.

9. Christmas gifts for children in an abandoned babies home.
10. Christmas gifts for children.
11. Christmas programs for families.
12. Christmas gifts for poor families.
13. Gifts for elderly people living alone.
14. Firewood for families on the support scheme.
15. Outreach work by the Grace church in Grodno (social and material support).
16. Knitted children's hats donated but not delivered yet.
17. Knitted blankets donated but not delivered yet.
18. Increasing amounts of Sudocrem and vapour rub donated but not delivered yet.
19. Support for disabled children in Minsk at Leila's education centre. This is ongoing.
20. Support for anti-human trafficking work.
21. Support for countering domestic violence.
22. Support for an elderly persons social group.
23. Travel costs to enable visits to ex-prisoners detained in WWII.
24. Incontinence supplies for bedridden people.
25. Hip joints for hip replacement surgery.
26. Medical and therapeutic treatment of young women with severe cerebral palsy.
27. Backpacks and educational materials for children from poor families.
28. Refreshments for asylum social group.
29. Surgery for Varvara's hip displacement that had been postponed was carried out in Austria for the first hip. The second will hopefully take place in the next financial year.
30. Financial support for one day per week for the Project Manager in Belarus, and Director in Belarus for one day per week. All other workers are volunteers.
31. Education programme for Miron with partner DCHA.
32. Special food for Lisa with PKU. Also partnered with DCHA.

We continue to work to ensure compliance with the requirements of GDPR and to operate within the law. The charity still does not directly approach people for funds, but rather relies up giving information and then following up where interest is expressed.

The effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic could not have been predicted and uncertainty remains as we enter the next financial year. As a charity, we will continue to work towards achieving our objectives and adapt as circumstances require.

2021-22 will be another challenging year as we cope with the restrictions forced upon us by Covid-19 and our ability to fundraise and to travel to Belarus. We are now better prepared to meet these challenges and look forward to when we can reinstate our visits to Belarus and have first hand experience of the impact of the work of the charity.

On behalf of the Trustees,
Alan Bridgewater
Charity Secretary, Treasurer and Trustee
April 2021.

*DCHA is Direct Connect Humanitarian Aid, a USA based charity

BELARUS FUND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FROM 6th APRIL 2020 TO 5th APRIL 20201

Current Account

		PAYMENTS		
		Total	Dollars	Sterling
			Sent to Belarus	£29,175.00
Donations Gift Aided	£21,738.85			
Non Gift Aid Donations	£17,607.28			
GASDS donations	£400.76			
Contra item Flights paid by Team	£785.02			
Contra item* Currency for cancelled visit due to Covi	\$19,635			
Totals	<u>£39,746.89</u>			
Bank Balance at 6th. April 2020	£4,836.22	Total Spend		<u>£29,175.00</u>
		Total raised	£39,746.89	
	Balance at	5th April 2021	£16,193.13	
	Balance at	5th April 2020(less)	£4,836.22	
	Contra item		£785.02	
		Money withdrawn (Plus)	<u>£29,175.00</u>	

Deposit Account

Balance	<u>£23.55</u>	Interest on Bus Acc.	
		Total raised therefore	<u>£39,746.89</u>

Note * funds to be taken to Belarus when borders are open and it is safe to travel

The Belarus Fund

Registered Charity 1116762

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Belarus Fund

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 5th April 2021, which are set out on the Belarus Fund Statement of Accounts from 6th April 2020 to 5th April 2021.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees 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;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) 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

have not been met; nor

(2) which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

The accounts and financial statement, as presented, represent a true and accurate record of the charity's account.

Name: Susan Margaret Selby

Profession: Retired Pharmacist / Store Manager for Boots the Chemist

Address: 118, Overdale Rd, Romiley, Stockport. Cheshire SK6 3EN.

Signature:



Date: 07.06.2021.