

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

**Present:**

Katie Maidment [Chair], David Patrick [Treasurer], Carol Shippey [Secretary & Sponsorship], Pauline & Ian Andrews, Maria Brown, Shirley Crombie, Pauline & Keith Copperwheat, Cathy Dickson, Rosemary Downing, Chris & Cameron Falla, Debbie Hill, Susie Thomson  
Anne Jackson, Steve James, Jill Kemp, Fran Ludden, Jan Northway, Eileen O'Leary, David Shippey, Carol & Bernard Webb, Letitia Willins, Libby Henshaw

**Apologies:** Tricia Hunt [Trustee], Sue Mumford, Sarah Mawe, Ann Humphrey, Ian Boast, Mary & Sergio Rando, Tim & Ruth Beard, Clare Glenn, Janet Smith, Julia Nelson, Chris & Ben White, Veronique Cornish, Roger Hayes, Judith James, John Warrington  
**BUSINESS SUPPORTERS:** Bottle & Jar Company, Ace of Spades Gardens, JB Postle, Bon Bon's [Aylsham], JLH Autos, Carousel Chocolates.

**1. INTRODUCTION & WELCOME:** **Katie Maidment**, as Chair of Trustees welcomed everyone.

**2. MINUTES OF THE 2022 MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes of the 2022 Meeting were approved – proposed by **Pauline Andrews** and seconded by **Susie Thomson**.

**Matters Arising:** unless there is anything outstanding, most of this was covered during the meeting.

**3.. REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2022: in two parts: PROJECTS/EVENTS and TRUSTEE VISIT**

The meeting was reminded of where the charity currently operates and how our projects are selected.

- remote rural areas in Pailin Province, villages within 90 minutes of Battambang and the Taom area outside Siem Reap.
- In practice this means Pailin, Battambang, Siem Reap, Sisophon.
- funding for locations receiving little or no other NGO help and essential needs for the poorest communities. “small money – big difference”.
- The point of the restructure has been to consolidate and refocus to make the best use of funds.
- Currently our main contacts in Cambodia are: **Sister Vangie Dunton & Father Carlos Alfaro** [both Pailin] **Betty Millena** [Siem Reap and **Sister Dulce Amor** Lagare [Sisophon]

**1. PROJECTS & EVENTS**

Copies of the ‘**Summary of Projects since March 2022**’ were distributed and illustrated with slides including the Sewing Centre, Vocational Training, Nikum Borewells, Rohal Handwash/Play equipment Formula Milk and [via Jesuit Service Sisophon] Wheelchairs and Bikes. *Steve James asked how many wheelchairs had been sent: answer: ‘ a total of 23 in two batches through the year’.*

**EVENTS & FUNDRAISING**

**Slides illustrating the following events were shown:** Stalls at Aylsham, Aldborough and Mannington. Christmas Events in Aylsham, Cromer & Loddon, Coffee Mornings at Wickmere, Aylsham, Wroxham, and Ely, Garden Gate sales in Cawston & Wickmere, the Wickmere Boules event.

Funding from other sources: a **grant of £1000** specifically for the Sewing Centre from the **Matthew Good Foundation** and several very generous donors.

GRATEFUL THANKS were expressed to: Fran Ludden for her general support, jam makers [Pauline Copperwheat, Maria Brown, Barbara Shaw, Carol Shippey] and to other regular **SUPPORTERS** Wendy Adamson, Roma Brooder, Pauline Andrews, Bernard & Carol Webb, Jill Kemp, Chris Falla, Rosemary Downing, Jan Northway and to Pauline Copperwheat for dressing the charity's bears.

*Katie asked for donations of small brown teddy bears.*

## **4. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The **Financial Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023** was presented by **David Pattrick**. This had previously been inspected and accepted by the Trustees. Katie thanked David for his hard work on the accounts throughout the year. I would prefer to see: total income £23,650.69 total expenditure £13,280 and UK bank balance £20,193.89 with a further \$14086 on account at the Battambang Prefecture.

