

ARDINGLY OLD JESHWANG ASSOCIATION: A.O.J.A

Chairman's Annual Report 2012-2013

The Trustees are pleased to present their report for the year ended 30th June 2013

AOJA was formed in 1993. Its aim is to provide affordable healthcare to the community of Old Jeshwang, The Gambia. To this end, in 2000, it built a modern health centre, which it now staffs.

The Charity registration number is 1024627 and is governed by its Constitution dated 6th August 1993.

Registered Office: Avins Bridge Cottage, College Rd, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6SH

Mr Stephen Doerr. : Chairman
Mrs Peggy Guggenheim. : Secretary / Administrator
Mrs Barbara Monk. : Treasurer.

The trustees are the above and in addition: Mr Lynn Wilson, Vice Chairman
Mr David Ogilvie.

The charity's bankers are Barclays and all three officers are signatories.

Finance

The detailed results of the year are set out in the annexed Receipts and Payments Account. The planned deficit over the year was due to capital expenditure for the commissioning of the new ambulance and the renewal of some path lab equipment. An advance was also made of £2,000 towards the purchase of some dental equipment to pump prime a new initiative as part of our sustainability programme. The cash funds, without charge, remaining at the end of the year, of £13,410. confirm the consolidation of our financial position. We are always mindful of our commitment to support the monthly salaries of 43 staff, from midwives, path lab technicians to administrators, ground staff and cleaners. This year we have set aside a significant amount towards a '6 month running costs fund' in line with good financial governance. Our cash flow has also benefitted from a more stable exchange rate with the trend in fluctuations being in sterling's favour.

It is hoped that our sound financial base will continue to give the opportunity for greater investment in the infrastructure of the clinic to make it more self-sufficient and also make provision for some major refurbishment and plant replacement.

Sponsorship

The sponsorship scheme continues to be the bedrock as our main source of regular income. Our sponsor pool of about 140 supporters, giving a monthly income of around £2000, contributes well to the running costs of the Health Centre including salaries and overheads although clinic activity generated income is increasingly enabling the O.J management committee to fund its staffing demands and decisions. Separate fund raising has continued to

support new initiatives and essential refurbishment. These events have included, coffee mornings, charity dinners, BBQs, and concerts. We are particularly indebted to our growing group of corporate sponsors; St. Peters Church Ardingly, St. Nicholas Church Hove, Worth School, Bidborough Primary School, and Redcoat Express.

The second grant from the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus was used to complete both the caretakers living accommodation and the conversion of the old watchman's hut into a much needed additional store. Another bonus for the year was St. Anne's girl's house at Worth School raising the necessary funds for the commissioning of the new ambulance, after its long sea cruise to Banjul.

Visits and Future development.

Throughout the year groups have continued to go out from the UK to give specialist support in midwifery, primary health care, medical research projects and building maintenance. The retention of high standards in all these areas continues to be a priority and is often commented upon by both visitors and new patients to the centre. The new external store also includes a small office which we have been asked to allocate to the Blood Transfusion Service as the Gambian Health Authority develop a national blood bank facility.

Two new corporate sponsors have already shown an interest in supporting the building of a hostel for night duty staff and visiting overseas medics.

This year we have been able to move forward some aspects of our plans for long term sustainability, with the pump priming for our own on-site dental surgery and negotiations started to receive rental income from our second site with its food processing plant.

Clinic Activities

The activities of the health centre continue to grow, with the infant welfare clinics thriving.. Deliveries at the clinic are now averaging 30 per month and increasing, as news of our high standards of care spread. Approximately two-thirds of the women attending the antenatal clinics deliver their babies at the health centre.

The general out-patient attendance, an important part of the clinic programme, also continues to steadily increase, and is now approaching 1000 patients per month.

Our reinvigorated pathology team in their new lab continue to expand their range of testing. The 'feeding' programme, initiated to meet any acute nutritional needs, continues, but with the dried cereal being replaced with the new 'plumpy nut'. The anti-malaria 'bed net' project continues with the use of pre-impregnated nets.

