

DURHAM-LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK

Charity number 702809

Trustees' annual report for the period of January 1st 2023-December 31st 2023

The Link was set up in 1986 as a partnership between the Dioceses of Lesotho and Durham, with a strong developmental element at its heart. Its core belief is that we are all one body in Christ; the Link is a tangible expression of that fact.

As a Christian organisation, the Link's calling is to serve the needy children of Lesotho - by working in unison and in sustainable ways to equip, inspire and empower them, to resource the communities around them, to improve their quality of life and to give them hope for the future.

In the aftermath of three years of Covid-related disruptions and delays, 2023 was a year of recovery, reassessment and readjustment for both the Durham Link and the Lesotho Link. Whilst the Durham Link Trustees transitioned to different roles, extra responsibilities and a new EO, the Lesotho Link team strove to complete their building programme, fully reopen the 'LINK', the Link's Conference, Training and Resource Centre, and re-establish core projects.

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the trust apply to the Anglican Dioceses of Durham and Lesotho, and are as follows:-

- to facilitate and support the relief of individuals, particularly children, who are in need, hardship or distress
- to facilitate and support the advancement of education
- to facilitate and support the advancement of the Anglican Christian religion

The charity may also:-

- provide books and journals and undertake development projects in conjunction with other appropriate NGOs and funding agencies
- assist and support the provision of medical and educational facilities
- provide other such support or assistance as the Trustees may determine

The Link's Main Activities

In Lesotho, the majority of projects and activities take place at the LINK Centre, located near the Maqalika Dam in Lesotho's capital, Maseru, and at the Link's second more rural site, the Mohatlane Community Education Centre (MCEC), which offers vocational training in brick laying, carpentry, welding & metalwork, cookery and garment making. Workshops also take place throughout the diocese to cater for those living in remote, hard-to-reach communities.

In the UK, gatherings, meetings and presentations are held in parish churches, Durham Cathedral, theological training colleges, C of E schools and other key venues within the Durham diocese.

The Trustees routinely review how the money they are entrusted with should be spent and regularly liaise with the Lesotho Link to ensure both dioceses benefit from the partnership.

The charity focused primarily on:-

Supporting Lesotho Link's core projects (children's ministries & Christian education)

Supporting Lesotho Link's income-generating/capital projects (completion of their building programme)

Working towards the revival of the UK schools Lesotho Programme post Covid

Strengthening and developing the partnership (maximising reach and impact using the services and resources available)

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm they have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The Trustees are confident that the Lesotho Link uses Durham Link funds to support children's ministries and Christian education, and to improve the LINK Centre's infrastructure, thereby increasing its capacity to generate income. The Durham Link EO works closely with the Lesotho Link Finance Department and reports directly to the Trustee Board. The Trustees also ensure restricted funds are used as instructed and fulfil the Link's objectives.

Other activities are aimed at supporting the advancement of education and the Anglican Christian religion in the Durham diocese.

Achievements and Performance

The Durham Link

Durham Link's new EO, Lee Musson, is Centre Director at Whithaugh Park, one of Rock UK's outdoor activity centres, and has been involved in Christian ministry for many years. In addition, he runs the charity's Instructor Training Programme - a two year discipleship programme which also enables the young trainees to become qualified outdoor instructors. He has led several teams of young trainees on working trips to the LINK Centre and is familiar with its set-up and the staff.

As part of his consultant contract, he is required to undertake at least one, but preferably two, working visits to Lesotho per year - one may be organised in conjunction with a Rock UK group visit. His main tasks are to undertake Lesotho Link-related work, including, but not limited to:- act as liaison between the two Links; help develop and advance the partnership by providing ongoing mentorship and support for their EO; appraise and offer advice regarding their financial and general administration, human resources and general operations; support the staff and the core projects; help identify any training needs (e.g. outdoor activities, team building) and offer relevant skills and resources; endorse school exchange programmes and help source local specialist support; help deliver and promote sustainability & environmental awareness; encourage succession planning and help develop a long-term strategy for the future.

