

**MINUTES OF THE 6th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE BRITAIN-NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL TRUST
HELD on TUESDAY 22nd JULY 2014 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]
Dr. M. Anderson		
Professor L.J. Bown, OBE		
D.K.O. Brandler, Esq.	(Vice Chairman)	
G.M. Clark, Esq.	(Secretary)	
T. Cooke, Esq.		
Miss Elizabeth Oritsejolomi Dudley	(Events Co-ordinator)	
Professor G.L. Furniss, BA PhD FBA OBE		
J.A.F. Howard, Esq.		
J.R. Lee, Esq.	(Treasurer)	
K.M. Rafferty, Esq.	(Membership Secretary)	

and 25 Members and guests.

Item 1

Welcome.

Mr Derek Reeves MBE, Chairman and in the Chair, warmly welcomed members to the sixth Annual General Meeting of The Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust and **opened** the proceedings at 3.30pm precisely. He was delighted to introduce Mrs Sylvia Smith who having completed the joining formalities that afternoon was the Trust's newest member. The Chairman acknowledged the presence of Chief David Griffin, former Vice Chairman of BNET and also Engineer Greg Ojieh, Resident Representative in Nigeria who was to give an illustrated progress report after the meeting.

It was at this time last year, the Chairman reminded, that Mr Kaye Whiteman was the guest speaker since when he sadly passed away in May. He had been a valuable member of the BNA Executive as well as a supportive member of the Trust and those present were asked to pause and give thought to his memory.

For the benefit of those members present the Chairman then introduced the top table namely Mr David Brandler, Vice Chairman, Mr John Lee, Treasurer and Mr Gary Clark, Secretary.

Item 2

Apologies for Absence.

The Chairman gave apologies for the Patron, Sir Mervyn Brown, KCMG OBE and HE Dr Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, OFR, CFR both of who were unable to attend. The Secretary reported that apologies had been received from three Trustees namely Mr SA Ademeli representing the Nigeria High Commissioner, General (Dr) YD Gowon, BA PhD and Mr B. Oladimeji, who was a delegate at the National Conference in Abuja and from 40 members of the Trust whose names had 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: -

"The formal purpose of this agenda item is to receive the Chairman's Report, which is presented in the Report and Accounts. This of course reports the situation up to six months ago and it has become customary for me to offer an update and comment on what has happened since then.

The new science block at the Immaculate Conception Girls School at Umutu has been awaiting equipping and furnishing which has taken a little longer than we had hoped but is now nearly complete and hopefully will enable WAEC to approve the facility for the teaching of Senior Secondary School students. The block – on which we have spent over £20,000 in total so far – will be named after our benefactor, Donald Partridge, who you may recall lived and worked in the area during and after his time in the Colonial Service and a plaque commemorating this has been installed.

For a number of reasons – none of them caused by us!! – there have been unsatisfactory delays in awarding a second BNET Commonwealth Fellowship at Ibadan University. The problems have now been overcome and Professor Herick Otieno, a Kenyan national and currently Professor of Physics at the Maseno University in Kisumu, Kenya has been appointed. During his three-month attachment Otieno will be engaged in teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Solid State Physics as well as undertaking research in the field of Renewable Energy Development and Application. Otieno took up his placement at the end of June and we are delighted with his selection.

The boreholes project in Kano State has been very successful and we hope that in due course we shall be able to extend it further.

The training and development of young teachers continues to be a priority and in April we agreed to sponsor a new intake of 36 students who had enrolled with the National Teachers Institute in Kaduna for their upgrading course. This is a three-year commitment and providing they all pass their exams will cost us £22,000 in total.

Our two major projects – at Edo College, Benin and King's College, Lagos – have progressed so much so that the Edo project has been completed and the opening and commissioning ceremony was held last month. Unfortunately there has been much less satisfactory progress at King's College but I am pleased to report that the project detail has at last been agreed and building work got under way in January this year. Our thanks must go to our Vice Chairman, David Brandler and in particular to our Resident Representative Greg Ojeh for all the effort which they have put in to these projects. Greg will be giving a detailed report after this meeting which I am sure you will find most interesting.

The Trustees are now having to consider the future in some detail. In simple terms over the past three years we have benefited a great deal from two windfall donations to our funds. These have brought more than £1.5 million, which is additional to our normal income. They have enabled us to sponsor much larger projects than had hitherto been possible – the Uniben E-learning facility, the school at Umutu and the two projects at Edo and King's – as well as many smaller but equally important projects. But these large donations are unlikely to be repeated so we shall have to look at a considerable reduction in the amounts we can spend over the coming years. Another concern is our apparent inability to attract new members. Membership strength continues to fall and is now only a little more than 200 and subscriptions barely cover our operating costs. It would be a pity if we have to limit our activities for lack of funds, but that is a real possibility as things stand and the Trustees will report back in the coming year once they have carefully examined the options.

