

Trustees Annual Report for the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

1. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Charity Name	Friends of Conakry Refugee School
Other name charity is known by	FCRS
Registered charity number	1124736
Charity's principal address	The Coach House 4 Church View Baschurch Shropshire SY4 2CD

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Rolf Levesley	Chair	Reappointed 23 rd June 2018
Mark Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2019
Tanya Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2019
Rachel Roland	Trustee	Reappointed 12 th October 2020
Angela Saganowska	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2019
Ruth Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2020
Jacqueline Watkins	Trustee	Appointed 18 th July 2018
Jeanette Whitford	Trustee	Appointed 11 th February 2020

Name of the volunteer Director

Angela Saganowska

Name of the volunteer Treasurer

Pauline Levesley

Name of the Independent examiner

Kate Chetwood.

2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

<i>Type of governing document</i>	Trust deed signed 23 rd June 2008
<i>How the charity is constituted</i>	Trust
<i>Trustee selection methods</i>	New Trustees will be selected for appointment by the Trustees with regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the Charity

Because of the pandemic all meetings were held on Zoom. There were 4 Trustee Board meetings during the 2020/21 financial year. There were also regular Strategy Sub group and Fundraising group meetings.

Additional governance issues

Relationship with any related party. There were no payments to related parties.

3. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of objects of the charity set out in its governing document:

To advance the education and relieve the financial hardship of those refugee children and children of refugees who require schooling and attend Conakry Refugee School, Guinea, which is currently not supported by the Government of Guinea or any other agency.

Our vision and objectives

FCRS believes that every child and young person should be educated, protected, respected and valued regardless of their faith, gender, ethnic background or financial circumstance.

We believe that:-

- Good quality education is the cornerstone to developing a child or young person's potential, improving their life chances, equipping them to gain employment and enabling them to play an active role in advancing their community
- Refugees and children of refugees are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged and should be enabled to access school and other services regardless of their status
- Sustainable, good quality education requires good teaching staff who are appropriately trained and remunerated for their work
- A greater understanding of other people's lives and cultures is important for everyone and leads to a more tolerant society

FCRS supports Conakry Refugee School (CRS) in Guinea, West Africa, to advance the education and life chances of vulnerable and marginalised children and young people, many of whom were originally from the refugee community.

We are one of the few UK charities involved in enhancing the education and wellbeing of English-speaking children in Guinea. As a value-driven organisation we are passionate about ensuring access to good education, promoting gender equality and tolerance. All our programmes are aimed at bringing about change to achieve our mission and objectives. Our successes are based on fostering a direct and honest working relationship with the school based on mutual respect and collaboration. We do not underestimate the challenges of working in a country which features in the bottom ten in terms of literacy, girls' access to school and life expectancy.

Conakry is the capital of Guinea, which is one of the poorest African countries.

CRS is an English-speaking school and a remarkable establishment; its ethos and values of equality, tolerance and compassion, and its quest for excellence in education sets it apart from other schools in Guinea. Its promotion of access and education for girls as well as its stance on supporting them on controversial issues like FGM and early marriage makes it unique. Over 50% of students at the school are female. It is a large school of nearly 600 students providing both primary school and secondary school education, with an excellent reputation in external exam performance. The vast majority of its pupils come from very disadvantaged refugee backgrounds and are often living

with single parents or extended family members. It functions as more than just a school.... It provides a safe haven for vulnerable and at-risk young people as well as serving as a community resource.

CRS receives no government support and without the support of FCRS the school would have to rely totally upon the fees of the students. The fees must be very low because the students are very poor, yet many are still unable to afford them.

4. PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

Trustees have had regard to the guidance provided by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit. In deciding upon the objectives listed below they recognise the activities undertaken in pursuance of those objectives are for the public benefit.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects in 2020/21

FCRS has 7 objectives listed below which are not mutually exclusive and are aligned with our vision and mission. We deliver our objectives through a series of programmes. We actively engage, provide resources and programme-manage developments, aligned with our vision on education, in support of CRS, to improve the life chances and advance the education of marginalised and vulnerable children and young people.

