



Friends of Hlekweni



Report and Financial Statements
Year ended 31 March 2015

Charity number: 1126598



Students at Samathonga school



Administrative and financial information

Trustees:

Susan Lee Taylor (Chair/clerk)
Roger Moore (Treasurer)
Jessica Bishop (co-opted during 2014)
David Brown
Ruth Findlay
Don Rowe

Contact address:

The Quaker Centre, 1, Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes, MK15 9BH.

info@friendsofhlekweni.org.uk

www.friendsofhlekweni.org.uk

Charity number: 1126598

Examiner of accounts: Martin Sale

Banker: The Cooperative Bank, Balloon St, Manchester.



Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2015

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

Structure, Governance and Management

Friends of Hlekweni is administered and managed by the Trustees in accordance with the constitution first agreed on 21st April 2008, revised at the Special Meeting on 12th October 2008 and registered by the Charity Commission on 6th November 2008. This charity derives from charitable work formerly carried out by Milton Keynes Local Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, principally in support of the Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre (HFRSC) near Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. We also support work in the wider area of Matabeleland.

The Trustees were appointed at the 2014 Yearly Business Meeting in accordance with the constitution; we co-opted a further Trustee, Jessica Bishop. The Trustees met five times during the year and had contact by email, phone and Skype between meetings. At Trustees' meetings, grant applications were considered, decisions taken on grant proposals, and reports received from existing projects. Decisions were also taken on matters of policy and procedure for the running of Friends of Hlekweni. Fund-raising, publicity, contact with supporters and liaison with other bodies were also considered. In 2014/15, considerable time was spent on planning forward strategy.

All meetings of Friends of Hlekweni are held in the manner of Friends, using the Quaker business method for formal meetings. A Yearly Business Meeting was held on 22 June 2014 at the Quaker Centre, Milton Keynes to which all members were entitled to attend, and due notice for which was given.

Membership of the charity is open to any individual over eighteen who is interested in helping Friends of Hlekweni to achieve its aim, willing to abide by the constitution, and willing to pay the subscription agreed by the Trustees, which is currently £25.

Objects & Activities

The aims of Friends of Hlekweni at the beginning of the reporting period were the relief of poverty and financial hardship, the advancement of education and the preservation and protection of good health, at Hlekweni Friends Rural Service and in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. When HFRSC closed in June 2014 (see below), these aims became in need of review and modification, though they remained formally in place throughout the current year.

In order to achieve these aims Friends of Hlekweni undertook the following activities:

- a) Receiving and assessing applications for support from projects working to further the aims of Friends of Hlekweni, and agreeing grants;



- b) Supporting the development, management, monitoring and evaluation of approved projects;
- c) Raising funds, and organising events;
- d) Communicating with supporters through a twice-yearly newsletter, speaking engagements and other means;
- e) Working with similar groups and exchanging information and advice with them;
- f) Keeping in close touch with colleagues at Hlekweni, Samathonga school, Bulawayo Quaker Meeting, and Quakers in Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting (CSAYM);
- g) Supporting the Clerks of Central and Southern Africa YM, the Trustees of HFRSC and the Board and interim management of HFRSC through the difficulties of the period leading up to the closure of the centre in June 2014
- h) Undertaking a review of the prospects and potential aims of the charity in the light of the closure of HFRSC through a process of consultation with supporters.

Risk Management

Trustees have continued to consider and review the major risks to which the charity is exposed and to take an active approach to managing these. There is no reason to change our previous statement which recognises that working to support projects in Zimbabwe is inherently risky due to the situation there. The Trustees maintain frequent contact with grant recipients by email and phone, and request written reports, preferably with photographs. The Trustees also meet with, or keep in contact with, others interested in our work in southern Matabeleland.

Trustees have continued to apprise themselves of the overall situation in Zimbabwe through the media, by liaison with other groups in this country and abroad, and contact with the relevant UK government department as appropriate. We have close relationships with Quakers in Zimbabwe (Bulawayo and Harare) and with Friends more widely in Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting. David Brown spent one month at Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre in November 2013 and a further three months from February 2014 as reported in last year's annual report. Lee Taylor also went to Hlekweni/Bulawayo in March/April 2014 and again in April/May 2014. Regular contact was maintained with Friends in Bulawayo and in Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting as the crisis addressing HFRSC mounted (see below).

