

NETWORK FOR A BETTER WORLD Registered Charity Number 1151591
TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Reference and administration details

Charity name: Network for a Better World
Other names Charity is known by: N4BW
Registered Charity Number: 1151571
Charity's principal address: St Vincent's School, Yew Tree Lane, Liverpool, L12 9HN

Contact: Mrs Barbara Charles
Telephone: 0151 228 9968
Website: www.n4bw.org.uk
Email: enquiries@n4bw.org.uk

Names of trustees who managed the charity during 2021:

Mr James Blaney (resigned 24th August 2021)
Mr Andrew Clark (Chair)
Mrs Mary Clark (Data Protection)
Ms Sheila Cogley (Safeguarding)
Ms Alice Davidson (Founder and main fundraiser)
Mr William Neale (Vice Chair, - resigned 7th July 2021)
Mrs Jacqueline Neale (resigned 7th July 2021)
Ms Marian Kearney (Projects & Publicity, appointed 13th October 2021)

Principal Bankers: The Co-operative Bank,
PO Box 250, Delf House, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Independent Examiner: Dominic Ion

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

Network for a Better World became a registered charity on 10th April 2013 under a trust deed signed on 4th February 2013 and operated in accordance with the provisions of that document.

Trustees

Network for a Better World appoints trustees according to skills and experience, especially relevant experience of working in the developing world. The trustees administer the charity and take decisions on the deployment of funds and human resources to meet the charitable objectives of N4BW. The trustees who served during the year are listed above.

Officers

In addition to the trustees a number of other officers are appointed to assist with the organisation and administration of the charity. Together with the trustees they form the management team and regularly attend or report to quarterly meetings.

Secretary and Administration Officer: Mrs Barbara Charles
Treasurer: Professor Ken Holden.

Active Supporters

A number of other people attend meetings regularly and play an active part in fundraising, promotional activities and short-term volunteering overseas.

Meetings

Trustee meetings are held quarterly with an Annual General meeting held usually in the spring to review the previous year's progress. At the AGM all trustees present will vote for the office bearers. The annual accounts will also be presented and a review of the organisation's yearly objective will take place. The organisation will also agree on priorities for the next year. In 2021 the AGM was held in July when we were able to hold an in-person meeting for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Induction and training

Induction and training is through attendance at trustee meetings and the Annual General Meeting. All trustees, officers and supporters give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits. Volunteers receive induction and training prior to travelling overseas and are required to hold a DBS Clearance. N4BW is registered with CSAS (Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service). This means that we are now able to process DBS checks for all our volunteers rather than relying on other agencies to process checks.

There is a Safeguarding policy which all trustees, officers, active members and volunteers are required to follow. This includes a reporting procedure in case of any safeguarding issues occurring either in the UK or in our overseas field of operations. To date no safeguarding incidents requiring investigation have been reported.

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are:

- (1) The prevention or relief of poverty anywhere in the world by providing grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.
- (2) The prevention or relief of poverty anywhere in the world by providing or assisting in the provision of education, training, healthcare projects, and all the necessary support designed to enable individuals to generate a sustainable income and be self-sufficient.

Public Benefit

The objects of the charity are to act as a forum for the missionary members to promote their aims and objectives within the wider context of the Roman Catholic Church of England and Wales. When planning the activities of the charity, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. Our humanitarian work in the developing world is primarily focused on the relief of poverty and sustainable development to enable disadvantaged people to support themselves and their families. Although we are a lay missionary organisation we make no distinction in the religion or cultural background of our beneficiaries and seek to help people of all faiths or none.

Overview of Activities in 2021

Since its foundation in 2013 the activities of Network for a Better World have focused on supporting the parish of Sitima in a deprived area of Malawi. We have built a residence, Bessie's Place, there to provide accommodation for our volunteers to use while working with the local people.

