

Trustees Annual Report for the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

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	Gretton Mill Cardington Church Stretton Shropshire SY6 7HZ

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Rolf Levesley	Chair	Reappointed 23 rd June 2021
Mark Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2022
Tanya Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2022
Rachel Roland	Trustee	Reappointed 12 th October 2020
Angela Saganowska	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2022
Ruth Walmsley	Trustee	Reappointed 23 rd June 2020
Jacqueline Watkins	Trustee	Reappointed 18 th July 2021
Jeanette Whitford	Trustee	Reappointed 11 th February 2023
Jana Kaminski	Trustee	Appointed 8 th December 2021

Name of the volunteer Director

Jacqueline Watkins

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

There were 4 Trustee Board meetings during the 2023/24 financial year. Considerable work was undertaken through working groups and meetings to amend and update the Safeguarding Policy and Risk Management, There were also Fundraising group meetings.

Trustee length of service

Three of the above Trustees have served continuously for over nine years.

Rolf Levesley (Chair)

Mark Walmsley Founding Trustee

Tanya Walmsley Founding Trustee

The Charity has succeeded in attracting a variety of Trustees with appropriate skill sets since inception in the interests of refreshing the Board. The Board have agreed unanimously to the extensions of the terms of office of the three Trustees referred to above for exceptional reasons as follows:-

1. Rolf Levesley (Chair) has been a Trustee since inception and offers particular skills as a retired solicitor not otherwise available and has broad experience as a Chair in local government, health and housing association sectors.
2. Mark Walmsley founded the Charity and has invaluable in-depth experience in education and knowledge of Conakry Refugee School and an extensive range of friends and supporters who have supported the school for years
3. Tanya Walmsley also founded the Charity and has current and extensive experience in international development with refugees and conflict resolution which Trustees feel, again, is invaluable.

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, (CRS) Guinea, which is currently not supported by the Government of Guinea or any other agency.

The school is registered with the Guinean government as CRS. This was an abbreviation of Conakry Refugee School. In September 2022 the school decided it would be beneficial to continue to call itself CRS but in future the initials should stand for Conakry Reliance School as too many prospective parents did not expect the school to charge fees as they expected a Refugee School to provide free education. As they have not officially changed their name and still have the same educational and social objectives and ethos, FCRS Trustees have decided to retain the charity's name to maintain continuity and avoid confusion but wherever possible use the abbreviated name FCRS.

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 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 internationally 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, 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 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 have to 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 2022/23

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 and IT 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

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
- 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 and CRS

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.

Synopsis of the year

2022/23 has been a difficult year for both CRS and FCRS. The cost of living crisis is a global phenomena – the price of fuel and food has rocketed in Guinea as well as the UK and the exchange rate between the pound and the Guinea franc has plummeted.

For FCRS this means we needed to raise 10% more than in previous years to simply meet our commitments to CRS at a time when the cost of living crisis and continued presence of Covid has made fundraising more difficult.

For CRS it has meant that students' families are even more pressed than usual and find it even more difficult to pay school fees.

However, despite that, it has been a very successful year for FCRS.

Having last year helped CRS move into the new school building for the start of the 2021/22 academic year, Trustees recognised that 2022/3 would be a year of consolidation, celebrating that achievement while still giving the strong message that CRS still needs a lot of support over the next few years to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils would be able to still receive an excellent education.

We are therefore pleased to be able to report that we were able to maintain all our planned programmes – Scholarships for the most vulnerable pupils, exam scholarships for the most able of those scholarship pupils, hot school-meals for all the school pupils 8 days per month, a breakfast and lunch club and 2 teachers were able to continue their professional development programme. (See below for details)

In addition, FCRS has helped CRS improve the building and educational facilities further by creating a bespoke IT room refurbished so that it could safely house the computers already donated by FCRS and 23 new laptops were taken out on the 2022 visit. It was also possible to greatly improved the facilities and equipment for the breakfast and lunch club, thanks to grant from Avonbrook Foundation.

