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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 2023-2024**

### **Introduction.**

This year has been one of success and frustration. The success comes from loyal continued support and being able to complete our mission in Belarus with both families and organisations. It has been a time of sorrow and joy. The sorrow comes from the death of two dear people who have been beneficiaries of the charity's work over a number of years. Denis and Maya were both dear to our hearts and will be missed by their families, their supporters and the charity team in the UK. There has been joy in hearing the good news coming from our volunteers and workers in Belarus

Our grateful thanks go to our team of local resident volunteers in Belarus without whom the charity could not function. This work remains focussed upon the support scheme and existing projects. All of which are carefully monitored and subject to scrutiny by the teams in Belarus and the trustees here in the UK.

The continuing issues around sanctions and conflict mean we are advised not to visit Belarus and so must use other means to keep in touch. The folks in Belarus regularly ask when their English friends are coming to see them. They are amazed that people from so far away care about them and continue to do so despite all that is happening in the world.

### **Communication.**

Zoom, WhatsApp, emails and Skype continue to be very effective in keeping in contact with the volunteers working in Belarus. We are able to consult, provide directives and plans for the charity work and to receive feedback on progress and how things are working out for the recipients of the resources. This acts a source of encouragement for the charity folks here in the UK.

### **Carrying out the work of the charity.**

Our frustration at not been able to visit Belarus during the year continues. Our good friends, Nicolai and Oleg, our co-workers (in Belarus), have continued

managing the work of the charity along with the team of volunteers in Belarus. Again, we have been able to have one face-to-face meeting with Nicolai and Oleg when they were able to travel to spend time with some of the trustees.

Our discussions throughout the year have focussed on:

- Reviewing Projects
- Discussing fundraising
- Receiving feedback on what is happening
- Talking about when visits to Belarus can recommence
- Monitoring the finances of the charity
- Regulatory requirements
- How to achieve best practice
- Planning for the future

A quarterly plan is created identifying what funds are to be allocated and where.

Doing these things have enabled us to achieve the objectives of the charity. However, paramount has been the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of the folks in Belarus. Their resilience in these difficult times has been amazing. This serves as an inspiration for the UK based charity work.

### **Objectives of the charity.**

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

The actual amount raised was £48,511.58. We will continue with the existing target as a matter of expediency. The charity benefitted from a legacy and a number of Large one-off donations.

We have lost a small number of donors but have managed to maintain the income of the charity, sufficient to fulfil its commitments.

Some limited additional fundraising is planned but our main source of income remains individual supporters.

The people in Belarus continually 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 volunteers remains the same and they are able to carry out the work of the charity. Everyone who is part of the charity, in the UK, is a volunteer, giving their finances, time and energy freely. The situation in Ukraine and Russian political alliances mean people are less likely to want to become involved.

#### **To identify appropriate projects in Belarus**

It still remains the case that we do not feel it is appropriate to take on new projects but do receive information from Belarus which we hope to be able to consider in the future, within budgetary constraints.

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

Visits to Belarus are not advised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Electronic communication is our most effective means of communicating.

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

The necessary funds have been securely transferred to Belarus but bank fees continue to be incurred at a rate of about 3%.

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

The work has continued, carried out by our colleagues and volunteers in Belarus, who continue to keep us fully informed. The work is supervised and monitored by Oleg and Nicolai. The safety and wellbeing of these folks remains of paramount importance

**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 remain fit for purpose and enable the running of the charity and keep trustees, UK supporters and the Charity Commission informed.

**To liaise with other charities and funders where appropriate.**

We continue to work with our American partner\* and, jointly, we have financed some provision for specific small projects.

**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. 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 2023-2024 accompanies this report. We do not spend money we have not already raised. Should a shortfall arise, there is an arrangement for an interest-free short-term loan.

**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 further develop the site of the church which has been successfully renovated. The additions will enable more activities and facilities to be available on site.

