

# **Trustees Annual Report of the Parish Uganda Link Group for the period November 2024 to November 2025**

## **1. The Purposes of the Charity**

The purposes of the Parish Uganda Link Group are to:

- provide access to food and clean water for families living in extreme poverty in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World;
- promote primary school education (and limited secondary education) for children and young people in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World;
- provide appropriate medical resources and equipment to the Medical Centre and schools in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World.

## **2. What the Parish Uganda Link Group has done during the past year - An account of our activities**

During the period since the last Annual General Meeting of the group the following activities have been undertaken.

### **Meetings**

The Trustees met on six occasions during the year. The meetings were well attended and achieved a 92% attendance rate.

### **Education Support Scheme**

The administration and communication of the scheme continued to be managed by Kasia Wawrzynek and Geraldine Murphy while Una McClements looked after the management of the scheme finances.

The year, from November 2024 to the end of October 2025 was successful despite the continued impact of the increasing cost of living on our supporters and other circumstances leading to people opting out. We are pleased to confirm that the level of participation in the scheme has been maintained at a level comparable to 2023-24, even though it took several months to achieve that.

The school fees maintained at the same level and the letters to sponsors were issued in November 2024 to update them on the work of the group and to request payment for day and boarding pupils.

Geraldine and Kasia asked that the pupils in Kibiri write letters to sponsors and the school Principals requested the first name of each sponsor matched to each pupil so that the pupils may address more directly this year.

Thanks to the efforts of other group members who were involved in organising the fund-raising event in November 2024, a few expressions of interest were received and some of those resulted in new sponsors joining the scheme.

The Principals of the two primary schools in Kibiri reported that the Primary 7 children had enjoyed considerable success in their end of year examinations.

Pupil reports and letters to their sponsors were received in December and the scheme administrators started distributing them shortly after Christmas using each sponsor's preferred method of contact. By the end of February majority of the pupil letters had been distributed while the scheme administrators continued sending reminders to sponsors who had not yet paid the fees for 2025.

By the time of the February meeting over a half of the funds necessary to cover the fees of the pupils in the scheme were received.

The transfer for Term 1 was made at the start of March 2025. It included fees for 153 primary pupils like in the previous year, and 5 secondary school pupils sponsored by a mixture of group members, sponsors and a local secondary school.

The Principals of the two schools in Kibiri confirmed the names of all pupils they had accepted in the scheme by the end of February, along with a few words on the pupil circumstances for new entrants. There was a slight difference in the number and the make-up of the children, with more pupils in general and more in the boarding section. In money terms £753 extra was needed to cover the fees compared to the previous year. The lists also provided explanation for a higher number of pupils who had left the scheme, mainly due to the local authority in Uganda claiming land for road building and relocating the families.

At this stage the group could not commit to topping up the payment to cover those additions and to having a sponsor for each additional pupil.

Kasia and Geraldine continued contacting sponsors until the summer to remind them of the payments due. This was done using all the communication methods available, incl. by email, letter, face to face and telephone. By the time of the next meeting on 5th March 2025, the equivalent of the fees of 120 pupils had been paid.

Our partners in Kibiri, Uganda requested, like in the previous years, that the group considers supporting more secondary school pupils as some of those finishing the primary school and academically very able would drop out of education unless they had a sponsor. This could not be considered at this stage while the scheme administrators were continuing efforts to attract enough funding for the primary school children and with the secondary school fees being much higher. However, the Chairman of the group approached St Colmcille's High School in Crossgar already supporting two pupils in Kibiri to request if they would cover the fees of a third one, this time as a boarder, after we received an appeal from her school principal supported by the description of her life circumstances. This request was considered favourably.

By the beginning of May, majority of pupils were assigned a sponsor with some exception where the fees had not yet been paid, or not paid to the same amount as required, or the previous beneficiary was replaced with one requiring higher fees.

The transfer for Term 2 was made at the end of May to cover the fees for 153 day pupils and 6 secondary ones.

