

MINUTES OF THE DOLEN FFERMIO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday, 24 April 2018

1 Welcome: Lorna Brown welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting.

2 Attendance: Lorna Brown, Nick Christoforou, Eileen Roberts, Cordelia Weedon, Tom Paddon, Cate Wallington, Suzanne Kirkwood, Dan Grove, Val Talbot, Dave Talbot, Enid Thomas, Lyn Evans, Richard Beaman, John Woolley, Zoe Helbrow, Heather Rees

Apologies: Emyr Owen, Tim Smith, Chas Nicholson, Judith Schofield, Liam Brown, Lawal Brown, Sue Hughes, Beryl Vaughan, Barbara Maycock, Nick Rees, Mary Jones,

3 Minutes of the last annual general meeting on 27 April 2017 (previously circulated) were agreed.

4 Matters Arising: there were no matters arising.

5 Chair's Report: enclosed. Lorna expressed everyone's sadness at the death of Jane Owen and paid tribute to her loyal support.

6 Treasurer's Report:

The treasurer, Nick Christoforou, presented the annual accounts with a series of slides, showing income and expenditure under the various project headings and a final balance, which is healthier than last year's. The accounts will be emailed or sent as a paper copy with the minutes. They will be put on the Charity Commission website when they have been audited.

7 Election of Officers

The re-election of the present officers: Lorna Brown as Chair, Emyr Owen as Vice chair, Nick Christoforou as Treasurer and Val Talbot as Secretary was proposed by Eileen Roberts, seconded by Suzanne Kirkwood and agreed by those present.

8 Annual Report: this had been circulated with the agenda 2 weeks earlier. **Please read the minutes in conjunction with the annual report.** Additional information was highlighted in conjunction with the accompanying slides.

Val Talbot echoed Lorna's sadness at Jane Owen's death and paid tribute to her loyal support, saying how much we would all miss her.

Val reiterated out great admiration of our exceptional Ugandan partners and also for Lorna's hard work and dedication in supporting them.

a) Goat Breeding Project

We saw the new goat breeding unit in Kamuli at Moses Kitimbo's compound and the healthy looking goats, as outlined in the annual report. Lorna explained that Moses is a retired senior agriculture teacher at Busoga High School, who was heavily involved in the school link programme. She expanded on the AI and embryo transfer work taking place in conjunction with the Animal Gene Pool group from Kampala. The group is investing in agriculture as a way of giving something back to Uganda, a common practice there among people who have succeeded in their professions but still farm.

b) Ngora community Solar Project

In just over a year the figures in the annual report are very commendable. There is a big demand for solar installations and one school offered the deeds of their land as security so that they could have theirs. The slide of the health centre showed an installation by another group which Moses and the team were called on to rectify when it didn't work. The team has collected a number of testimonials from children who are thrilled to have light to study by and, as Lorna pointed out, don't have to run the risk of fire from kerosene lamps. Lorna expanded a little on the energy and construction company they have set up in Ngora (TECCO). So far they have only won small contracts but they are confident this will grow.

c) Ngora Agro-Forestry

The new land in Ngora will be for tree and bamboo planting when funds allow. We saw a slide of a sweet potato crop, which will improve the ground. We also saw thorny bushes being planted, which will make a living fence (permaculture principles) so that only a very small amount of wire will be needed to keep animals out of crops and in their compounds. We have made contact with a new community in Ngora district which is very responsive to working with permaculture principles and is learning to grow crops with a minimal amount of water.

d) Kamuli Agro-forestry

We saw impressive slides of the papaya plantation mentioned in the annual report and also mango trees. A slide reminded us of the Kamuli team, who make up the Dolen Ffermio Environmental Farming and Health organisation and are the original people who came to Llanfyllin in 2012. Lorna explained that the long title was chosen by the team and they insist on retaining it! Paul Musenero is the agronomy expert and plays a key role in the project and Charles Mugarura acts as a consultant. We saw a slide of the new administrative office, which is described in the annual report and which was funded by a cash crop of water melons. Dolen Ffermio is funding places on the next permaculture course in May, again run by Steve Jones of Sector39.

Busoga High School permaculture food forest

Slides showed us the good work taking place here under the leadership of Connie Kauma. In particular, we were very interested to see the swales (ditches) which had been dug in the grounds to trap and retain rainwater.

Irrigation on the Kamuli land

At this point member Tom Paddon gave an eloquent talk on the need for funding to provide irrigation along the same lines as Busoga High School but on a much bigger scale. Details are on the letter accompanying the minutes and they are reproduced here so that there is a record in the minutes. He ended with a plea for donations for this specific project and with specific amounts.

