**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**of GAMBIA EDUCATION AND TEACHING SUPPORT on 03/09/2016**

**at 1.30pm at Macclesfield Methodist Church Hall**

Present: Tony Nelson Chair

Dawn Webster Trustee

Paul Webster Treasurer

Sue Nelson Secretary

Barry Young Trustee

Barbara Young

Maxine Beech

Steve Humphries

Chris Humphries

Helen Touray

Tony Bound

Erica Wren

Johnnie Walker

Angela Longoni-Sarr

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| **Apologies:**  Peter Corrance, Joanne McIntyre, Angela Thomas, Rosemarie Holder, David & Fiona Schofield, Julia Baker, Joyce Turner, Catherine Coe, Ruth McMeechan, Debbie & Graham Bradley, Alan, Denise & Paula Johnson, John Birkin, Carolyn Jupe & Simon, Sue & Kev Storr, Geoff & Pat Taylor, Denise Green, Mel Benyon, Joyce & Ian Turner, David & Val Allen, Julie & Bryn Limbrick, Richard Beech, Ian Ward-Dutton, Peter Steele, Jean Steele, Quintin Hampton, John Skingsley, Kay Skingsley, Gill Perkins, Ray Perkins, Sam Perkins, Ina Bakker, Sue Langley.  **Approval of Minutes:**  The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 05/09/2015 were circulated and approved with one small name correction.  **Introduction by Chairman**  All those attending were welcomed by Chairman Tony Nelson and thanked for coming. Introductions were made around the room. Particular thanks went to Barry Young for finding and booking the excellent hall and to all who prepared the magnificent lunch.  A slide was shown summarising the achievements of the last 12 months with emphasis on the fact that the school is now full (to Grade 5). We have 112 sponsored students. NAT test pass rates were at 88%. The year has seen many visitors. The work experience placements have gone well. Of the 23 Skills students who graduated, 70% have promises of jobs. We have a new office administrator who has settled in well. Five staff are in training at Gambia College (paid for by GETS). The biggest achievement of the year is that our Skills Centre is now fully accredited – thanks to everyone for their hard work!  **Election of Officers**  Maxine Beech has stood down as a Trustee and during the year Barry Young was co-opted onto the Board. All the Trustees and Office bearers had indicated their willingness to stand for re-election:  Chairman: Tony Nelson  Treasurer: Paul Webster  Secretary: Sue Nelson  Trustees: Dawn Webster, Barry Young  The election of the board was unanimously accepted.  **Trustees’ Annual Report**  This was circulated and accepted.  **Accounts for the year 2015/2016**  The Statutory Accounts have been drawn up according to Charity Commission guidelines by Treasurer, Paul Webster, who gave a brief presentation of the main points. The accounts have been examined and endorsed by the independent examiner who will sign them once they have been approved at this meeting.  One year’s expenses, currently £55,000 are kept in hand. The accounts are managed by the accounts committee of Paul and Dawn Webster, Helen Touray and office administrator Georgette Coker. The management accounts are run in Dalasi and converted back to Sterling for the AGM. Next year’s budget has been agreed. Once signed off the accounts will be lodged with the Charities Commission and be available on their website.  A proposed budget and cash-flow have been prepared for the coming year and this will be monitored closely and adjusted according to changing needs.  Tony thanked Paul Webster for his hard work in preparing the budget and accounts. These were then accepted by the meeting.  **Sponsorship**  We have total of 112 sponsored students, 61 at Sunrise and 51 elsewhere. We manage all external sponsorships, check attendance and monitor progress reports. At Sunrise, the sponsorship does not just pay for the education of the children but contributes towards the broader running costs of the school. The external sponsorship gives much less value for money and creates a lot of work, so we are not accepting any new ones. We do, however, have three current external sponsorship children in need of a new sponsor, as their previous one died. We have someone who will cover their next year but will need around £300 for them to complete their education as they travel to Banjul daily. There are currently four children at Sunrise in need of sponsors, two in Skills, one in Lower Basic and one in Nursery. More will probably arise and will be considered on the basis of grades, attendance, behavior and attitude as well as the families being means-tested. We also keep a hardship fund, which is used for specific cases where need for sponsorship arises suddenly, such as death of a parent; this will cover the children until a sponsor can be found.  **Sponsor-a-Class**  This initiative generates long-term, ongoing funds and is ideal for people who are unable to visit Gambia, or for schools or corporate groups. It can be given as a gift. It has gained us many new supporters. With Maxine stepping down we need someone to take this on and drive it forwards. It is a vital source of funding and is especially useful as it contributes to general funds, not the education of specific individuals. Tony thanked Maxine for all her help, for her original brain-wave in setting it up and for her continuing work in producing updates and keeping in touch with all the sponsors.  **Sunrise Review**  Helen has had a very busy year (several slides were shown to illustrate this) with lots of visitors to manage and several school trips as well as ongoing events such as graduation, sports days and festivals. There have been few staff losses and some recruitment due to expansion. Maternity leave proved to be a particular challenge this year with three Nursery staff all needing leave at the same time! MBacho has recently given birth to a daughter and the other two are imminent. This has necessitated a lot of shuffling and great use of our teaching assistants. We are particularly proud of our TAs and as far as we know our use of them is unique within The Gambia.  Angela Longoni-Sarr asked whether transfer of the Sunrise Centre back to the community is our long-term conclusion. What is the charity proposing to do going forward once the Lower Basic school is filled? This is an issue to which the Trustees have been giving much thought and will continue to do so.  Dawn Webster gave a brief update on charitable giving and ways and means of increasing the money coming in. We are signed up to Give as you Live (where they give a selected charity a small percentage donation of a supporter’s On-Line spend with certain companies) and this needs to be promoted in blogs and newsletters as well as on Facebook and Twitter. We may have some business cards printed. We have also signed up to BT’s MyDonate as this is a free service.  **Vote of thanks**  This was given by Angela Longoni-Sarr on behalf of all supporters to thank the Trustees for their hard work throughout the year and for another successful AGM. The meeting closed at 4.15pm. A presentation was made to Maxine to thank her for her services and the usual group photo was undertaken.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Signature: |  |  | | Full name | Anthony Robert Nelson |  | | Position: | Chairman | Date: | | **Proposed/**  **Seconded**  Maxine Beech/  Helen Touray  Erica Wren/ Christine Humphries  Helen Touray/  Steve Humphries |