



The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Making a difference in rural Namibia

NEWSLETTER

No: 47

Winter 2022

A successful visit

In September, we returned to Namibia for the second time this year with the task of completing the Foundation's two outstanding projects, the provision of an ambulance for the clinic at Otjimanangombe and the construction of a multi-purpose hall for Omuhaturua Primary School and Hostel, both of which were accomplished and will be described later in this newsletter.

Our first week was spent in Windhoek where we were able to inspect the ambulance which was ready for delivery to Otjimanangombe for the handover in October. We also had a meeting with Fortitude, our project management company for the hall to tie up loose ends and to be briefed on the construction which had started a week before we arrived.

Due to the death of the Queen and the subsequent official period of mourning our planned dinner with the British High Commissioner, Mr Charles Moore was curtailed but we did manage to brief him about the Foundation's plans over a cup of tea and cake.

Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic and the ambulance handover

After spending a week in Windhoek, we journeyed on to the Omaheke regional capital, Gobabis and then to Otjimanangombe and to the clinic. On our arrival, there was an air of anticipation and excitement that the ambulance was coming. However, before that was to happen there were hurdles to jump, the main one being the provision of a driver, the lack of which could jeopardise everything.

When the ambulance was ordered it was agreed with the Ministry of Health that a driver would be provided by rotating drivers from Gobabis. Although not the best solution we agreed to go with it. However, on announcing that the ambulance was ready for delivery the Ministry advised there was not enough money in the budget to pay the driver's subsistence and travel allowance. At the eleventh hour we had an ambulance but no driver and you can imagine our stress levels were rising with the handover date of 25 October only being a matter of weeks away.

However, where there is a will there is a way. Sister in charge of the clinic, Linea Tomas, pointed out that at the clinic at Epukiro Post 3, some forty-five minutes away, there were two drivers, but only one

'ambulance' (termed an ambulance it was actually a Hilux pick-up with a canopy and a mattress in the back for the patient). With time running out and with the assistance of the Governor for the Omaheke Region, Mr Pijoo Nganate and Constituency Councillor Mr Piniel Pakarae an agreement was reached with the regional health authority, that one of the drivers could transfer to Otjimanangombe. There would be no extra costs involved as he was already receiving a subsistence and travel allowance.

With the driver situation resolved, a committee was formed to make arrangements for the handover. These included the sourcing of marquees, provision of funds to pay for refreshments and the issuing of invitations. We had already been advised that the Minister of Health, Mr Shangula would be attending to accept the ambulance which was a great honour for the village. Also planned was a tidy up of the clinic grounds and its surroundings which included the Foundation providing a new clinic sign. We attended two committee meetings before our time at the clinic was up and we left for Oshivelo on Friday 14 October, leaving everyone to it. We were able to keep in touch through a whatsapp group that had been set up by the committee to keep everybody informed.



Tidying up outside the clinic for the big day.



The new clinic sign in place.

On Friday 21 October, Toyota from Windhoek delivered the ambulance to Gobabis and it was met by the driver and Sister Tomas and driven to Otjimanangombe where it was placed out of sight behind the clinic. While in Gobabis, the ambulance picked up the new clinic sign and over the weekend this was erected by our friend Bob Puzey, an Englishman who lives in the village.

On the following Monday we left Oshivelo to return to Otjimanangombe for the handover, a drive of just under seven hours. During the day, the marquees were erected and the final tidying up at the clinic was happening when we arrived. Unfortunately, during the evening, a strong wind blew through the village taking down the marquees. As darkness fell plans were made for an early start in the morning to put them up again.

So the next day, Tuesday 25 October, we were ready for the handover. The following is an extract from my diary detailing the day's events.

'During our breakfast, Mr Shikulo, the Omaheke Regional Director of Health and Social Services arrived, and we had a little chat. He liked the new sign, but said we needed to send him a letter of donation to keep things tidy. Meanwhile, two of the marquees were re-erected and chairs and tables were brought over from the school. At around 09.30, the Minister of Health, the Governor and constituency councillor arrived. The proceedings started on time, and each speaker praised us and the Foundation. Linda read out a speech from Charles Moore, the British High Commissioner, which was well received and both the Governor and Minister made good speeches. Then it was my turn to handover the ambulance to the Minister which was greeted by lots of excitement. He got into the drivers seat and sounded the siren much to the delight of the audience. After the closing speeches, there was a tree planting ceremony with trees supplied by the Ministry of Forestry. A number of trees were planted in the clinic and hostel grounds, with Linda planting one of the trees. Later, we sat down to eat pasta, chicken and meat. Afterwards we said goodbye to our guests and reflected on what a remarkable day it had been.'

