

FHC General Meeting

Minutes

9 November 2022

Meeting opened: 7:25pm

Attendance: Som Tamang, Susan Devitt, Tim Trehearn, Mary Frances de Jourdan, Jonathan Clayton, Georgia Smith, Steve Johnson, Ian Lowth, Angus McColl, Fiona Sewell, Ashleigh Lawrence, Roz Pulley, Kirsty Nancarrow

Apologies: Sue Lowth, Kay Smith

1. Welcome (Tim)

Tim welcomed group and wanted to bring attendees up to date with FHC by revisiting last minutes in some detail as there were many items from the last general meeting that needed following up.

2. Acceptance of previous minutes- discussion of these items necessary:

1) Teacher quarters Project (Jonathan)

There has been no progress on teachers quarters to date. The block has been prepared and water brought to it but it is a big project (likely around \$100,000) required and these funds are not available at the moment. It is thought the accommodation would be for both teachers and students. Ivan Whittle (FHC member and builder) is proposing to travel to Batase and do some drawings and measurements. There is no action required from this item.

2) Sponsorship costs (Tim in Peter's absence)

Tim revisited the different sponsorship options for students in Batase Village

- \$30/month for scholarship students (help with school fee, books, uniforms and associated school costs)
- \$50 month for students living in FHC hostel
- \$150 month for students completing final 2 years of school (known as +2 or College)

Few of our sponsors pay more than \$50/month which needs to be looked at more specifically for the future as more students will be wanting to complete school education. Peter has previously stated that students should be encouraged to study in Melamchi rather than Kathmandu to minimise costs. This topic will be discussed more specifically under Managing Sponsorship later in this meeting.

3) Innocents Relief/Ubuntu Update (MF)

Mary Frances summarised the funding/support we have received so far from IR. In addition to the water project (bringing water to the new land, (3km poly pipes and water tank) the school has funded 2 teachers for 2 years. This funding also included additional support for 'Educational Needs' (US\$ 1,315.54). Mary Frances spoke with Clare about next years funding and there is presently \$3,230 Australian 'in the kitty' (in addition to teachers wages) that can be used for Educational Needs. The school

is planning a Cultural trip for Year 9 and Year 10 students that this money (Educational Needs) can be used for.

Ubuntu Foundation donated \$25,000 to IR for a worthy recipient – and Batase School was selected. The majority of this money was used to complete an unfinished school building. There are still 3 small projects for the last \$4000 of this donation that are being finalised. Sujan Tamang was congratulated for his rapid action and the pictures and videos of the finished building is obviously making a huge difference.

IR require a Child Protection Policy be in place (a requirement for Australian Charities). Mary Frances and Kay have completed this and sent it to IR.

Action: Implementation of Child Protection Policy in Batase and FHC Hostel to be discussed at the next Committee Meeting

4) Use of gas rather than timber for fuelling hostel kitchen (Jonathan)

Jonathon and Steve said that Sujan could implement gas burner stoves at the FHC hostel with minimal costs (2,500Rp for a gas burner). This suggestion has come up in many meetings but there has not been action.

Action: Som to talk with Sujan and get him to work on this and report back.

5) Emergency solar power for hostel (Steve)

Emergency solar power is now being used in the hostel.

Steve installed a change over switch which needs to be operated manually should power fail.

Action: On his next visit to Batase in January 2023, Steve will make the change-over switch automatic.

An extra solar panel will be added.

This led to a discussion of a solar project that will take place at Batase school in the future. Som told us a university group from the USA will provide solar power for the school which will take the school completely off the grid.

Action: Angus to write an article about the solar successes in Batase in the upcoming newsletter.

6) Visits to Batase (Susan)

The Women's Everest Base Camp trip date is on 27/12/22 and has 13 women registered. Unfortunately, there will be no fundraising with this group as was previously done. Costs in Nepal have dramatically increased so the trip will not be as profitable as hoped. Three of these women are going to Batase Village. Susan said there have been no visitors to the village since Steve's visit in April.

Som said he will not be able to visit the village until April next year (2023).