3. The Abandoned Babies Home continues to receive funding for prioritised needs and welcomes our continuing involvement.
4. Continued funding of individual people and families on the support scheme receiving monthly monies from UK sponsors and general fundraising. Some families receive an additional support amount because of the complex needs within the family
5. Support for outreach work done by the HOS Pentecostal Church in asylums. They also undertake camps for children at special times of the year, for example, at Christmas. They selflessly give of their own time and it is a privilege to be able to support this important work.
6. Family food parcels and medicines in the Grodno region. These are distributed in the "Forgotten Villages" in isolated locations in the border regions with Poland.
7. Art and Craft materials for young women to earn a living. Life is difficult for these sisters as their health continues to deteriorate. The second sister has had the second hip replaced. The cost of these hip replacements has been shared with DCHA\* our American charity partner.
8. Christmas gifts for children in an abandoned babies' home.
9. Christmas programs for families.
10. Christmas gifts for poor families and children.
13. Gifts for elderly people living alone.
14. Firewood for families on the support scheme.
15. Outreach work by the church in Grodno (social and material support)
16. Support for countering domestic violence.
17. Support for an elderly person's social group.
18. Travel costs to enable visits to ex-prisoners detained in WWII.
19. Incontinence supplies for bedridden people.
20. Backpacks and educational materials for children from poor families.
21. Financial support for one and a half days per week for the Project Manager in Belarus, and Director in Belarus for half a day per week. All other workers are volunteers.
22. Education programme for Miron with partner DCHA\*.
23. Special food for Lisa with PKU. Also partnered with DCHA\*.
24. Purchase of medicines.
25. Additional support for people with Covid.
26. Support for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Belarus.
27. Material costs for the digging of village wells.
28. Corrective surgery and treatment for Varvara funded by Sisters of St. Joseph of the Annunciation. This took place at a specialist hospital in Austria.

Throughout this year, we have again been consolidating the work of the charity, so most of the public benefit is still a continuation of what the charity has already been doing. The needs being met are mostly long term in nature. Any new approaches in Belarus are being assessed by our colleagues there. However, meeting these needs is constrained by the resources we can get to the workers in Belarus.

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. This has been our strategy throughout and has proved successful.

The work of the charity continues but has lost the benefit of face-to-face interaction with the beneficiaries. Fortunately, technology continues to enable forms of personal contact (email, Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp) with the project manager and Director.

This has been vital to the fulfilment of our purposes. Being able to meet them outside the country has been of great importance and benefit, but still remains second best to in-country visits.

We anticipate that 2024-25 will be another challenging year as we cope with the restrictions forced upon us by not being able to travel to Belarus. Also, the geopolitical situation resulting from the war in Ukraine continues to be a major concern. We are 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.

We remain extremely grateful for the wonderful generosity of our supporters, without whom the work of the charity could not continue

On behalf of the Trustees and with heartfelt thanks,  
Alan Bridgewater  
Charity Secretary, Treasurer and  
Trustee  
June 2024.

\*Direct Connect Humanitarian Aid a USA based charity.

# **BELARUS FUND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FROM 6th APRIL 2023 TO 5th APRIL 2024**

## **Current Account**

		<b>PAYMENTS</b>	
	Total		
Donations Gift Aided	£17,035.13	To Belarus	
Non Gift Aid Donations	£30,486.05	Travel and Accommodation	
GASDS donations	£942.84	Currency to Belarus A	
Interest	£47.46	Austria Klinik for Varvara	
		Back brace for Yana	
		Currency to Belarus B	
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>£48,511.48</u></b>		
<b>Contra</b>	<b>£7,738.74 paid then refunded</b>	<b>Total Spend</b>	
		<b>Balance at 6th April 2023</b>	<b>£1,184.80</b>
		<b>Balance at 5th April 2024</b>	<b>£795.09</b>
		<b>Money Withdrawn</b>	<b><u>£43,682.31</u></b>
<b><u>Deposit Accounts on 5th April 2024</u></b>			
<b>Barclays</b>	<b><u>£53.92</u></b>		
<b>B. Account</b>			
<b>Halifax</b>	<b>£7,000.00</b>		
		<b>Total raised</b>	<b><u>£48,511.48</u></b>

Sterling  
£30,508.28  
£1,309.74  
£12,993.33  
£4,439.87  
£62.99  
£1,368.10

**£50,682.31**

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024, which are set out on the Belarus Fund Statement of Accounts from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023 to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### 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.

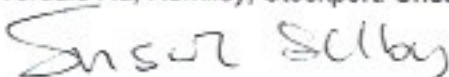
The accounts and financial statement, as presented, represent a true and accurate record of the charity's account.

Name: Susan Margaret Selby

Profession: Retired Pharmacist / Store Manager for Boots the Chemist

Address: 87, Overdale Rd, Romiley, Stockport. Cheshire SK6 3JB.

Signature:



Date:

12.12.2024.