In January, Lee began his tenure by leading a 20-strong Rock UK team on their first 2-week visit to Lesotho in three years. They funded and led Child Headed Household* (CHH) camps at the LINK Centre and carried out essential maintenance jobs - expanding WiFi, installing low ropes, and repainting existing buildings.

After returning to the UK, one of the trainees wrote an account of their experience for eMoho, the charity's news bulletin; they ended their article with, *"Lesotho has transformed a lot of us"*.

In his Durham Link EO role, he was able to spend time familiarising himself with the Lesotho Link's finances, projects and general operations. He had already built good relationships with the Lesotho Link EO, Revd Dr Joseph Morenammele, and many of the staff, but was keen to get to know the new Youth Officer and see how children's ministries were developing.

The visit afforded Lee the chance to better understand his new role. He reported the LINK Centre's lapa/kopanong** (constructed in 2022) was proving to be a real asset, attracting more and more bookings for accommodation and catering. The Backpackers (budget accommodation units), however, were still being upgraded and were out of action.

Lesotho's Bishop Vicentia Kgabe, appointed September 2021, arrived in the Durham diocese in February. Trustees helped draw up her busy programme of visits, meetings and preaching engagements and were her hosts and transport-providers for much of her stay. The Bishop made many new connections and her visit to address two Church of England Academies was seen as an ideal opportunity to begin reintroducing their own Lesotho Project - curtailed by Covid - which involved year 10 pupils participating in CHH camps, engaging with local school children and spending time at orphanages.

Lee made his first dedicated working visit to the LINK Centre in June/July. His experience managing a residential centre and training up new instructors proved invaluable. He appreciated the differences in cultural attitudes, beliefs and approach to business strategy, and was able to offer constructive advice and practical solutions to facilitate more effective accounting practices and forward planning. Lee is still learning what his EO role entails and how best to assert his authority to ensure Lesotho Link operations stay on course and Durham Link funding is used appropriately.

Trustee, Nick Barker and Stuart Bain, Diocesan Education Officer and retired Provost of Sunderland Minster, undertook a working visit to the Lesotho Link in October/November. Nick concentrated on information-gathering regarding 'Telling the Story' - a history of the development of the Durham-Lesotho Diocesan Link: he successfully interviewed past and present LINK Centre staff and many others besides. Stuart focused on developing educational connections. Nick returned to the UK more knowledgeable about the Lesotho Link's perspective and better prepared to deliver presentations in parish churches and elsewhere.

The Lesotho Link remains reliant on funding from Durham: £20000 (£5000 each quarter) was transferred to Lesotho to fund income-generating capital projects, children's ministries and Christian education. An additional £10000 was transferred in January to facilitate the completion of their building programme.

The Board agreed to increase the Reserve to £10,000 to cover the EO's annual salary, travel and expenses, general administration and any unexpected costs.

The Trustees continued to focus on their new roles, including producing and editing eMoho, governance and rebuilding the website; towards the year's end they began preparations for EO Joseph Morenammele's visit to the Durham diocese in 2024.

*Child-Headed Households - children living on their own with no adult carer - many are double orphaned by HIV/AIDS. (Despite the availability of specialist clinics and effective medication, HIV/AIDS remains a significant issue in Lesotho)

** lapa/kopanong - large open wooden structure with drop-down canvas side panels and external verandah, ideal for conferences, workshops, wedding receptions/family celebrations etc.

Lesotho Link's core projects

Children's ministries

Children's ministries and Christian education have always been pivotal to the Link's work and remain at the very heart of Lesotho Link operations.

Prior to Covid, children & young people were served under the Outdoor Skills and Activities (OSA) Programme; one of the units focused on Child Headed Households in rural Mohatlane. There was also *Coalition* which brought together children from different institutions in Maseru.