Objective - Focusing on Marginalised and Vulnerable Children and Young People

- Scholarship and Student support programme
- Hardship Fund

Objective – Achieving excellence in education

- Exam scholarship programme
- Professional Development programme
- Relocation of the school building and improved facilities
- Advancement of science education

Objective – Supporting the school towards realistic sustainability

- Relocation of the school building and increasing students and/or fee levels
- Provision of resources and mentorship in setting up a science lab
- Governance and budget management advice for a more self-sustaining management team
- Assisting the school in their marketing plans
- Solar Power programme

Objective – Well-being and safety for all

- School meals programme and Breakfast Club
- Health Club / Girls and Young Women's programme
- Female hygiene and sexual health in collaboration with other organisations
- Support and mentorship to introduce / implement safeguarding child protection policy and procedures

- Relocation of the school building and a better and healthier school environment
- Water Tower and provision of water
- PHSE programme

Objective – Building equality

- Scholarship programme
- Female hygiene programme
- Health Club

Objective – Building professional development and leadership training

- Professional training programme
- Management team leadership programme

Objective – Promoting a more tolerant society by raising awareness and knowledge of life in Guinea

- FCRS newsletter and website
- Presentations on the work of FCRS to schools and other charitable groups

Our UK schools programme and talks to other organisations were not possible because of the Covid pandemic

Our approach

Our aim has always been to work in true and equal partnership with the school and we will continue to strive and challenge our actions, language, and behaviour to ensure this approach.

FCRS acknowledges we have considerable privilege and power, and we must pay attention to issues of race and avoid a paternalistic approach. FCRS will continue to focus on our belief that good quality education is the cornerstone to developing a child or young person's potential and improving their life chances. We will create a narrative that emphasises self-determination and constantly review our policies and programmes and challenge each other to ensure that we are not inadvertently using discriminatory policies or practicing discriminatory behaviour. We will engage the CRS management in all decisions about funding and use of funds.

5. 2020/21 ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Synopsis of the year

The beginning of the financial year was marked by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic outbreak – lockdown in the UK and closure of all schools in Guinea. As with other charities, our plans and fundraising strategies came under immediate threat. Work started immediately, trying to risk-assess the pandemic's impact and on how we could best mitigate its worst risks to our organization, the school, and our plans for 2020/21.

Closure of the school in Conakry meant not only that the students' education stopped but also that they couldn't receive the school meals FCRS provide. With no pupils attending school there were no fees coming in to pay the wages of the staff.

Plans to implement our three-year strategy to enhance the long-term sustainability of the school, underpinned by a major two-year grant from the Merck Family Foundation, were placed under serious threat.

As a small charity supporting an overseas educational programme, we were not eligible for the government's special COVID-19 grants and many charitable funding bodies gave priority to programmes operating within the UK.

The activities and plans for the rest of the year for both FCRS and the school were inevitably dominated by the COVID-19 virus.

Impact on CRS

Reported cases of the virus remained comparatively low in Guinea, but the country's economy suffered considerably with spiralling inflation. The impact for the school being;

- Landlords' plans for a massive threefold rise in school-building rental costs, coupled with a general shortage of suitable buildings
- Sharp increase in cost of basic food items, disproportionally impacting on the poorest, most vulnerable families, making school fees unaffordable for many
- Extra-curricular activities and Health club programmes seriously curtailed
- Delivery of the hygiene kits for girls, solar lamps and refurbished laptops had to be put on hold for this year due to the cancellation of our visit

Impact on FCRS

- We had to cancel the annual visit to the school, booked early in April 2020, which is crucial to enabling our joint planning and review discussions with CRS and our opportunity to meet with staff, students, and families.
- All our live fundraising events planned for the spring and early summer were cancelled, including arrangements for a large concert

HOWEVER

- New methods of remote communication between Trustees, supporters and the CRS management team have been developed, including the use of meetings with the school's management team via Zoom
- A programme of on-line fundraising events was rapidly developed
- We were able to use monies from the Merck Family Fund Foundation as well as specific donations from our supporters to put into place the stringent hygiene and safety measures set out by the Guinean Government. This enabled the school to reopen within three months and resume educating their pupils and providing them with school meals

