

Friends of Himalayan Children Inc
Annual General Meeting (2020-2021)

Minutes

24 August, 2022

Meeting opened: 6.02pm

Attendance: Som Tamang, Susan Devitt, Tim Trehearn, Mary Frances de Jourdan, Sue Lowth, Peter Gaudron, Steve Johnson, Kay Smith, Georgia Smith, Jonathan Clayton, Debra Whittle, Ivan Whittle,

Apologies: Rosalind Pulley, Kirsty Nancarrow

1. **Welcome by President:** Som Tamang welcomed newcomers and thanked everyone for supporting FHC.

2. **Acceptance of previous AGM minutes**

Moved: Som Seconded: Susan

3. **President's Report (Som)**

Som acknowledged the impact of Covid on fund-raising activities during the year and thanked everyone for their efforts to keep the charity going forward.. He reported that, although FHC had gone backwards financially, Batase hostel and school had been able to progress various projects. Recent academic achievements reflect this progress.

10 hostel students were among 50 recent school leavers. Four students achieved over 90% in their final results. Three hostel students will go to Kathmandu to pursue their studies: one on a full scholarship (external to FHC), one, with heart disease, will board with relatives, and one will live in the FHC hostel in Kathmandu. The other seven hostel school leavers will pursue their Plus 2 studies in Melamchi. All but the scholarship student will require ongoing support from FHC.

Som is keen to continue upgrading facilities in Batase School.

4. **Financial Report (Sue)**

Sue reported that in 2020 FHC income was \$66,000; and in 2021 it was \$72,700. (In 2022 it was \$95000.) Increased income reflects a wider source, and steadier stream of donations due largely to website and communication improvements. (Thanks to Angus McColl.) Batase expenses accounted for almost all expenditure apart from auditing fees and some minor costs such as hire of meeting venue.

(In 2022, Laura Richardson, from Business Mapping Solutions, is providing auditing services at a reduced rate, saving FHC \$2500. FHC now pays \$24/mth for a MYOB subscription, a fee covered by funds raised from Containers for Change.)

5. **Secretaries Report (Mary Frances)**

Mary Frances read her report (see below), and presented a slide show of hostel and school life in Batase. She suggested that Tania, the donor of the Little Suns lights, should be kept in the loop with photos as well as Newsletters.

6. **Other Business**

1) Sue reported that the Auditor had requested information regarding future directions for

FHC, for the 2022 Audit. Sue also requested written details about the FHC money recently transferred to Nepal for investment in a one-year term deposit account, in case the Auditor requires information about FHC's apparent financial loss this year.

(\$50,000 +\$10,000, at interest rate of 10.6%.) Som will respond to both requests, as a matter of urgency. Som also explained the Nepalese process of dealing with foreign investments of this kind: the application was published in a newspaper and various banks offered deals.

2) Jonathan asked that Sujan be given the go-ahead to fence the buffalo shed. \$3,500 has been raised for this project and needs to be transferred. Som will attend to this without delay.

3) Tim suggested that, since we needed to vacate the meeting venue at 7.30pm, we close the AGM and hold a brief General Meeting immediately to set an agenda for a lengthier General meeting to be held on 12 October 2022. This date should give Auditor time to complete FHC's 2021-2022 Audit, prior to the meeting.

Meeting closed: 6.50pm

Minutes taken by Kay Smith

Secretary's Report (Mary Frances)

July 2020 – June 2021

The Friends of Himalayan Children Charity has been no stranger to adversity and this financial year is no exception. In the face of that adversity, there lies a commitment, generosity, hope, determination....best described as resilience, which has made for a great year.

Covid19 Dominates our Lives

Unfortunately, the Covid19 pandemic continued, and dictated how life in Batase, Nepal and the world in general, affected Friends of Himalayan Children. Schools and travel in and out of Batase was very limited for the majority of the year. This included the school shutting until early March 2021. Our College students (Plus Two) in Kathmandu returned to Batase and school/learning was the responsibility of our amazing staff and volunteers. Sujan, Bijay, Anil and many others ensured that hostel children worked on their studies on a daily basis. The older students helped the younger ones and while the school remained shut for an extended period, children were supported throughout. In addition to school work, children helped with gardening projects, kept fit with their running and hiking trips and continued with the regular chores

Som was unable to return to his village during this time but our virtual connection remained strong and constant.

The Banana House in Kathmandu, the accommodation for our Plus Two students was vacated which resulted in a lease being broken. This financial loss was covered partially by FHC and partially by Som.

Batase School News

Most notably, Sujan Tamang was appointed as the President of Batase School in early December 2020 which was a terrific result for the community. He has worked tirelessly to accommodate the expanding school enrolments and bring up the standard of teaching and professionalism in the school since then. This position holds great responsibilities and expectations and we are so grateful to have such a determined, caring and hardworking person in the role. Congratulations Sujan and thank you for all you do.

Batase School reopened in March 2021 and students were delighted to return. Friends of Himalayan Children distributed scholarship packs to many community children who would otherwise not be able to attend school. The scholarship students are those that live at home but families are unable to cover school costs. We are delighted that increasing enrolments include these deserving children.

The hostel children come from situations where they have no home or family that can take care of them. 45+ children are flourishing in the hostel which offers food, shelter, education and most importantly, a loving environment.

