

Mamie Martin Fund AGM Minutes of the 5th November 2022

Held online via Zoom

13.00 – 1500 UK time



Attendees

Jennifer Barrett, Patrick Chinguwo, Sue Crawley, Alastair Cuthbertson, Carol Cuthbertson, Mariot Dallas, Ishbel Dorward, Sue Dumbleton, Moira Dunworth, Catherine Jere, Remie Kamanga, Heidi Kastern, Frank Kirwan, Alan Laverock, Sally MacPherson, Shona McAllister, Rachana Patel, Mercy Sibande, Eileen Sinclair, Janet Sinclair, William Sinclair, Isa Uny, Arthur West, Peter Wilks, Angie Wynn.

Welcome & Apologies

Mariot Dallas (co-convenor) welcomed everyone to the AGM and noted that members were zooming in from Scotland, England, Portugal and of course Malawi.

Angie (co-convenor) then read out the list of apologies from member-supporters unable to attend today. These are:- Agnes Forrester, Helen Kinloch, Jean Gordon, Winnie Wood, Donald Maxwell, Lynsey Shepherd, James Champion, Hazel Dawson, Alison Cameron, Colin Cameron, Wendy McFarlane, Ian McFarlane, Brian Kerr, Richard Robinson, Fran Coates, Julie Gemmel, Peggy Shatwell, Penny Douglas, Gill McIllwaine, Isobel Reid, Marjory Kuhlwillm, Andrea Adden, Nora Summers, Maureen Iles.

Minutes of 2021 AGM & Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last AGM. Willie Sinclair proposed that they should be accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Alan Laverock. This was agreed by a majority show of hands.

Presentation of Annual review by the co-convenors

Mariot noted that the schools returned for term 1 on the 10th October and MMF is currently supporting 148 girls in 7 schools in North Malawi. Malawi has faced huge challenges due to the pandemic and then the devaluation of the Kwacha. Only 2 girls did not return to school and the percentage of MMF girls completing their schooling is higher than the national average. The Ready to Learn fund that Mercy (our Malawi Director) uses to give girls help with basics like transport and uniforms etc probably plays a good part in helping them to stay in school. Mariot announced that Mercy's title is now MMF's Country Director in Malawi. We have had a positive year with involvement from all over.

Angie then told the meeting about our revised Strategic Plan and that our priority for the next 5 years is 'localisation', i.e. more decision making in Malawi. We achieved most of our goals in the previous strategic plan except for the Brighter Futures project which didn't attract funding. But looking forwards this kind of project could be undertaken by a Malawian organisation as from this year small organisations in Malawi can apply to the Scottish Government for funding.

We hope perhaps to have more role models, like Nerani Nthara the photographer we commissioned to take photographs for us to use in reports and publicity.

MMF hosted a postgrad masters student, Aiko Imamura from the University of East Anglia during the summer. She updated our pupil database, wrote a new outcomes report and helped with social media posts. From her research Aiko was able to inform us that more MMF-funded girls remain in school and finish their education than the national average in Malawi. They also exceeded the national average in their exam results in the final year. The Ready to Learn fund will play a part in

these results by allowing the girls to concentrate on their studies without too much worry about needing to find money for everyday necessities.

Mariot then talked about cybersecurity and how the Trustees take this very seriously and are working hard to keep up to date with all the issues and to commit to best practice. Our score on cybersecurity tests increased this year after we all undertook training.

Our year in numbers. We supported 148 girls in 8 schools over the last year. Our board of 9 Trustees met 6 times online and once in-person at an awayday in Fife (Remmie and Mercy joined online).

The marketing team met 11 times. Mercy made a number of school visits in Malawi and we worked with our 5 partners which are the Synod of Livingstonia, the Diocese of Karonga, Menchengautuba CDSS, The Soko Fund and Lancashire West Methodist Circuit. Mariot expressed our thanks to these partners and to all the other organisations who support and collaborate with us. Greetings to anyone from these organisations who are in this zoom meeting today.

Mariot mentioned that we still need support from an IT person – either a volunteer or in a part-time paid capacity. She asked if everyone could think about whether they know anyone amongst their contacts who might be able to help with this.

Back to Angie who described the different funding streams supporting extra girls in addition to our core donor supported girls. She shared the success story of the career of Maclina Kumwenda who gained a BSc in Physical Planning and now works for a renewable energy company. She is grateful for the help from MMF which gave her the freedom to concentrate on her studies and she can now be a role model for younger girls still at school.

Looking ahead, the year 2023 will be the 30th anniversary year of the MMF and we are planning a visit to Scotland by Mercy as well as a #Birthday30 fundraiser.

Treasurer's Report

Alan Laverock presented this report. Our income for the year to 31st July 2022 was £101,798 and our expenditure £59,716. £62,000 of our income is allocated to future years fees as it is from the extra funding streams. There is a small fund for future trustee governance trips to Malawi. These of course didn't happen during the pandemic years. Alan has been to Malawi this year and accompanied Mercy on some of her school visiting trips.

More than 90% of our expenditure is spent in Malawi (on school fees, Mercy's salary, the R2L fund and expenses for school visits). Less than 5% is spent on admin here in the UK as Moira is doing the bulk of the admin on a voluntary basis.

