Mamie Martin Fund AGM 6th November 2021

Held online via Zoom

2 pm – 4 pm (UK time)


Welcome & Apologies
Willie Sinclair (trustee) opened the meeting welcoming everyone to the online event and reminding us of the zoom etiquette. He then handed over to Angie Wynn, one of the MMF co-convenors, to chair the AGM and explain the order of events. The following names were read out as having given their apologies:– Susan Tredget, Jenni Barr, Gill McIlwaine, Cath Dyer, Richard Dyer, Marjory Kuhlwilm, Fiona Dempster, Peggy Shatwell, Margaret Bryant, Angus McLeod, Jill McLeod, Jill McLeod, Isobel Reid, Ishbel Dorward, Donald Maxwell, Ceris Jones, Jade Stein, Alan Kimmitt, Margaret Kimmitt, Jenny Ashcroft, Sandress Nkhoma, Colin and Alison Cameron.

Minutes of the 2020 AGM
The 2020 AGM was a trustee only meeting, held online, due to the ongoing covid restrictions at the time. Angie asked if anyone had any questions arising from these minutes. The only matter arising was the approval of the annual accounts which was done at the next board meeting in Jan 2021. William Sinclair proposed that the minutes were a true record and this was seconded by Brian Kerr.

Message from the Convenors (Mariot & Angie)
A very busy year for the MMF and a worrying one with regard to the pandemic both here and in Malawi. We can report that all the girls and Mercy and friends in Malawi are well. Now that the schools are open it was good to learn that only two MMF supported girls were unable to return. Mercy managed to contact one of these girls and assured her that if she is able to return to school in the future the MMF will still support her. Despite the online way of life quite a lot has happened. We have a new funding partnership with the Lancashire West Methodist Circuit – more of that later. And we managed to have some imaginative fund-raising events which are in the report from Moira, our Marketing Lead.

Message from Mercy Sibande (MMF Malawi Manager)
Mercy described her work visiting each of the schools every term to make sure the girls we support are at school and to chat with each individual girl to give them support and guidance. This enables her to also give material support from our Ready2learn fund which helps meet the very basic needs of the girls, e.g. transport costs, stationery, soap, uniform items etc. Meeting these needs means the girls can concentrate on their studies. Transport costs increased for families during the pandemic as the schools closed and re-opened more often than normal and parents & guardians lost income when businesses closed. Mercy made a plea for donors to be extra generous as the girls are so appreciative
and full of gratitude.
Angie thanked Mercy’s 9yo niece for filming this video of Mercy for us.

Annual Report – A Year in Numbers
A short slide show (graphics by Helen Robbie – a great granddaughter of Mamie & Jack Martin). It showed that in 2022 MMF will support 148 girls at 8 schools in North Malawi. The Annual report was provided in a newsletter form to all member-supporters prior to the AGM.

Brian expanded on the Soko Fund partnership with MMF. He is a trustee for both charities. He praised Mercy’s support and advice to girls preparing applications to the Soko Fund. The Soko Fund is committed to supporting 5 MMF beneficiaries at university at any one time but this year there will be 7 being supported. He reminded us that government statistics show that only a tiny percentage of girls move from primary to secondary school and even tinier percentage to university.

Angie highlighted some other news in the annual report such as an event with the First Lady of Malawi when she was in Scotland for COP26 with the President, the new partnership we have with Lancashire West Methodist Circuit, and Katy’s Fund which will provide fees for more girls at Mchenguautuba day school, St Mary’s in Karonga and 6 girls at Chitipa in the very far north. Katy’s fund is kindly financed by a private donor.

She also mentioned the good news that Handy Kamanga (MMF 2008-2012), after obtaining a degree in media development, now works for Plan International as a gender & protection officer. She has also had a baby recently!

A research student from Edinburgh University interviewed 21 young women who were beneficiaries of the MMF while at school. Interestingly some of them now support other girls at school.

Angie thanked Moira for doing the admin role on a voluntary basis after Doreen resigned due to ill health.

Treasurer’s Report
Alan gave a concise overview of the accounts to the year 31/7/21. They will be examined by an independent examiner before being submitted to OSCR.

Some income which has been earned but not yet received (e.g. gift aid) is included in the accounts. Similarly some Malawi school fees which would normally have been sent by now are accounted as if spent but will be sent by September.

Restricted income of £29K was received in this year and £27K has been spent. £46K of unrestricted income received and £41K spent. During this past year the exchange rate has been in our favour (ie more MK to the pound) but this is likely to change in the coming year.

Alan showed a bar chart comparing our spending in Malawi to that in Scotland – good to see that most of our income is spent in Malawi. This has been helped by not having an employee here in Scotland for some of this year.

We have £37,365 in our general reserves to cover the first two terms of the next school year. Maureen Iles asked if money should be given separately to general donations for the R2L fund. Alan explained that money was usually taken from the general fund to keep the R2L fund topped up, but if anyone wanted to specify a donation go to this fund that can easily be done. Moira intimated that the re-usable sanitary wear costs £4-500 annually so a donation/s for this would be useful.

