



The Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust

*Promoting friendship & understanding through financial support
for Nigerian education*

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MINUTES for the 12th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of
THE BRITAIN-NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL TRUST
on THURSDAY 22nd JULY 2021 at 3.00pm
at
THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE
PARK PLACE, ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON SW1A

1	WELCOME BNET Chair, Mr David Brandler, welcomed all attending and introduced Members to those seated on the top table, table namely Mr John Lee (JL), Treasurer; Mr. Kevin Rafferty (KR), Membership Secretary; and Mr. David Brandler (DB), Chair. DB explained that lockdown last year meant the AGM for 2020 had to be cancelled but that the deposit for 2020 had been extended to the AGM for 2021 and a contracted meeting was arranged, despite England only being out of full lockdown since the beginning of the week, without a guest speaker or Trust representatives from Nigeria. All Trustees are therefore very grateful to all Members making the effort to attend this meeting.	
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To give apologies for the Patron, Sir Mervyn Brown, KCMG OBE , from Trustee General (Dr) YD Gowon, BA PhD, and from members of the Trust whose names BNET Administrator, Frances Tarr, has recorded.	
3	TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT "The last fifteen months have been difficult for BNET, as they have been for all of us.	

I am glad we are able today to meet physically for the first time in two years even if this is low key and, clearly, the problems associated with COVID 19 are far from over, both here in the UK and in Nigeria and around the world.

Inevitably, the movement restrictions and decrease in commercial and social activity has had a negative impact on BNET and our projects, both ongoing and planned. Normally, our Nigerian representative, Greg Ojieh, would be here to give a talk on the various projects but it would not have made sense to ask him to come over to the UK ten days in advance to complete his quarantine. So, I will give a brief précis now of our activities in the last months.

Our sponsorship of one student per state for the National Teachers' Institute online teacher training programme has unfortunately fallen into temporary abeyance. But we plan to re-start it as soon as practicable, either for those students who completed their first year in 2020 or for those completing their first year in 2021. We will then sponsor the best student from each State for the next three years and award the N100,000 Gary Clark Prize for the teacher graduating with the highest marks overall.

We still have one year left of our joint sponsorship with the Association of Commonwealth Universities of a Visiting Fellow to Ado Bayero University, Kano, as an external examiner to the Department of Education. This could not be arranged in 2020, nor indeed in 2021, but we will review the situation next year to see if the programme can be completed and we will assess the options of renewing it.

We continue to sponsor the REEL Foundation, set up by Ajoke Omoware-Adeola, who I hope you will remember gave a talk on her work at the 2019 AGM. This involved setting up E-learning hubs in the outskirts of Lagos City to encourage children to gain access and experience of the internet and its potential. This is a school, or a hub, that is run out of hours and during weekends. We have provided funds to support the volunteers running the centres as well as providing some equipment for them. More details are available via our website.

We continue to support the Hope For the Village Child Foundation, run by Sister Rita in South Kaduna. In 2020 we donated £1,000 to help them supply essentials to village children who could not get

