



Forever Friends of Uganda

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Annual General Meeting By Zoom Sunday 26th September 2021 Minutes

1. Opening the Meeting and Welcome

Gill Partridge as Chairman opened the meeting at 4 pm and welcomed those present.

Members present: Keith Mills, Gill Partridge, Andrew Partridge, Felicity Jones, Rogan Mills, Alexander MacGregor, Nigel MacAdam and Danny MacGregor.

Apologies for absence were received from Martine Acoulon.

2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM.

These were agreed without amendment.

3. Proposed modification to the Constitution

The Constitution currently required that a Trustee who had served for three consecutive terms must stand down for a year before serving a further term. This was not appropriate in the case of FFOU and would unduly disrupt FFOU's business. It was therefore proposed that Item 4 para 122 (3) be modified from "A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be appointed for a fourth term but may be re-appointed after an interval of at least one year" to "A charity trustee can be re-appointed for as long as the Board considers appropriate." This modification was agreed unanimously.

4. Presentation of the Co-ordinator's Annual Report.

Keith Mills had circulated his report before the meeting. Particularly pleasing was sponsors' willingness to pay for classroom extras and not a single sponsor had dropped out of the programme. We have provided 3 solar batteries for the Children's home and school hall, school books and 50 desks and progressed the fruit trees and shade area. The new classroom block has been painted and the teacher accommodation is well used. Computers have been purchased now that electricity has reached Bulumbu. We support 22 girls in the Little Angels Children's Home at Bubebbere.

5. Presentation of the Financial Report

Fil circulated her report prior to the meeting. Although a difficult year, we raised £28,717 and spent £21,450 on children and the wider community. There were few fundraising opportunities but still managed to sell some crafts brought back from Uganda and had two sponsored events. Most of the year the schools were closed, building work was halted and expenditure down. However, we continued to pay the enhanced salaries to teachers, provide food for the children's home,

purchased 3 computers, 50 desks and solar batteries and planted more trees. We paid for work on the teacher's quarters and kept our promise to help towards secondary school exam fees and PLE fees. We also gave money to buy food and supplies in the villages. When the exchange rate was particularly good, we forward purchased £6000 from the Equals Account. The finance report was accepted.

6. Election of officers

Re-appointment of Gill Partridge as Chairman.

Keith Mills proposed her re-appointment and Fil Jones seconded

Re-appointment of Keith Mills as Co-ordinator

Gill Partridge proposed that Keith Mills be re-appointed as co-ordinator. This was seconded by Felicity Jones and agreed unanimously.

Re-appointment of trustees

Keith Mills proposed the re-appointment of three Trustees whose term of office had expired, namely Rogan Mills, Martine Acoulon and Alexander MacGregor. This was agreed unanimously.

Re-appointment of Felicity Jones as Treasurer

Nigel MacAdam proposed that Felicity Jones be re-appointed as Treasurer. This was seconded by Danny MacGregor and agreed unanimously.

Re-appointment of Andrew Partridge as Minutes Secretary

Gill Partridge proposed that Andrew Partridge be re-appointed as Minutes Secretary. This was seconded by Felicity Jones and agreed unanimously.

8 & 9 Consideration of the current situation in Uganda and its implications. Discussion of proposals for action in the coming 12 months

- **£5 increase in sponsorship charges for primary school children**

Keith Mills proposed that the voluntary £5 increase in sponsorship for primary school children be made permanent and the annual figure should be £75 instead of £70. This was agreed unanimously.

- Schools in Uganda are now in their second year of closure and some children have been

without classroom teaching for 18 months. The funding we send for the teacher's salaries has helped to maintain the teaching staff who have been visiting children and the community. The Government has said that schools will re-open when all teachers are vaccinated although many schools have been made bankrupt

- **Discussion of Proposals for Expenditure for the coming 12 Months**

It was agreed that the secondary school fees should now be fixed at £250 per annum. The sponsorship account is fairly healthy and it was agreed that we can raise the amount sent for secondary school students in 2022 to 450,000 UGX per term. If the account continues to be stable, we can finally send 500,000 UGX per term which will mean that we have attained the desired amount.