- **IN SUMMARY:**

**Total income for the year: £20,193.89 Total expenditure (on aid): £13,280 Bank balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023: £20,193.89 with a further \$14086 in our ‘account’ at the Battambang Prefecture** [the bulk of which is already earmarked for distribution to Cambodia within the next month or two]. The full accounts will be available on the website [under NEWS] in due course. *Bernard Webb asked: “Do we send in sterling or dollars? Answer: ‘Sterling’. Is it then exchanged into local currency?” ‘No, into US dollars’..*

## **5. REVIEW OF THE YEAR Part 2: TRUSTEE VISIT**

In order to put the findings of the Trustee Visit 2023 into context, an illustrated overview of what the charity has achieved since its inception in January 2015 was presented.

OVER 8 years, Support Cambodia has funded: 15 borewells, 3 handwashes, 10 toilets, 6 community buildings, dozens of water filters, 3 water tanks, farming projects, formula milk, rice soup, school & play equipment, books, medical supplies, toiletries, vitamins and most recently: The Sewing Centre and the Vocational Training Scheme. Katie Maidment said *“we should be incredibly proud of our record in helping disadvantaged communities in NW Cambodia.”*

### **Trustee Visit 2023**

**Katie Maidment** and **David Pattrick** visited Cambodia 25<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> February. An illustrated resume was presented to the meeting.

### **THE COVID EFFECT:**

Cambodia was not hit badly [just over 3,000 deaths compared to 206,000 in the UK] It looks the same but things are very different..... derelict hotels, businesses shut, poorest have no jobs, sending older kids out to work, many in debt, repossessions, microfinance farmers have lost everything. Many faces are missing, those remaining are exhausted and overstretched. The result of all this is that continuity has been lost. A lack of maintenance and changed priorities meant a significant number of projects were found not to be as they should. But we begin with the positives:

**The SEWING CENTRE:** open for 9 months and going well. Teething problems [floods, trainer, illness, needles] but 5 of the original 6 women are still there and one, **Chhoun Thy**, is now supervisor and will start to train the new intake of women. Uniforms now starting to be sold.

The other **DRESSMAKING CLASS** outside Siem Reap run by **Betty Millena:** very different. Impressive community project, not yet supported by us but hopefully we will be involved in the next stage.

**BOB MAIDMENT VOCATIONAL TRAINING:** scheme set up in memory of our former Trustee to give young people from very poor families access to training [not university]. 2 year course plus entrepreneurship and business training .Set-up has taken a long time but the first 2 students are now launched. We met the students, explained the history of the Fund and the importance of sticking with the courses. But it’s very early days so we’ll have to wait and see,

**FORMULA MILK:** the need for formula for very poor , under-nourished mums was explained. At £10 a can, with no job, no husband, no money, hungry baby, yes...it’s a hand-out, unlike our other projects. And this need is ongoing.

**SCHOOLS: 1. Prek Kabo Secondary:** Our second visit to this school. More friendship than practical support. Donated books in 2020, this time volleyballs.

**2. Rohal Primary:** lovely welcome. Good school, well run, staff and children very friendly. Our two handwashes and play equipment all working well. We agreed to support their in-school dental health project by giving \$300 every 3 months for the next year for toothpaste/brushes.

## Some less positive findings.....

**WATER;** We inspected 14 of our 15 wells and have news of the 15<sup>th</sup>. All are working but ...

**Nikum Village:** the 5 newest wells here are not finished properly [not weatherproofed, electrical connections very poorly installed, no proper housing] and not being used because the villagers ‘*find it easier to use the dirty water!*’. We have asked for repairs to be done and submitted designs to help this happen. Very little evidence of the many *Water Filters* donated over the last 5 years: continuity of learning/ education has gone. In Pailin, the **Ochra Kandal well** is working but looks very scruffy.

**Pailin Province:** Owing to a Cambodian Government ruling that all primary schools must have a handwash but are not prepared to provide the money to pay for them, local government and big, rich NGOs, [some Cambodian but some foreign with alternative agendas eg: Samaritan’s Purse] are putting in handwashes, water tanks and incinerators [!] on the same sites as existing **SUPPORT CAMBODIA** facilities. Some of these are a) not connected b) not finished c) doubling up what we’ve already done d) using our well installations e) putting in clean water dispensers where there is already good drinking water on site. This has happened at all the schools Sister Vangie and **SUPPORT CAMBODIA** have been involved with in Pailin Province and there is nothing we, or Vangie can do about it. As Vangie says.” We can’t compete with them” so both Vangie and the charity’s Trustees have made the sad but essential decision to pull out of all our schools in Pailin Province with immediate effect.