Over time, *Coalition* was replaced by an Outdoor Activities Klub (OAK), and this year, in line with their strategic planning, the Lesotho Link employed their first dedicated Children's and Youth Officer (CYO) to help establish a new Department. To support the initiative, Durham Link committed to fully fund the CYO's salary year 1 and 50% fund year 2.

The Child Headed Household Coordinator, who lives and works alongside vulnerable communities in Mohatlane, worked with the LINK Centre staff to identify the neediest children - primarily from pre schools, primary schools, Sunday schools and orphanages.

The new programme offers these disadvantaged children respite, rehabilitation and spiritual growth through the provision of outdoor activities, CHH camps (games, dancing, singing, outdoor adventure and sharing the Gospel), psychosocial support, life skills training (e.g. how to grow vegetables, maintain a keyhole garden) and opportunities to tackle challenging issues, in a safe, caring and inclusive environment. With ongoing support, they can look forward to brighter, more positive futures.

The unexpected resignations of the Children's Youth Officer and CHH Coordinator, meant the new programme, although developing relatively well, struggled to gain momentum. Interviews were held to find replacements; the newly appointed CYO and CHH Coordinator are due to start work in January 2024. In the meantime, the Children & Youth Department is under the care of the EO's office, assisted by LINK Centre staff.

Despite the setbacks, the Lesotho Link continued its outreach whenever possible. In September, Joseph and his team collaborated with the sisters of the 'Community of the Holy Name' to organise a girls' conference, themed 'Women of Honor'; girls from across the diocese attended - regardless of whether they were churched or unchurched. The convention tackled awareness and empowerment to help combat their struggles in a patriarchal society.

Christian education

"The Lesotho Link's mission has always been to support and disciple children and youth, and to make the LINK a place of Christian education, where young lives are transformed through the application of God's word"

Revd Dr Joseph Morenammele

Good progress was made in their Christian Education Department. Bishop Kgabe continued to establish herself in the diocese and actively endorsed the Link's extensive CE programme. Clergy and lay ministers were given accredited training, pastoral support and encouragement and opportunities to attend certified courses and workshops, providing them with the tools to better serve their communities.

Lesotho Link's building programme

The bulk of the LINK's income comes from accommodation, catering and bookings to hire its training and conferencing facilities, the new lapa/kopanong, campsite, recreational activities or outdoor activity sessions. The majority of bookings come from Government Departments, NGOs, churches, businesses, schools, the Lesotho Diocese and families.

Durham Link sent extra funding to speed up the completion of the programme to enable staff to refocus on core projects.

UK schools Lesotho Project

The Link's children's ministries have had a profound and lasting effect on young lives in the UK as well as Lesotho. The positive impact of school visits for Year 10 pupils can be life-changing; they return to the UK having witnessed a very different culture and real poverty.

One school reported, "the pupils are exploding with stories and tales..." and, "many children say it dramatically changes their outlook on life".

Work to restart the C of E Venerable Bede and Ian Ramsay Academies' Lesotho Project is ongoing; they hope to resume visits in 2026.

Strengthening and developing the partnership

The Durham Link not only helps fund the Lesotho Link's core ministries, but works closely with them to find the right balance between commercial and strategic development, reduce their reliance on external financial support and promote self-sufficiency. Whilst continuing to maintain and develop core projects, to combat the changing dynamics of their relationship, both Links are exploring ways to further involve their respective dioceses and keep the partnership strong.

To facilitate the Links objectives and activities, the charity collaborates with the Durham Diocese Rock UK, C of E Academies in the diocese, the Basotho Education Trust (BET) and the Society of the Sacred Mission

Rock UK: UK-based Christian charity providing outdoor activities and adventure

The Basotho Educational Trust: UK-based Christian charity funding education and vocational training

Society of the Sacred Mission: Anglican religious order founded 1893, based in UK, Australia and Lesotho, funding the Link's Christian Education Programme and other theological learning

Financial Review

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and financial statements for each financial year. The financial statements give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure of the Charity for that year.

