



Abba's Rest Orphans
supporting
Care and Share Malawi



Newsletter 21 – November 2024

The newsletter reaches some by email, and some by paper copy. Enjoy whichever you receive - the content is the same. We have included the cost of several items, to indicate how your kind donations are used. Costs keep rising, and income stays roughly the same, so we welcome new supporters and/or one-off special donations.

Another half-year of progress in . . .

Educating at secondary stage:

One of our students, contributing to the Michesi Secondary School invitation to the graduation ceremony in June, wrote: "Care and Share has been a cornerstone of support to us . . . Your generosity has not only eased the financial burden of education but has also inspired us to strive for excellence in our academic pursuits."

October expenses included term fees for the 45 orphans and vulnerable children at Chiringa Community Day Secondary School and Michesi Secondary: £20 each, totalling £900. When they started term in September, we supplied them with 10 notebooks each for their lesson notes, etc., at £17 per student, totalling £765.

Encouraging primary students:

Our Care&Share trustees asked that the older primary orphans & vulnerable children be given uniforms to give them encouragement. The May newsletter showed the uniforms being made, and they were distributed in June. We also bought 600 exercise books, at £180.



Giving keen pupils a trade:

When we visited in 2023, it was clear that senior pupils would like to learn a trade. To make a (small) start, we are training two in tailoring. The photo shows Charles Chipwere and Cecilia Zawanda posing for a photo with their (single) mothers. The cost for the three-month training is £190 each.

We hope to help these trainees set up a business with a sewing machine and some starter material, and to offer two more students (from those who pass their secondary exams next spring) training in some other trade at the local college. But this is if funds allow.

Providing likuni phala: We support Memezi CBCC, the pre-school Childcare Centre which Abba's Rest set up in 2008, with likuni phala, the nutritious 'porridge' which Mary's Meals sponsors in other centres. The cost is £300 three times a year.

Our C&S trustee George made a casual visit recently, but a local funeral had reduced the attendance to a few.



Providing maize: George wrote in August: *"today with the Trustees we agreed to give 20kgs of maize to the most elderly families who are keeping orphans . . it is so disheartening to see some of our orphans going to bed on empty stomachs we have identified the most needy"*



Above, our team measure out maize (from the stores purchased in March/April; the lady with the baby is Fagess, a trustee). On the right are four disabled elderly who look after orphans.



Helping girls: Two years ago, under the guidance of Chikondi Gundo, we provided menstrual hygiene kits to 60 girls. This year, we are repeating the activity, at a cost of £970. The photo shows some of the girls helped in 2022.

Each girl receives 5 re-usable pads, 5 tablets of laundry soap, 5 sets of underwear, 3 tablets of bathing soap and a bucket. These kits encourage girls not to miss schooling one week a month.

A kind supporter assisted financially in 2022, and we had a full report in July 2023 – all three teachers interviewed reported that no girl failed to go to school due to lack of kits. Chikondi talked with some of the girls about the importance of working hard at school, personal hygiene during menstruations and sexual reproductive health issues, and issues of gender based violence and protection.

Training farmers in making new fertiliser: An interesting new project arises from our decision to stop buying expensive fertiliser, especially when in 2023 Cyclone Freddy washed out most of the maize fields in the area and in 2024 the poor rains led to a very poor crop, wasting the fertiliser spending (£2,000 in each year). We suggested two alternatives, one being mbeya, which they can make from animal dung (eg goat), ash, water, maize bran, and a small amount of commercial fertiliser. It uses the locally available resources, is rich in nutrients and is good for soil texture and fertility. Benefits are improved crop yields and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices. The project is costing £1,000 and involves many farmers in two of the villages we help.

The first photo (day 1) shows a training meeting in a local meeting room, the second (practical, at the C&S compound) shows the local Agricultural Officer supervising the mixing of the dung, and the third is a group photo with, in the front row, trustee George and the male and female Agriculture Officers.





Keeping the compound in good condition: two things since May: replacing the water tank pier (a 2012 photo) because its lower courses were becoming unsafe (£650), and repairing the perimeter wall after the branches of a nearby tree hit it (£22). Our team there have also asked that sections of the perimeter wall of the compound be raised, to make it more secure (for discussion in 2025).



