

**MINUTES OF THE 4th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE BRITAIN-NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL TRUST
HELD on THURSDAY 12th JULY 2012 at 3.30pm at
THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE, PARK PLACE, ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON SW1A**

Trustees Present: D.R. Reeves, Esq., MBE (Chairman) [In the Chair]
Professor L.J. Bown, OBE
D.K.O. Brandler, Esq. (Vice Chairman)
Elizabeth Dudley (Events Coordinator)
J.R. Lee, Esq. (Treasurer)
B. Oladimeji, Esq.
K.M. Rafferty, Esq. (Membership Secretary)

and 36 Members and guests.

Item 1 Welcome.

Mr Derek Reeves MBE, Chairman and in the Chair, welcomed members to the fourth Annual General Meeting of The Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, particularly to Greg Ojeh, the Trust's Resident Representative in Nigeria, and **opened** the proceedings at 3.30pm precisely. He introduced Ms. Lucy Stiles as a special guest who was to give a talk after the AGM about her BNET sponsored VSO experience as a teacher trainer with the College of Education at Akwanga, Nasarawa State and the current priorities of VSO for education in Nigeria.

Apologies were given by the Chairman for the Patron, Sir Mervyn Brown, KCMG OBE who was unable to attend.

Item 2 Apologies for Absence.

The Chairman reported that apologies had been received from six Trustees namely Mr GM Clark, Mr T. Cooke, Mr R. Fulford-Brown, Professor GL Furniss, BA PhD (London), General (Dr) YD Gowon, BA PhD and H.E. Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, OFR, CFR and from 61 members of the Trust whose names have been recorded.

Item 3 To Receive the Chairman's Report.

The Chairman, Mr DR Reeves, MBE presented his report, which is reproduced in full hereunder: -

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

Everyone here will have received a copy of the Report and Accounts which includes the formal Chairman's Review of the Year. I will assume that you have all read it but should like at this meeting to update you on some of the things that have happened since it was written several months ago.

Having reviewed the progress made in setting up an E-learning library at the University of Benin the Trustees agreed to meet our commitment to provide a further 50 computers and some additional support hardware. I am happy to say that these have now been installed and are fully operational. This has been a somewhat longer process than we all thought it would be when we started it just over four years ago but I think we can now safely say that it has been a success and is a major benefit to the students of UNIBEN. In total BNET spent some N30 million (over £100,000) on this project and the university has been advised that we consider our commitments to be fulfilled and our participation therefore at an end. We have to hope that the university will continue to discharge its responsibilities to the ongoing running of the centre and have now handed over the project to UNIBEN.

We continue to support the Umutu school project but progress is a little slower than we might like. Our Nigeria Representative, Greg Ojieh, is maintaining pressure on the school, the diocese and the local community to deliver their side of the bargain more quickly. We agreed this morning to support a science wing needed to get creditation and to support a few students with scholarships there.

We all know the major problems that exist in most of the Northern states. We are being very cautious about projects based there but did decide to support the Gethsemane Rehabilitation Centre in Jos in the building of a security wall around their school in an attempt to keep trouble out. It is a sad commentary when I have to say that one of the recent bombing incidents actually happened in the same road as the Gethsemane school, some yards away.

Our commitment to prioritise the training of teachers continues and we have undertaken the sponsorship of another VSO to replace Lucy Stiles, who having completed her two-year placement has returned home. During her attachment to the College of Education, Akwanga, Lucy initiated a successful in-service teacher training project in Gudi and we are reliant on her replacement Lesley Marchant to expand this excellent method of instruction. There are problems with NTI and poor administration but we will keep plugging away at it.

The first visiting academic under our Commonwealth Fellowship scheme, Dr Simon Heap, completed his three-month's attachment to the University of Ibadan in the latter part of last year. Despite there being problems with strikes at the university Simon carried out a lot of good work which was much appreciated by the University authorities. He gave a very interesting review of his attachment at the recent Sussex meeting, which has now been published on our web-site – I commend it to you.

Mentioning the web-site I am pleased to say that it is now up and running and we hope that it will prove to be a source of information to existing members and also help in recruiting new ones. Thanks are due to everyone who helped to get it off the ground – in particular Gary Clark and Tim Cooke.

I am pleased to tell you that we have very recently received a major donation of slightly under £1 million. This has been given anonymously and we have yet to address the action which we will need to take in order to meet the terms on which it has been given but are confident that we can do so and that it will greatly enhance the already good reputation of the Trust.

The continuing economic downturn continues to affect our income making it difficult to maintain support for our on-going commitments. We are therefore grateful to our membership for the valuable support they give us through their subscriptions, which last year generated some £8,000. Our membership strength remains fairly stable although this year we have already been pleased to welcome several new members. The sale of our annual Christmas cards generates extra revenue, which enabled us to fund essential software for the Pacelli School for the Blind & Partially Sighted Children in Lagos. We are grateful to our member Pamela Hill for her attractive paintings that make these cards possible and I am delighted to say she has just given us another one for this year. We have reduced the number of cards ordered this year because the cost of stamps affects the sending of them.

I conclude by expressing gratitude to all my fellow Trustees for the hard work which they have given over the past year. In particular I should like to mention David Griffin who had been such an excellent Vice Chairman ever since the Trust was set up (and before that with BNA and the Tafawa Balewa Memorial Trust). David retired at the end of August and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for everything that he has done over the years. David Brandler, who was Chairman of the former BNA, has taken over as our Vice Chairman and Elizabeth Dudley our Events Co-ordinator has been appointed a trustee to fill the vacancy created by David's retirement. I should also like to thank Gary Clark, our Secretary, not

only for being the hub of the Trust but in particular over the past four months when he has been very ill. I am sure you will all be pleased to know that he has responded well to the extensive treatment and is nearly back to full health.