- Lessons continued not only for the remaining term but throughout the summer so that pupils could catch up on the time they lost, and the exams programme proceeded without major disruption
- Our charity's budget/planning process enabled us to provide all staff with a guaranteed minimum wage for the duration of the school closure which provided a vital safety-net during a time of unprecedented crisis
- We were able to provide guaranteed funding to support all the planned programmes for the 2020/21 academic year which included; funding for 154 school Scholarships for those students meeting the criteria; exam Scholarships for 12 of the most able scholarship students; hot school-meals- although, unfortunately restricted to 10 days per month due to budgetary pressures; PHSE and sanitation materials; the teachers' Professional development programme; and continuation of the Health Club programme
- Our three-year strategy to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the school remained intact and also on target. Plans for the expenditure of the 2-year grant of 75,000 euros received in January 2020 from the Merck Family Foundation, an important element within that strategy were also progressed as detailed below (a. The School Building and Achievement of Science).

This has been a difficult year for everyone, with a series of major highs and lows. It has required CRS and FCRS to work very closely together and be involved in protracted planning and risk-analysis discussions over an extended period.

We would like to pay tribute to the very capable and hardworking CRS Management Team and school staff who have made this possible. They have successfully achieved a mammoth undertaking in a period of massive global uncertainties.

All our sincere thanks and appreciation also go to all our loyal local supporters and donors, together with our volunteers and contributors to all our on-line fundraising events during the year.

We would specifically like to thank our major donors; the Merck Family Foundation, Avonbrook and the Waterloo Foundation (via the Big Give 2020 Christmas Challenge) whose generosity and support has been instrumental in the continuing achievement of our three- year Sustainability Plan.

The challenges ahead are still immense. Guinea remains one of the poorest countries in the world; its political and economic future remains precarious with refugee communities, several decades on, remaining some of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in the community. Girls particularly are particularly vulnerable with Guinea being ranked 152 out 154 countries in terms of inequality for girls' access to education.

Although our plans aim to attract more fee-paying students, a large number will be unable to pay and ongoing financial support for those students will be needed for the foreseeable future and until the new school establishes itself. The school will still

require considerable support for several years to come and we acknowledge this will pose a challenge to FCRS particularly in the current post lockdown COVID climate.

The detailed sections set out below, provide information on the performance of our priority programmes.

a. The School Building and Advancement of Science

In 2019 CRS and FCRS developed a 3-year Strategy to enhance CRS's long term sustainability

It identified

- the need to find solutions to address increasing concerns about the major limitations of the existing school building and its suitability in both providing an adequate learning environment and attracting additional students.

It hoped to build

- on the school's considerable academic successes and quality of education and support to vulnerable students to increase the student roll and support sustainability

and identified that

- the advancement of science education should be an early priority.

In January 2020, we received a grant from The Merck Family Foundation 75,000 Euros over 2 years for:

"The provision of a well-resourced learning environment and well-motivated and trained staff to support the long-term sustainability of the school, attracting fee paying students while continuing to provide an excellent education to marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the community and further the advancement of teaching of science in Guinea."

The grant therefore is pivotal in helping us achieve the priorities of the 3-year Strategy,

The money is to

- help CRS move to a new building or renovate the current building to improve the physical learning environment,
- provide a science lab so that students are able to take part in practical science lessons which form part of the science exam curriculum
- provide training to improve science teaching.

The provision of a well-resourced learning environment and well-motivated and trained staff will help the long-term sustainability of the school, attracting fee paying students while continuing to provide an excellent education to marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the community. Few schools in Guinea have practical science facilities.

The 2019 visit had confirmed that because of the physical changes to the external environment of the school (increasing traffic, noise and pollution) and the lack of maintenance by the landlord, the school building was inferior to the other schools visited and the poor physical condition and locality would hinder CRS's potential to attract pupils that could pay higher fees and therefore its future sustainability. However, the option of renovating the current building had to be seriously considered, priced and evaluated, to identify the most cost-effective option but also in case no other option was viable.

