

Minutes FHC General meeting 10th July 2024 6pm

Attendees: Som Tamang, Susan Devitt, Fiona Sewell, Angus McColl, Kay Smith, Brian Duncan, Kirsty Nancarrow, Josie, Ivan Whittle, Roz Pulley, Jonathan Clayton, Tara Tamang, Regina, Bijay, Judy, Rita Zappulla, Brendan Radke, Phulmaya Tamang

Apologies: Sue Lowth, MF de Jourdan, Tim Trehearn, Kurt Wagner,

1. Som welcomed all to the meeting – it's been a while since we had a general meeting so everyone introduced themselves.
2. Acceptance of minutes of last general meeting – moved Kirsty, seconded Susan
3. No issues arising from last general meeting
4. Update from Kirsty on Himalayan Dreams. The launch was hugely successful in March 2024. \$5500 raised that night. The feedback has been amazing, people starting to donate/sponsor as a result, or are keen on trekking. Kirsty has been to 15 book events to promote the book – either through bookshops or Rotary. Adelaide, Cairns, Darwin, Alice Springs, Sydney. People connecting with the themes in the book, great media coverage. Speaking engagements involving Som & Kirsty coming up.
5. Update from Rita on RAWCS. Balance is \$5800. Some money went to FHC, some to RAWCS. We've had 2 donations of \$500 from Rotary clubs. Rotary clubs are supporting schools in other parts in Nepal. We need to find our point of difference, what makes the work of FHC special? Rita is prepared to do a trivia night to fundraise. Not 10th August, too short notice. It will be at Brothers – they have waived the room rental fee. Rita needs help to do it. Is there a fundraising committee at FHC? If people donate to the RAWCS program, it will be available to pay for students. Rita wants us to realise how important it is - that the money is to pay for the running costs of the hostel. Susan has assured Rita that we will all get behind it. We need to get the word out that RAWCS and FHC are the same thing, raising money to do the same work. Kirsty suggests we all post on social media at least once a month regarding sponsoring a child. We all thanked Rita for her incredible work.
6. Som talked about the loss of our beloved Bijay. He's been part of FHC for most of his life, firstly as a sponsored child himself and then as a leader. He epitomised what Som had dreamed for young people in Batase. He looked after the children at the hostel, he was a trekking guide. Everyone who trekked with him loved him. Sadly Bijay died suddenly and we are still reeling from his loss. FHC plans to honour his memory with a trek and memorial. We will start accepting donations for a scholarship in his name. Som will lead a trek to the place he died in March 2025.
7. Other news from Batase. Som's father is very sick. He doesn't have long to live, possibly a month. He's back in the village. There are currently 26 students in the hostel, 5 of them are new. Jonathan has been in the village getting the plantation going and looking at sustainable ways of living. There are plans to build new

accommodation for teachers and other students. FHC supports 57 scholarship children, with school fees etc. There's another group in Kathmandu doing further studies who are also being supported. Innocents Relief has funded a water system but Jonathan is worried about water security moving forward. Jonathan needs to get costings.

8. Other general business. Roz asked who is filling the shoes of Bijay and the incredible work he did? Som says they are looking and it will take time. They have a few ideas. Angus commented on RAWCS. Should he be encouraging people to donate through that or direct through FHC? It depends on tax deductibility. Rita asks can we put RAWCS on front page of the website? Angus plans to set up another page to facilitate this. Rita will send wording to Angus to assist. Jonathan says we need some new pictures of the children to really tell the story of FHC. Brian's mum wanted to help so she and her friends have been knitting things for the children, socks and gloves. They're just gorgeous. He's taken a lot over already and will take a load with him to Batase on his next visit later this year. Brian will write up a little blurb for the next newsletter.
9. Som wanted to talk more about fundraising. We don't have a lot of money sitting in the FHC account. Money needs to go out for food, books etc at the hostel. We need to organise a big fundraiser – at least one. Trivia night at Brothers, plus some smaller events to get the funds coming in. Som suggests we have a conversation with the owner of the new Himalayan restaurant in Cairns to have some sort of event. One night during the week would be best. Could we do a banquet? Angus says we should have a little article in the newsletter. We should organise a dinner with the membership – a nice social night. Som will put a date out for dinner. Can we bring the Nepalese caterer into the club – Mukti from the restaurant?
10. Next General meeting 11th September. Som will book the meeting room. Fiona will create Facebook event.
11. Meeting closed at 7.52pm