The fact that CRS enjoyed the new school building with a 2 year rent free period, following the very generous grant from the Merck Family Foundation was a terrific help.

During the year FCRS Trustees built upon the safeguarding work undertaken last year. One trustee with considerable professional safeguarding experience took the lead to amend the FCRS Safeguarding Policy with full involvement of all the Trustees and we have worked to assist and encourage CRS to produce their own policy, especially through the visits to Conakry. Additionally, as a step to improve governance FCRS have instigated a risk management plan which is reviewed at every meeting.

Covid has prevented us from achieving our aim to visit the school every academic year since May 2019. Trustees were pleased that this year we were able to arrange two visits to CRS by our Director Jackie Watkins, each accompanied by two supporters. After both

visits Jackie and all 4 supporters reported back to Trustees that the education at the school continued to be excellent, the management and staff were functioning well and the children were receiving a high quality education in a safe, caring and inclusive environment.

In mid May 2022 (during the 2021/22 Academic year) our Director Jackie Watkins accompanied by two supporters- Sally and Maddy Loft. They were able to add value to the visit by looking into the whole issue of safeguarding at the school, talking to both pupils and staff. It was apparent to them that pupils felt safe in the school and able to go to staff if they had problems. Whilst staff and pupils may have had difficulties understanding the terms of safeguarding, safeguarding procedures were in place but not written down as a policy. FCRS has therefore been able to mentor CRS's management to develop their own safeguarding policy.

The second visit, in February 2023 (during the 2022/23 Academic year), Jackie was accompanied by Andy Nichol, who has extensive experience at a high level in the IT sector and science and Carol Jowitt who worked in education for 30 years and headed a humanities team. She was able to work with staff on curriculum management, educational data and teaching language methodologies.

Andy gave a talk on the importance of science education, worked alongside the science teachers to help develop some of the more challenging topics on the chemistry and physics curriculum and organise a software coding weekend workshop for students and staff.

As always, Jackie was able to carry out an extensive programme of work looking at all the educational activities at the school, the finances, health and well being of the children etc.

The resumption of visits with the input from supporters who could take a fresh perspective having never visited CRS before was especially valuable.

Trustees were very pleased that visits could resume as FCRS feel the direct personal contact is invaluable.

Trustees recognised that at the end of the rent free period the continued financing of CRS will be a considerable challenge. Attracting sufficient numbers of additional fee paying children was proving to be extremely difficult and Trustees recognised that the solution would have to involve some way to tap into the growing economy of Guinea to generate the necessary additional income. This will be the major priority for the following year.

We hope that that this annual report helps explain the excellent work carried out by the charity together with the challenges ahead.

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

We would also like to thank our major donors this year; the Avonbrook Foundation, and the Waterloo Foundation (via the Big Give 2022 Christmas Challenge) whose generosity and support has been important in helping us achieve our objectives.

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

a. The School Building and Advancement of Science and IT

Last year the grant from The Merck Family Foundation gave FCRS the resources to

- help CRS move to a new building to improve the physical learning environment,
- provide a science lab so that students could have practical science lessons which form an obligatory part of the science exam curriculum
- provide training to improve science teaching and ensure the new science lab was used to its best advantage.

Staff and pupils successfully moved into the new building in October 2021.

During the 2022/3 financial year, FCRS has been able to further upgrade the building and learning environment and advance the quality of science and IT teaching:-

- Creation of a bespoke IT room that will allow better IT teaching and safely house all the computers and laptops the school has thanks to a private donation of £5,000.
- 23 refurbished laptops were taken out on the May 2022 visit

In addition

- A weekend Software Coding Workshop was held during the 2023 visit to Conakry, making use of the IT lab and the laptops taken out in May. Using BBC micro bits and working off line, Andy led a workshop supported by Jackie and Carol showing 40 students and several keen staff members how to write simple code to control the micro bits. Female students made up at least half of the want-to-be coders, CRS are now going to set up a coding club to allow students to continue to learn and explore the world of coding with virtual support from Andy.
- Also during the 2023 visit Andy gave a talk on the importance of science education and worked alongside the science teachers to help develop some of the more challenging topics on the chemistry and physics curriculum.
- Chemicals were also replenished for the 2022/3 academic year's practical science classes following a Just Giving campaign

Thus

- Pupils are now being taught in a modern building providing an improved, effective learning environment.
- Pupils are being taught in a healthier environment in a building with flushing toilets and running water.