Trustees recognise that Friends of Hlekweni is a small charity which has grown rapidly over its first few years and that there is a need to maintain a stable base in order to sustain further growth. We are very grateful for the steadfast support of Milton Keynes Quakers and Quaker meetings across the UK. We remain grateful for the work of our Examiner, Martin Sale.

Through the work of one of our Trustees in the Finance Office at Hlekweni, the 2012/13 audit report, and subsequent financial reports, no evidence was found of fraudulent use of Friends of Hlekweni monies sent to Hlekweni FRSC; however, poor financial control and management was evident and this undoubtedly contributed to the increasing non viability of HFRSC.. Trustees reviewed our role and processes in terms of grant management



procedures, communication and support to those involved at HFRSC, and concluded that we could not have done much more to alleviate the situation, or to help avoid the closure

Activities for Public Benefit

The Trustees have complied with their duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the public benefits guidance published by the Charities Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

In Zimbabwe, the very high cost of living compared to the average wage, the very high level of unemployment, unreliable water and electricity supplies, frequent failing harvests due to unpredictable climate conditions (although the 2014 harvest was good), poor health care and other infrastructure provision all combine to make life very challenging indeed for those living there. The Trustees' overall policy gives priority to projects that aim to tackle the problem of poor nutrition by improving sustainable agriculture. They support possible routes out of poverty through vocational and small business training. The Trustees have also responded to projects that aim to ensure basic survival needs are met, and projects supporting children's educational opportunities.

A twice-yearly newsletter keeps supporters informed of the progress of projects. The website has also been re-launched during the year.

The Trustees have been able to keep the operating costs of Friends of Hlekweni to a minimum, so ensuring that a very high percentage of money given by donors reaches the intended recipients. Owing to the exceptional circumstances at Hlekweni, as outlined below, there has been a need for more and longer Trustee visits, which have resulted in higher expenditure in this area. However, Trustees are satisfied that these have contributed significantly to work at Hlekweni itself, as well as providing accurate information to all the Trustees and our supporters and donors about the situation there. The cost of such visits has been kept to a minimum and we continue to believe this has been money well spent, especially during a period of significant change.

Closure of Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre: implications for Friends of Hlekweni

The decision to close Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre (HFRSC) on 30 June 2014 was taken by the HFRSC Board in consultation with the Quaker Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting (CSAYM) in April 2014. This arose from the adverse financial, operational and managerial conditions at HFRSC and the failure to identify a feasible resolution of these in the foreseeable future. It should be noted that this decision was taken in accordance with proper governance of HFRSC and Friends of Hlekweni had no formal role in this. Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting owned Valindre Farm, which was sold after the closure of HFRSC and Friends of Hlekweni also has no formal role in this. The sale ensured that staff and other creditors received their due payments. CSAYM appointed an Acting Director to manage this process. At the time of writing, the final AGM to dissolve HFRSC is expected to take place in mid-2015.



Friends of Hlekweni has taken a close interest in maintaining the schemes running in Samathonga School located on Valindre Farm in order to minimise the impact of the closure on the children and staff of the school, notably the feeding scheme at Samathonga school, the support for payment of orphan fees and the playscheme.

We know that it has been a source of sadness for many that HFRSC had to close; Trustees have shared this. However, Trustees are also proud of the contributions made by the charity to support hundreds of trainees over the years, and maintain the community at Hlekweni.

As stated above, following the decision for closure, Friends of Hlekweni Trustees took steps both to inform supporters, and to review the charity's strategy. There was steadfast support from core supporters: Milton Keynes Quakers, members of FoH present at the Yearly Business Meeting held in May 2014, and from others on our supporter list. Two newsletters were sent out about the situation: in April 2014, and in July 2014. It was decided to hold the usual fundraising leaflet until February 2015 when a solid statement 'Towards a New Vision' could be sent out.

Proposed new strategy

Friends of Hlekweni Trustees are proposing a five-year plan: this will be taken to the YBM in May 2015. Trustees are committed to the continuation of support for people in and around Bulawayo principally through the vehicle of education and training. The plan is to build on existing local contacts and diversify the work that is already known to bear fruit. The plans include:

- Maintaining and extending support for learning by means of feeding schemes and improved school libraries, equipment and buildings
- Educational bursaries for orphans at Samathonga and other primary schools and for gifted children who would otherwise be deprived of the secondary education they need for their own fulfilment and to contribute to the development of Zimbabwean society;
- Improving education generally through grants to schools to attract and keep better qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas;
- Promoting Alternatives to Violence programmes in schools and the community;
- Continuing with hardship relief grants where appropriate.