*Bernard Webb asked, “Formula has to be mixed with water. Do the mothers have access to clean water?” Answer “Yes, bottled water. “ What is in rice soup apart from rice?” answer: ‘vegetables, chicken, spice’.*

**Reedonkao:** The borewell specifically requested by the villagers in 2019 and the toilet block [2020] are in good working order but not being used. “It’s so much easier to go to the river”! This is another example of the breakdown in community education caused by Covid-19. The appearance of an evangelical church presence on the site has further complicated the issue. Without the influence of the late Brother Francis and the village contact with whom he worked [now moved to Phnom Penh], communication is almost impossible. Again, there is nothing we can do.

**BUILDINGS:** We inspected 5 and have news of a 6<sup>th</sup> [Pongro Day Care Centre, Sisophon] Our **Day Care building at Kon Damrai Primary & the Dining Hall at Tampoung** are being used and seem in reasonable condition although both have change of use. However, the **Bradley [Student] Building at Tampoung** [2016] has not been maintained and is now used for storage. It is due to be demolished. The **Community Building at Pheasabao** [2018] has been flooded and as the land it’s built on has now been repossessed by the bank in lieu of a Covid-incurred debt, the building is now derelict. The sustainable **Community House at Ochra Kandal Farm** is OK but needs looking after. The **Pongro Centre** is OK but needs some maintenance following the Covid-19 lockdown.

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

### In summary:

sadly, the Trustees have come to the conclusion that the Khmer do not seem to be able to maintain buildings, wells or equipment without regular supervision. If we had been able to visit during the last 3 years, we might have been able to prevent some of this happening.

### In conclusion:

**SUPPORT CAMBODIA** is not prepared to continue pouring donors’ money into projects that will not be looked after. Neither can we guarantee Trustee inspection visits will continue indefinitely.

***So, with a heavy heart the Trustees have decided...no more buildings, water wells, handwashes or equipment that requires regular maintenance.*** There may be exceptions to this but these will be considered very carefully on a case by case basis

*For an example of an exception please see the **Soun Ampou** project below]*

## **PROJECTS 2023**

### **1. SOUN AMPOU KEUT PRIMARY SCHOOL [Pailin City]\***

A video was shown with commentary by David Patrick. We visited this government school in Pailin City with Sister Vangie. With only 50 pupils, it is in a very deprived area, is appallingly maintained and staff morale very low. The classrooms are completely bare, most of the windows and shutters are broken, the rooms are not secure. The only water supply is a 'community only' well 100m away so instead of studying, the children take it in turns to carry water for the toilet. This is a hand pump well so cannot be modified to allow the school to connect it to the toilets.

There is a new but unused/damaged water tank, a derelict toilet block, a handwash with no water and another, perfectly good toilet block, again with no water. Sister Vangie wishes to start a food programme here to support the families but until there is a proper water supply, this can't happen. \

It's clear this school needs help across the board and the decision to take this on as a project was passed unanimously. *Maria Brown asked if a handwash would be included – answer "yes"*.

**2. PONGRO DAY CARE CENTRE.** Pongro is large sprawling village 5 miles outside Svay Sisophon, near the Thai border. Most are subsistence farmers. Parents often away working and kids left with granny so they are often wild and rather disturbed.

Filipino missionary **Sister Dulce Amor Lagare Ibanez** has worked in Cambodia since 2013. She started **Pongro Center for Day Care** which opened December 2014, funded by a Singapore NGO and **SUPPORT CAMBODIA**. Since then we have done the fence, water tank, windows, air con, wall panelling, roof, play equipment, water filters. In 2020 Dulce went on leave and then Covid came. Now she is back and getting the Centre going again. The Trustees have agreed to support her as she has virtually no other funding.

**3. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT:** It is proposed to extend the range of the current **Bob Maidment Vocational Training Fund** to include educational support for families of much younger students in an effort to keep them in school and so get the chance to go forward for training.

Sister Vangie has asked we **support 10 students in Pailin Province starting in May 2023**. This will not in any way change our original remit to help older students access vocational training. The current two students will finish in 2024 and there are already two new students lined up to start next January.

In a separate project, we have already agreed to supply **rice to 20 students in Svay Sisophon** through Jesuit Service Cambodia [Sisophon branch].

In order to fund these initiatives, the Trustees propose to rename the Vocational Training Fund, **Bob Maidment Educational Support**. A vote was taken, proposed by **Bernard Webb**, seconded by **Carol Webb** and passed unanimously.