In preparing the accounts, the Trustees apply suitable accounting policies and make judgements that are reasonable and prudent.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the Charity at any one time. They are also responsible for taking sensible steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Review of the charity's financial position for the year ended 31st December 2023

Total bank balance at 31/12/2023 = £23,147.98 (CAF Cash = £13,7022.50; CAF Gold = £10,125.48)

See Receipts and Payments Accounts

Amount of reserves held

Reserves held = £10,125.48

The charity's principal sources of funds

The charity relies on an annual £25,000 grant from the Durham Diocese and from regular giving from churches and individuals; funding from the Palmer Endcliffe Trust is used to support Christian Education and funding from the Basotho Education Trust is used to support further education and vocational training in institutions throughout Lesotho.

The charity does not fundraise per se; occasionally, Trustees give presentations and host one-off social events which can boost income.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Durham Lesotho Diocesan Link is an unincorporated association governed by a Deed of Declaration of Trust and additional Supplemental Deed.

The Board of Trustees decides on development, strategy, policy and finance; responsibility for implementation is shared. The Board meets quarterly throughout the year; various specialist subcommittees meet as required. Questions arising at a meeting are decided by a majority of votes: if necessary, the Chairperson of the meeting has a second or casting vote. The appointment and re-appointment of Trustees must be ratified by resolution of the continuing Trustees. All Trustees are requested to complete and sign a 'Fit and Proper Persons' Declaration. New Trustees often have a knowledge of, or a connection with, Lesotho and are chosen to fill a specific role or skills gap. The Anglican Christian faith is preferred but not a requirement.

The Executive Officer is appointed by the Trustees and contracted to work 5 weeks per year on a self-employed basis; he is precluded from being a Board member. His primary responsibilities are to guide and support operations, projects and activities in Lesotho, advise when required and mentor the Lesotho Link EO.

Both the Durham and Lesotho Link EOs share updates via monthly Zoom meetings and provide the Trustees with written reports (fund status, projects, news updates) to help inform their decisions. Although a diocesan link, the partnership is independent of the Durham Diocese.

Trustees who served during the financial year 2022-2023

Nick Barker (Vice Chair), Elisabeth Bryant (Chair), Susan Egglestone (Treasurer), Jason Exley, Ruth Hicks, Alex Nelson, Andrea Pritchard (Secretary), Rick Simpson

Executive Officer

Lee Musson is a self-employed consultant; he is answerable to the Chair of Trustees

Independent Examiner

Alan Dent (ex Trustee and Treasurer) retired end of December

Registered address

Durham-Lesotho Link EO: Birchwood, Holmfoot, Newcastleton, Scottish Borders TD9 0QJ

Additional background information

Lesotho is a small, mountainous country, a 6000 mile journey from the UK. It is surrounded by South Africa and has a population of approximately 2.2 million. There are 10 administrative districts and 4 geographical/ecological zones; mountains (75%), lowlands, foothills and the Senqu River Valley.

Its economy is reliant on subsistence agriculture, livestock, the export of water to South Africa (ref. the Lesotho's Highlands Water Project), diamond exports and revenue from migrant workers (300,000 reside in Maseru). Changing weather patterns have resulted in severe droughts, declining food production and chronic food insecurity - giving rise to an ever-increasing dependency on South Africa.

Covid-related loss of employment and loss of education were both disproportionately borne by the poorest children, women and young adults. In the intervening years, numerous factors, including high unemployment and rising food prices, have limited poverty reduction and, for those in greatest need, hampered access to basic social necessities.

Most recent estimates suggest 57% of households live below the national poverty threshold and 65.4% of children aged 0–17 are deprived in three or more dimensions of well-being. These children are more likely to be affected by malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, school dropout, under-five mortality and orphanhood.