A visiting dentist is still in attendance three days a week, as we make plans for our own dentistry. As part of a Global Health Fund initiative the Health Centre offered itself to be a counselling and testing centre for HIV/AIDS and it is now accredited, with three members of our staff already trained to provide this service.

The clinic currently has a doctor on site twice a week but we are still looking towards a more permanent solution as and when a suitable appointment can be made, funding permitting.

During the year a newly formed association of young Gambian doctors had chosen the Centre to host a free "Community Health Day". The 20 doctors in attendance were kept very busy with several hundred local people receiving medical diagnosis and advice for future treatment. The Gambian Minister for Health was present and has recently emphasised his support for our centre by donating some much needed new pathology lab equipment. On this occasion he was also pleased to receive, on behalf of the Gambian people, the new ambulance. Although our facilities and team of midwives match the best of those available in

the Gambia there are still times when it is essential to get an emergency patient to the nearest hospital, some 20 minutes' drive away.

Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)

The elective programme continues, with Brighton and Sussex Medical School who use our structured programme for their students and involving the Medical Research Council (MRC) in Fajara. Students stay at the MRC for 6 weeks, spending one day a week at our Health Centre, usually a Monday or Tuesday the busiest days, and the remainder of the week at the MRC. Generally two students from BSMS go out at time when they are able to visit other local medical facilities apart from helping with our Anti Natal and Infant Welfare Clinics. This year our links were extended with two students, using our centre to support their MSc. in Global Health. Junkungba, our interpreter, was again invaluable in supporting this initiative with his command of the 13 languages used in The Gambia.

Research

With the increasing number of births at the health centre we are in a position to audit the birth outcomes. The study will examine the effect of maternal anaemia during pregnancy on the well-being of the mother and baby at delivery. It will also indicate what can be achieved in The Gambia in a health centre with facilities such as those available at Old Jeshwang. A study of cardiovascular risk factors in Gambian adults (in conjunction with the MRC) is also at the planning stage.

For this data collection, ethical approval has been agreed locally from both the combined ethics committee of the Gambian Government and the Medical Research Council. It has been a long process but this year's pilot study for data collection has been completed and is about to be evaluated.

Pharmacy

The revolving drug fund continues to keep us adequately stocked but the system still requires review in terms of suppliers and rate of consumption of some items. Supplies in the Gambia can be uncertain for 'essential' items and we are currently looking into the possibility of some procurement in the UK. Bakary our cashier and stock controller continues to increase his role in the day to day management of the centre, easing the workload of our hard pressed administrator. This year saw Bakary successfully complete his final Stage 4 of his accountancy exams funded directly by the association.

Buildings and Plant

The buildings remain in good condition, with the continuation of our rolling plan of redecoration and visits from groups of UK sponsors who are always able to put their varying skills to good purpose.

Our magnificent generator still cuts in most days to cover for the regular power cuts which are a feature of Gambian life, but its complete refurbishment is now long overdue with essential replacement parts being difficult to obtain! The new access arrangements to our

Public Health Officer have worked well with the library no longer used as a waiting room. The Minister for Health on a recent visit to the clinic was heard to comment that O.J. was the first Health facility in The Gambia where he had seen a medical library!

Old Jeshwang (OJ) Management Committee

The O.J. management committee continues to be ably led by its chairman Emmanuel Stafford who in supporting our administrator, Abdoulie Sowe, retains a good team spirit and sense of ownership amongst the staff. Our now fully qualified cashier Bakary continues to increase his contribution to the overall management of the centre. The system of monthly reporting continues, enabling us to respond more accurately to changing circumstances at the centre. With the recent introduction of VAT on all goods and income tax being applied to all expenses our Gambian staff have experienced a difficult year financially - a situation which the OJ committee has asked the association to try and address when finances allow.

Risk Assessment

The trustees have identified and are aware of any risks to which the Charity is exposed and will keep this under constant review to establish procedures to mitigate those risks.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Stephen Doerr
Chairman.

31st July 2013