- Pupils are now being taught practical science in a fully fitted science laboratory by qualified staff.
- The number of senior students studying science has increased to 47 this year.
- For the 2022/23 academic year there are 19 students in Grade 10, 17 in Grade 11 and 11 in Grade 12.
- Girls make up at least 50% of senior science classes and during the last visit it was noted that they were confident demonstrating their knowledge in front of the class.

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 are able to 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, at least 12 of the most able scholarship students taking external exams are awarded with exam scholarships. This means the students know that all their exam fees and other costs associated with taking their 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 school visits parents and students reported the positive and important impact of the scholarship programme on both pupils and their families. It meant families could more easily afford to pay 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.

The fees that FCRS pay for the scholarship students are used by CRS to provide members of staff with a guaranteed minimum wage each month and therefore staff receive a higher level of pay than could have delivered if CRS was reliant on fee payment by pupils alone. Staff 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 also helps CRS retain the right people thus contributing to the quality of education.

- Scholarships mean students are able to attend school and concentrate upon their education throughout the academic year with total confidence knowing that their school fees and registration costs will be paid in spite of the poverty of their family / guardian
- Exam scholarships mean that students are able to take their external exams and 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.

- All members of 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 staff receive some money throughout the year

The 2022/23 financial year covered the last term of CRS's 2021/2 academic year and the first two terms of their 2022/3 academic year.

Throughout the 2021/22 academic year

- 154 pupils were awarded scholarships
- 13 students were able to take their external exams Summer 2022 because FCRS paid for all their exam fees
 - 4 took their grade 6 exams
 - 5 took their grade 9 exams
 - 4 took their grade 12 exams thus being able to graduate from school with recognised academic qualifications.

Throughout the 2022/23 academic year

- 102 pupils were awarded scholarships
- 20 students will be able to take their external exams Summer 2023 because FCRS is paying all of their exam fees
 - 4 will be able to take their grade 6 exams
 - 9 will be able to take their grade 9 exams
 - 7 will be able to take their grade 12 exams and be able to graduate from school with recognised academic qualifications.

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 in spite of their poverty
- Unfortunately, it has only been possible to provide 8 meals per month this year as the cost of food has increased and FCRS has not been raise any more money for this programme.
- The provision of school meals remains a priority for CRS and FCRS Trustees. Each visit reports back the importance of the school meal. The school reports there were noticeable differences at school on the days when school meals were not provided – poorer attendance, students are hungry. Many have to leave home as early as 6am to get to school on time.

d Breakfast and Lunch Club Programme

- FCRS has continued to support a term-time breakfast and lunch 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.
On the days when the free meal cannot be provided. Cooks make simple and cheap food and drinks. All prepared and served in the improved facilities (see school building above)
- A small profit is made providing both the staff and CRS with a small amount of extra income.
- This year, thanks to a grant from the Avonbrook Foundation, we were able to greatly improve the facilities and equipment for serving food by building a shelter over the area where the catering staff cook, tiling the floor of the kitchen and providing new cooking and serving equipment. These improvements were welcomed by both staff and pupils during the February 2023 visit. The cooks were overjoyed at the shelter from the sun and rain that had been constructed

e. PHSE and Sanitation materials

During the pandemic, water and hygiene has been, and still is, highly important. The Guinean Government set out stringent hygiene measures that schools had to undertake before they were allowed to reopen and once open schools had to abide by further strict measures. There were regular visits from Ministry of Education officials to check that these measures were in place and were being implemented. Throughout FCRS has helped achieve and maintain these measures.