The Lesotho Link

The Lesotho Link's 3-year Strategic Plan 2022-25 focuses on 10 'Key Priority Areas'

1. Reestablishment/development of Children and Youth Department (particularly in Mohatlane)
2. Development of the LINK Centre for Christian ministry & leadership training
3. Good governance
4. Financial sustainability & stewardship
5. Staff development & performance (training, support and motivation)
6. Improvement of infrastructure, facilities and equipment (completion of building project, replacement of old equipment)
7. Improved environment (general maintenance)
8. Development of the Recreational Department (adventure & team building activities)
9. Public relations within the diocese, with like-minded NGOs and the Durham Link
10. Quality services and customer care

The 'LINK' - Lesotho Link's Conference, Training and Resource Centre - comprises an administration block, conference centre/hall, kitchen and indoor dining area, lapa/kopanong, a shower block and boathouse.

On-site accommodation includes the recently upgraded Backpackers, Durham House (self-contained unit sleeping up to 16) and Rondavel (traditionally built circular 'dwelling' sleeping 4)

Outdoor activities include water sports (canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding), bouldering (climbing wall), abseiling, archery, obstacle wall/course (low ropes etc.) and geocaching

A campsite, picnic ground, general recreational area and lakeside walks lie within the Centre's grounds, which are a haven for wildlife.

The staff are committed to protecting the biodiversity of their surroundings - any maintenance or activity-related work is to have minimal negative impact on the environment.

The Mohatlane Community Education Centre (MCEC) is Lesotho Link's second site and serves the village communities in Berea District. If it can be developed in the right way, it has the potential to become a nationally recognised college and agricultural training facility.

The MCEC comprises a vocational school (60 places); church; primary school (run by the local authority); an agricultural project (growing high-yielding crops to benefit local villages); nurse/midwife-led clinic (offering low-cost Covid and HIV counselling, mother & baby services and basic medical healthcare).

Lesotho Link Staff

12 full-time staff are employed at the LINK Centre; trainees/apprentices are hired as required to assist the Finance and HR Departments. The head of the Outdoor Skills Activities Department works with the Activities Instructor and other Outdoor Activities Klub members. The new Children's and Youth Officer will begin work in January 2024.

Two security men, one full time and one weekend relief, are employed at Mokatlane; the new Child Headed Household Coordinator will be based there.

The trustees would like to extend their sincere gratitude to the Durham Diocese and to supporting churches, trusts, individuals and NGOs, whose ongoing financial contributions have been instrumental in securing the ongoing development of the partnership and the continuation of the Link's work.

Andrea Pritchard
Secretary

19 October 2024

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK**Charity Number : 702809****Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st December 2023**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023	2022
Receipts				
Donations				
Churches	1,897.20	400.00	2,297.20	4,229.59
Individuals	2,992.50	2,200.00	5,192.50	4,540.00
Palmer Endcliffe Trust	-	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,200.00
Basotho Education Trust	-	16,752.00	16,752.00	9,745.00
Gift Aid	337.50	450.00	787.50	880.00
Diocese of Durham	25,000.00	-	25,000.00	25,000.00
Leavers service	-	275.00	275.00	210.00
Bank Interest	178.38	-	178.38	29.53
Retirement gifts	-	50.00	50.00	500.00
Total Receipts	30,405.58	21,627.00	52,032.58	46,334.12
Payments				
Transfers to Lesotho	33,800.00	3,388.00	37,188.00	32,604.00
Christian Education		1,500.00		
Church of the Resurrection	-	400.00	400.00	400.00
Basotho Education Trust	-	26,497.00	26,497.00	9,800.00
Exec. Officers' travel to Lesotho	1,378.85	-	1,378.85	1,841.07
Exec. Officers' Fees	4,380.00	-	4,380.00	2,555.00
Administration	217.86	-	217.86	408.60
Bank Charges	371.75	-	371.75	163.50
Retirement Gift	-	50.00	50.00	500.00
Sundry Payments		-	-	-
Total Payments	40,148.46	31,835.00	71,983.46	48,272.17
Surplus / Loss	9,257.12	10,208.00	20,049.12	1,061.95