Discussions are underway for Friends of Hlekweni to take over responsibility for the UK fundraising for the Zimbabwe Secondary School Bursary scheme from QPSW. The Trustees can confirm that this is within the existing remit of FOH and no constitutional amendment is required to assume this responsibility.

We are working closely with our partners in these activities to ensure that plans meet local needs, and have proper assurance. We are also proposing small changes to our charitable objects to the 2015 YBM, to reflect the closure of HFRSC and the new strategy.



Marko Dube, Samathonga Headteacher and the school garden

Grant-making policy and procedure

The Trustees aim to disburse the monies received as soon as practicable to meet needs through approval of grant applications. The Trustees usually make payment up front on approval of grants.

Grants that fall within the charity's area of work can be applied for at any time, and will be considered at the next Trustees' Meeting. There is a simple standard form for grant applications available from info@friendsofhlekweni.org.uk .

Achievements & Performance

This is the seventh year of our operation as a charity, and the Trustees continued its core work on fundraising, communication with donors, and providing grant support to the work at Hlekweni, Samathonga School and more widely in Matabeleland.

The Trustees have fully taken over the funding of the Samathonga School Feeding Scheme and were pleased that the appeal in the 2013 leaflet provided financial confidence that the scheme could continue to benefit over 300 children, and that it was possible to extend the scheme to both a breakfast and lunch scheme in early 2015



In more detail, support from Friends of Hlekweni has included the following grants in the past year:

- Samathonga school feeding scheme –extended to a breakfast and a lunch scheme in early 2014;
- support for 15-20 community orphans to attend Samathonga primary school plus a grant to two other schools to support needy children;
- infrastructure work at Samathonga school: seating for children eating meals, repairs and reglazing, moving the play equipment;
- The community playscheme (through donations via Hazel Morris and others) – to the end of June 2014;
- Mobile library funding for Lochview school (Bulawayo);
- Individuals in need, including contributions to the Zimbabwe Secondary School Relief Fund to fund two ex-Samathonga students in secondary school and the grandchildren of a former Hlekweni employee to remain in school;
- Support for other schools in Matabeleland, primarily Mashumba and Ratanyana schools in Kezi District.
- Payment of the Hlekweni audit fee for 2013/14.

Trustees have continued to prioritise communications to FoH supporters, primarily through the newsletter (either sent as e-attachment or hard copy) sent twice a year, and the annual leaflet. These appear to be well-received.

We have received donations from more than 45 Quaker meetings per year in the past two years.

We thank all donors – individual, Quaker meeting and Trusts – for their contributions, which have meant that we have been able to continue significant grant funding for education and training projects in southern Matabeleland; we know that the need remains high.

Financial Report

a) Property and equipment

The charity owns no properties. Business meetings are held at rooms offered free of charge.

b) Funds

During 2014/2015 the charity's income was £35,297 (2013/14: £52,234) and expenditure was £32,828 (2013/14: £49,317). This represents a reduction in income of about 33%. The reasons for this reduction have been discussed above. About 36% of this income has come from six donors, five of which are grant-making trusts. We continue to see a steady commitment to regular payments with a total of 35 giving about £850pcm (28% of the total).

About 4.5% was spent on publicity & fundraising costs of advertising & printing etc and less than 0.1% on trustees expenses



We have a balance going forward of £40,351 (2013/14: £40351) of which 93% is unrestricted.

Trustees are confident that the finances of the charity are on a sound footing to meet our current and expected future commitments.

c) Investment Policy

The charity aims to disburse its funding on approval of grant applications and there is no investment account, so there has been no need as yet to agree an ethical investment policy. The current account is held in the Co-operative Bank. The Trustees recognise that the period between supporting HFRSC and implementing the new strategy will entail keeping a higher-than-usual balance of funds held on deposit; this is a temporary condition and requires no alteration to this general approach.

Jessica Bishop (co-opted Trustee), David Brown Ruth Findlay, Roger Moore, Don Rowe, Lee Taylor (clerk)

This report was agreed by the Trustees, 28 May 2015

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