	supplies from towns with the lockdown and, this year, we donated just over £2,000 to help them in their teaching work. One of the major consequences of the Covid Pandemic has been the closure of schools for several months. We have supported Gethsemane School in Jos, who take in a considerable number of orphans from the nearby Military Camp as well as the IBRA Foundation School in Miringa, near Biu, in Borno State. Both have had to close for a large proportion of 2020 and have therefore faced the additional problem of whether to lay off staff or how to pay them. Earlier this year we agreed to pay three months of staff salaries to the two schools. Additionally, we are exploring the option of assisting IBRA Foundation to send female staff on computer training courses. We received a private donation of just over £2,000 earlier this year to be spent on a primary school in Badagry, Lagos State, and we are currently arranging to buy various educational aids and equipment to supply them. Last year we agreed to sponsor an NGO PADEAP (Pan African Education and Advocacy Programme) who are starting a pilot teacher training project in Abuja to assist teaching at some of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The modalities are yet to be finalised as the State Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) has not cooperated as initially promised but we feel these types of initiatives are important and worth persevering with. So, I hope to be able to report more positively on this project by next year. As always, our aim as Trustees is to try to ensure any project we sponsor will benefit as many children as possible and has a good chance of success and will be sustainable. Our focus, where possible, is on teacher training, as can be seen by the description of the projects above. With the current difficulties in the educational system in Nigeria exacerbated by the challenges of COVID, there is a constant challenge for us between approving projects that have little chance of success because we feel we must assist where we can and, constantly, rejecting projects that we do not believe will meet our criteria. This remains, for us, one of our major challenges.	
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	In the last year, two Trustees have resigned – Mary Anderson and Hindy El Fadel. They have been replaced by Edith Ngozi David and Janet Kirk, both of whom are here today. Like so many other organisations, companies and groups, all our meetings this last 15 months have been by Zoom, with the inevitable lack of bonding and fellowship that we get with live meetings. Nevertheless I want to thank all our Board Members here and in Nigeria and, especially, our officers as well as Frances Tarr, our Administrator, and Karen Sussex, helping out with our website, who have kept us running and functioning as best we can these last months. I want to thank all our Members for their continued support, especially those of you who came today. And let us hope by 2022 we will be back to something closer to what we had before and can organise a proper AGM with reports from Nigeria and Guest Speakers.”	
4	TO RECEIVE THE TREASURER’S REPORT & ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2017 The Treasurer, Mr JR Lee, presented his report on the accounts for the period ending December 31, 2020. Compared to the previous year, activity in 2020 was at a reduced level in view of the implications of COVID 19 affecting the UK and our projects in Nigeria. Funding remains a matter of concern as incoming resources continue to decline without the benefit of any sizeable donations. Bank interest and investment declined by 14% to £4,854, while voluntary income comprising membership subscriptions, tax reclaims, and donations came to £4,923. Overall income for the year reduced to £10,731. Governance and supporting costs, including administrative expenses £13,655, a decrease of 57% over 2019. Our combined Funds closing balance reduced to £ 361,502 as against in 2019 £383,108. The Trustees are addressing as a priority the need to attract new members and donors. £10,359 was disbursed from its unrestricted funds in support of current projects, as against £13,867 in 2019. Before closing the Treasurer explained that the full set of accounts would be available for viewing on the BNET website once formally signed by the Auditors.	

	There being no further questions, the report of the Treasurer and Statement of Financial Activities for 2020 were approved by a show of hands of all members present.	
5	APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS John Lee, BNET Treasurer, confirmed Messrs Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP have signified their willingness to continue as Independent Examiners of the Trust and proposed they be re-appointed for the ensuing year. The motion which was seconded by Kevin Rafferty and agreed by all members present.	
6	ELECTION OF TRUSTEES (i) Under Clause 5 (2) each newly elected Trustee shall retire with effect at the first Annual General Meeting after his or her appointment but shall be eligible for re-election at that Annual General Meeting. Those new Trustees due to retire at this Annual General Meeting were Mrs Edith Ngozi David and Ms. Janet Kirk who, both being eligible and having signified their willingness to serve again, were prepared to be re-elected Elizabeth Dudley proposed a motion that both were re-elected en bloc, Bayo Oladimeji seconded the motion which was agreed by all present. (ii) Under Clause 5(9) of the Constitution of the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, one third of the Board of Trustees retire annually at the Annual General Meeting. Those due to retire at this Annual General Meeting were Professor Graham Furniss, Mr John Lee and Mr Dafe Diejomoah who, all being eligible and having signified their willingness to serve again, were prepared to be re-elected Edith David proposed a motion that both are re-elected en bloc. Derek Sawyer seconded the motion which was agreed by all present.	
7	TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS The Secretary confirmed to the Chair there were no items of other business for which notice had been given; technically questions should have been submitted 28 days before the question.	