Initially it had been hoped that Angela Saganowska and Jackie Watkins would be able to look at potential buildings and discuss face to face with CRS how to implement this programme during their planned visit. This has not been possible, and all the planning and execution of the programme has been undertaken via conference calls, emails, plentiful photos and WhatsApp.

Throughout 2020 and the first part of 2021 we have worked very closely with CRS to determine whether they should move to a new building or renovate the current building, undertaking considerable risk analysis of several potential buildings, and detailed discussion regarding negotiations undertaken by the CRS management with potential landlords, engineers and builders.

The journey was a rollercoaster of highs and lows when it was feared that the current lease might end on 31st December 2021 with the school having nowhere to go.

By the end of the financial year this deep low looked like being a possibility as there was no new building on the horizon and the landlord of the current building had at the last minute decided he wanted 3 years rent in advance so that he could undertake the necessary works to the building.

We are pleased to report that after the end of this reporting year another suitable building was found and a four-year lease was signed in early June 2021.

The challenges for CRS for 2021/22 and the next two years will be immense

- to ensure all the building works and the creation of the science lab are finished by the start of the new school year
- To move to the new school in time to start the new academic year
- Start to building up the number of fee-paying students so that CRS can pay the increased rent when the rent-free period ends.

The challenges for FCRS will be to

- balance celebrating the achievement of acquiring a new building while still giving a strong message that CRS still needs a lot of support over the next few years
- rethink our fundraising strategy so we can raise the required funding in the post lockdown COVID climate

CRS will be only English-speaking school offering practical science lessons allowing them to market the school not just based on its existing excellent academic reputation but

also now on its much-improved educational environment and its unique science education offer to prospective students

By increasing capacity by over a third CRS now has an opportunity to generate a significant increase in annual income from student fees whilst not losing its focus on educating children in most need

b. Student Scholarships and Examination Achievements

Scholarships are awarded annually for an academic year. The criteria for choosing which students are awarded scholarships ensures that the many marginalised and vulnerable pupils continue their education. If a student's circumstances do not change for the better and they have attended school regularly they are eligible for a scholarship the following year.

In addition, each academic year, if finance allows, 12 of the most able scholarship students in the external exam grades are awarded with exam scholarships. This means the students know that all of their exam fees and the cost of going to Sierra Leone to take the exams will be paid by FCRS. They are therefore able to put all their energy and effort into achieving high standards in the exams rather than being worried that they may not be able to afford to take them.

During the last school visit parents reported the positive and important impact of the scholarship programme on both pupils and their families. It meant families could afford transport costs and therefore send their children to school on a regular basis. The Exam scholars all reported that the scholarships gave them an opportunity to take exams they could not afford and extra motivation to do well.

In the past we had a much smaller programme, whereby supporters sponsored an individual student and supported that student throughout his/her education at the school. This programme is being phased out and we hope that in future supporters will sponsor scholarships instead. All students in our sponsored student programme are automatically awarded a scholarship each year ensuring that they do not have to pay any school fees but in addition their sponsors provide them with additional help to keep them in education and pay for their exam fees. The number of students supported on this programme will decline as these students complete their education and hopefully leave school with recognised academic qualifications.

During the 2019/20 academic year 3 students were part of our sponsored student programme. They were also provided with a small allowance to help them get to school, purchase school uniform, school books and equipment. 1 of these students was in Grade 12 and therefore his sponsors paid all his exam fees and covered the costs of him going to Sierra Leone to take his final exams when he passed 6 of the 8 chosen subjects.

There are therefore 2 students left on the sponsored student programme for the 2020/21 Academic year. They will remain on the programme until they complete their education at the school. One will be taking her grade 12 exams Summer 2021.

The fees that FCRS pay for the scholarship students are used by CRS to provide members of staff with a guaranteed amount of money each month and therefore pay staff a higher level of pay than could have delivered if CRS was reliant on fee payment by pupils alone. Those with children have also been awarded one scholarship per family thus further helping their families' well-being. Without this support many of the staff would not be able to continue working at the school. Ensuring a higher wage is important for their well-being, motivation and morale and helps CRS retain the right people thus contributing to the quality of education.

