

FRIENDS OF MATTHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME



Charity Number 1120944

FoMRCH annual report 2023

The poor economic situation in Zimbabwe continued throughout 2023 causing the Children's Home much financial difficulty. The pandemic situation was easing by the end of 2022 and 24 children were able to spend Christmas with foster families for the first time since 2019. There were various safeguarding reasons for the other children being unable to go away. The Christmas party did go ahead in spite of a breakdown of electricity, cake was eaten, there was singing and dancing to their marimba band and various activities were arranged for the many children who had stayed at the home for the holidays. One boy had driving lessons and received a class 2 driver's licence.

The 2 grade 7 children did fairly well in their exams and were enrolled into the Matthew Rusike secondary school. The two A level students scored well in their results and the girl was lucky enough to get sponsorship to attend university. Out of 7 children who took O level exams, 2 did well and one had sponsorship to do A level the other found sponsorship later in the year.

In June we heard about plans for starting up an elementary school for 6-12 year olds at the Home. They already cater for preschool and secondary. There is a lot of disruption in education with teachers striking or leaving the country and schools closing. Education for the MRCH children was greatly restricted during the pandemic as they didn't have the technology needed to work online and all still need remedial help to catch up. The MRCH board felt that to protect the children from this situation they would involve local supporters and the diaspora to raise funds for new buildings. Meanwhile a room was set up in the preschool, a teacher hired and 10 grade 1 children were enrolled in January 2024. Some of these were fee paying local children others are MRCH residents.

A Methodist Church in Solihull has said they will fundraise to build a new classroom.

In July we heard that the diabetic child who had been at MRCH since she was 5 in 2011 had died. She was buried near her mother 100k away.

During the year another long term house mother retired after 27 years. These events always affect the children but once again a loyal employee retired still owed US\$6000 in salary arrears and no pension.

The regular fundraising events held at the Home (The Big Sunday open day, the marathon and the business dinner dance) have not been raising as much money as in the past due to smaller attendances and the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Even the gifts in kind are substantially lower causing the Home to have to buy in more food stuffs.

The hyperinflation situation became very serious and was becoming a repeat of 2008/2009. The country still uses the Zim\$ but most goods are sold in US\$. Prices change daily. Staff salaries were unpaid for 5 months. The management plans more fund raising drives to rectify this but the government only pays a grant for 66 children, children in care without official court orders are not supported by a government grant. Local Methodist Circuits and Districts now fund the Outreach programmes at Donga and Mzinyathi, MRCH only funds staff salaries at the residential site at Epworth.

200 chickens were lost to a virus during the year, the piggeries needed new sows and feed and the greenhouses produced good crop of tomatoes.

Towards the end of the year it was beginning to be a concern that the rains were failing again and since the new year the government officially declared Zimbabwe is in a drought situation and desperately needed food imports. This was also affecting the Home.

Thanks to receiving in excess of £25,000 from gift aid donations from 2018-2021 we were able to donate the total cost of installing solar energy to the rural outreach project at Donga (US\$3,972, around £3,500). This non-residential centre supports over 50 children and their vulnerable families in the local rural area but has no electricity and only hand pumps water for personal use and irrigation. Solar will give them light, refrigeration, energy to pump the water, charge their phones and laptop and will transform their lives. We have also been able to donate the cost of installing solar power to the houses (US\$14,047, around £12,250). We were told that the Home was 'bubbling with joy' following the solarisation of all the children's houses and the staff houses occupied by the Chaplain, Social Worker, Health Sister, the Finance and Admin officer and the National Director's house.

We were also able to send some money towards deepening the borehole at Donga but sadly no water was found.

An anonymous donor sent £645 to be spent on Zimbabwean books for the children.

An unexpected donation of £5000 was used to provide Christmas for the children and Christmas bonuses for all the staff (not replacing the unpaid salaries)

The generator is rarely used now because of the high cost of fuel but they save its use for emergencies only.

There was some concern during the year that the MRCH Board had decided to use our name, Friends of Matthew Rusike children's Home (FoMRCH) to raise funds for the new elementary classrooms. They had drawn up letters to send to their local supporters and the Methodist Fellowships around the world and asked us to send out the one they had written for the Friends of MRCH. After urgent discussion in the committee the Home was contacted. It was made clear that the name FoMRCH could not be used in the UK and that if used elsewhere it would be extremely confusing for potential supporters and it would illegally go against our constitution. When their board met they agreed to change their name to MRCH Associates and that we, as a separate charity, would not be involved.

A former MRCH child has gathered together a group of former MRCH children to develop an alumni and we are publicising this in our newsletters. They realise that young people still need support after they leave care. Already they have paid for the funeral of the child of a single parent who was struggling after leaving care a few years ago.

