

THE DURHAM-LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK

Registered Charity Number: 702809

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

The Durham-Lesotho Diocesan LINK is a partnership between two independent Christian organisations, the Lesotho Link, which manages and develops the 'LINK' - a residential resource centre specialising in education, training and outdoor activities - and the Durham Link, which, primarily, supports the Lesotho Link's work, spiritually, practically and financially.

Despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic, the Lesotho Link not only successfully navigated those challenges, but, in many ways, emerged in better shape. This was mainly due to the hard work, determination and commitment of its EO and the LINK staff, as well as the continued support and encouragement of the Durham Link. The new Bishop of Lesotho's positive influence on diocesan relationships and an improving political climate also played their part.

The Lesotho Link began the year in a strong financial position, with surplus in the bank. A well-prepared developmental programme gave key staff (hospitality, outdoor activities and site maintenance managers, plus the EO's PA) clear responsibilities and a mandate to share and progress their own ideas.

After months of disruption, it was important for the LINK, dependent on the revenue raised from catering and accommodation, to become fully operational once again. As the organisation pressed ahead with its re-revised building programme, staff members gradually started to welcome church and school groups back to the centre. The on-site recording of a popular TV programme generated good publicity and stimulated bookings. Large numbers of families, affected by travel restrictions to South Africa, also began to use the Centre's recreational activities, particularly at weekends.

The construction of a lapa (a traditional South African structure consisting of poles, roof and drop-down canvas side panels) with added kitchenette and storage area, took precedence over the planned upgrade of the Backpackers accommodation block. Although this increased their costs, the lapa has the capacity to seat up to 100 people and was in use by the end of the year - affording the Lesotho Link much greater flexibility.

The LINK's new kitchen arrangement and equipment proved to be game changers for the domestic staff, providing them with the means to improve standards as well as easily cater for the many groups attending the various workshops, training sessions, conferences and events.

On reassessing its active ministry, the Lesotho Link management board realised their child-focused projects - Child Headed Households (CHH), education, life skills training and outdoor adventure - needed to be put back at the heart of its work. To this end, they appointed an experienced, dedicated youth officer to oversee their CHH programme, Sunday schools training and church-based youth projects in Ha Mohatlane: she was soon developing new work, especially amongst local orphanages. The Durham Link agreed to fund this important post 2022/2023 and 50% fund in 2024.

The new Bishop better understood the scope of the Durham-Lesotho LINK's impact in the diocese, which meant relationships were more amicable & constructive. She actively supported and encouraged clergy training, worked well alongside the Lesotho Link's EO & was enthusiastic about a new degree course for priests. With her involvement, their busy Christian Education programme, funded by Durham Link & UK-based Society of the Sacred Mission, will continue to thrive.

Other projects, including Health and Environment, remain on hold until dedicated lead workers can be hired to manage and develop them.

At the Lesotho Link's second site in rural Ha Mohatlane, the situation was not so upbeat - the Community Educational Centre (MCEC) was operating without a warden to manage repairs and maintain its upkeep, and both the agricultural and eggs projects had stalled. Whilst the latter had proved unsustainable, after negotiating with the management board, men from the villages formed a co-operative to re-establish the cultivation of high yielding crops. After 6 months, they began supplying three local schools with produce for school meals; the MCEC also received a percentage.

The full time Child Headed Household coordinator was well-embedded in the community and continued to liaise with villagers to improve awareness and understanding. A more targeted approach to ongoing CHH young people's issues, however, had yet to be implemented. The on-site vocational school (teaching carpentry, brick laying, welding & metalwork, cookery, garment making and agriculture) continued to do well and 185 were enrolled in the primary school. The nurse/midwife-led clinic offered Covid & HIV counselling and mother & baby services in addition to basic medical healthcare but, due to charges, was less well used than expected.

The Lesotho Link ended the year in as good a position as it has ever been; this was reassuring for the Durham Link which, ultimately, aims to facilitate the LINK's development, not maintain it.

Throughout 2022, Durham Link trustees progressed with redistributing tasks and responsibilities, and transitioning to a new EO. In March, they met and interviewed Lee Musson, manager of Whithaugh (one of four UK Centres run by Christian charity, Rock UK) and leader of previous Rock UK visits to the LINK. Lee was offered a newly defined EO position, starting January 2023; his appointment was endorsed by the Lesotho Link's EO and the Bishop of Durham.

In February, EO Rob Bianchi, after two years' absence, made his penultimate working visit to Lesotho. He was impressed by their ongoing response to Covid - the site was well-maintained and staff were keen, focused and had a real sense of purpose - his report was very encouraging.

Financially, the Durham Link kept within budget and trustees agreed to increase their reserve using the money gained from the cessation of the EOs' remuneration. The annual Diocesan Grant of £25,000 and donations from churches & individuals continue to form the bulk of the charity's income. The regular £20,000 was transferred to Lesotho, in quarterly payments, plus an extra £5,000 towards the LINK's building programme; a further £10,000 was promised, on the proviso all buildings were adequately insured.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments, the Bishop of Lesotho's anticipated July visit to Durham had to be postponed.