- Throughout the 2020/21 financial year, 154 students were able to attend school and concentrate upon their education each academic year with total confidence knowing that their school fees and registration costs would be paid in spite of the poverty of their family / guardian
- 13 students were able to take their external exams Summer 2020 because FCRS paid for all their exam fees and the cost of going to Sierra Leone to take those exams.
 - 4 took their grade 6 exams
 - 4 took their grade 9 exams
 - 5 took their grade 12 exams thus being able to graduate from school with recognised academic qualifications.
- A further 12 of the most able of the scholarship students and 1 sponsored student have been awarded exam scholarships for the 2020/21 academic year. Thus 13 students are able to put all their energy and effort into achieving high standards in the exams rather than being worried that they may not be able to afford to take them as all of their exam fees and exam classes have already been paid by FCRS. Come summer 2021, they will not have to travel to Sierra Leone because they will be able to take their exams in Conakry.
- All members staff have received a higher wage than the school would otherwise have been able to afford. Since August 2019 at CRS's request, FCRS has divided the fee money by 12 so that staff can receive some money each month throughout the year. This meant that when the school was closed and they taught during the summer months, they still received a small amount of money. Ensuring a higher wage is important for their well-being, motivation and morale and helps CRS retain the right people thus contributing to the quality of education.

c. School meals programme

- A hot midday meal was provided for all pupils attending school. The provision of a school meal increases the concentration and learning of all pupils but for many it is vitally important to them and for some it is their only meal. It also encourages regular attendance at school.
- Students were better nourished than they would otherwise have been and were incentivised to attend school despite their poverty
- Unfortunately, it has only been possible to provide 10 meals per month this year
- The 2019 visit confirmed that the provision of school meals remains a priority for CRS and there were noticeable differences at school on the days when school

meals were not provided – poorer attendance, students are hungry. Many had to leave home as early as 6am to get to school on time.

d. Breakfast Club Programme

- FCRS has supported a term-time breakfast club that produces cheap food at the start of the day by paying the rent and providing 2 catering staff with a guaranteed minimum salary.
- All pupils have been able to purchase cheap food at the start of the day after their journey to school and on the days when the free meal cannot be provided.
- A small profit is made providing both the staff and CRS with a small amount of extra income.

e. PHSE and Sanitation materials

During the pandemic water and hygiene has been highly important.

The Guinean Government set out stringent hygiene measures that schools had to undertake before they were allowed to reopen

- spraying the whole building,
- having a dedicated waiting room in case of emergencies,
- chlorinated water containers at each classroom door,

and once open schools had to abide by further strict measures

- checking temperatures before pupils were allowed into the classrooms
- regular temperature checks throughout the day,
- social distancing
- compulsory wearing of masks,
- regular washing of hands,
- staggered attendance times.

There were regular visits from Ministry of Education officials to check that these measures were in place and were being implemented.

These regulations required additional costs that CRS had not budgeted for and could not afford – flash thermometers, water kits for each classroom door, soap, hand sanitiser, face masks, water sacs for drinking, adaptation of the sick room into the required waiting room and spraying the school.

We were allowed to use the Merck grant as well as specific donations from our supporters to pay for these initial costs and increase the PHSE programme's budget to cover the extra water and sanitation costs. Previous years' support that had established a designated sick room and the provision of a water tower so that the school could have a constant, good supply of clean water also helped them meet the requirements and meant that the school was able to open as quickly as allowed.

- PHSE classes were provided for all students
- A school nurse was employed to support hygiene good practice

- Water, soap, towels were provided
- Students have increased their understanding of the importance of hygiene and diet
- Students have been able to practice good hygiene at school reducing the potential occurrence of disease

f. Female Hygiene Kits

This project has suffered as a consequence of the cancelled visit. Over 80 sustainable sanitary kits made by volunteers of the Penrith Chapter of Days for Girls and Dunstable Inner Wheel were all packed ready to go. The volunteers have prepared many more since. They will all be taken out as soon as we can make a visit.

