

Visit to Malawi, 2018

2nd September – The team met at Glasgow airport and checked in. The first flight left Glasgow at 9.35 pm for Dubai.

3rd September – The second leg of the journey from Dubai to Lusaka was delayed by almost an hour. We arrived at Lusaka and had to rush to catch our connecting flight to Lilongwe. Our suitcases could not be unloaded in time to get to the connecting flight and we were informed that they would be sent the following day.

4th September – We met with Austen at the Prosthetics Clinic and proceeded to the bank to collect the Kwacha the team would require for expenses, fuel, etc.

The bank insisted in having letter from the clinic authorising the withdrawal. This was required on official paperwork from the clinic which resulted in Austen having to return to his office to prepare the document.

Whilst Austen was doing the paperwork we visited the Civic HQ and met, briefly, with Vitto Mulula, Director of Health and Social Welfare Services (and Acting Chief Executive) the Chief Executive, Mr Zeleza was not available as he was out of the city. We agreed to meet again later in the day.

We returned to the bank and collected the Kwacha, returned to our accommodation and sorted out the various amounts and deposited the money in our safes.

After lunch we met with Vitto Mulula. Mr Mulula is seeking assistance with refuse collection. BK explained the problems in getting vehicles to Malawi, including the high costs. Mr Mulula was advised that is very unlikely that GCC could source further vehicles. He confirmed that the two refuse collection vehicles supplied by Glasgow City Council are still in operation.

Mr Mulula informed us that Lilongwe City Council has only one Environmental Health Officer at present. He raised issues of noise pollution and acknowledged receipt of the information sent to LCC from GCC. He explained that LCC was in the process of introducing new byelaws regarding noise pollution and light pollution.

Agreed:-

- BK to contact REHIS for assistance with projectors, training materials, videos, CDs on food safety and hygiene. Also explore issuing basic certificates showing staff and premises meet hygiene requirements.
- BK suggested the introduction of a computerised system by the Environmental Health Department to record visits to establishments and flag up when repeat visits are due.

The suitcases arrived on the evening flight, to our great relief.

5th September – Bwaila Hospital.

We visited Bwaila Hospital and met with Dr Ethel Rambiki, District Medical Officer. Dr Rambiki confirmed that 80% of the donations received from GCC were of use to Bwaila Hospital and that anything which could not be used was passed to other hospitals. Dr Rambiki stated that the hospital is very grateful for IT support it receives from Glasgow City Council.

Agreed:-

- BK to try and source portable oxygen cylinders. The hospital is in dire need of this type of equipment when transporting babies between hospitals.

College of Health Sciences, Lilongwe

We visited the college and met up with Sammy at the library. We witnessed some of the installation work being undertaken and passed on details of Bwaila Hospital contacts to Sammy to enable delivery and installation of PCs at Bwaila Hospital.



Interdenominational Pastoral Care Centre, Kamuzu Central Hospital

We met with Sylvester Kachinje, Manager, IPCC. Sylvester advised that funding was an ever present concern for IPCC. They remain very grateful for the donated IT equipment and clothing received from GCC. IPCC is now offering training to new chaplains to generate funding to help maintain the IPCC headquarters. They are also continuing efforts to establish psychotherapy and chaplaincy as a recognised profession by the Government, by teaming up with other organisations offering similar services.

Children of the Blessings Trust

This charity was established in 2008, and now has two outreach centres. The organisation is funded through donations, mostly from Canada. Staff includes administrative team, physiotherapist, nutritionist and nurse.



The premises are in a very poor state of repair. Broken, home-made walking aids and poorly constructed wooden boxes are being utilized to help children with cerebral palsy stand, were the only pieces of equipment in evidence to assist the children. The organisation looked very much in need of help on all fronts.



Agreed:-

BK to try and source:-

- Baby weighing scales
- Chairs for children with cerebral palsy
- Feeding bowls and specialist cutlery
- Baby/children clothes and shoes (6 months – 15 years old)
- Floor mats
- Baby and toddler toys
- Forehead thermometers
- Pedal bins/sharps bins/bin liners
- Plastic tubs
- Mops
- Surgical gloves/bandages/cotton wool

For their epilepsy clinic they are in need of :-

- Phenytoin
- Carbamazepine
- Phenobarbitone
- Sodium valproate

Mr Kahunda, Maula Prison, Lilongwe

We were advised that this was only Mr Kahunda's second day in office. Maula Prison has more than 2500 prisoners. The age of prisoners is between 21 and 65 years. We were allowed to visit the women's wing, where there is an average of 15 beds to one room. It was noted that mothers may keep their children with them in prison up until the child is aged 6 years old.

Most of the IT equipment, installed last year, was still functioning. It was agreed where the greatest need for computers existed and arrangements were made to do the installs later the same day.



BK was shown how dilapidated the external cooking facilities had become. The best way forward would be for the present system to be abandoned and a replacement facility provided.