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

a) Building projects

Due to restrictions on travel to Malawi from March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of planned visits by trustees and volunteers had had to be cancelled. Also, limits on movement within Malawi prevented builders taking on new projects. As a result, new classroom building projects planned at two primary schools were put on hold. One of these involved the re-building of Mitole Primary School which had suffered serious damage when Cyclone Idai devastated the area in March 2019. We had been grateful to receive a grant of £10,000 from the Ashworth Trust for this work. A second school identified as a priority for extra classrooms was Nakhombe Primary School which was desperately short of space, having 5 classrooms for 1500 learners.

b) Volunteers & visits

We had received a number of enquiries from potential new volunteers. However, we felt that until we could offer a placement with some certainty we should not pursue these applications. We hope that now that restrictions have been lifted we can reconnect with these applicants.

Although our own volunteers were unable to travel during the 2 years of the pandemic we were able to provide a base and workspace in our volunteer house for a young Irish brother and sister who were working in the area on a literacy project and also members of a Belgian charity providing pre-school support within the local community.

c) Fundraising

This too, was affected by the pandemic - one of our main sources of funding is via pulpit appeals as members of the CMU (Catholic Missionary Union). With the closure of churches in 2020 and slow return to regular services in 2021, our activities in this area were severely curtailed.

d) Trustee Meetings

Most of our trustee meetings took place via Zoom during the course of the pandemic. We were delighted to be able to hold our Annual General Meeting in July 2021 as our first in-person meeting, since the start of the restrictions. In addition to the AGM the trustees met four times and the management team met once over the course of the year. *Our projects were monitored remotely via regular online communication with our contacts in Malawi and we were satisfied with the progress.*

Achievements and Performance in 2021

Irrigation Project Completion

The solar-powered irrigation project was designed to help people most at risk from the challenges of drought and flooding. It has enabled the cultivation of vegetables to supplement the basic diet of maize in the dry season and provide an income for 30 families. This has been accompanied by adult literacy and business skills training for the workers as well as training in land management, crop rotation, vegetable growing and compost making. After four years of support funding, the project is now largely self-sufficient and has been handed over to the group to manage themselves. The women are now assuming full responsibility for the ongoing management of the project and employment of night watchmen and local manager. They have been growing enough vegetables to feed their families and selling their surplus at market.

It is hoped that the 30 families will continue to benefit from the initiative, gain in confidence and pass on their skills to younger family members. Although our main funding has ceased, we have offered a small annual grant to support the project, ie to cover repair and maintenance of equipment, and emergency funding in case of flooding or other climatic events.

An offshoot of the project has been the development of a tree nursery run by the manager. The seedlings are purchased by N4BW and distributed to schools and villages to help combat climate change. Following the successful pilot in February 2019 it has now become an annual event: - 'Tree Planting Day'. To date over 6000 trees, including fruit trees have been distributed and planted. This initiative provides an income for the manager and helps to finance the irrigation project. The survival rates of trees in some schools were initially only around 50% although 70% is believed to be achievable. Following advice received from a forester in Malawi, we decided to bring forward schools' annual tree planting day to the beginning of December to enable the seedlings to take advantage of the whole of the rainy season. Teachers and learners were taught tree planting techniques.

School & Village Kitchen Gardens

Following our successful pilot with kitchen gardens in schools, this has now been extended to several villages in the area. Prospective participants submit a request to the local chief and agree to prepare the land and build a protective fence around the growing area. Following this act of commitment the Irrigation Project manager Mr Makawa issues seeds and provides training on vegetable growing. Recent reports indicate varying

degrees of success, with some families growing enough vegetables and able to sell any surplus to generate a small income. Others struggle to find sufficient water - a challenge for us to address in the future.

School Improvements

Since the completion of the Irrigation Project our main focus has been on supporting schools, in particular education provision in the primary sector. Our work involves not only improvements to school buildings, the provision of school furniture and other resources but also supporting initiatives in partnership with the Education Authority to provide training and support to headteachers and teachers and address the problem of absenteeism.

a) Building Work:

Although none of our volunteers was able to travel to Malawi in 2021 we were able to send the necessary funds and work on two blocks of three classrooms, started in the autumn, ably supervised by our host, Fr Owen O'Donnell of the Montfort Missionary Society. By the end of the year the Mitole School block was complete and the second project at Nakhombe School was very close to completion.

b) Desk Restoration: Few classrooms in the primary schools we support have desks for the children. Mostly the 100 or so children in each classroom sit on the floor with books resting on their knees. Over the last few years we have worked with schools to renovate some of the desks they already had but were broken through *constant wear and tear*. In 2020, however, we set up a pilot project where we consulted with headteachers and local tradesmen to develop a design for more durable desks, created to cope with the high number of children in the classrooms. Working with hardwood and the best quality metal tubes we could find, the desks and benches were custom built to fit in the classroom at Kachere School. All this was made possible thanks to a generous donation from a benefactor from Merseyside.

