

**Annual Report
Friends of Wechiau Group
Charity number 1113023
For the period 1st April 2018
to 31st March 2019**



“Small locally based charities with a focus on community to community support have a continuing and important role to play in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly they also build global solidarity from the grass roots. Governments come and go but peoples and their relationships remain. Growing up in Ghana and having lived and worked in both the U.K. and Africa I know just how much the shared bonds of common humanity between peoples matters in transforming the lives of donors and beneficiaries alike. Friends of Wechiau is a small charity that punches above its weight with a welcome focus on outcomes and impact The needs it meets are real and ongoing and its work deserves to flourish.
I wish Friends of Wechiau continuing success.”

*The Rt Hon the Lord Boateng of Akyem and Wembley
formerly Chief Secretary of Her Majesty's Treasury and High Commissioner to
South Africa*

Trustees

Ann Bannister: Chairperson
John Flynn: Treasurer
Martin Upson: Secretary
Janet Kirk: Vice Chairperson
Lisa Porter

Charity Address: % 55 Lunt Road, Bootle, L20 5EZ

Governance

The Friends of Wechiau Group is membership based unincorporated organisation which is registered as an English charity. Trustees are elected annually at the charity's Annual General Meeting which all members are invited to attend.

Membership is open to any individual, aged 18 years and over, who agrees with the objectives of the Friends of Wechiau Group and who has paid the annual fee, agreed from time to time by the Annual General Meeting, currently £15 per year. Members are drawn from people across the world.

The Friends of Wechiau Group also keep a list of supporters who have either donated to the charity or received support from the charity in the form of scholarships and have consented to receive information.

Contact is maintained with members and supporters through email, a website and by post. Members are invited to attend a minimum of one meeting per year in England.

The Friends of Wechiau Group and the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary Management Board have a partnership agreement with the Savannah Fruits Company to disburse the Friends of Wechiau education funds and provide a monitoring role. [Savannah Fruits Company is an agro processing company based in Ghana which is developing additional or alternative economic livelihoods for the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary members through the trade of shea butter].

In addition the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary Manager has agreed terms and conditions for the administration of the education scholarship programme. The terms and conditions are reviewed annually.

Objectives

The objectives of the charity according to their constitution are:

“The advancement of education of people resident within the boundaries of the Wechiau Hippo Sanctuary, Ghana, or surrounding areas by the provision of educational materials, funding of teachers and supplies and at the discretion of the trustees the provision of scholarships for individuals to extend their education and training.”

Activities

The Friends of Wechiau Group provide educational scholarships to individuals living in the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary area and education supplies to a chosen primary school in the WCHS area. Applications for the scholarships are open to all people living in the sanctuary area and the beneficiaries are selected by an education committee, based at the WCHS, made up of representatives of members of the Sanctuary Management Board, SFC, schools, former scholarship students and representatives of the local community. Priority is given to those who were in most need of funding, have good education results and are well motivated. Efforts are made to ensure that the scholarships are awarded on an equitable basis considering factors such as gender, ethnic group/tribe and religion.

Emphasis is given to disadvantaged groups including young women and young disabled people. The trustees make their decisions on the funding for the year at their Annual General Meeting based on the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission.

The programme of education funding is managed according to a 'Terms and Conditions for Funding' which has been jointly agreed between Friends of Wechiau Group, Savannah Fruits Company and the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary Management Board.

All surplus funds to the annual disbursement are held in an interest bearing account.

Achievements for the year 2018/19



This year six new students were selected to receive scholarships to attend senior high school. The number of students selected has been gradually increased and the amount of each scholarship has been reduced as a result of the Ghanaian government funding most of the school fees for new students from 2017. Also this year there was considerable competition from good applicants (30 applicants from 8 primary schools) making it more important to select a larger number of scholarship students. However we were disappointed this year that only one of the six students selected is a young woman. The

trustees will be discussing with the local administrator how best to achieve the target for 50% women to be selected as scholarship students by 2023. Currently the total number of female students selected has been 14 out of 59 over a 14 year period. However there have been improvements in the number of females selected in more recent years. There has also been an increase in students selected from the less privileged communities. In the early years the students were predominantly from Wechiau, from the Waale tribe, and Muslims. This year the students were from a range of communities (Christian and Muslim, Brifour, Dagaati and Waale tribes, and Kantu and Wechiau communities). This reflects the improvements in primary education throughout the sanctuary area. With each student studying for three years at senior high school, we are currently funding four students in their third year, five students in the second year, and 6 students in their first year, a total of 15.