The teaching of good hygiene is of paramount importance.

Whereas the old school had no running water and very poor toilet facilities the new school has running water and proper toilets on each floor of the building. The new school itself is therefore a major step forward for hygiene and sanitation. However, resources are still required to maintain and keep these facilities clean and in good working order and ensure pupils know how to use them properly.

Throughout the year FCRS has provided monthly support to help provide the PHSE and Sanitation materials required for the month. It is up to the Management Team to determine exactly what is required to ensure the maintenance of the PHSE programme and good hygiene and sanitation within the school.

- PHSE classes are provided for all students
- A school nurse is employed to support hygiene good practice
- Water, soap, towels are 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

Over 200 sustainable sanitary kits made by volunteers of the Penrith Chapter of Days for ,supporters when they visited Conakry in May 2022.

Sanitary pads are expensive in Guinea, in some cases costing up to 25% of female staff's monthly salaries. In many cases, because they are too expensive for them, girls are not able to go to school. Reusable sanitary wear saves money for both them and the PHSE budget and should decrease female student absenteeism.

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 previously made available. Their meetings continue to provide a safe place and space where girls can be educated about their rights, inspired to stay in school and supported in avoiding FGM and Early Marriage.

- During the year they have developed and performed a new drama based on their discussions about corporal punishment and the treatment of children – what is acceptable and what isn't.
- The club bought drums and costumes to support their dramas with money raised by FCRS.
- In June 2022 two female members of staff were able to attend the 10th African conference on sexual health and rights held in Freetown. The conference was organized by “we are purposeful” an African-rooted global hub for girls activism. Their trip was paid for by a supporter who saw the opportunity for CRS to network with others who are working in Africa on the issues of early marriage and FGM. They met with many people from different organisations, and dignitaries and hope to use their new contacts to secure funding for the activities of CRS's health club.
- Also in June 2022 Health Club students went with 4 members of staff to the National Museum of Guinea in the administrative centre of Guinea, just a few miles away, on their first trip on a coach. They also visited the Blue Zone a multi media and sports complex. For many of the students the greatest excitement may have been the trip on the coach – feeling they are worthy of the same treatment as more privileged young people is a powerful message and will motivate them to reach for their potential in the future.
- Inspiring literature and videos were taken to Conakry for the club on the May 2022 visit.

h Professional Development

Since 2017 the Avonbrook Foundation has awarded FCRS grants so that members of staff could attend three-year training courses that lead to a professional higher teacher certificate thus increasing the quality of education at the school. The training comprises 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.

February 2022, the Avonbrook Foundation gave us their final grant for this programme. At that time three members of staff had successfully completed their training under this programme. Two other people were undertaking the training. The final grant allowed the two people currently on the programme to complete their courses.

During the 2022/3 financial year:-

- The FCRS scholarship student who had begun her training in Sept 2019 successfully completed her final year and in September 2022 became a qualified teacher.
- The other member of staff successfully completed his second year and progressed onto his third and final year. He has successfully completed his second period of teaching practice. It is hoped that he will satisfactorily complete his final year Summer 2023.
- The increased skills of all those trained are benefitting not only the education of their pupils but also benefitting other members of staff and their pupils, as they share their new knowledge and ideas both informally and formally through staff workshops.
- A workshop for all CRS staff on new teaching techniques and methodologies was led by the staff who had benefited from the higher teaching certification training in Sierra Leone in October 2022.
- With the help of a £2,500 donation given last year, 2 CRS science teachers have been able to complete the specialist courses during their school vacations and are now fully qualified practical science teachers able to make full use of the new science lab, having obtained the highest qualification in teaching practical science. Students now have both the facilities and qualified teachers in practical science which is a compulsory part of the Grade 12 science exams. Few other schools in Conakry have any facilities for practical science nor teachers qualified to teach practical science.
- As explained above, during the May 2023 visit Andy gave a talk on the importance of science education and worked alongside the science teachers to help develop some of the more challenging topics on the chemistry and physics curriculum.
- Also on the May 2023 visit, Carol, herself a retired French teacher, was impressed by the quality of learning and spoken French but underlined the importance of using French grammar accurately in exams to achieve the highest grades that would allow students to study in French in Guinean universities. She worked with the French teacher to inject some interactive teaching styles into lessons - feedback session staff expressed thanks and enthusiasm to try out different approaches.