- The aim is to make the Skills Centre self-sufficient is for those in need e.g. school drop-outs and young mothers and the plan is to sell the products produced during training i.e. soap, cakes, crafts, sanitary pads. Tailoring and hairdressing courses are to be arranged.
- The Government has announced that all schools must be inspected before they re-open and

some remedial work may be necessary. The Ministry of Education is including the need for children to be taught in an enclosed area and a boundary wall will need to be constructed. The doors to the Skills Centre need to be widened to give better ventilation.

- Bulumbu. Carried forward from last year is the need to build a boundary wall and the dormitory, which have both been priced. At the moment we do not have sufficient funds for all this and need to raise more.

10 **Any Other Business**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 5.10 pm.

Coordinator's Report - April 2020 to March 2021

What a horrible time it has been for Ugandan children - and sadly it is not over yet. Ten days after Jeanette, Fil and I departed from Entebbe Airport in March 2020, the country went into lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its effects continued throughout the year.

Some children have received no classroom education in the past 18 months.

Others, slightly more fortunate, were able to go back until another lockdown (in June this year) closed the schools entirely once more. Children in P7, S4 and S6 classes were able to take their exams but as yet have been unable to take advantage of their successes.

A large number of sponsors paid for classroom extras, school uniform and other gifts for their boys and girls. An early decision was made to pause this programme for 2021 as few pupils were able to receive their gifts.

Despite this, we have been able to make considerable progress in securing the long-term viability of Little Angels. We paid for 3 solar batteries for the Children

Home and the school hall, bought school books and 50 desks and made progress with new shade and fruit trees in the move to green the environment.

There have also been pleasing advances on capital projects. The new classroom block was painted and is ready to go; the new teacher accommodation is already being well used; computers were purchased now that electricity has reached Bulumbu; and a start was made on the construction of the new skills centre.

We continue to support 22 girls in the Little Angels Children's Home and to augment staff salaries in order to encourage motivation and teacher retention.

The great news is that during the 12 month period, not a single sponsor dropped out of the programme. Not only that - 8 new sponsors signed up to support more girls and boys.

At last year's AGM, we agreed to ask sponsors (at all levels) to pay additional fees in support of secondary school students for whom we had learned that what was being paid was insufficient to keep them in school without great hardship. To date, not a single sponsor has declined to pay the supplement and several have sent us more than we asked.

On a personal level, I was delighted when my Marathon walk brought in almost £1,800; far more than I ever dreamed possible. Many thanks to all the family and friends who gave support during the week.

Even though these achievements are very well worth heralding, the downsides for the village communities in general and most particularly for the children cannot be overstated. Girls and boys have lost a far too long period of their childhood both in social and educational terms. I wonder: can that loss ever be made up? We know that children in more affluent countries have lost out, but not to the same extent as those in poor villages. We rightly applaud home school education by television and internet. Neither of those are available to the children that we support. They don't have either. In Bubebbere and Bulumbu, the only option available has been for teachers to walk from home to home distributing projects and correcting previous efforts. That it is something is all we can say.

The greatest upside is that Little Angels Primary School will survive. Some 80% of Ugandan schools are, like ours, privately administered. A large number of these will go to the wall and never reopen. Many have gone into massive unrepayable debt. Teachers who were not being paid have found alternative employment and will never return to the classroom. A whole generation of children will be permanent victims of Covid-19 and lockdown.

Keith Mills
September 2021

FOREVER FRIENDS OF UGANDA FINANCIAL REPORT

YEAR April 2020 to March 2021

Income

Sponsorship	£12,155
Donations	£8,940
Membership & Girls' Club	£2,877
Sale of Crafts	£468
Gift Aid	£4,277
Total	£28,717

Expenditure

Sponsorship	£9,876
Capital Projects	£4,356
Membership & Girls' Club	£1,359
Enhanced Salaries	£2,166
Donations	£3,400
Office Expenses	£15
Craft Purchases	£278
Total	£21,450

Bank Balance at 1/4/2020	£13,281
Bank Balance at 31/3/2021	£14,547

Equals Account at	£6,00
31/3/2021	0

Total held in both accounts at 31/3/21 £20,547

Comments on Income:

2020/2021 was a difficult year for us as, for every other charity, but although our income in some areas went down, we raised £28,717 and spent £21,450 on the children and wider community in the two villages.