“The land belonging to Dolen Ffermio is 30 acres and 850m wide. The land slopes gently down to the Nile, which means that the rains run off and there is a great need to retain as much moisture as possible. Steve Jones and Charles Mugarura have developed a plan to remedy this by the digging of a valley dam in the area of a natural spring and by digging swales (ditches) along the contours to trap the rainwater.

This work has to be done by a tractor and digger. Dolen Ffermio has received a donation to pay for the dam, which will take 3 days’ work. The swales will take a further 2 days’ work, which we need to find funds for. Each day’s work will cost £200 plus £80 for fuel for the machinery. I am appealing for 4 donors to fund this vital work. If they can be gift aided, the donations for the work would cost £160 for each day and the fuel would cost £66 for each day – and Dolen Ffermio will claim the rest from HMRC!

I would like to pay tribute to the amount and variety of crops already planted but, with the rains being unreliable, water retention is vital and would make the whole land even more productive. This proposal is firmly in line with permaculture principles and will be used a training tool for farmers in the community”.

We do hope that members will respond to Tom’s appeal and, if anyone needs further information, please contact Lorna on 01691 648709 or uk@lornabrown.net. Donations can be sent to our treasurer:

Nick Christoforou, Gribin Fach, Lon Caeaugwynedd, Llanfyllin SY22 5EN

01691 648176 nickchristoforou@gmail.com

Or, you can credit the Dolen Ffermio account using the sort code 40 30 13 and account no. 51035401. Please tell Nick that you have done this and whether it can be gift aided.

e) Ngora Orphan and Vulnerable Children (NOVC) Project

Val thanked Cate Wallington who had taken on the day-to-day tasks involved in the Christmas catalogue fundraising for 2 years, adding how grateful we are to Rachael Sharpe who has volunteered to take over from this autumn when the new catalogue comes out. A question was asked if the catalogue was only for Christmas and she replied definitely no and that we had had a phone call that day asking for gift cards for solar lamps. A series of photographs were shown of the children to illustrate the Annual Report. The first one was of all 90 children receiving stationery at the beginning of 2018 – the new intake of 30 and the children in their second and third year. Val explained that,

as well as the 90 current children, Moses and his team carry on monitoring and helping the other 140 children who have been through the project. There were slides of upgrades to larger animals, the all-important skills training and some of the children with their impact assessment boards.

Tailoring Project

We showed a slide of the 9 women on their final practical exam before graduating from their tailoring course which members had specifically funded and for which the women are extremely grateful. They are now ready to earn income from their skills and Moses is starting them off by giving them the order for the children's school uniform. This will give them confidence and experience to begin their tailoring careers.

9 Awareness Raising

Slides of the highly successful sixth form conference in December 2017 on "Pro Environment Farming" were shown and the organisers, Emyr Owen and Lorna Brown were praised and thanked. The open meeting for the farming community was equally successful the evening before on "The Future of Farming". As Lorna said in her chairperson's report, awareness raising is a very important part of our remit and becoming more so.

10 Fundraising

Val praised the generosity of our donors, both individuals and groups, notably schools, chapels and churches but stressed the need for more fundraising. She thanked Richard Beaman for the duck race he organised last year and hoped there would be other imaginative fundraising ideas for the coming year.

11 Visit to Uganda 2017

Suzanne Kirkwood gave a very interesting talk on last year's visit and detailed all the many activities that they undertook and places they visited. One of the people in the group, Judith Schofield, was on holiday so unable to attend but she had sent a note to Suzanne to read out. Judith taught in Uganda for a year but had couldn't complete her final 2 years because Idi Amin had started his reign of terror.

"The difference between my first and second visit gave me great hope for the future. The difference between the attitude of the secondary aged pupils is more purposeful and education is a sure path to achieving their ambitions. Their horizons have moved out and now cover the globe. They have moved forward but still value their culture and roots. It was a joy to join in with the dancing and see the younger children learning their traditional music, how to make and play their instruments and sing their songs."

12 World Heritage Orphan and Vulnerable Children (WHOVC) Project

Cordelia Weedon showed slides of the progress which has been made by the permaculture initiative in Nyero in the community and the local primary school and praised the collaboration between the Nyero and Ngora communities. There were delightful slides of the project which she is funding and organising independently of Dolen Ffermio. As explained in the Annual Report, this follows a similar format to the NOVC project but with 30 children and she has enlisted the help of Moses and Ruth to manage it, with the help of a committee from the community.

13 Any Other Business:

This mainly centred around the pressing need for more fundraising activities.

Spring Sale: Saturday, 12th May from 10 am to 1 pm in the Institute at Llanfyllin. All contributions most welcome.

Across Wales Walk: this was promoted in the newsletter, with a choice of different lengths from 8 to 42 miles and full details are on the Rotary website.

Other fundraising ideas would be warmly welcomed.