The Innocence Relief Link

Innocence Relief is a Brisbane based non-profit charity aiming to break the cycle of poverty by supporting education of children in developing countries. Batase School has become a 'Centre' that will receive ongoing support. Great to have you on board!

Fund Raising

Sponsorship

Fortunately, our generous sponsors have continued giving throughout the year. Angus McColl, Peter Gaudron and Colin Devitt managed to sort the ever changing list of sponsored children and sponsors. With their help and Angus' changes to the website, we have a much more user friendly means of donating and sponsoring children.

Rotary \$10,000 Grant

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Kirsty Nancarrow, Peter Gaudron and Sujana Tamang, Batase will be the proud recipients of a \$10,000 Cairns Rotary Club grant which will fund 8 laptops, a computer teacher and internet service.

Containers for Change

Covid restrictions curtailed most of our usual fundraising activities but, thankfully, we were still able to raise funds through the Containers for Change scheme. Jonathon Clayton continued to bring in a healthy weekly sum with others helping to make a difference as well. His weekly record of \$604.80 goes a long way in Batase. We are lucky to have collectors in Brisbane, Boonah and Canberra. Thank you to all who have joined this project. In Covid times, it has allowed us to raise much needed funds. In addition to the containers for change scheme, Jonathon has change tins in various businesses around Cairns – every little bit helps.

Salomon Shoe Sale

FHC was generously given a collection of demonstrator Salomon track shoes to be sent over to Batase village and distributed amongst the children there. These shoes were in near-new condition. Luckily, 2 duffle bags full were delivered and distributed when the Leadership Training course took place in March 2020. Unfortunately because of the COVID pandemic, getting the remainder shoes to Batase was no longer possible. Nobody could travel there and guaranteed delivery to the village via the post was not possible either. The FHC committee decided rather than waiting for an opportunity to get the shoes to Nepal that we would sell them off now and send over the urgently needed funds. A big thank you to Tim, Mary Frances and Jonathan for preparing the shoes and organising the sale at Tim and Mary Frances' house. The sale was a huge success and all of the shoes sold, raising close to \$1,800! A very big thank you to Salomon for their generous donation!

Rohit Chandel Running for FHC

Rohit Chandel from the Stratford dolphins Football Club set a goal to run 10km each day of August (that's 310km in one month) to raise money for FHC and Kick On. He achieved his goal and raised

\$4000. In a year where fund raising was incredibly difficult and so desperately needed we are very grateful for people like Rohit.

Special Visitors to Batase

Supporting girls/women is a very important aspect of FHC so it was fantastic to have 8000m peak mountaineers, Marie-Pier Desharnals and Adriana Brownlee visit Batase in April.

But both Marie-Pier and Adriana are more than just ticking off these goals for themselves. Their aim is to also educate, inspire and empower young girls into possible mountaineering careers. Marie-Pier and Adriana are friends of FHC and our kids in Batase. They discovered us by chance and are so inspired by our cause that they aim to be actively involved with our charity. On their way to the Everest and Lhotse climbs, they called into Batase to meet our Hostel kids and to briefly introduce the children to mountaineering. It was more than just a crash course in ropes and ice picks. The women sowed the seeds of other possibilities to the children. Their aim is to support 7 girls through to high school. Their visit will never be forgotten by the students, particularly the young girls, whose roles in traditional Nepalese culture are usually pre-determined as home-makers and farm workers. This opens up wonderful new possibilities for them.

\$5000 for Ground Preparation

Sujan's efforts to secure a government grant for a school addition required the ground to be prepared. Our call for help was quickly answered with FHC supporters making additional donations. We are very grateful.

Thank Yous and other Notables

Solar Lights from Tanya Younger

FHC received an incredibly thoughtful and generous gift from a long-time supporter, Tanya Younger. Tanya and her husband Ken wanted to send very special solar lights (Little Sun) to Batase Village. Knowing there were close to 50 children in the hostel at that time, they decided that they needed to provide for all! The lights are high quality and come from Germany. Tanya and Ken decided to forgo gifts to each other and extended family to manage the costs! This sort of dedication and generosity is what makes FHC. Tanya, we are so excited that the world is finally opening up and we will be able to get your generous gift to the kids in the hostel! Thank you again, and we look forward to sharing pictures of the kids using them.

Thanks to the following for your ongoing support and generosity:

- 7 Spices Indian Restaurant
- Captain Cooks Diner
- Edge Hill Friendly Grocer
- Rohit Chandel (Stratford Dolphins Football)
- Richardson Family
- Di Owens
- JP Clayton
- Peter Guadron
- Tanya and Ken Younger
- Peter Trehearn and Alison Dunning
- Salomon Shoes

With the passing of two long-time supporters, Prince Taiapa and Carol Mayer, FHC lost two valued and highly-regarded friends.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the committee (Som Tamang, Tim Trehearn, Mary Frances de Jourdan, Sue Lowth, Kay Smith, Susan Devitt, Colin Devitt, JP Clayton, Roz Pulley, Georgia Smith, Angus McColl) for their efforts this year. Friends of Himalayan Children is successful because the dedicated committee and volunteers see the amazing results. Som, you continue to inspire people with your continued desire to improve the lives of vulnerable children in Batase.