7) Treasurers Report (Ian in Sue's absence)

Ian said there were no issues to report on with regards to the finance. The audit has been completed and minutes from this meeting will show the plans FHC have for the future.

Action: MF to send meeting minutes to Sue for auditor.

8) General Business

1. Fundraising

Susan suggested a combination Irish/Nepal Dinner with Irish Music and Nepalese Food. Susan thought Irish musician Mick O'Mara would be willing to help FHC with this fundraiser. St Patricks Day is on 17 March and could be a good time to do this. The event might require a liquor licence.

Kirsty said that past International Women's Day events have been hugely successful and could be considered. She said the events are a huge amount of work but bring in money, sponsors and momentum. International Women's Day is on 8 March 2023

Tim reminded us that the ideas are good but need people to put up their hands to help. Georgia, Roz, Angus, Fiona, Steve and Ashleigh have volunteered to help.

Mary Frances said she thought these two dates were too close to do both, and possibly celebrating women could happen at another time. Mary Frances thought a film night with Tania Verbs would be a good way to celebrate women and showcase FHC. This could be a future fundraiser in the year.

Som decided to have a Women's Day Dinner at Roz Pulley's House (as done in the past) on March 4, 2023. Ashleigh Lawrence will help cook. The cost of dinner will be \$60pp and will include a glass of champagne on arrival and be a BYO from there.

Actions:

- Mary Frances to check with TAFE to see if they would donate a room for a film night for Tania Verbs Film for future fund raiser.
- Tim to check with Maureen about the use of Saint Andrews as an option for the same fund raiser
- Susan to check with Mick O'Mara for his willingness to play music for a Nepal/Irish fundraiser
- Som to lead the fundraiser on March 4 and get helpers on board.

2. Toilet Grant Application

Tim told us about a recent grant application put in by FHC supporter Marika Rogers (in Canberra). Marika found a grant that she could apply for with her student status. The grant is for \$5000 and with Suján's help, it was decided that additional toilets be added to the school. We thank Marika for working on this and will report on the grant application outcome at the next meeting.

3. Charity Information (Ian Lowth)

Ian has checked into the work required to attain Tax Deductibility for our donors. He said that Friends of Himalayan Children would have to move from a Not for Profit organisation to a Registered Charity. The application for Tax Deductibility then is applied for and signed by the Foreign Affairs Minister. With this status there is much more rigor and responsibility required in reporting and managing of systems.

Steve said he thought the added work was worth the effort as we could access much greater sponsorship.

Action: Steve Johnson and Ashleigh Lawrence to have a more in depth look at the work involved with tax deductibility and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

4. Managing Sponsorship (Tim)

Tim spoke of the issue of sponsorship and its problems. With FHC funds going to three different areas (scholarship, hostel and college students) it is difficult to manage the needs of sponsors wanting a connection with one student/child. Sponsors are wanting more information and contact from the child they are sponsoring. Tim says if we are to continue with this type of sponsorship (rather than just sponsoring all children in FHC care), there needs to be a paid, dedicated person to do this job. JP (and many others) believes this person needs to come from the village. Tim volunteered to start a list of what he believes needs to be done to run a successful sponsorship program. Peter is willing to continue this work on return from his holiday in January. Som suggested this go on our private FHC Committee FB page so people could see it and make comments, additions etc. Further discussion and decisions to be made at future committee meetings.

Actions:

- Tim to start Successful Sponsorship Requirement List and post on FB page
- Som/Susan to add members to group

5. Revisiting the FHC Constitution (Tim)

Tim said we are reacting to many needs and possibilities with FHC. Tim said he thought we need to be looking at what our aims are and how we are going to manage our efforts with the division between School and Hostel.

Action:

Discuss this more specifically at the next committee meeting.

Som/Susan to invite people to our private FHC Committee FB page to add thoughts on these topics for ongoing discussion.

6. Himalayan Dreams book reading (Kirsty)

Kirsty read a beautiful section of her book to finish the meeting. Thanks Kirsty!

Next Meeting: TBA

Meeting closed: 8:20pm

(Minutes recorded by Mary Frances de Jourdan)