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

- Raised awareness through fundraising activities, talks to community groups, 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 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 2022/23 Trustees were working towards ensuring that by the end of July 2023 (the end of CRS's academic year) there would be at least £30,000 in the bank that could be committed for the 2023/24 academic year.

At the end of this financial year we had £10,830.91 unrestricted funds and £28,594.30 in restricted funds. Total £39,425.21

Restricted funds

Big Give 2022 for 2023/24 scholarships	£ 23,438.80
Big Give 2021 for 2022/3 scholarships	£ 2,258.90
Professional Development (Avonbrook)	£ 2,162.51
Breakfast & Lunch Club Grant (Avonbrook)	£ 734.09

This was sufficient to fulfil all our commitments for the academic year ending July 2023 but required fundraising by the end of July to be able to commit £30,000 for the 2023/4 academic year.

Trustees would like to thank all our generous supporters who ensured that, despite the cost of living crisis, we reached that target by the end of July 2023.

ii) Principal sources of funds

Donations

General (unrestricted) fund	- £22,107.83
Student sponsors	- £ 2,953.00
Big Give 2022 donations	- £14,868.80
Science Equipment & training-	£ 6,434.78
School Meals	- £ 1,030.00

Raised by

- 64 supporters who gave monthly donations to the general fund (1 of whom donate via the Charities Trust (pay as you earn scheme) and another via Just Giving)
- 12 supporters who made regular monthly standing orders to support students within the scholarship programme.
- 31 one-off donations from individuals mainly as a result of the newsletters and “fundraising events” outlined below but also birthday presents, circle dancing, community group collections etc
- 1 person donated £5,000 to improve IT provision.
- 36 people who donated or held events and donated the proceeds for 2023/4 scholarships via the 2022 Big Give Challenge
- donations from the members of Hanna Lawrence’s singing groups who donated £1,030 for school meals
- a further unknown amount of people who donated £706.61 via PayPal Giving
- donations have also been received from Easy Fundraising, Just Giving and Amazon Smile.

Gift Aid has been claimed on all eligible donations raising a further £11,022.44.

Grants Received 2022/23

Big Give 2022

- The Big Give is a mixture of donations and grant. The 2022 Big Give appeal for 2023/24 Scholarships raised a total of £23,438.80. Our champion, once more, was the Waterloo Foundation provided £5,000 of that total.

Breakfast and Lunch Club Grant

- The Avonbrook Foundation paid £4,787 to help CRS improve the facilities for serving the Breakfast and Lunch Club food by building a shelter over the area where the catering staff cook, tiling the floor of the kitchen and new cooking and serving equipment.

Fundraising

Fundraising events not only raise income they also provide important opportunities for raising awareness, support and donations.

The pandemic meant that live fundraising events were not possible. Last year our Fundraising Group ran two smaller events early 2022 which plus sales of Christmas

cards, yoga bags and other items made by volunteers from material bought in Conakry before the pandemic raised £1,173.50.

In 2022/3 the Fundraising Group organised a book sale, auction, walking day around Cardington and yoga day and butterfly talk by Andrew Peters. Unfortunately, whilst the walking day proved very successful despite being held on the hottest day of 2022, the butterfly talk had to be cancelled very late due to the severest snowfall of early 2023. We would like to thank all those people who agreed to either donate their ticket money or keep their tickets for a rearranged talk November 2023. In total these events plus sales of yoga bags and other items made by volunteers raised £2,687.54.