In an effort to ensure that all children in Standards 7 and 8 have the opportunity to learn from chairs and desks (instead of sitting on the floor), money has been made available to restore around 20 – 30 desks in each school. We will assess the durability of the design during the next 12 months and maybe tweak it before rolling out in other schools.

c) Work with headteachers, teachers and learners.

During her last visit prior to the pandemic Marian worked with the Primary Education Adviser to help support underperforming headteachers by producing a 'Skills for Headteachers' workbook, a copy of which has been distributed to each headteacher. This portfolio will be added to and maintained as a point of reference for each school, and will eventually include topics such as disability awareness.

Work with Standard 8 girls explored attitudes to staying at school and combatting obstacles to this process. This also included teaching the girls about "My body, my choice", how to say no to sexual relationships, dealing with menstruation, and distribution of sanitary kits.

Another volunteer, a Nurse Trainer, updated groups of teachers in first aid, including practical revision of previous work, distributed first aid kits and provided new teaching on the management of epilepsy. Alongside this there were sessions teaching hand washing techniques and most schools have now been provided with tippy taps, known in Malawi as Mponda Gear. It is with hindsight that we reflect on the 'spot-on' timing of this piece of work.

Other projects

In addition to our work within Education, N4BW has been able to engage with the local community via a number of other initiatives:

a) Our Christmas gift to Mikuyu prison

Over the year we made our usual small gifts of sweets, toiletries and footwear to the prisoners which are always gratefully received. However, the past 2 years have been exceptionally difficult for so many. In addition to Covid-19 issues our friends in Malawi continue to suffer and fight against illnesses sometimes caused by insects and unclean water, and often made worse by a poor diet. We were delighted to receive

a photo showing how our Christmas donation to the prison was spent. On Christmas Day the young men tucked into a hearty goat stew instead of their normal daily dish of maize porridge.

b) Womens Literacy Group

With our remote support, various local women's groups have continued to meet and provide agriculture, hygiene and craft work.

c) Disability Support

We have continued to send funds to support a number of families with disabled members, in particular one young man who was unable to attend school for lack of a wheelchair. For a small sum to cover transport costs he was able to attend the hospital in Blantyre to be fitted for a wheelchair.

d) Combating Climate Change

Many N4BW projects since 2013 are directly concerned with equipping and empowering local people to improve their environment and adapt to and cope with climate change. In addition to the kitchen gardens and tree planting, these include:

- the provision of over 2000 solar lamps to families
- stoves which use 50% less wood or charcoal
- money allocated for school water supplies
- funding training in sustainable agriculture for communities and a school conference on climate change.

e) Anti-Covid Measures

Throughout pandemic we monitored the Covid-19 situation in Malawi and were pleased to learn that although there were cases in Malawi, these were in the more densely populated urban areas with the remote area of Sitima, where we operate, being largely unaffected. We nevertheless provided funds for the purchase of soap and face masks and offered the use of our volunteer house to another charity as a base for the distribution of supplies.

Priorities for the future

Our focus in 2022 will continue to be on education since there is still much to be done in this area, including completion of at least one further planned classroom building project. We hope that our volunteers will be able to resume visits in the coming year.

We will also continue to support the disabled and disadvantaged groups in the community. With the planned opening of a new clinic in the community we are ready to assist with staff training and support.

One challenge for the organisation is the loss of three trustees who have recently retired. Our parish appeals have been a useful source of new contacts and we will continue to seek people with relevant experience, background, knowledge and skills to become involved in our work in Malawi, to enable the Sitima community to be the best it can be.