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK
Charity Number : 702809
Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st December 2023

Statement of Assets

Bank Balances at 31st December 2023

CAFCash Account		13,022.50
CAF Gold Account	(unrestricted reserve)	10,125.48

Total Bank Balances **23,147.98**

Fund Balances at 31st December 2023

Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
21,747.98	1,400.00	23,147.98

Notes

Rob and Margaret Bianchi retired as Executive Officers of the Link on December 31st, 2022. A late donation of £50 towards their retirement gift was received and transferred to Nick Barker who purchased the actual gift.

£3800 in total was transferred to the DLDL unrestricted reserve account to increase the total to slightly more than £10,000.

Gift aid note

Gift aid is still to be claimed on donations from December 2023.

Signed


Trustee


Hon Examiner

Date 12.5.24

Date 12.3.24

DURHAM-LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK

Registered Charity Number 702809

RESERVES POLICY

2023

The Durham-Lesotho LINK supports and helps develop child-focused rehabilitation programmes, health education programmes (e.g. AIDS awareness and diabetes), Christian education programmes and income-generating/capital projects in Lesotho; in the UK, it helps develop and encourage educational projects and school visits to Lesotho; the charity also raises awareness and seeks support for all these initiatives, throughout the Durham Diocese, and strives to foster closer spiritual links between the Anglican church in Lesotho and Durham.

The charity relies on an annual grant of £25000 from the Durham Diocese and on donations from churches, trusts and members of the public, many of whom are regular supporters. Although sources of income cannot be guaranteed, they have remained steady year upon year and the Diocese has not given the charity any indication that the grant will be reduced or withdrawn.

The charity does not fund-raise per se, but, by delivering presentations in churches throughout the Diocese, it actively promotes the charity's work and encourages financial support. Trustees also host one-off events and work with other Christian NGOs to fulfil the charity's objectives, both in the UK and in Lesotho.

UK schools do their own fundraising to pay for visits to Lesotho and to support projects.

Trustees acknowledge the Lesotho Link is working towards self-sufficiency and is becoming less reliant on Durham Link funding.

Our budgeted expenditure is approximately £30000 per year. The charity's operational overheads and liabilities are minimal and it does not own any capital assets of significant value.

The reserves are held in a bank account which has a good rate of interest.

It is the aim of the Durham-Lesotho LINK to achieve and then maintain free reserves of £10000, an amount which will fund Durham-Lesotho LINK's administration costs for 12 months and should also cover emergencies, unexpected expenditure and allow for forward planning.

In November 2022, the Treasurer confirmed £10000 was needed to cover 12 months' administration costs. Trustees agreed this was both appropriate and affordable, and could be achieved by December 2023 if paid in two increments, one of £2000 and one of £1800.

Our current reserves balance is £8215; £2000 was transferred in March 2023 and a further £1800 will be transferred in October - this will include money set aside in the budget to upgrade the website (work which will now take place in 2024) and will bring our total reserves to just over £10000.

When the time is right, trustees intend to spend accrued interest on a specific project.

This Reserves Policy will be regularly monitored by the Trustees and reviewed on an annual basis. Should the charity's financial position change significantly prior to the review, the Finance Committee will meet to discuss the situation and the Treasurer will present their recommendations to the board.

This policy was adopted and agreed by the Trustees on.....13th September 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

DURHAM - LESOTHO DIOCESAN LINK

On accounts for the year
ended

31 DECEMBER 2023

Charity no
(if any)

702809

Set out on pages

1 AND 2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2023

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:

11 MARCH 2024

Name:

CHARLES DIXON FORSTER

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

Address:

10 SWINHOPE

WASHINGTON

TYNE AND WEAR NE38 9HR

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

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