8	CLOSURE As there was no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 3:45pm and thanked all Members for their attendance and participation, especially because of Covid, the weather and travelling. It is hoped this time next year we will back to where we were before with a guest speaker and a larger audience.	
9	QUESTIONS (i) Mr. Derek Sawyer asked Trustees for a report on the situation in Nigeria as affected by COVID. The Chair responded that, from his own visit in May, in Kaduna & Kano, none of those he was working with had any negative impact from COVID; that the restrictions are much reduced now, and people are generally more worried about earning a living than of catching Covid. (ii) Mr. Ayodeji Alaka, as an alumni o Kings, asked about the development fund, requesting an update on Kings and Edo Colleges. DB confirmed BNET built a teaching block, with an IT centre on ground floor at Kings which is equipped with computers provided by BNET. This is on the new site, built from a private donation from an individual specifically requesting this for Edo and Kings Colleges. The decision to build on the new site was taken in discussion with Kings. DB confirmed that BNET has a reserve for improvements and repairs that are needed, that the college can call on if necessary. (iii) Mr. Ayodeji Alaka, asked about the strategic challenges involved in maintaining teaching capacity and was specifically curious as to how it may be possible to plug the 'dire' teacher training system in Nigeria. DB reported that BNET involvement with teacher training at the moment is through working with the NTI, touched on briefly in his Chair's presentation , where BNET sponsors a student from every state to do their distance training through the NTI. At the end of their first year, BNET is given the results of all the different teacher students in each State and selects one of them to sponsor. Whilst normally the student selected will be the one with the highest mark, this is not automatic, as the Trustees try to get a reasonable	

	spread in terms of men and women and of subjects. BNET will then sponsor them for the next 3 years of their 4-year course and, at the end of their final year will award a prize of N100k to the overall best student. BNET sponsors a 3-year cycle and, when that cycle ends, the Trust will start again, rather than sponsoring a 3 year cycle every year. In 2019, the Trust finished the 2017 cohort and will restart the project, either taking 2020 first years, depending on their results or the 2021 cohort. DB confirmed that teacher training is part of the education in Nigeria that BNET, as a charity, tries to focus on. Yet, at same time BNET has to acknowledge that, as a small charity, our influence is limited which is why Trustees assess individual projects and will support those that are both sustainable and contribute to teacher training or assisting teachers in their work.	
(iv)	Dr. Salamatu Fada (SF) asked whether BNET works directly with the Federal Ministry of Education and, if yes, at what capacity. She told the meeting that her decision to join BNET was because of the high illiteracy level in the north of Nigeria, which is slightly better in the South. SF works in local communities and reported working with one school where there are 377 pupils in the class and only one teacher ; this is during the morning. This teacher arrives at the school again in the afternoon to work with secondary school students. SF asked if it was possible for BNET to influence the Federal Ministry of Education as, from her own experience as a consultant in conservation biology, she knows many politicians feel overwhelmed and need to be guided, to hopefully help reduce illiteracy problems in northern Nigeria.	
(v)	SF reported on a maths pilot she undertook earlier in the year in Bauchi where a teacher helped educate teachers preparing for secondary exams, working with SUBEB (State Universal Education Board), recruiting approximately 10 teachers in Bauchi State for a two-day workshop. The before and after assessment illustrated a remarkable difference – with a 0% before and an up to 77% after the workshop. This demonstrated just how necessary teacher training is needed. Patrick Emek responded to SF, saying local governments are not happy when charitable organisations begin lobbying in political issues.	

	DB agreed. BNET does not have sufficient contacts or sufficient strength to talk to the Ministry of Education on a Federal level and feel BNET's energy and what funds the Trust has - and what focus BNET can bring - is better spent on particular projects than on any grand vision. DfID etc are better resourced than BNET, and if the Federal Ministry of Education is interested in receiving outside help, is better placed in bringing this kind of vision than BNET.	
(vii)	DB confirmed SF's pilot project in Bauchi is exactly the sort of thing that BNET is interested to assist as the Trust can focus on a particular area, e.g. improving the teaching in a small rural school by bringing in better qualified teachers to show the local teachers how to improve their work. This is the sort of thing, in the end, BNET is fighting in a desert and what little few drops of water we have are better concentrated in one place than scattered throughout. Overall, DB reported that the Board is comfortable about the direction we have, particularly in teacher training and improving the resources for teachers particularly, if outside urban areas.	
(viii)	Kevin Rafferty emphasised BNET's policy to always be even handed in where BNET help is targeted so there is no bias to the North or South , one of the reasons why BNET focuses on NTI, as it is a project to benefit the whole of Nigeria.	