We continue to follow the progress of our outstanding former scholarship student Hasehni Vampere (known as Hassan) who obtained a first class honours B.Sc. in Disability and Rehabilitation Studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. As trustees we have offered support to Hassan where we can. One of our trustees helped Hassan to obtain financial support from the Business Council for Africa (West Africa Branch) to study for 2 years for a Masters degree in Kumasi in Ghana from September 2018. Another trustee who works at the University of Worcester has sent to Hassan a collection of key academic text books donated by herself and her colleagues, with postage paid for by the Business Council for Africa, to aid him in his studies. It is because of this generous grant that Hassan is able to continue his postgraduate studies and research.

In addition to the education scholarships, Friends of Wechiau provides some funding for much needed educational materials in primary schools. This year the Wechiau Girls Model School received school supplies at their PTA meeting.



Evaluation

Regular visitors to the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary are Dr Aggie Weighill and her students from Vancouver Island University, Canada. We are very grateful for the support from Aggie and her team in organising for one of her Recreation and Management students, Kristina Vaudry, to undertake an evaluation of the Friends of Wechiau scholarship programme providing valuable independent examination of the programme. The findings have demonstrated not only that the scholarships supported individual students, but the recipients are returning to the Wechiau community having obtained professional qualifications.

From 38 scholarship students followed up

- 92% successfully passed all their senior secondary classes and graduated
- 82% had pursued tertiary education after senior secondary school
- 69% of those obtaining a tertiary degree and were working in their profession returned to the Sanctuary.
- 68% of those working after completing Senior High School have returned to the Sanctuary.

Scholarship Students benefited from:

- ability to study at senior high school without the worry of being a burden on their family
- encouraged to get higher grades because they were held accountable by the Sanctuary
- encouraged to continue into tertiary education

Families benefited from

- siblings inspired to also pursue further education
- financial support when students achieved careers

The community benefits from:

- returning students volunteering in schools,
- students speaking at schools to promote the scholarships, the benefits of good grades, and conserving the Sanctuary land and animals.

Finances

We are extremely grateful to the Taunton Royal Over-Seas League who agreed to adopt the Friends of Wechiau to be their charity for their fund-raising efforts for the year. Two trustees, Ann Bannister and Janet Kirk, gave a presentation about the work of the charity at their meeting in October 2018. Further funding for Friends of Wechiau mainly comes from individual donations. Our income for the year April 2018 to March 2019 was £1,881 and total expenditure for the year £1,717 with a balance at the end of the year of £5,550.

This year all funding sent to Ghana was used for senior high school scholarships and school supplies. As the Ghanaian Government has provided the majority of funding for fees to attend senior high school since 2017/18 Friends of Wechiau has gradually reduced the amount for each scholarship. Some additional funding support is needed as students still need to pay for uniforms, equipment, PTA levies etc, and families lose a valuable source of income whilst students are studying as boarders away from Wechiau.

This year the students received different scholarship amounts according to their year of study. The four students in their third year received a higher scholarship amount of 790 GHC (126 GBP*) reflecting the fact that they do not receive funding for their fees from the government. The five students in their second year received 500 GHC (80 GBP*), and the six students in their first year received 333 GHC (54 GBP*). In addition 1000 GHC (160 GBP*) was provided to purchase primary school supplies.

Nearly all the funds raised by Friends of Wechiau are used directly to further the education of people in the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary area. Administration costs are kept to a minimum and include bank charges for transfer of funds to Ghana, an honorarium 1,000 GHC (160GBP*), travel and stationery costs for the local administration of the education programme at Wechiau 450 GHC (72GBP*).

The Friends of Wechiau Group ensures at any time that it has sufficient reserves to enable funded students to complete the current course of education.

[*Note: assuming GHC:GBP exchange rate = 0.16]