Agreed:-

BK to try and source:-

- 15 laptops
- Ambulance (it was noted that this was very unlikely but that an approach would be made to Scottish Ambulance Service)
- Blankets
- Water bottles
- Plates and plastic cutlery
- Cooking utensils
- Disposable and durable rubber gloves
- Clothing (BK reported the forthcoming donation of uniforms recently donated to LP Malawi Project following Euro Championships held in Glasgow in August, 2018, and agreed to supply a quantity of the clothing for use at the prison)
- Tools – gardening, joinery
- Educational materials
- Aluminium cooking pots
- TV set for the recreation room

We were presented 2 substantial wish lists of (1) medical equipment and (2) drugs that the prison's clinic/pharmacy is lacking. It may be possible for us to source some of the items but unlikely that the drugs requested can be provided.

Lilongwe City Council sprung a surprise on the Glasgow team by inviting us to a Civic Reception that evening. It was a good opportunity for us to meet some of the council's staff in an informal setting. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

6th September – Nkhudzi Bay, Mangochi

We set off for Mangochi. On route, we stopped at the Nkhudzi Bay development we had visited last year. We were very disappointed to find that no progress had been made. It appears that the original funding has been exhausted and it looks unlikely that the funds required to proceed will be forthcoming. The local school was in recess and the small tailoring project was closed when we called.

7th September – Mangochi District Hospital

We visited the hospital for a meeting with the Director. Our main purpose was to explore the possibility of gaining support for the establishment of a Prosthetics/Orthotics Clinic at the hospital. Unfortunately, the Director was not on site. Notwithstanding, we took time to look around the entire site in the hope that we might identify a suitable building for that purpose.



The condition of many of the buildings was poor. Some were in advanced stages of disrepair and many were out of use. A number of the hospital's functions were being conducted in temporary mobile units and tents, many of which appear to have been in use for some time. It was with real disappointment that we had to abandon our hope of establishing a P and O Clinic at this location.

8th September – free time.

9th September – We were invited to visit Chikulu Lodge by the owner. The lodge is located at the south western end of Lake Malawi and access is obtained either by boat or by road from Mangochi round the south end of the lake and up the eastern shore by way of poor roads. It was too windy to travel by boat so the road option was the only one available. The journey time was two hours and thirty minutes each way which was quite tiring and uncomfortable at times.

We were accompanied by three visitors from South Africa who made the journey pleasant by chatting freely throughout.

The lodge is in a very attractive location but it has not been well used, to date, probably due to the poor access problems. We spent some time taking in the magnificent views and enjoyed lunch before starting our homeward journey.

10th September – free time.

11th September – We departed Mangochi for Blantyre. On route we visited the Open Arms Infant Home (Mangochi). We arrived in Blantyre at lunchtime and called at the Old Town Hall to meet Robert and receive updates on progress from Robert and Ian.



In the afternoon, we visited the Open Arms Infant Home (Blantyre) and spent some time with the staff and, of course, the children.

Charlie McCalder, the manager, asked if we could ship around ten high chairs for him from the U.K.

We advised him that if he could get the chairs to our store in Glasgow in October that they could be sent in the container which will be leaving at the end of the month.



12 September – Zomba Prison

We met with Commissioner Yafeti Chimodzi and staff and discussed the distribution of IT equipment to Zomba and Chichiri prisons and Mpembe Young Offenders Institution. BK reported on the possible donation of uniforms. It was agreed that a significant quantity would be delivered to Zomba Prison for use there and for distribution to other prisons.

We also met with Ms Wandika Phiri, District Commissioner, who expressed her gratitude for the donation of IT equipment. All were very excited about the fact the IT equipment would be installed very shortly. We agreed the logistics for delivering and installing IT kit.

Agreed:-

BK to try and source:-

- Disposable gloves
- General medical supplies
- Industrial printer

Insieme Per Il Malawi Onlus, Zomba

We met with Michael Nyang'ama and discussed the establishment of an Internet café, aimed at generating funding to help Michael maintain the premises in Zomba. Michael advised us that the diocese had given notice to the Zomba office and confirmed the intention of moving the headquarters to offices in Mangochi. Michael is currently working on plans to share office space with another colleague to enable him to continue to work for Insieme, whilst also running the Internet café. He also indicated that he is currently trying to source motorbikes to enable him to set up a small transport service.



We visited the site of proposed café and noted that it was in a suitable condition to receive the IT kit. The location is good with plenty of other businesses operating close by. The unit is located on a relatively busy road.

Agreed:--

- Michael to receive 6 PCs to enable him to get the Internet café up and running (noted that there is space for up to 15 PCs)
- Michael requested an industrial printer. BK explained that printers are now very difficult to source due to GCC leasing its printers.