Note: If you wish to see some of the TV coverage of the event, go to <https://youtu.be/NAmrQ2HoBPI>

The next day after saying our goodbyes, we drove to Gobabis to stay the night before returning to Oshivelo the next day.



The main guests left to right: Constituency Councillor, Mr Piniel Pakarae, the Minister of Health, Dr Kalumbi Shangula, (us), Regional Director of Health, Omaheke region, Mr Jeremiah Shikulo, The Governor of the Omaheke region, Mr Pijoo Nganate.



The ambulance in place for the handover



After the hand over, Linda, the Minister and myself



Nurses Frieda, Linda and Linea. The Minister and myself



Linda preparing to plant a tree.

The multi-purpose hall for Omuhaturua Primary School and Hostel, Otjimanangombe

This has been the only one of our projects that has seriously been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This forced original contractor to leave the project with only a minimal amount of work having been done. As mentioned in our previous newsletter, since 2019, when the project began, costs have increased and we redesigned the hall. During our last visit we met with Fortitude who we appointed as

our project managers. They in turn suggested a builder who they had worked with before and were currently building a school hall at a school about an hour away from Otjimanangombe. The completion of this hall coincided with the start date of our project, so the builder, Afrideca, were able to move their men and equipment to us, saving money as they were nearby. Work started in early September, and by the time we arrived on 18 September, they were well on the way to completing the Foundations. However, the Otjimanangombe rocks were causing a problem, and a large compressor was brought in to power the pneumatic drill. Once this problem had been overcome, work moved at a pace, and the hall was completed on 12 November, two weeks ahead of schedule. Official commissioning will take place next February when we return to Namibia.



Those darn rocks again



Foundations laid, with the base for the steel uprights.



Steel structure starts to take shape

The brickwork begins



Walls taking shape

Work begins on the roof



Exterior view, first coat of paint applied



Interior view



Left: The completed hall with water tanks to catch the rain water from the roof.
Right: Ms Naanii (Rose) Uanivi, acting principal receiving the keys from Thomas, the Afrideca supervisor on the site.

Omuhaturua Primary School goes green

When we visited last March, we were advised that the community wanted to impose charges on the school and clinic to pay for the labour involved in pumping water from the borehole which consisted of fuelling and monitoring the diesel engine. The school was reluctant to pay these charges and the Ministry of Health refused to do so.

Steve Kavari, the school principal decided the solution was to replace the diesel engine and old pump with solar panels and the appropriate pump. Not only did this save money on diesel fuel for both the clinic and the school but it enhanced its green credentials. The Catherine Bullen Foundation was approached for funding and it provided seventy per cent of the money with the school providing the other thirty per cent. Part of the Foundation funding came from ATI, a Windhoek based travel company which collects donations from its customers and they felt this was a worthy cause to support.



Top: The school borehole with its solar panels and pump. Bottom: The senior pupils at the borehole.



Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic

As usual we spent four weeks in the clinic arriving on 18 September. The following day was Lin's birthday but also the Queen's funeral which we watched on Sister Linea's TV. Later we celebrated Lin's birthday with a fruit cake supplied by Bob. The clinic continues to be busy especially with the San women and their young children. During our stay, a one month old baby was brought in covered with scabies and on another occasion a badly mal-nourished baby arrived at the clinic and had to be sent to the hospital at Gobabis.



A happy San patient at the clinic.

However, nothing could prepare us for what happened a week after we arrived at the clinic when on 26 September, Steve Kavari, the school principal took his own life. With Sister Linea out of the clinic on a workshop, Linda and nurse Frieda had to certify his death which was a traumatic experience for all involved. There was disbelief in the community and the school that this had happened and it will take some time for things to return to normality. There is an obituary at the end of this newsletter.