Keith worked tirelessly to keep our sponsors on board during a year when many faced financial difficulties. Where sponsors had to drop out they have been replaced and no children were cast adrift.

There were few fundraising opportunities, but Keith's birthday walk and Keith and Danny's Zoom call with Tolu on the radio raised over £1,700 and £1,000 respectively. We also received some generous donations from individuals.

We had visited Uganda just before Lockdown and bought crafts for sale in the UK. Despite the lack of craft fairs during the year we raised £468 from crafts sold during the year.

We now receive a small regular income through PayPal Giving, and using Equals to transfer money to Uganda has meant a much better rate of exchange with no transfer fees, so our money goes further these days.

Despite the difficult circumstances, our income went up by £2,887 in the year 2020/2021 largely due to our receipt of Gift Aid in June and January amounting to £4,277.

Sponsorship was down by £678 on last year.

Donations were down by £631 on last year.

Membership/Girls Club income was down by £583 on last year.

EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Sponsorship:	£9,876
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Capital Projects:	
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50 Desks, April 2020	£656
3 Solar batteries, April 2020	£558
Teachers' accommodation, Oct 2020	£4,356
3 computers, Nov 2020	£519
Trees for planting, Jan 2021	

Girls Club:

Food for children's home (20 girls) April 2020	£394
Food for children's home (20 girls) July 2020	£393
Food for children's home (20 girls) Sept 2020	£394
Food for children's home (20 girls) Jan 2021	£364

Other:

Enhanced Salaries, April 2020	£739
Enhanced Salaries, June 2020	£739
Enhanced Salaries, Jan 2021	£689
Textbooks for 2 Schools, April 2020 -	£383
Contribution to school fees, Nov 2020	£725
Community Appeal, June 2020	£430
Food for the village community, Sept 2020	£208
Food for Namatovu family, Oct 2020	£15. 50
Blankets for children, Jan 2021	£57

Comments on Expenditure:

Because Uganda was in lockdown, for most of the year the schools were closed, building work was halted and expenditure was down by over £5,000 on the previous year.

However we continued to honour our sponsorship commitments which meant that our schools survived the pandemic when many others did not. We also continued to pay enhanced salaries to the teachers and to provide food for the girls in the Children's Home.

There were new expenses incurred during the year:

We paid for work on the teachers' quarters.

We bought new textbooks for both schools, 3 new computers, 50 desks and 3 replacement solar batteries and we planted more trees.

We kept our promise to try to help towards the payment of secondary school exam fees and PLE fees.

As a result of the devastation caused by the pandemic, we also gave money to buy food and other supplies for families in the village communities on several occasions during the year.

The Equals Account

In January, when the exchange rate was particularly good, we purchased UGX 29,694,000.00 at a cost of £6,000. This was to be

held in a Nat West account to be spent when the exchange rate was less favourable.

£3,000 was taken from the Sponsorship and Membership/Girls' Club Funds and £3, 000 from the Unrestricted Fund.

Equals do not charge us for this service and there were no costs associated with this transfer.

Forever Friends of Uganda

Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2021

	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20
Receipts		
Sponsorship	12,155	12,833
Donations	8,940	9,571
Membership	2,877	2,294
Sale of Crafts	468	427
Gift Aid	4,277	705
Total Receipts	28,717	25,830
Payments		
Sponsorship	9,940	9,987
Capital Projects	6,160	11,473
Enhanced Salaries	2,166	2,201
Membership & Girls Club	1,540	1,774
Craft Purchases	278	-
Donations	728	1,065
Community Support	638	-
Bank Charges	-	9
Equals Money	6,000	-
Total Payments	27,450	26,509
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	1,267	(679)
Bank Balance	14,548	13,281
Equals Money	6,000	0

I have examined the Forever Friends of Uganda Accounts for the year to 31 March 2021 with the books and vouchers relating there to and have obtained all the explanations that I required.

I certify that in my opinion the Receipts and Payments Account accurately reflect the transactions carried out on behalf of Forever Friends of Uganda by its Officers.

W. John Baker
W John Baker

13 December 2021