Lastly, most of you will, I expect, now know that despite many objections the Africa Centre has been sold for redevelopment. This means we will once again be on the move, probably before the end of the year. Although the date of closure has not yet been given we are together with the Business Council for Africa currently investigating various options for relocation. As soon as a decision has been taken we shall let every member know through the BNET Newsletter.

I thank you for your attention and will be happy to answer any questions.”

- 3.1 Mr Anthony Shillingford introduced himself as the son of educator, Anthony Arthur Shillingford, asking if there is any way of monitoring effective use of BNET money. He cited Simon Heap’s excellent feedback on the BNET website, requesting similar feedback in future. The Chairman confirmed the success of Simon Heap’s visit adding that the Commonwealth Fellowship Scheme had this day confirmed that arrangements for choosing the second BNET Fellowship were in hand. He concurred that monitoring had in the past been problematic but our Representative in Nigeria, Greg Ojeh, now monitors projects on the ground. The Chairman also explained that the recent (anonymous) donator of £1m had chosen the Trust because he knew he could trust BNET to ensure the money was spent properly; indeed much time was always spent ensuring funds are spent as intended.
- 3.2 A question was raised about the situation in the North. The Chairman confirmed the Trust’s support of two small projects in the North, one being Gethsemane, a school set up by a pastor and his wife for Nigerian Forces’ orphans. The current sponsorship of the building of a wall to aid the school’s security illustrated issues of security faced in Kaduna, Jos and Kano. Greg Ojeh informed all present about BNET’s support of Hope for the African Child and the NTI in Kaduna and confirmed that BNET will continue to support on-going projects in the North and, as the security situation improves BNET will improve its presence there. He verified problems with NTI administratively whilst recognising the difficulties presented in maintaining standards for those working under a continuous security threat. The Vice Chair, David Brandler added that BNET has no qualms about supporting projects in the North and would continue to consider all projects on merit. He reflected that the North was the place where BNET ought to be supporting more projects.

Ms Daphne Martin proposed and Professor L.J Bown. O.B.E seconded the Chairman’s Report be **Noted** with gratitude for the leadership he shows and this was agreed by all members present.

Item 4

To Receive the Treasurer’s Report and Annual Accounts for 2011.

The Treasurer, Mr JR Lee, presented his report on the Accounts for the period ending December 31, 2011. Although there has been little improvement in the UK economic climate, the level of income increased by 20.1% over 2010. Much of the income has been generated from interest which rose by 62% to £8,805 while membership subscriptions and donations, which included a donation as an award by the Judging Panel for the FIRST Award for Responsible Capitalism, generated £8,978.

The Statement of Financial Activities showed total incoming resources of £22,779 (2010 - £18,963) of which £2,461 (2010 - £225) was through donations while subscriptions from members, including Gift Aid refunds (£1,328, an increase of 32% over the previous year) raised £7,845 (2010 - £7,797). Investment income and bank interest generated £8,804 (2010 - £5,445) and the sale of Christmas cards a further £2,207 (2010 - £2,762).

Resources expended totalled £76,985 (2010- £116,745) which included £72,246 (2010 - £111,224) disbursed in support of the Trust’s charitable activities. Governance costs for the period were lower at £3,491 (2010 - £4,808). After taking into account Net unrealised

losses of £580 on investments (2010 - £4,385) the Fund balance stood at £435,800 (2010 - £490,586) at the year-end.

In line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, BNET spent more in 2011 than it received and ran a deficit.

The Treasurer explained that there will be a one-off increase in the audit fee for 2012 because income will exceed £500,000, and explained the difference between an Independent Examination and a full audit. The extra cost for the audit will be covered by the donation.

After further discussion and explanation Mr Peter Edwards proposed and Mr Kevin Rafferty seconded the report of the Treasurer and Statement of Financial Activities for 2011 be **Approved**. The motion was carried by a show of hands.

Item 5 **Appointment of Independent Examiners.**

The Treasurer confirmed that Messrs Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP had signified their willingness to continue as Independent Examiners of the Trust and proposed they be **re-appointed** for the ensuing year. Mr Kevin Rafferty seconded the motion and members present agreed unanimously.

Item 6 **Election of Trustees.**

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 Lalage Bown, OBE, Mr Gary Clark, Ms Elizabeth Dudley and Mr 'Bayo Oladimeji, who, all being eligible and having signified their willingness to serve again, were prepared to be re-elected.

The Chair recommended that all four be **re-elected en bloc**. On his proposal and seconded by Mr Ebun Akanni this was unanimously agreed. Mr Peter Edwards then proposed and Lady Atako Gregory seconded that the four named members of the Board be **re-appointed** Trustees and the motion was carried by a show of hands.

Item 7 **To Consider Any Other Business.**

There were no items of other business for which notice had been given.

- 7.1 Mr Anthony Shillingford asked whether BNET had approached any UK educational institutions and foundations for support. The Chair replied that, through various trustees, there is contact, especially where there are special projects, but there is no formal relationship with any particular institution or foundation. The Vice Chair added that BNET works with VSO, especially where they have projects or work in Nigeria. Additionally, one of the BNET Trustees is a SOAS professor and the Trust works closely with the Association of Commonwealth Universities in support of their Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

Item 8 **Closure.**

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 4:05pm and thanked members for their attendance and participation.

As recorded by
Elizabeth Dudley
Events Coordinator
On behalf of

Gary Clark
Secretary

D.R. Reeves, MBE
Chairman