The board is looking at new money giving platform as Virgin Money Giving is closing.

Fiddes Moswoya gave a short speech giving thanks for all that MMF donors do for girls education in Malawi. Fiddes has been a good friend of MMF Trustees over the years. She gave a nice example of a girl who was taken out of school when Fiddes was the head teacher
at Bandawe. The girl was taken out of school to be married as a second wife but later she returned to school and was helped with fees by the MMF. The young woman is now a teacher at Bandawe after doing a degree at Mzuzu University.

Angie announced that someone has offered to support the purchase of sanitary wear after the mention of it earlier. Grateful thanks were given.

An online poll of attendees was done at this point on whether to accept the financial report. Result was unanimous acceptance.

Marketing Report
A short video was shown highlighting the year in pictures & words. Moira emphasised that it is important to have fun while fundraising as evidenced with all the lovely photos of cycling, hula hooping, walking etc.
Mairi Brown is producing a 2022 calendar – proceeds from this will be shared between MMF and the Soko Fund. Thanks to Mairi for this.
Planned events for 2022 are the Borders 2022 cycling, walking etc event where supporters can clock up miles along borders inspired routes to raise funds. The idea was inspired by Alasdair Alan’s book, *Tweed Rins tae the Ocean*, which Moira recommends as a great read. MMF is delighted to be one of the two beneficiaries of the royalties from this fascinating book about the Scotland-England border.

Constitution
There were no constitutional changes proposed by the trustees or the member-supporters.

Election of Trustees
Voting was done online in the weeks prior to the AGM. All the current trustees stood for re-election. 22 member-supporters took the trouble to vote and all the trustees were re-elected. One new candidate put himself forward for election to the Board and he too was elected. Welcome to Remmie Kamanga, a Malawi based trustee.
Fiona Dempster was re-elected as the Independent Examiner.

There was no other competent business so the Chair moved to introduce the first of 2 speakers for the AGM.

Fiddes Msowoya
A pre-recorded film of Fiddes was shown in which she made the strong case for girls’ education. Fiddes is now Director for Education, Youth & Sports in the Mzimba area but was a teacher for many years before this. Fiddes described her own struggle to get the education she wanted as a young girl. In Malawi girls generally marry when very young and have to take instructions from their husbands, but a girl who has been to school is able to make her own decisions for her family. Malawi is now recognising that girls’ education is a profit to the family, community, and country rather than a loss. Women are showing their worth in many spheres such as politics, healthcare, education, agriculture etc etc
More parents are encouraging their girls to go to school as they can see the benefits.
Chimzy, the interviewer, asked Fiddes if the donor system for girls secondary education is the right way to fund it. The answer is probably not but at the moment it is the only way for some girls to take up a place at secondary school.
Fiddes is doing a Masters degree in education at the moment. Angie thanked her for doing the video and for her earlier live contribution to the meeting.

Willie then introduced Dr. Isa Uny and invited her to give a presentation on her current work in
Malawi and Kenya.

**Dr. Isa Uny  Fuel to Pot**

Isa did her PhD and her Masters degree on maternal health projects in Malawi. She is now a Research Fellow at Stirling University. She has already done some research for them on RTA trauma around Bangwe, Malawi, but currently she is doing research in both Kenya and Malawi on the health hazards associated with charcoal & wood fuel for cooking. The research is being conducted in slum areas of Blantyre and Nairobi. Local people are being trained to collect the necessary information. Two of these people are residents of the slum areas – one in Blantyre and one in Nairobi. Household Air Pollution (HAP) is a major contributor to lung disease, cataracts, and chronic TB. It is thought to lead to 4 million deaths worldwide annually and of course it is mainly women and girls who gather fuel and do the cooking.

Cuts in Overseas development aid by the Westminster Government has meant a 30% reduction in the University’s projects but this project is going ahead. Other problems are due to covid, ie all training sessions for the in – country researchers had to be done online and they all have to be provided with proper PPE to keep them safe when out & about talking to residents in the research areas.

The plan is to do walking interviews where the interviewer accompanies the interviewee on their trips to collect/buy fuel and can ask questions on all aspects of the process, e.g. how far, time taken, difficulty finding fuel, cost if having to buy, etc. The interviewees will then be given android phones so they can document the difficulties faced. They are people from a range of ages, both male & female, and they will decide among themselves what photographs and issues should be presented to the researchers for analysis and together they will hope to find some solutions.

The project should be finished by September 2022 so Isa would be happy to do another presentation next year of the outcomes.

There were no questions from the audience but lots of appreciative comments in the online chat. Willie thanked Isa for this interesting insight into practical research in Africa.

**Vote of Thanks**

Willie thanked the attendees, the tech team for making the AGM possible, Angie for chairing the meeting, Moira and Alan for their reports, the guest speakers and all the brilliant fundraisers & donors who make the work of the MMF possible.