Engaging with local agencies - Care and Share is well regarded by Phalombe District Social Welfare. **In June**, George, representing C&S, attended the Phalombe Civil Society Organizations Network - it enhances coordination between Non State Actors in the District. **In July**, he attended a meeting on Emergency Preparedness (at Nkhulambe, where the 2023 Cyclone swept through the Health Centre). **In September**, he attended an away-week at Dedza (165m. away), organised by Phalombe Social Welfare Office, on the topics of youth empowerment, child trafficking, sexual harassment and HIV testing; one other local organisation (Ufulu Wathu CBO) was invited - it and C&S are expected to take a role of teaching other CBOs (Community Based Organisations) in the district.



Working with the community has included helping the local police (last year trustees Muriel and Ian met the Officer-in-charge, Mr Manyamula). The C&S trustees were asked to help with things their underfunded police dept cannot supply - extra chairs, a new door, repairs to windows (broken three years ago) and a door lock. We in Scotland were not sure. George reported that orphans are often mistreated and can risk losing homes when they lose parents, so depend on the police for help, and C&S have a good relationship with the local police unit.

Knowing that the police and C&S work well together for orphans, we assisted them at a cost of £210 (15 chairs, 48 small window panes, putty, a door, a lock, and a £20 labour charge). At the hand-over, where it was all smiles in the faces of the police officers, Mr Manyamula said "this is not a mean donation but a huge one as we have been asking a lot of organizations but none came to rescue us; today we are very happy to see Care and Share rescuing us, this occasion will be in our memories forever . . . I will report to the District Commissioner and to the Police Headquarters."

Your Scottish Trustees are Muriel Wilson, Malcolm McNeil, Colin Naismith and Ian Dickson - Colin maintains the supporters' list and handles Gift Aid matters.

Cooperating with other funders: When former midwife Alison, with Muriel & Ian last year, visited the Chiringa Maternity Unit, she was shocked at the conditions in which local women give birth, seeing limited equipment, lack of privacy, a collapsed open-air shower, and problems getting hot water. Their funding covers necessities only. There are usually 75 to 80 births each month.



Abbas Rest is enabling a project to provide basic equipment and new showers and toilets. Our contribution is **not** financial - it is practical: our C&S staff are keen to help their local Maternity Unit.

Funding is provided by donations from Dunbar Rotary (of which Alison and Ian are members) and other Rotary clubs, plus a generous £2,000 corporate donation from CWP Energy.

So far, this project has supplied items including an electric kettle, hot water bottles and privacy curtains; work on the new showers is starting. Edda Kumakanga, the midwife-in-charge, and her staff are delighted that the Abbas Rest/C&S link is bringing care and hygiene improvements at the Unit.

Michesi water scheme: This scheme, supplied by Abbas Rest and Ayr Rotary in 2019, is not operating at full capacity. Improvements were agreed in 2023 by the local Water Office and with funding from the Constituency fund of the MP, who confirmed this month “it’s a priority”.

Ayr St Columba Church are holding a Coffee Morning in aid of Abba’s Rest on Sat. 30th Nov. If anyone wishes either information sheets or even a trustee visit at an event, feel free to contact us.

Our funds are not increasing in line with costs - if you have ideas on how to increase donations (even by legacies!!), or contacts with interested donors, please share them with us. For standing orders, our a/c details are: Abbas Rest Orphans, 20-29-24 (Barclays), a/c no 80050482 and you can put your name in as the reference. Sincere thanks to those who have set up standing orders in recent months.

Message from trustee Muriel Wilson

Education and training are so important for the Malawian people. It may be providing nourishing porridge so that pre-school children can play happily with full tummies: distributing uniforms, exercise books, paying school fees, giving out sanitary products to girls in the local schools: training senior pupils for work in tailoring: helping farmers discover new ways of creating more economical and ecological fertiliser: and of course providing maize for hungry families, including elderly grannies and great grannies (some of whom are disabled) who work so hard to bring up the orphans in their families.

Our Care & Share Trustees are also involved in education and training. George has been attending meetings where issues which concern our charity are discussed. He and the other Trustees James, Timothy and Fagess, as well as our Project Co-ordinator Blessings, are always keen to be better informed and to be part of a network of organisations which seek to raise awareness and help the local people deal with complex problems.

At our last Trustees meeting (on Zoom) we were delighted to see George and Blessings’ smiling faces and listen to their contributions. **Your generous donations make all this invaluable work possible.**

Everyone involved with the charity in Chiringa wants us to say a huge “ THANK YOU ” and “ GOD BLESS YOU ” !