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 the year. They would like to especially thank the volunteers for all their hard work and the people who led the walks in such extreme heat.

*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 £59,728.46. Considerably less than last year because last year we spent £85,686.53 securing and improving new premises and relocating CRS.

CRS gives FCRS detailed estimates and sends scanned receipts.

Bank Transfer fees are charged each time we send money to Guinea. This year we spent £90 in bank fees compared to £130 last 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 hygiene kits, secondhand text books, refurbished laptops to be taken to Conakry from the UK. The cost of posting such items would be prohibitively high and undependable.

There were two visits during the 2022/3 financial year. One in mid-May 2022 for the 2021/22 academic year – the first possible date following two years without a visit because of Covid. The second, during the 2022/2023 academic year, was in February 2023. Both of these visits were highly successful.

The Director went on both visits but each time was accompanied by 2 different supporters who each had different skill sets that could be utilised to make the visits even more positive and useful for CRS. Many of the valuable outcomes of this year's two visits have been recorded already in this report.

Following each visit an action plan is developed covering actions both CRS and FCRS will undertake over the following months. This ensures FCRS's work is relevant and focused.

As well as annual visits, FCRS is in regular email contact with CRS. The current level of 2- way communication is high. We also arrange conference calls with the school's management team when joint planning and discussion requires face-to-face communication.

The experience of Covid and these two visits has reinforced our belief that an annual visit is essential and should be taken so long as those going feel comfortable doing so.

Revenue generating costs were £236.30 compared to £520.10 last year.

They paid for:-

- £216 Monthly fees to Just Giving
- £ 20.30 PayPal fees

We received £2,060.22 in donations via Just Giving and £1,556.61 was received via PayPal.

iv. Other information

On the 31st March 2023 there was £28,594.30 restricted money;

Big Give 2022 for 2023/24 scholarships £ 23,438.80

Big Give 2021 for 2022/3 scholarships £ 2,258.90

Professional Development (Avonbrook) £ 2,162.51

Breakfast & Lunch Club Grant (Avonbrook) £ 734.09

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


1/11/23

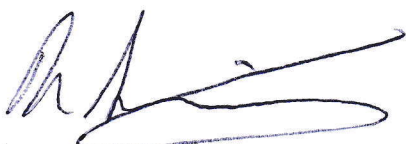
Friends of Conakry Refugee School

Receipts and Payment Accounts for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Last year £
Receipts				
Student sponsors		2,953.00	2,953.00	3,328.00
Fundraising events	2,687.54		2,687.54	1,173.50
Donations	22,107.83	22,333.58	44,441.41	39,834.59
Grants		9,787.00	9,787.00	7,642.00
Gift Aid	6,077.44	4,945.00	11,022.44	6,880.95
Refund			0.00	1,578.27
Interest	110.26		110.26	3.48
Total receipts	30,983.07	40,018.58	71,001.65	60,440.79
Payments				
Scholarships / Sponsored students	14,359.86	13,881.63	28,241.49	17,621.35
Other School programmes	15,545.76	15,941.21	31,486.97	110,269.87
Visit to school	8,064.99		8,064.99	0.00
Bank Transfer fees	90.00		90.00	130.00
Revenue raising costs	236.30		236.30	520.10
Governance costs	0.00		0.00	0.00
Total payments	38,296.91	29,822.84	68,119.75	128,541.32
Net of receipts / (payments)	-7,313.84	10,195.74	2,881.90	-68,100.53
Transfer between funds	0.31	-0.31		
Cash funds last year end	18,144.44	18,398.87	36,543.31	104,643.84
Cash funds this year end	10,830.91	28,594.30	39,425.21	36,543.31
Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £		
Cash funds: In bank	10,830.91	28,594.30		
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



1/11/23

Signed by Kate Chetwood, External Examiner

Date of approval

