

Olney—Newton Link

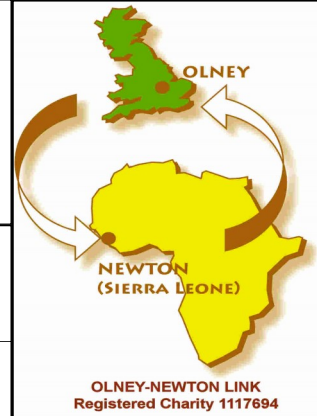
"To advance education and to relieve poverty

in the village of Newton, Sierra Leone, by the provision of charitable assistance"

May 2020

www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

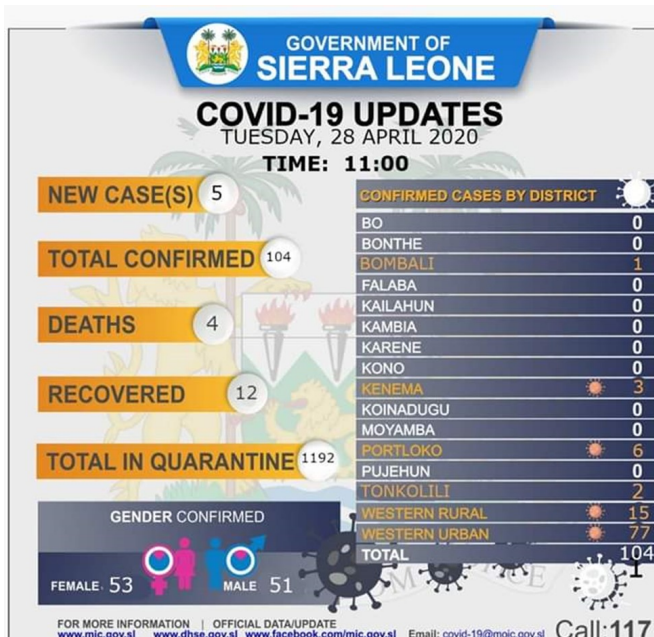
ONL



The **AGM 2020** has been cancelled due to the current situation. You can read the reports from the officers in this newsletter. The trustees are all willing to stand again - anyone else wishing to stand is asked to complete the nomination form in the attached e mail and return it to the secretary by 8th May. Details of those wishing to be trustees will be sent out to supporters as soon as possible.

Sierra Leone today...

The country celebrated the 59th Anniversary of its independence on 27th April, albeit without the usual mass celebrations as the pandemic has now reached them.



The newspapers stated on 29th April that *five new cases of COVID-19 had been reported in the last twenty-four hours, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 104. The total number of those recovered was 12. Four people are so far confirmed dead. There are now 1,192 people in quarantine at isolation centres under observation.*

Most of the cases were in Freetown or close to it. Sadly this includes the area around Newton—the 'Western Rural District'. Our thoughts are

with the Newton community—and they have sent good wishes to us.

To get in touch with The Olney-Newton Link contact Anne McCallum, Chair: telephone 01234 711196
 For the newsletter e mail: olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

Life in Sierra Leone

In February the news from James Kabia, Baptist minister and organiser of the Tailoring Apprenticeship scheme was that he had started digging his well again. He has contracted a new team - the old well had to be abandoned due to the water having too high an iron content. He sent photos—it is being dug manually.

At the beginning of March the ONL was able to send funds to him for the purchase of an embroidery machine. Before this students had to travel to Freetown, over an hour away, to use one.



In March, Sierra Leone registered its first case of the coronavirus. President Julius Maada Bio says he's a 37-year-old man who came to the country with Air Brussels on 16 March. He'd been in isolation. By 1st April the country was in lockdown for three days following a second case.

Brima **James Kabia** sent a second message...

Hi all ,

I send you greetings from Newton. I write to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for all what you have been doing and are doing for us .

Another ugly, dreadful and disastrous monster had raised its ugly head in the world, this time Covid 19. I joined the brothers and sisters in Christ and friends in Olney in praying for this pandemic to be a thing of the past.

I am glad to inform you that we have bought the embroidery machine it is now with us but we are awaiting this pandemic to pass away so that we will start to operate it . Notwithstanding the present state of emergency declared by our head of state and government, the work is though small and in an intermittent level due to the adherence to the social distancing preventive IPC rule. I will send you the information on the launching of the embroidery venture as and when we are ready.

God bless and keep us all.

James Kabia.



The ONL asked James what we could do to help and trustees agreed to send funds for the purchase of a PA system. James trained as a health adviser during the Ebola outbreak and wanted to be able to pass information to people (there is very little available by way of news bulletins so he wanted to be able to travel and broadcast information).

He was delighted and replied on 6th April...

Good afternoon all, I thank the friends and the people of Olney for your relentless effort in promoting the Newton community in diverse ways.

Thank you very much for your timely provision of funds for the purchase of a state of the arts public address system to pass on the infection prevention control (IPC) messages from a very comfortable distance in a time like this where social distancing is the order of the day .