Sanitary pads are expensive in Guinea, in some cases costing up to 25% of female staff's monthly salaries and in many cases leading to absence from school because they are too expensive. Reusable sanitary wear saves money for both them and the PHSE budget and should decrease female student absenteeism. Our aim is to eventually provide them for all female students.

g. Health Club

Many of the activities were curtailed because of COVID restrictions but the club has been able to meet and flourish thanks to the extra resources made available last year. The attractive, safe, and well-resourced room for their meetings, with additional equipment to enhance their excellent work, provides space where girls can be educated about their rights, inspired to stay in school, and supported in avoiding FGM and Early Marriage.

h. Professional Development

With the help of the Avonbrook Foundation, members of staff have been able to attend a three-year training course that leads to a professional teacher certificate thus increasing the quality of education at the school. The training comprises of three residential courses in Sierra Leone per year normally held during the Christmas, Spring and Summer holidays and one period of teaching practice also in Sierra Leone either during the Autumn or Spring terms of their second and third years.

The Easter 2020 course was cancelled online because of the pandemic. On-line study was set up through May, June and July and a WhatsApp group set up for tutorials. Some of the savings on accommodation and travelling were used to help them with the data costs. Normal courses resumed in the summer 2020 with some catch up in the Autumn. All other courses have been back to normal.

- Despite all the interruptions 1 teacher successfully completed his final year of study and took his final exams in November 2020 which he passed.
- Having only started her training in October 2019, an FCRS scholarship student who had just graduated from CRS and working as a classroom assistant, also coped with the online training and successfully completed her first year. She entered her 2nd year Autumn 2020. She undertook her first period of teaching practice February 2021 teaching 50 students in Kambia and scored 88% with her assessed lesson described as excellent.

- The fifth member of staff was accepted for training October 2020 and has started his first year of training.
- Their increased skills are benefitting not only their pupils but also other members of staff as they share their new knowledge and ideas.

i. Solar Power

Unfortunately, this programme also suffered because the school visit was cancelled. New solar lights would have been taken out April 2020 if the visit have not been cancelled. They will be taken out when it is possible to visit.

The lamps are kept in school and lent to students and staff as required.

- Grades 6, 9 and 12 pupils were able to take them when they went to Sierra Leone to take their exams. They found them very useful as there was no electricity in the area. They were able to have classes in the evenings and do private revision by their light
- They have helped the members of staff undertaking professional development courses continue their studies in the evenings in Sierra Leone, despite the lack of electric lighting at their lodgings.

j. To maintain support and raise awareness and knowledge of life in Guinea

This programme was badly affected by the pandemic in the UK and the links with local UK schools and talks to community organisations could not be maintained. All activity had to be undertaken on-line.

- Raised awareness through Zoom fundraising activities, the website and Facebook
- Emailed regular newsletters to supporters.

6. FINANCIAL REVIEW

i. *Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves*

FCRS has no overheads, does not have paid staff, and therefore has no ongoing commitments in terms of its day to day running costs in the UK. It therefore does not need to ensure a level of reserves to be retained to meet legal or contractual liabilities within the UK.

FCRS's income is used to support programmes at Conakry Refugee School that will advance the education and life chances of marginalized children and young people, many of whom were originally from the refugee community.

To give CRS more security and help them better manage their finances, Trustees have decided that they will annually determine the programmes FCRS can realistically provide for CRS for the whole of the following academic year. That support will be based upon CRS's needs and the amount of money FCRS has at the end of July.

Once the annual amount has been agreed FCRS will support other requests from CRS only if extra funding / grants are obtained over and above those needed to provide the agreed support for the year and build up a fund for the following year's support.

This means that although the amount of money held during the year will fluctuate Trustees will ensure that there is sufficient income held to honour the agreed support and any other agreed projects.

For 2020/21 Trustees were working towards ensuring that by the end of July 2021 (the end of CRS's academic year) there would be at least £30,000 in the bank that could be committed for the 2021/22 academic year.