Although we have 3 new funding streams this year they have a finite timescale of a few years. Alan emphasised the importance of regular small donations to keep our core fee-paying work going. The MMF keeps reserves at a level sufficient to cover the costs of fees for all currently supported girls for one academic term, and to meet salary and office costs for the staff in Malawi and Scotland for three months.

Questions from the floor :- Willie Sinclair emphasised the importance of member-supporters' continuing to donate regularly with monthly standing orders. Frank Kirwan asked if we had plans to protect the cash balance against inflation. Alan said he would look again at interest paying accounts now that interest rates have risen. Previously it was not worth the bother with interest rates at 0.01% Patrick asked why there wasn't a Malawi bank a/c. The answer is that we pay the school fees direct to the Synod and the Diocese and MCDSS. Mercy has a bank a/c of course and she looks after the R2L money.

An online poll to accept or reject the financial report was held. Result was 100% acceptance from 21 responses (out of 23 people present).

Report from our Malawi Country Director (Mercy Sibande)

Mercy started by thanking everyone for their support and donations. She emphasised the importance of the Ready to Learn Fund in keeping girls focussed at school. It helps provide the girls with reusable sanitary wear, soap, uniform items and transport costs. God bless everyone.

She explained why some girls have dropped out. One girl has had her baby and hopes to return to school this year. Another 2 pregnant girls will also be accepted back when ready. She told the story of a girl who went home when she was 6 months pregnant. A car hit her when she was out walking and she ended up in hospital for a month (she was unconscious for the first 2 weeks). She eventually had her baby (a girl). She has returned to Form 3 in school after a year out. She wants to be a nurse and thanked the school for accepting her back.

Marketing Report (Moira Dunworth)

The main fundraising and awareness raising event of 2022 was #Borders22. Thanks to Alasdair Allan MSP and his book for giving us the idea. The theme was doing walks/cycles etc around, along or across borders either in reality or virtually. Thanks to Richard Robinson for his help showing these routes on maps for the website and socials. Moira gave a mention to all the participants and their fantastic achievements. £6,500 was raised.

Jenny Thompson ran the London marathon and raised over £4000 for the Thompson Fund stream. Frank Kirwan's garden openings raised over £1000 and brought the MMF story to a whole new group of people.

The Kiltwalk team did the Edinburgh and Glasgow events and raised £2500

A video of the marketing highlights of the year was shown and all the volunteers thanked.

Interesting to note that 37% of income is raised from these events but 63% comes from the regular individual donations.

2023's main fundraiser and engaging event is #Birthday30. Supporters are invited to complete 30 things during the year and can set up a sponsor page if they so wish. There will be prizes for the most interesting photos. There will be other 30th birthday celebrations too.

Meantime there is a Christmas Appeal for funds for the R2L fund for school jumpers for needy girls.

Constitution

The wording change that was made in 2020 to enable us to support schools run by other organisations in addition to the Synod of Livingstonia has to be ratified again by member-supporters as the trustees didn't realise that OSCR should have been informed beforehand. A vote to approve the change to our purposes was approved by everyone by the vote sent out prior to the meeting and was ratified unanimously by all present.

Election of Trustees

The current Trustees standing again for election were all voted back onto the Board. Patrick Chinguwo, standing for election for the first time, was voted for unanimously by the member-supporters. Angie formally welcomed him to the Board.

The Independent examiner for the accounts, Paul Clelland, was re-appointed.

Brian Kerr, a long term Trustee, is retiring from the Board this year. Willie Sinclair thanked him for his many years of service and words of wisdom and advice at Board meetings.

As no other competent business was raised, Angie concluded the business part of the meeting and handed over to Mariot to introduce the guest speakers.

Speakers

First up was a recorded video from a teacher at Mchengautuba Community Day School, Mrs Joanna Chimphepo. The school is in Mzuzu and started in 2015. Joanna was one of 4 teachers teaching the first intake of pupils that year. Now there are 650 pupils at the school with a ratio of one teacher to 85 pupils. It should be one teacher to 60 pupils. There are 300 boys and 350 girls at the school and most have to walk a long distance to school which often results in lessons starting late when the

teacher has to wait for pupils to arrive. A big problem is that the Government removes the best performing pupils at the end of term one and sends them to what they see as better schools. The school is then given another 50 pupils to replace them but of course they are behind in their learning compared to the ones who have been there since the start of the school year. This is hard for teachers and pupils. If a MMF girl is moved then of course she loses her bursary which can cause problems for her family. Many pupils are from child – headed families or single parent households. Joanna praised Mercy’s support of the girls, not only with providing necessities but giving them encouragement to be good students and lending a listening ear. She even visits girls if they are sick at home or in hospital.

The second speaker was Dr Isa Uny who returned to give an update on the research project she told us about at the 2021 AGM. The Fuel to Pot project in conjunction with the Malawi School of Business Studies. There were 9 participants in Malawi – 6 out of the 9 women took photographs that showed the issues surrounding the use of solid fuel burning for cooking in the Durande slums near Blantyre. Isa met with them recently. It is mainly wood and charcoal that is used but in Malawi, plastic bottles, maize stalks and cobs are burnt. Participants are aware of the health dangers of smoke. In Feb 2023 she will use the study to reach and inform those who can make a difference in government etc.

The participants in the study were allowed to keep the mobile phone they used to take photographs for Isa and her team. Isa has also started research on the effect of banning the sale of alcohol sachets in Malawi.

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