The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic, Oshivelo

In October we drove to Catherine's clinic, interrupting our four week there stay to drive back to Otjimanangombe and back to hand over the ambulance. Having handed over a brand new ambulance to Otjimanangombe clinic we were disappointed to learn that Catherine's clinic no longer had theirs due to a shortage of ambulances in Tsumeb because of breakdowns. It had been replaced by a Hilux double cab with an open back, so it could only take patients who could sit in the back seats. Anyone who had to lay down and be treated on the way to the hospital had to wait for an ambulance from Tsumeb, which defeated the object somewhat.

It is recognised by the authorities that Oshivelo is on the busy main road from Windhoek to the north and in the past, the ambulance at the clinic has attended road traffic accidents saving valuable time in treating the injured, and moves are afoot to get a proper ambulance back at the clinic.

The clinic is a very busy one with around 80 to 100 patients a day and we have nothing but admiration for the nurses who work there. While we were there a farm worker was brought in after having been bitten by a snake on his foot. The snake had been killed and was also brought into the clinic and identified as one that bites twice, with the second bite injecting the venom. Luckily it had only bitten him once but was painful. He left the clinic not complaining about the bite but about the pain killer injection he had had in his bottom.



One of the younger patients



A very busy waiting room



Left: Some of the clinic nursing staff and the pharmacist.



Right: This ambulance has been standing at the clinic for nearly a year with broken engine. Perhaps a possible project to get it back on the road and provide a dedicated vehicle for the clinic.

Fundraising

Sponsored events

The Great North run



While we were preparing to fly out to Namibia on Sunday 12 September, Orthopaedic Surgeon at Colchester General Hospital Satyanarayana Annapureddy was running the Great North run course. On his justgiving page he commented 'I am doing the Great North run 2022 for the Catherine Bullen Foundation because of the amazing work done by Linda and Roger'.

With Gift Aid he raised £3,333 for our projects in Namibia for which we are very grateful..

Sponsored bike ride by Jean Quinn

I'm a keen cyclist and a volunteer with Sustrans (a charity that promotes sustainable transport with safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and wheel users) who after various long distance Sustrans rides set myself the challenge of cycling from Colchester to Devon where one of my daughters and her family lives, just following Sustrans routes. Although having reached Oxford, unfortunately, I was prevented from continuing this journey in 2020 when Covid struck and in 2021 after I tripped over in the woods and smashed my shoulder.

Jeremy Stanton, orthopaedic surgeon to the rescue! This wonderful doctor not only fully repaired my shoulder injury but also completely understood my passion for cycling and the desire to return to the saddle as soon as possible. As a Thank You to him I offered to do a fund-raising ride for his favoured charity which was The Catherine Bullen Foundation. Jeremy had undertaken a sponsored bike ride from London to Paris to raise funds for the Foundation.

My usual approach to a fundraising bike ride is to:

1. Have a JustGiving page which I promote shamelessly on Facebook.
2. Produce postcard-sized cards with a photo and all (and I mean all) the ways a donation can be made, copies of which I carry in every bag and panier to issue to everyone I meet.
3. Email or post copies this postcard to any family member or friend who is not on Facebook.
4. Carry copies of this fund-raising postcard in every bag and panier I use to issue to acquaintances (and sometimes complete strangers) I meet in transit.

I was also delighted to be able to contact Roger and Linda Bullen directly because they gave me such friendly, professional help and support. There was no question to which they didn't know the answer. So in mid-September, after a few weeks of training locally to get me fit enough, I embarked on the next 132 mile leg from Oxford to Bournemouth feeling both excited and a little nervous. My wonderful husband, Don offered (?) to be the Sherpa backup dropping me off every morning and picking me up at the end of each day.



Jean Quinn on her travels

I had such a wonderful adventure meeting some amazing people including by sheer chance a fellow Sustrans Ranger in Winchester and in Didcot someone from the same remote Welsh village as my mum...what are the chances?

The overall sum raised was £1,127 which I hope will go in some small measure to improve the lives of the people in Namibia.

Jean Quinn

(A big thank you to Jean from the Foundation – Roger and Linda Bullen)

Shop collections

Since the last newsletter, we have carried out the following shop collections:

Stanway Co-op – £199.50

Manningtree Co-op - £270

West Mersea Tesco - £281.36

Brightlingsea Co-op - £207.09

Woodbridge Co-op - £184.80

West Mersea Co-op - £255.54

A big thank you to Nicky, Elish, Sandra, Shirley, Mike, Pat and Dagmar for their help. A full list of forthcoming collections is on page 13.

