

Friends of Ethiopian Children in Need (FECIN)

AGM on 27 June 2018 at Lucy and Graham's 31 Arbury Road

Present: Gill and Richard Smith, Audrey & Andy Jackson, Paul & Veronica Stower, Dr Abraha Derso & Mrs Sharon Derso, Bolette Pedersen, Peter & Sue Woodsford, Boni Sones, Lucy & Graham Edgeley, Anne Purvis, Barbara Sinclair, Maggie Craig, Rosemary and Gordon Heald

Apologies: Jo Archer, Stephanie Barnes, Val & Rowan Jackson, Lesley Gillespie, Natasha Sharpin, Christina Leadley, Adarsh Grewal, Dora Bulen, Sue & Chris Wagner, Jeanette cavey, Gunnel Clark, Phyllis Newman, Chris Cook

Minutes of FECIN AGM 8 April 2017

The minutes of last year's AGM on 8 April 2017 were accepted as a correct record.

1. Chair's Report --- 2017

a. Last year we were expecting Alem and Terfu from Elshaday to visit UK at Chris Cook's invitation, but they were refused a UK visa and could not come.

b. Since we had money in our account, Sue wrote to Ashenafi at Mums for Mums asking if they needed more funding for prolapse operations. Chris and Sue Wagner had generously given £600 plus gift aid towards this. That meant FECIN would provide the other £1,750.

c. Audrey wrote to Elshaday asking for a project and Tesfai suggested a fence around the Flexigester. The Flexigetsre was not by then installed so the fence was not urgent. We finally heard that the Flexigester had been successfully installed in June 2017.

d. Gill and Richard kindly hosted the summer party on 24 July 2017 for which many thanks.

e. Abraha informed us that the fence was already put up and what Elshaday needed now was furniture for the new kindergarten extension, due to open in September. So after checking costings, FECIN paid £4,500 for this furniture to be made locally. EOK-UK also contributed. We also sent 100 dry-erase whiteboards with erasers for £166-99p.

f. Discussion at the summer party revealed serious concerns about mesh implant prolapse operations, which were proving painful and even dangerous. Scotland had already banned such operations. An intense flurry of research confirmed our suspicions and we agreed to send the money for prolapse operations only on condition that they did not use mesh. The money was sent in November 2017 but we have heard nothing since then.

g. 26 July 2017 brought dreadful news of the farm disaster at Elshaday. There had been a storm with hail, heavy rain and flooding. All their crops were destroyed so income from their sale was lost as well as food for livestock and the children in the orphanage. Elshaday had formed a partnership last year with an Israeli-based organisation called CultivAid (formerly Engineers without Borders) and they have been helping to develop the farm providing seeds, a drip irrigation system and solar energy panels. Sadly, the harvest last summer was wiped out by the storms. Thank you, Abraha, for your update and photos of the damage.

h. The Jumble sale on 18 November 2017 was successful and made £738. A meeting was held at lunchtime and the minutes circulated. These are available on request from Sue.

Chair's report (continued) --- 2018

i. Thanks go to Sue and Peter where we held our Christmas Party on 6 January, Ethiopian Christmas day.

j. Thanks to Abraha and Sharon who visited Ethiopia in January and sent us a report on Elshaday with photos. They saw that the sheep raising programme we had funded is now well established and successful. Sheep are sold three times a year at traditional festivals. The Flexigester is working well and making more biogas than can be used at present. No one has yet developed an oven or hot plate for making injera (the traditional staple bread/pancake) that can run on this biogas.

k. The kindergarten extension is up and running and they now have about 180 children from the community attending. They expect 300 by September 2018.

l. These are all income-generating projects, so what about the farm in the aftermath of the storm and frost (in Nov)? Tesfai sent us a proposal in March for an Avocado Farm Project in partnership with CultiVaid. This is a 3-year project requiring £11,852. We sent £2,000 from FECIN funds and EOS-UK sent £3,00 for this. Alem is attending a 3 week course in Israel on "Irrigation and Fertilisation" arranged by CultiVaid. He was finding the course "useful and inspiring".

m. The Jumble Sale on 28 April was not as successful as usual raising just over £200. This was partly due to the advert not being put into the Cambridge News as Audrey had arranged and paid for. We need to start using other ways to fund raise and several ideas were discussed.

n. Tesfai's report arrived by email 26 June and was circulated to members. This let us know the farm is doing well and the school, kindergarten and orphanage are in good heart and managing well too.

o. Thanks were expressed to Abraha and Sharon for all their input and support keeping us updated on the situations at Elshaday. And to Chris Cook in absentia who also visits regularly and keeps us informed. She was there in April and Abraha and Sharon visited in January. So we have recent news.

p. Elshaday's Swiss sponsors are helping them to build a guest house so visitors are can stay there in future.

2. Treasurer's Report

Please see the accounts attached. Jumble Sale takings were down and sponsorships and other donations were down too. £600 from Chris and Sue Wagner has now been used for Prolapse operations at Mums for Mums.

Accounts attached show four and half thousand pounds were used to buy furniture for the extended kindergarten at Elshaday and two and a half thousand for Prolapse operations at Mums for Mums. This left £4147 in our kitty. £4047 was recovered as gift aid but this came too late to be included in these accounts. Also after date £2000 was paid to the orphanage for the avocado scheme plus £1964 of sponsorship money for December 2017 and March 2018. This then leaves us with expendable income of £4480.

Discussion followed about whether we can afford to buy an injera oven for Elshaday to use the biogas generated by the Flexigester we bought them before. But Sharon and Abraha told us there is no equipment at present to use the gas.

The accounts were accepted by the meeting and a vote of thanks was given to Gill for all her work as treasurer.

3. Election of Officers

This was conducted en masse for all three posts, proposed by Andy and seconded by Richard and elected unanimously.

Chair: Audrey Jackson

Secretary: Sue Woodsford

Treasurer: Gill Smith

AOB

- A. New fund-raising ideas were discussed. Audrey offered to hold a coffee morning soon. Jeanette has offered to run lessons on machine knitting, giving the fees to FECIN. More ideas for fund-raising would be welcome.
- B. Audrey is negotiating for a Jumble sale date in November.