

Trustee Review

Overview

We continue to gradually and steadily increase the scope and scale of the projects we support in Malawi. Conditions in Malawi remain challenging for the population living there and the funds and supplies we provide make a significant difference to the lives of the individuals and communities we work with. The challenge for us is to resist the temptation to disperse funds widely and reactively in response to crises. While there is always a place for emergency support we have been pleased at the success of our efforts to support longer term projects with trusted partners in a more focussed and also recipient guided way.

Financial highlights

We have an informal fund raising target of £50,000 per year which aligns with the resources we have available in terms of fund raising activities and also responsible distribution in Malawi

This year at £49,541 we were almost exactly in line with this target after an exceptional year the preceding year. The timing of distributing funds means we have an exceptionally high bank balance but this declines rapidly at the start of the new year financial year

Programme highlights

The division of our activities into workstreams (Education, Health and Wellbeing, Environment and Sport & Culture) has allowed us to both focus our resources here in Scotland and better determine projects worthy of support in Malawi. Some particular highlights follow.

The success of the Netball4All initiative continues and as well as the individual team we sponsor the annual Netball tournament has become an established and major event in the netball calendar. It is likely we will provide sufficient additional funding next year to allow an expansion in the number of teams participating.

We continue to build links with schools and organisations working with young people in Malawi such as STEKKA. This has a reciprocal benefit for pupils from George Watsons who enjoy and benefit greatly from meeting young people of a similar age in Malawi while on the school trip.

The Environment workstream continues to deepen links with people and organisations in both the Zomba and especially Mount Mulanje areas. We are developing a programme to increase the number of trees planted in the tree nursery to help combat deforestation and also offset the school's carbon footprint.

Pupil and school engagement

The range of activities provides opportunities for the pupils to establish a better understanding of a very different culture and engage with a range of very different projects

And those who go on the school trip regularly enthuse about the positive and life changing nature of what they have seen and learnt

They also enthusiastically undertake all the fund-raising activities and so can experience the link between their actions and the outcomes delivered in Malawi

At the school and staff level the school is seen as a leading light in the network of organisations working across Scotland to support Malawi.

Sally Rae is on the Board of the Scotland Malawi Partnership for example and although it took place in the year 25/26 the school's Malawi activities were instrumental in facilitating a visit to the school by First Minister John Swinney and also the school being invited to a Scotland Malawi partnership reception for Princess Anne.

Plans for the future

Given the resources we have available we have reached the plateau for the level of fund-raising and project support we can accommodate.

So our aim remains to consolidate the workstream projects we currently work with and remain responsive to how our partners would like us to support them

One specific initiative we will launch next year is to add a fifth enterprise workstream which will allow GWC pupils to support and appreciate small scale commercial activities in Malawi such as pig farming, vehicle mechanics or micro-finance

As ever all the work we do relies on the dedicated partners we work with in Malawi to keep our programmes alive and we are especially grateful to Aaron and Paul for all their support in this respect.

Stephen Connelly
Chair
March 2026