At the end of this financial year, we had £32,593.73 unrestricted funds and £72,050.11 in restricted funds. Total £104,643.84

Restricted funds

Big Give 2020 for 2020/21 scholarships	£ 6,860.52
School Meals	£ 737.20
Professional Development (Avonbrook)	£ 2,923.99
Health Club	£ 395.31
Merck Family Foundation	£ 61,133.09

This was sufficient to fulfil all our commitments for the academic year ending July 2020 but required fundraising by the end of July to be able to commit £30,000 for the 2020/21 academic year.

Trustees would like to thank all our generous supporters who ensured that, despite Covid 19, we reached that target by the end of July 2021.

ii) *Principal sources of funds*

Fundraising

In previous years fundraising events have been a major source of income (£4,587.50 in 2019/20) but also an important way of raising awareness, support, and donations. The pandemic has meant that live fundraising events have not been possible and those planned for the early part of the year were cancelled, including a big concert with The National Polish Folklore Choir of Great Britain and dancers plus The Mere Singers, a local choir.

The Fundraising Group quickly adapted to producing more regular newsletters and organising on-line "events" such as quizzes, online yoga classes, an online concert, an illustrated talk on how to prune roses, Shropshire wildlife photography, Stone Age living and many more to raise awareness, support and donations. Our heartfelt thanks to all those who donated their time and expertise to support CRS and lightened the effect of lockdown for many of our supporters who were able to join these events free of charge

but invited to give a donations. As you can see below, they were amazingly supportive and generous.

Donations

General (unrestricted) fund £28,877.08
Restricted funds £ 7,346.96

Raised by

- 71 supporters who gave monthly donations to support the school (1 of whom donates via the Charities Trust (pay as you earn scheme) and another via Just Giving)
- 16 supporters who made regular monthly standing orders to support students.
- 179 one-off donations from individuals mainly as a result of the newsletters and “on-line events” outlined above but also by one supporter’s “walk around the garden” and a singing group who met socially on-line
- an unknown amount of people donated via Just Giving to a sponsored marathon run and an appeal by a supporter who asked for donations rather than birthday presents
- a further unknown amount of people who donated via PayPal Giving for another supporter’s birthday and a golden wedding
- donations have also been received from Easyfundraising, Recycle4Charity and Amazon Smile.

Gift Aid has been claimed on all eligible donations

Grants

Big Give 2020

- The Big Give is a mixture of donations and grant. The 2020 Big Give appeal for 2020/21 Scholarships raised a total of £12,492.24. Our champion, once more, was the Waterloo Foundation provided £3,000 of that total. 82 individuals donated or held events and donated the proceeds.

Professional Development

- The Avonbrook Foundation paid £3,568 towards the Professional Development of two members of staff.

The Merck Family Foundation – Guinea science education and sustainability project

- January 2021 FCRS received £32,450.86 (37,500 Euros), the second and final instalment from the Foundation of a two-year grant of 75,000 Euros. This grant has to be spent by the end of December 2021.

Trustees and all the staff and pupils of CRS would like to thank everyone who has supported the school with their money and their time during this very difficult year.

iii How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity

Most of FCRS's income goes straight to CRS for the identified programmes detailed above. This year we sent £48,904. CRS gives FCRS detailed estimates and sends scanned receipts and we pay for an annual external audit of CRS's accounts.

Bank Transfer fees are charged each time we send money to Guinea. This year we spent £120 in bank fees compared to £162.70 last year. 12 separate payments were made compared to 17 payments the previous year.

Visit to school. FCRS believes that visits to the school are an essential way of ensuring its programmes are still relevant and fulfilling their objectives. They provide up to date understanding of the problems and issues the school faces and a reminder of the considerable positives of CRS and FCRS's work. Visits also allow items such as solar lamps, hygiene kits, second-hand textbooks, refurbished laptops to be taken to Conakry from the UK. The cost of posting such items would be prohibitively high and unreliable.

Following each visit an action plan is developed, covering actions both CRS and FCRS will undertake the following year. This ensures FCRS's work is relevant and focused. Trustees monitor the action plan at each board meeting.