The scheme administrators undertook to contact each sponsor whose pupils had been replaced with a new one and this exercise took a few months. They also continued seeking clarity from the school Principals in Kibiri where there were discrepancies between the information received this and in the previous year.

At the meeting in September Kasia reported that sufficient funds had been received to date to accept the increased number of pupils as requested by the Principals at the start of the year. The group supported this proposal and the transfer for Term 3 was made in the middle of September to cover the fees of 157 pupils and 6 secondary school students.

St Dominic's PS and St Kizito's PS Principals sent thank you emails to the group following each transfer. We requested that the pupils write to their sponsors as usual.



**PUPILS FROM ST DOMINIC'S AND ST KIZITO'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

### **Food Poverty Programme**

During 2025 the group became aware that there is a significant level of food poverty in the two primary schools in Uganda. Fortunately some generous donations had been received from parishioners most of which was transferred to Kibiri to be used for food relief in the schools and among the elderly poor. Discussion of further payments will take place on an ongoing basis.



**PARISHIONERS RECEIVING MAIZE AND BEANS**

### **Community Clinic in Kibiri**

During the year correspondence had been received from the Parish Priest in Kibiri seeking support with the parish clinic. When an indication of what was required was received it was clear that this greatly exceeded what the group was able to provide. Work to clarify the basic health needs of the community continues with the recently appointed parish priest. The group are still working on this and hope to provide some help in the future.



**PARISHIONERS QUEUING TO BE SEEN AT THE CLINIC**

### **Fundraising 2024/25**

The group hosted a bingo night on 28 Feb 2025 and raised over £1000.00 and the money was used to alleviate the circumstances of some of the poorest families in Kibiri. The group received £1700.00 from the Jenny Rowden Memorial Fund in Nov 2024 and also a few other donations throughout the year from various individuals. Again this money was used to feed the poor and elderly. In August this year we lost our very good friend and Chairperson of the group Terry Murphy. His golfing society in Ardglass ran a charity event in Terry's memory with all proceeds going to this charity. The amount raised was £6,359.00. The group will decide in due course what the money is to be used for.

### **3. How the activities of the group have provided benefit to its beneficiaries and how this can be demonstrated.**

The main beneficiaries of the Group's activities have been the families whose children have been in receipt of sponsorship to allow them to attend one or other of the two primary schools in Kibiri and the large number of people who have received food donations acquired using the funding provided by the group. The Pupil Sponsorship Scheme is a well-managed initiative and benefited many children during 2025, including a few children who are now sponsored through secondary education.

The Pupil Sponsorship Scheme is not only of great benefit to the pupils who are supported by it but it also takes the pressure off many Ugandan parents who find it very challenging, if not impossible, to find the funding to pay for their children's education. When attending school, the pupils in the scheme receive a meal every day as well as their school books.

During 2024/25 the Parish Uganda Group continued transferring a modest amount of funding with the objective of providing much needed food for some of the poorest people in Kibiri. This has helped reduce the levels of starvation among the poorest people many of whom are elderly and unable to receive the support of family and neighbours.

### **Mitigation of Harm flowing from Group Purposes**

The Group, as a Charity Commission approved body, follows best practice in terms of governance of our financial management practices and is careful to ensure that there is no likelihood of harm to recipients of our support. During 2024/25 we were in close contact with

our Ugandan partners to ensure that those distributing food support were not in any danger. We ensure all purchases made with the money provided from our fund-raising efforts are accompanied by receipts to minimise the risk of fraud.

#### **4. Receipt of Private Benefit**

The Group is confident that no person has been in receipt of private benefit or been an unintended beneficiary of our charitable activities.

#### **5. Compliance with the Charity Commission's Guidance**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Group Trustees have been careful to consider the Commission's guidance on public benefit to ensure that our activities have helped to achieve our purposes and provide the intended benefit to the beneficiaries.

#### **6. Signatories to the Annual Report**

**Chairperson : Geraldine McGreevy**



**Secretary : Oonagh Murray**