China Smashing

We had our china smashing stall at the following events:

Lions Summer Fair - £208

Clacton Car Show - £188.70

Brightlingsea Car Show - £219.60

Many thanks to Paul, Penny, Chloe, Kim and Paul for their help. We have decided to carry on with this stall for one more year and desperately now need more china. If you are able to donate china (no pyrex or glass please), please give us a ring on 01206 383368 before dropping any off at the house.



Left: Collecting outside West Mersea Tesco. Right: The china smashing stall set up at Clacton Car Show and all ready to go.

Other Events

Mersea Island Car boot carpark - £160.50. Car boot stall - £90.20

Round the Island Yard sale - £207.40. Charity stall at Clacton Air Show - £112.90.

Mersea Christmas Lights up - £381.20

Steve Kavari **1964 – 2022**

In his younger years, Steve was a talented footballer, but injury caused his premature retirement from competitive football. He then took up a teaching career at the K.J.Kapeuta Primary School at Okandjira, situated 40 kilometres east of Okahandja.

In the year 2000, he transferred to the newly constructed Omuhaturua Primary School in Otjimanangombe assuming the position of school principal which he held until his death. Under his leadership the school became one of the best in the region and he will be sadly missed by both teachers and pupils.

We first met Steve in 2005, when we went to see the refurbished borehole funded by money from Catherine's memorial fund at Otjimanangombe. It was he who approached us with a rough plan of a clinic that he had been lobbying for many years. We decided to take up the challenge and the Catherine Bullen Foundation was launched.

We have known Steve and his wife Sylvia for eighteen years and they have become great friends. When there was no longer accommodation at the clinic for our stays, he offered us a room in his house and later a teacher's house for our sole use.

We offer our condolences to Sylvia and the family and we hope that whoever becomes the new school principal will carry on his legacy.

Forthcoming Events

We have the following events scheduled:

Saturday 21 January 2023

Morrisons Supermarket, Little Clacton

Saturday 29 April 2023

West Mersea Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 10 June 2023

Felixstowe Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 17 June 2023

Frinton Triangle

Saturday 22 July 2023

Stanway Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 29 July 2023

Manningtree Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 12 August 2023

Brightlingsea Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 29 August 2023

Woodbridge Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 9 December 2023

West Mersea Co-op Supermarket

Donations

It would be very much appreciated, if you feel you could support us with a donation for our projects in Namibia. As we are a UK charity working overseas we are not eligible for any British Government grants.

It can be made on line on our website www.namibia-aid.org.uk through 'justgiving' or 'Paypal'.

By sending a cheque made out to the Foundation to 15 Colchester Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8RS

Or you can donate by bank transfer to:

Account Name: The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Sort Code: 20-22-67

Account No: 53717690

Regular giving

Some of our donors have made a more formal arrangement by setting up a standing order to donate a regular monthly or yearly sum. For which we are extremely grateful. If you would like to support us in this way, please use the above banking details so that you can set it up.

Presentations

The Foundation is pleased to give presentations to groups and clubs on its work during the day or evenings.

Make a difference!

The Catherine Bullen Foundation is working with local communities to help build and nurture a new life for the people in rural Namibia. Because we are a small charity, our overheads are small and are personally covered by the trustees, so that every single penny donated to us goes to the intended project, with spending strictly monitored by the UK trustees and their ngo partner in Namibia. All visits to Namibia are self-financed and no charitable funds are used for this purpose. Please help us make a difference by making a donation, either on line at www.namibia-aid.org.uk or sending it to the address below.

How to contact us

By Email: info@namibia-aid.org.uk

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Thank you for your support in 2022



*Roger and Linda Bullen
and the
Catherine Bullen Foundation
wish you a happy Xmas and prosperous New Year*

Donation/Gift Aid Declaration

(The Catherine Bullen Foundation – Registered Charity No. 1110516)

Details of donor

Title..... Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Signature.....

Date.....

I want the charity to treat

*the enclosed donation of £..... as a Gift Aid donation

*the donation(s) of £..... which I made on/..../..... as (a) Gift Aid donation(s)

**delete as appropriate*

**You must pay an amount of Income and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year.
(currently 25p for each £1 you give).**