We arranged 2 online meetings with the National Director, Board Chairman and any staff of the Methodist Church. Each time we sent the management team a list of topics we wanted further information on and most of our queries were successfully answered.

As usual, the officers and 3 members of our committee stood down at the AGM and were then re-elected as no one else had come forward. A member of the committee volunteered to become secretary and our loyal secretary Michael Mapako was able to step back and stay on as a trustee. The chair, Carol Banham, announced she would be retiring at the 2024 AGM and request for her replacement was included in each subsequent newsletter.

Life at MRCH can be extremely difficult but in spite of all the economic hardships including low incomes, unpaid salaries and high prices, unpredictable weather and ever changing government policies, the staff remain committed to offering support, love and care for the children. We are very grateful to all our supporters who have stayed with us and have started to organise fundraising events again and sometimes send generous donations.

Carol Banham
Chair FoMRCH
May 2024

FRIENDS OF MATTHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME

Charity Registered Number: 1120944

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from **01/01/2023** To **31/12/2023**

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £	Notes
Receipts					
Membership Subscriptions	760	-	760	850	
Donations	39,103	1,195	40,298	23,722	1
Student sponsorship	-	-	-	470	
Special appeal donations	-	-	-	-	
Fundraiser events	1,662	-	1,662	2,142	2
Gift Aid	14,148	118	14,265	10,963	
Interest	271	-	271	205	
Sundry Income	-	-	-	70	
Total Receipts <i>(Gross income for Annual Return)</i>	55,944	1,313	57,256	38,422	
Payments					
Remittances to MRCH	51,138	1,395	52,533	34,473	
Bank charges	90	-	90	119	
Other expenditure (incl printing and postage)	268	-	268	534	
Exchange difference	28	(28)	-	-	
Total payments	51,524	1,368	52,891	35,126	
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,420	(55)	4,365	3,296	
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	
Cash funds last year end	21,049	55	21,104	17,808	
Cash funds this year end	25,469	-	25,469	21,104	

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

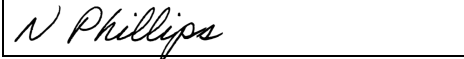


		Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £
Cash and cash equivalent funds	CoOperative bank current account cleared funds	2,873	-
	CoOperative bank savings account cleared funds	22,596	-
	Cheques received Dec not cleared in bank	-	-
	Total cash funds	25,469	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK

Note 1

Restricted donations received in the year included amounts donated for the piggery project and for picture text books

Note 2

Fundraiser events included supporter led fundraising events and various church events

	Signature	Print Name
Signed by one trustee on behalf of all the trustees		Mrs Nicola Phillips BSc ACA BFP - Treasurer
Signed by Independent Examiner		

FRIENDS OF MATHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

for Year Ended 31 December 2023.

Charity number 1120944

TRUSTEES

- 1 Donald John Banham Trustee
- 2 Mrs. Carol Anne Banham Chair
- 3 Immanuel Mudzingo Trustee
- 4 Michael Mapako Trustee
- 5 David Lawson Graaff Trustee
- 6 Wayne Ronald Cooper Trustee
- 7 Rev. Edward Charles Patrick Standhaft Trustee
- 8 Rev. Audrey Lesley Standhaft Trustee
- 9 Nicola Louise Phillips Trustee

Bank accounts

Bank Account type	Account number	Sort code
Coop Bank Current	65859309	089299
Coop Bank Savings	67289330	089299

I have conducted an independent examination of the Friends of Mathew Rusike accounts covering the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The purpose of this inspection was to ensure that the laid down accounting procedures and internal controls are operating as effectively and are compliant with the Charities Act (2011) standard operating and reporting procedures.

The responsibility for preparing the final accounts for the charity remains with the Trustees of the Charity. Based on the income and receipts threshold set out in the Charities Act, the Trustees of the Charity have determined that a full audit of accounts is not required but that an independent examination will suffice. I have conducted the independent examination by:

- Inspecting the Treasurer's accounts recorded on Excel spreadsheet.
- Following a sample of funds deposited into the bank account.
- Examining whether payments made were properly authorised and supporting invoices and receipts were being kept.

Findings and recommendations

The main points arising from this independent examination are as follows:

Bank Accounts:

The charity now operates two bank accounts with the Coop bank.

Treasurer's record book:

All receipts and payments have been recorded correctly by the Treasurer.

Receipts: The Treasurer does not hold a receipt book. No cash payments were received by the Treasurer during this period. Receipts into the charity account are made through cheque deposits and direct debits from members and supporters' accounts.

Payments. Remittances were made to Mathew Rusike Children's Home in Zimbabwe. The total annual amount remitted was £53,533 (sterling equivalent). Acknowledgements of remitted funds by the recipient, Mathew Rusike Children's Home Zimbabwe were submitted to the independent examiner. Payments are being recorded and authorised correctly.



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19 May 2024