As stated above, the visit to Conakry planned for April 2020 had to be cancelled at the last moment. The tickets cost £1,578.27. Rather than refund the money immediately, Air France gave vouchers that could be redeemed if not used after 12 months. At the time everyone hoped that travel would be possible later in the year. Unfortunately, this was not the case. FCRS received the refund May 2021, after the end of this reporting year.

As well as annual visits, FCRS is in regular email contact with CRS. The current level of 2-way communication is high. As the 2020 visit had to be cancelled, we also had a number of conference calls with the school's management team.

The experience of this year has reinforced our belief that an annual visit is essential and should be taken as soon as those going feel comfortable doing so.

Revenue generating costs were £412 compared to £1,245.64 last year. The reduction in costs being due to all fundraising events having to be cancelled and therefore no venues etc being required.

They paid for:-

- | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|
| - | £216 | Monthly fees to Just Giving |
| - | £ 81 | Paypal fees |
| - | £ 115 | Zoom subscription |

We received £13,305.82 (£1,693.04 last year) in donations via Just Giving and £5,940 (£1,229.19 last year) was received via PayPal.

Zoom provided the platform for all Trustee meetings, conference calls with CRS and the many free events arranged for supporters.

iv. Other information

On the 31st March 2021 there was £72,050.11 restricted money:-

Big Give 2020 for 2020/21 scholarships	£ 6,860.52
School Meals	£ 737.20
Professional Development (Avonbrook)	£ 2,923.99
Health Club	£ 395.31
Merck Family Foundation	£ 61,133.09

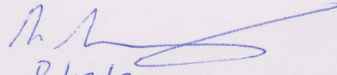
DECLARATION

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustee

ROLF LEVESLEY, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Signed



Date

8/12/21

Friends of Conakry Refugee School

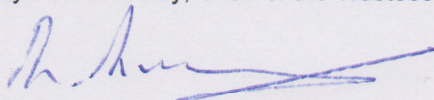
Receipts and Payment Accounts for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Last year £
Receipts				
Student sponsors		3,666.00	3,666.00	3,701.00
Fundraising events	40.00		40.00	4,587.50
Donations	28,877.08	3,680.96	32,558.04	24,141.89
Grants		48,511.10	48,511.10	46,616.14
Gift Aid	8,842.41	857.50	9,699.91	7,292.61
Interest	23.53		23.53	54.12
Total receipts	37,783.02	56,715.56	94,498.58	86,393.26
Payments				
Scholarships / Sponsored students	5,503.74	12,428.51	17,932.25	24,872.37
Other School programmes	15,102.21	15,869.68	30,971.89	33,385.45
Visit to school	1,578.27		1,578.27	2,718.59
Bank Transfer fees	120.00		120.00	162.70
Revenue raising costs	412.05		412.05	1,245.64
Governance costs	0.00		0.00	0.00
Total payments	22,716.27	28,298.19	51,014.46	62,384.75
Net of receipts / (payments)	15,066.75	28,417.37	43,484.12	24,008.51
Transfer between funds	-0.32	0.32		
Cash funds last year end	17,527.30	43,632.42	61,159.72	37,151.21
Cash funds this year end	32,593.73	72,050.11	104,643.84	61,159.72

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £
Cash funds: In bank	32,593.73	72,050.11
Gift aid claimed but not received	0.00	0.00
Investment assets	0.00	0.00
Assets retained for the charity's use	0.00	0.00
Liabilities	0.00	0.00

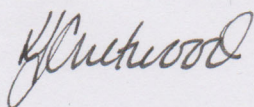
Signed by Rolf Levesley, Chair of the Trustees on behalf of all the Trustees



Date of approval

8/12/21

Signed by Kate Chetwood, External Examiner



Date of approval

25.10.21



Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of Friends of Conakry Refugee School

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 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. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as 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:

(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; or

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

Name: Kate Chetwood

Signed:

K Chetwood 25.10.21

Relevant professional qualification or body: AAT

Address: 'Spring Cottage' 207A Hadley Park Road, Leegomery, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 6QG

Date: 22 October 2021