



# The Catherine Bullen Foundation

*Making a difference in rural Namibia*

## *NEWSLETTER*

**No: 50**

**Winter 2023**

As I compile this newsletter, COPT28, the climate change conference is taking place in the United Arab Emirates.

In Namibia, climate change has affected the normal pattern of weather that has been relied upon over the years. For instance rain at the beginning of the year heralded the planting of crops in anticipation of further rain, but this never came and the crops shrivelled in the ground.

In some parts of the country a drought still prevails and during our last visit temperatures were above normal, consistently in the high thirties. However, at the beginning of December, it was reported that practically every corner of the four northern regions, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Oshana and Omusati has received good rain fall transforming the water scarcity of recent times into water abundance. The Oshanas (waterpans) have filled up with rain water, rendering a number of rural two-track roads impassable. This has led to subsistence farmers dusting off their farm implements and ploughing their fields. A local official reported that the rain was enough for every farmer to start ploughing with their tractors while also some were resorting to the traditional method of using draught animals to plough their fields. Grazing is also improving, a welcome relief for livestock farmers whose animals have been badly affected by poor grazing.

It is hoped that the rains continue well into the new year to allow the crops to flourish and the situation earlier in the year is not repeated resulting in crop failures.

Namibia is pursuing a policy of Green Energy with International partners investing and setting up pilot projects. However, fossil fuels have not gone away, and there is a promise of future prosperity with the discovery of encouraging deposits of offshore oil.

### ***Another successful visit***

At the end of November we returned from Namibia after another successful visit. Towards the end we were joined by our friends Chrissie and Colin Westgate and we were able to show them the Foundation's projects. They were amazed to see what had been achieved and it was good to see things through someone else's eyes. It is hoped to have a Namibian evening in the summer 2024 at the MICA featuring the Foundation's work and Chrissie and Colin's pictures.

## ***Omuhaturua Primary School and Hostel, Otjimanangombe***

The school is currently renovating the toilets and showers which it is financing through hostel funds. It is also replacing the drop toilets with flushing ones.

The Foundation replaced all the worn valves on the borehole pipeline to the school, hostel and clinic which are used to direct the water to the required location.



One of the many valves along the pipeline replaced by the Foundation

## ***Donkerbos Primary School and Hostel***

As mentioned in the last newsletter there was work to be done on the toilets and showers for them to become operational. We are pleased to advise that when we visited this time, all the work had been done and the children are now able to shower, and more importantly to use the toilets instead of having to use the bush.



At last the construction of the fence has started with Linda having a Diana moment

Still outstanding from April 2022, was the construction of a protective fence around the borehole and solar panels. Delay upon delay was proving frustrating, until the intervention of the President no less, who immediately ordered for the work to take place which it did!

When we drilled the boreholes, the one that was less productive was capped. Now funding had been obtained by Constituency Councillor Wenzel to equip it. This will provide water for a community garden and the nearby settlement of Sondenblom which translated means 'sunflower', quite apt.

During our visit to the hostel dormitories we were shown the state of the mattresses which were very worn, and therefore the Foundation agreed to replace all 120 of them. These will be delivered when the school re-opens after the Christmas break.



Two photos illustrating the state of the mattresses at Donkerbos (Credit: Chrissie Westgate)

## ***Good Hope Primary School and Hostel***

In our last newsletter we report that St Marys Senior Girls School had raised the necessary funding to purchase winter jackets which have now arrived at the school and we were able to see them when we visited.



Some of the pupils with their jackets

While we were there we were told they were going to extend the school garden to provide vegetables to the hostel kitchen and the to sell to the local community. There is a need for an irrigation system for the enlarged garden and this is another project that St Mary's is involved in.



Current garden

The planned extension (Both photos credit: Chrissie Westgate)

## ***Projects***

### **Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic's ambulance**

During our last visit we met with Toyota in Windhoek and it was decided to upgrade the front and rear suspension because the ambulance spends the majority of its time on gravel roads with surfaces that varies from good to bad. The upgrade was funded by the Foundation and completed in October.

### **Eiseb Primary School and Hostel – school garden irrigation system**

A quotation was provided and funds have now been sent to the school. The system will be installed in the new year once the school returns from its Christmas holidays.

### **The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic – Ultrasound machine**

Quotes have been received and we had a meeting with the acting Chief Medical Officer at Tsumeb. He advised that nurses would be able to operate the machine after training and that in the future doctors would be stationed at the clinic which is planned to become a Health Centre. The machine would prove invaluable as a diagnostic tool not only for maternity cases but others such as road accident internal injuries. It will cost in the region of £25,000 and this is the project that we are currently fundraising for which will include sourcing grants from other medical Foundations.

## ***World Aids Day***

On Monday 4 December, the Epukiro Constituency held its belated World Aids Day Commemoration at Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic with the theme 'Let the Communities Lead'. An estimated 48 patients are currently receiving HIV/Aids and TB treatments from the clinic. The most affected age group is between 15 and 49 years. The community serves as a bridge between individual needs and broader societal structures in fighting diseases.

## ***Visit to Gobabis Hospital Premature Baby Unit.***

During one of our weekend visits to Gobabis, the regional capital, we visited the Premature Baby Unit in the hospital to deliver some baby clothes and blankets knitted by the local Mersea community. The little boy held by the nurse lost his mum at birth and is being looked after by the unit. The family cannot afford to look after him and he will probably go into an orphanage.



Linda and the nurses at the Premature Baby Unit at Gobabis Hospital

## ***Fundraising***

### **Shop Collections**

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

Woodbridge Co op – we raised £370.78 which was a record for this store. A big thank you to Elish, Pat and Dagmar for their help.

West Mersea Co-op – We raised £123.33. Thanks to Shirley, Sandra, Steve and Mike for their help.

## ***Forthcoming Events***

We have the following events scheduled:

*Saturday 23 December 2023*

West Mersea Tesco

*Sunday 21 January 2024*

Indian Lunch – Titash Indian Restaurant (Sold out)

Please note that by now we should have received confirmation of our bookings for shop collections at Co-op stores for next year from head office. They are currently revising their booking system and they will come back to us. As soon as we know the locations and dates, we will advise those involved.

## ***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](http://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](http://www.namibia-aid.org.uk) or sending it to the address below.

## ***How to contact us***

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## ***Stop Press***

### **West Mersea Lights Up**

This took place on Saturday 9 December and the Foundation had a homemade cake stall in the MICA hall. We also sold the Foundation Calendars, cards and San Jewellery. We raised a magnificent sum of £432.70. Thank you to all our cake makers and Theresa, Paul and Penny who manned the stall.



The YWCA Kindergarten, Windhoek

*Linda and Roger*

*and*

*The Catherine Bullen Foundation*

*Wish you a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year*