Jason Exley was welcomed to the board in September. He has experience in leading school groups to Lesotho and was eager to reinstate visits post Covid. Jason also offered to help redevelop the Durham Link's website after the EO changeover.

In November, after 30 years of working for the Durham-Lesotho LINK, and having made more than 50 trips to Lesotho, Rob and Margaret travelled to the LINK as Durham Link EOs for the last time. Before returning home, 100+ guests were invited to a blessing of the new lapa and celebratory farewell gathering held in their honour.

2022 saw the Lesotho Link grow in maturity, competence and confidence. The board acknowledged the need to redress the balance between commercial and strategic development if they were to fulfil their primary objective and succeed in identifying and reaching out to the neediest of Lesotho's children. Rob and Margaret's exit marked the end of an era for the Durham-Lesotho LINK, but their successor, Lee Musson, has the skill set, experience & energy to reinforce and encourage the Lesotho Link's resolve to work towards financial independence in a sustainable way. His appointment also reaffirms the partnership's Christian calling - to promote greater physical and spiritual unity between the Dioceses of Durham & Lesotho, through prayer, learning and the sharing of ideas & expertise.

The Durham-Lesotho Diocesan Link is an unincorporated association

There is no limit to the number of trustees on the board; trustees may be appointed at a trustee meeting

Current trustees: Nick Barker, Elisabeth Bryant, Susan Egglestone, Ruth Hicks, Alex Nelson, Andrea Pritchard, Rick Simpson

New Trustee: Jason Exley

We said goodbye to: Margaret Wilkinson (stepped down 31/12/2021)

We remember: Rev Dr Ntsiuoa Rathabaneng, first female Mosotho national ordained into priesthood in Lesotho

Executive Officers (self employed): Margaret Bianchi, Rob Bianchi (now retired/new EO starts January 2023)

Address (until 31/12/22): 8 Lindisfarne Washington Tyne and Wear

Andrea Pritchard (Secretary)

October 9th 2023

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK**Charity Number : 702809****Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st December 2022**

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | 2022 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Receipts | | | | |
| Donations | | | | |
| Churches | 3,829.59 | 400.00 | 4,229.59 | 5,980.36 |
| Individuals | 1,749.00 | 2,791.00 | 4,540.00 | 5,185.00 |
| Palmer Endcliffe Trust | 1,200.00 | | 1,200.00 | 1,200.00 |
| Basotho Education Trust | | 9,745.00 | 9,745.00 | 20,631.00 |
| Gift Aid | 392.00 | 488.00 | 880.00 | 851.25 |
| Diocese of Durham | 25,000.00 | | 25,000.00 | 25,000.00 |
| Leavers service | 210.00 | | 210.00 | |
| Bank Interest | 29.53 | | 29.53 | 0.44 |
| Retirement gifts | | 500.00 | 500.00 | |
| Total Receipts | 32,410.12 | 13,924.00 | 46,334.12 | 58,848.05 |
| Payments | | | | |
| Transfers to Lesotho | 30,000.00 | 2,604.00 | 32,604.00 | 24,383.00 |
| Church of the Resurrection | - | 400.00 | 400.00 | 400.00 |
| Basotho Education Trust | - | 9,800.00 | 9,800.00 | 10,831.00 |
| Exec. Officers' travel to Lesotho | 1,841.07 | | 1,841.07 | |
| Exec. Officers' Fees | 2,555.00 | | 2,555.00 | 4,200.00 |
| Administration | 408.60 | | 408.60 | 579.88 |
| Bank Charges | 163.50 | | 163.50 | 202.50 |
| Retirement Gift | | 500.00 | 500.00 | |
| Sundry Payments | | | - | 27.00 |
| Total Payments | 34,968.17 | 13,304.00 | 48,272.17 | 40,623.38 |
| Surplus / Loss | - 2,558.05 | 620.00 - | 1,938.05 | 18,224.67 |

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK**Charity Number : 702809****Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st December 2022****Statement of Assets****Bank Balances at 31st December 2022**

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| CAFCash Account | | 33,133.13 |
| CAF Gold Account | (unrestricted reserve) | 6,165.73 |

Total Bank Balances **39,298.86**

Fund Balances at 31st December 2022

| Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Total |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 27,416.14 | 11,882.72 | 39,298.86 |

Notes

Rob and Margaret Bianchi retired as Executive Officers of the Link on December 31st. Donations totalling £500 were made for a gift for them in December. They are referred to as RG in the accounts for December. A sheet labelled retiring summarises these, together with the payments made to Nick Barker who purchased the actual gift.

Gift aid note

Gift aid is still to be claimed on donations from December 2022.

Signed

Trustee



Date

12.03.2023



Hon Examiner

Date

10 MARCH 2023



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK.

On accounts for the year
ended

31 DECEMBER 2022

Charity no
(if any)

702809

Set out on pages

1 AND 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets).

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2022

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which 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:

Date:

25 OCT 2023

Name:

ALAN DENT

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

Address:

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