*Rosemary Downing asked, "how can we ensure the money given to families is used as intended"?*

*Answer: 'Sister Vangie, with her local knowledge will monitor the families, all of whom she knows well. But there has to be a certain amount of trust here'.*

As a result of these changes, the **RESTRICTED FUNDS are now reduced to three:**

**NUTRITION, SEWING and BOB MAIDMENT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT.**

The WATER fund has been suspended for now until the money in that Fund has been spent.

*NB: If the Soun Ampou School project goes ahead, most of the money will be used for that]*

The GENERAL FUND remains unchanged.

**4. THE WOMEN WEAVERS OF TA HEN:** These women are the sole breadwinners in their families.

They work at a weaving centre 5 miles outside Battambang, weaving cloth in the traditional way to make items for sale [scarves, bags, purses, shirts, etc] It's a social outreach enterprise set up by a Cambodia-based NGO called Karuna Battambang Organisation [KBO] and through them, **SUPPORT CAMBODIA** plan to develop interest in the initiative by selling a small quantity of their products and returning 20% of the selling price directly to the women.

We also hope to develop our connections to other Cambodia-based NGOs.

**FUNDRAISING 2023:** In the absence of our Fundraising Co-ordinator, **Tricia Hunt**, Katie outlined the events planned for the year so far. These were displayed on a slide and a hard copy was given to all present. This information is also available on our website under DIARY or on paper by request.

**SPONSORSHIP:** **Carol Shippey** reiterated the immense contribution Sponsorship makes to the running of the charity, enabling ALL donations to be genuinely spent on projects rather than administration.

The various different types of sponsorship were explained:

**\*Administration Sponsor** [minimum £50 for a year] *companies or businesses only*. In return we advertise them on social media, letters, website and at our events.

Annual sponsorship: 1<sup>st</sup> October - 30<sup>th</sup> September.

- **One-off Sponsorship** [eg: an entire project, event publicity, transport costs the Christmas Tree] Sponsors can be *businesses or individuals*. Promotion only for a limited time.
- **Event Sponsorship** eg: Coffee Morning, Mannington Stall. *Businesses or individuals*, promotion leading up to and including the event
- **\*Collecting Tin Holders** *shops, pubs, cafes, businesses preferably patronised by people connected to the charity so visited regularly*. Regular promotion on social media, Mango News and Updates.
- **Donated items 'in kind'** eg: plants, raffle prizes, produce. *Mostly individuals but could be businesses*. Acknowledged on social media/Mango News

**NB:** \* Administration Sponsors and Tin Holders must be registered with us as **BUSINESS SUPPORTERS**

Carol thanked our 6 current Sponsors [**Ace of Spades Gardens, JLH Autos, Peggy Little's Products, S&M Supplies (Aylsham) Ltd, 4U2SEW and the Bottle & Jar Company**].

- and 10 Tin Holders **Aldborough Village Shop, Bond's Chip Shop, Carousel Chocolates, MBon Bon's [all Aylsham], Cafe Lisa & The Market Cafe [Swaffham], The Tech Geeks [North Walsham] and The Fat Cat Pub [Norwich]**
- The Sponsorship season runs from October 1st each year so we are now actively looking for next year's Sponsors. Carol urged those present to consider whether they or their contacts might be able to offer sponsorship **of any kind** for 2023/4.

## **THANKS**

In conclusion, Katie Maidment offered thanks:

- *"to Fran Ludden for taking the notes and to Carol and Pauline for the refreshments.*
- *.....to my fellow Trustees:... to Carol & Tricia.....and especially to David for his accounting skills and general support, both here and in Cambodia.*
- *Finally to all of you for making the effort to come this evening, some from quite a distance. We really appreciate it.....and for your continued support for our charity.*  
*And it is "our charity" - it's not about me or indeed, about any of us in particular. it's about all of us doing what we can...and we really can't do this without you.*
- *....and finally, the single most useful thing you can ALL do is..... to read Mango News and the Updates we send. And I mean, read, not just look at the pictures!*  
*When you've read it then if you'd like to take some action, brilliant. If not, that's fine too.*  
*But you will then have the knowledge of the charity which you have chosen to support.*

*By 'consenting to know' you are making a significant contribution. Thank you and goodnight."*