Much as I would like to avoid it I believe that I have to make some comment on the security situation in Nigeria and in particular that of Boko Haram. In many ways – and fortunately on a scale that may be of no interest to them – the Trust represents much of what Boko Haram stands against and we have to be conscious of the impacts they may make on our activities. Some members have contacted us and encouraged us “to join the fight against Boko Haram” but we do not see this as our role. Unfortunately we have to be ultra careful about spending any money in the affected areas and hope – without I confess a great deal of optimism – that the Nigerian Government eventually accept their responsibility for a return to normality.

In conclusion I should like to record thanks to everyone who has helped us during the year. In particular our gratitude is due to our Secretary, Gary Clark, who holds the whole thing together, to our Vice Chairman, David Brandler who does sterling work both here and in Nigeria on our behalf and to all of our Trustees who contribute so much to everything which we do. Last April we strengthened our team by the appointment of Jonathan Howard as a Trustee. Jonathan, as some of you may know, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council for Africa, (our landlord!). Apart from the benefit of his 35 years service in the Army and diplomatic corps he is also an Associate at Philip Mostyn Associates where he assists with leadership training at the University College London Hospital Staff College.

Thanks also to Greg Ojeh who does such a good job for us in Nigeria. We are grateful too for the valuable support, which we get, from the Nigeria High Commissioner and his staff. Most of all we are grateful for the support which we get from you, our members of the Trust.

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

In the absence of any questions **Miss Elizabeth Oritsejolomi Dudley** proposed and **Chief Robert I. Walters** seconded the Chairman's Report be **Noted** and this was agreed by all members present.

Item 4

To Receive the Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts for 2013.

The Treasurer, Mr JR Lee, presented his report on the Accounts for the period ending December 31, 2013. He reminded why it was still necessary to separate the financial resources into Restricted and Unrestricted funds, those restricted having been anonymously donated for the specific benefit of Kings College, Lagos and Edo College, Benin.

Income for the year was solely Unrestricted and totalled £34,126 of which membership subscriptions, Gift Aid refunds and donations had generated £12,908 (2012 - £10,306). Investment income and bank interest rose by 24% to £18,128 (2012 - £14,603).

Restricted resources expended totalled £235,100 of which £225,100 went to the Edo College project and £10,040 was released to the Kings College project to cover design fees and mobilisation costs. Management and support costs for both projects totalled £7,324.

Unrestricted resources expended amounted to £91,190 (2012 - £79,542) of which £67,485 was disbursed in support of the Trust's charitable activities (2012 - £59,979). Governance costs for the period were £4,023 (2012 - £3,571) while total support costs fell by 26.8% to £18,992 (2012 - £25,963).

After taking into account a Net unrealised gain of £5,978 on investments (2012 - gain of £5,289) the combined Fund balance closed at £1,076,193 (2012 - £1,369,743).

In line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, BNET spent more in 2013 than it received and ran a £51,086 deficit of its Unrestricted funds.

Before closing the Treasurer explained that the full set of accounts were available for viewing on both the Charity Commission and BNET websites.

There being no questions **Professor Lalage Bown, OBE** proposed and **Mr Kevin Rafferty** seconded the report of the Treasurer and Statement of Financial Activities for 2013 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. **Mrs Christine Afolabi** 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 Dr Mary Anderson, Mr Jonathan Howard and Mr Kevin Rafferty, who, all being eligible and having signified their willingness to serve again, were prepared to be re-elected.

The Chair recommended that all three be **re-elected en bloc**. On his proposal and seconded by **Mr Samuel Okeiyi** this was unanimously agreed. **Mr Olu Akanni** then proposed and **Professor Lalage Bown, OBE** seconded that the three 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.**

The Secretary reported there were no items of other business for which notice had been given.

Mr Anthony Shillingford enquired if the Trust had ever received funding from DFID as he believed there was a facility for charities to get matching funding through a DFID department for certain projects such as those involving health and education. In reply the Chairman thought that that facility had ceased but would ask the Treasurer to investigate.

Professor Lalage Bown speaking on behalf of those present commended the Officers of the Trust for their dedication, hard work and outstanding commitment to BNET and asked that the appreciation of the members be recorded in the Minutes.

Item 8 **Closure.**

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 3:55pm and thanked members for their attendance and participation.



G.M. Clark
Secretary

D.R. Reeves, MBE
Chairman