13 September – Blantyre City Council

We met with Dr Alfred Chanza, Chief Executive Officer of Blantyre City Council. Dr Chanza raised the issue of improving relations between Glasgow and Scotland and Blantyre. He did not seem very aware of the work undertaken previously between Glasgow and Blantyre City Councils. We brought him up to speed on donations sent to date, in particular, the IT equipment already donated to Blantyre City Council and the work currently being carried out during this year's visit. GW also raised the question of a possible Memorandum of Understanding between Glasgow and Blantyre, noting that one already exists between Glasgow and Lilongwe, signed in 2014 during the visit of the former Lord Provost, Councillor Sadie Docherty. GW suggested that Blantyre and Glasgow could possibly sign a similar MOU, perhaps during the visit of the Lord Provost, provisionally planned for 2019. GW passed a copy of the existing MOU with Lilongwe to Dr Chanza for his comments.

Dr Chanza raised a number of issues, including major potential projects such as remedying the failing sewerage system and the need for expansion of the system to cope with demands imposed by the expanding population. He explained about the difficulties faced by the Fire Service which is operating well below required levels. He raised the possibility of a project for the rehabilitation of the Old Town Hall. He also raised his concerns regarding refuse collection and disposal. Dr Chanza promised to send several proposals to us in the weeks ahead.

Dr Chanza continued by highlighting the major problems with sewerage in Blantyre and mentioned, in particular, the outdated and ailing sewage treatment works which are permitting raw domestic sewage and effluent from commercial premises to be pumped into the river. He stated that the whole system needed replacing. Dr Chanza stated that his engineers required training in up to date methods. BK pointed out that training would be less effective if the structural problems with the treatment works were not addressed.

Dr Chanza raised the issue of firefighting equipment and stated that the city of Blantyre urgently requires fire engines. Currently, there is no fire engine situated at the airport which means that, every time a flight is due to land, a fire engine from the city must be despatched to the airport, thus leaving the city unprotected. BK agreed to look at the possibility of sourcing a fire engine from Glasgow on the condition that Blantyre City Council covers the shipping costs. BK also outlined the existing relationship between Glasgow and the Malawian Prison Service as well as the Police Service and suggested that a similar relationship might be developed with Fire Services in Malawi.

Dr Chanza then turned his attention to the Old Town Hall and proposed a major refurbishment with a view to converting the building into a museum, charting the relationship between Malawi and Scotland. It was noted that the building is considered a national monument, having been constructed in 1890. BK and GW indicated that this would be a major piece of work and not something that Glasgow City Council would consider.

Agreed:-

- Dr Chanza will submit proposals
- Dr Chanza will consider the wording of the MOU which GW had passed to him

- BK/GW will attempt to source fire engine (s) on the understanding that Blantyre City Council will cover shipping costs

[As promised, Dr Chanza submitted five proposals in writing. These are as follows:-

1. Rehabilitation of the Sewerage System (currently costed at £11.5 million)
2. Acquisition of Sanitation Equipment (currently costed at £4 million)
3. Acquisition of Fire Fighting Equipment and Rescue Vehicles and Equipment (currently costed at £1.3 million)
4. Rehabilitation of Old Town Hall (currently costed at £0.5 million)
5. Technical Capacity Development (costs associated with travel varying from £450 to £2200 per Officer)]

There are some aspects which arise from these proposals which we are prepared to explore over the next twelve months.

Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital – Dr Gonani

A meeting had been requested with Dr Gonani the hospital Director. Unfortunately our previous meeting over ran and by the time we arrived for the meeting Dr Gonani had been called away on other business.

Step Kids Awareness (STEKA) - Godknows Maseko



Godknows thanked Glasgow City Council for the donations received to date.

He advised that a number of their children were now attending college and university (he currently has 70 young people in his care, staying in a house designed to accommodate 40 children). Queen Margaret University (QMU) is now offering scholarships to the young people from STEKA. Subjects being studied include child development; photography and film making; beauty; hairdressing; carpentry and welding. STEKA are planning to develop their own training centre using a building which they have now finished refurbishing. They have also approached a number of companies seeking practical placements for their young people to develop their vocational skills. As the government provides no financial assistance to STEKA, Godknows also highlighted the different ways in which STEKA aims to raise funds to provide a home for their young people. These include producing bags which the QMU sells on their behalf and also hiring out a 12 seater van, which was donated to STEKA, by a well-wisher. Godknows reported that he had recently purchased four more cars which he was also intending to hire out. He will launch the STEKA website over the next few months and will include the GCC logo.

Agreed:-

BK/GW to try and source:-

- Hairdressing and beauty items, including sinks, hairdryers, straighteners, nail kits
- Carpentry tools
- Electric drills, grinders, welding equipment
- Power surge protectors
- IT equipment (currently 7 out of 10 PCs are still working). Looking for 10 PCs and 10 laptops

Footnote:-

Our driver, Andrew Kayuni owns the company, Dream Tours. Andy has been our driver on several occasions and has proved to be a most helpful contact in so many ways.

This year, Andy took us to visit his home and his new office. We have helped Andy in the past by way of computer equipment. If it is possible we will send him 2 desks and swivel chairs for his office. Two additional computers will also be provided when the opportunity arises.



Andy is breeding pigs at his home and he intends to supply his village with some breeding stock when his pigs produce their first litter.