It is hoped that the ongoing success of the irrigation project will enable the establishment of a market in the locality where the women farmers can sell their surplus and we will seek to fund the initial set-up and provide support and training where required. We also hope to build on the success of the kitchen garden scheme, address the practical problems and extend to a wider area.

Financial Review

Sources of funding

As registered members of the CMU (Catholic Missionary Union of England and Wales) we have an annual programme of mission appeals in designated parishes. The purpose is not only to raise funds but to promote the missionary aspect of our work and encourage support from people who are inspired by our endeavours.

2020 had been difficult year for funding due to the closure of churches and curtailment of parish appeals. However, we were able to resume appeals in September 2021 and the response was very generous. We now have funds ready to support a number of projects as soon as our volunteers are able to travel to Malawi to carry out a needs assessment.

Other regular sources of funding have continued:

- Standing orders
- Sponsored events by individuals
- 59 Club - lucky numbers scheme
- One-off donations
- Internet fundraising

Accounting

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the trust and ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity Commission's SORP 2005.

Reserves Policy

The General Reserve represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for particular purposes. It is the policy of the trustees to maintain reserves at an adequate level, being at least 12 months' expenditure. The trustees continue to monitor the level of free reserves and believe that the charity will be able to fulfil its objectives in the short to medium term.

Risk Management

The trustees have considered the risks to which the charity is exposed and have reviewed those risks and established systems and procedures to manage them. The trustees consider the principal risks to be related to an inability to provide the necessary continuity of funding to enable the projects to continue.

Financial Outcome

The bank balance on 31 December 2021 was £75,614.63 which included substantial amounts earmarked for further building or agricultural projects. It is expected that once our volunteers are able to travel, needs will be assessed and appropriate sums made available for future development.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature:

A.C. Clark

Full Name:

ANDREW CLARK

Position:

CHAIR

Date:

18/05/22



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Network For A Better World

On accounts for the year
ended

31 December 2021

Charity no 1151591

Set out on pages

3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**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 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *)

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 Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: I D ION

Date: 16 June 2022

Name: IAN DOMINIC ION

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

CPFA

Address:

9 Oakmere Drive

Greasby WIRRAL Merseyside

CH49 2RU

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None.

Network for a Better World Financial Statement

1st January to 31st December 2021 (£)

Income	2021		2020	
Personal Donations	19,807.50		11,525.70	
HMRC Gift Aid Refund	5,811.62		3,904.60	
CMU Parish Appeals	8,645.80		2,583.53	
Other Corporate Donations	0		645.00	
Internet Fundraising	1,391.89		2,979.10	
Deposit Account Interest	17.95		126.04	
59 Club Gross Income	<u>6,155.00</u>		<u>6,125.00</u>	
Total Income	41,829.76		27,888.97	

Expenditure	2021		2020	
Charitable Expenditure				
Education & School Buildings	24,793.49		3,545.12	
Other Projects	289.94		329.55	
Bessie's Place	0		581.17	
Total Charitable Expenditure		25,083.43		4,455.84
Fundraising Expenses	0		312.33	
Office Costs: internet, postage etc	207.04		301.86	
Bank Charges	116.42		122.21	
59 Club Prizes	3,195.00		3,037.50	
Total Expenses		3,518.46		3,773.9
Total Expenditure		28,601.89		8,229.74
Surplus		13,227.87		19,659.23

Balance Sheet at 31st December (£)

ASSETS	2021	2020
UK Coop Bank Current Account	5,108.85	5,621.63
UK Coop Bank Deposit Account	70,000.00	56,000.00
Malawi Bank account balance	175.10	1,093.06
Malawi cash in hand balance	<u>899.02</u>	<u>74.07</u>
Total Assets	76,182.97	62,788.76
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	0	0
Total Liabilities	0	0
ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES		
REPRESENTED BY:		
Opening balances 1 st January	62,788.76	43,353.40
Current Year Earnings (surplus/deficit)	13,227.87	19,659.23
Exchange rate effect (surplus/deficit)	<u>166.34</u>	<u>223.87</u>
Total	76,182.97	62,788.76