James Kabia

Mabinty Sesay (Newton Committee treasurer and preschool manager) also sent greetings on 31st March:

Good afternoon all. Hope all our friends in UK are safe. We pray God continue to protect and guide you all.

Mabinty

We also received a video of an ingenious **handwashing system**, operated entirely by foot pedal, which I have taken some screenshots of so that you can see how it works...

The system with two containers and two foot pedals



The first pedal controls the soap—press to dispense—wash hands for 20 seconds



The second container is full of water—press foot pedal and rinse hands. Air dry, do not wipe on clothes, it is hot and hands will dry quickly.



Daily Life in Sierra Leone: A report from Claire and Mahmoud Tarawally



So Covid 19 finally reached us in March. Our government was very sensible and put measures in place quickly, before any case was registered. The lessons of Ebola were hard learnt! Any traveller from the airport was put into quarantine immediately and the land borders with Guinea and Liberia were closely monitored and eventually closed. The cases so far have all originated from air travellers but..... In the meantime, we've had a 3 day lockdown, which was used as a trial run for any further lockdown, there is essential travel only between districts and a night-time curfew in place. We do have some social distancing rules, more on that in a moment. Schools and colleges are shut until further notice with all examinations postponed. For a country as small as this and with such porous land borders these measures are sensible and for the most part holding. Guinea have a lot more cases, and Liberia is being far more draconian in their measures so here's hoping our measures continue to work as they are!

Social distancing though is an issue. For some time now all places of worship have been closed, no meetings allowed, at 1st it was 100 people now its no more than 10. Business hours have been cut and public sector workers are on a 1 day in 1 day out system. Shops, offices and businesses have to offer hand washing facilities and people are complying. We are encouraged to use face masks, a new industry of making cloth masks has sprung up so it's a brilliant way of helping some people make a bit of money!! Yes, the argument for and against cloth masks can (and should) be made, but as the "proper" masks are in short supply for those that DO need them I personally strap my cloth mask on, wash my hands, still cover my mouth and keep my distance! It's the last bit that is our issue. It's nigh on impossible to be a metre apart, the markets just are not designed to allow for such spacing and our transport system means you have to come together. Yes, there are buses in town but very few, instead we use taxi cars which means you ask the driver if he is going where you want, then have to hustle to get into the vehicle before someone gazumps you!!! You can use a motorbike and here in Bo that's the most frequent form of transport but you wash your hands immediately after dismounting as you tend to have to cling onto the luggage rack as they zip between the traffic.....

And like the global community we have our fair share of social media "fake news". And this can cause all sorts of problems. The 5G debacle reached here, we don't even have nationwide 3G let alone 5G but hey let's not let sense get in the way of a good story..... Then there are the fake press releases, and these can be dangerous as it could lead to serious consequences. An example is from last week. A press release from the Government claimed they would be stopping all salaries for teachers and other public sector workers, no pay increases would be given etc etc. This went viral across WhatsApp, a major form of communication as many are part of groups where such press releases are shared. It was of course fake but this was slow to become known and a lot of teachers became very worried for their livelihoods, as did nurses and police the 2 sectors you want to support. But its not easy to check what's real and what isn't.....

We've lived through worse with Ebola, so in some ways we are "old hands" but the measures in place are different. Ebola was more deadly but harder to transmit and I think there's the danger of complacency. So, like everyone we keep our loved ones in thoughts and prayers, if possible we hug a little bit tighter and wait it out.

Claire

The AGM 2020

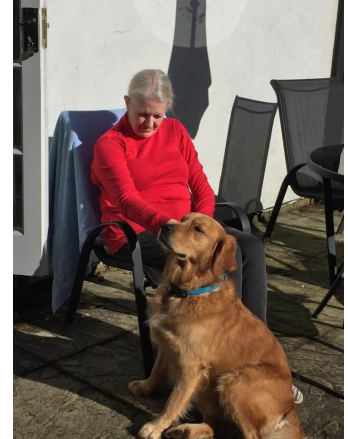
The AGM was due to be held on 29th April. It has had to be postponed but the officers have written their reports and so we are including them in the newsletter for you to read. We need new trustees, please contact Anne if you are able to give up a little time to help.

Report from the CHAIR

Writing this report, on the basis that you will be reading it, rather than hearing it, is just another of the strange effects of the current pandemic.

I hope that you are all in good health and surviving the current lockdown and the effects of isolation and social distancing?

I am conscious that the people of Newton, and the rest of Sierra Leone, experienced a very similar situation fairly recently. In 2014/2015, the deadly Ebola epidemic swept over them, causing considerable loss of life, severe hardship, lockdown and innumerable after effects. Having come through the worst of these, they now face another crisis and lockdown, but, this time, in company with the rest of the world.



However, whereas we in the Western World have many lines of communication, readily available food, plentiful electricity (or other power sources) for lighting, heating and cooking and to power our freezers and fridges, clean running water and mains sewers and drainage etc., they do not, particularly in rural areas. Their stoicism and positivity are an example to us. They are coping with the lockdown and sending messages of encouragement to us!

They seem to have learnt to socially distance to effect, as they have only 43 confirmed cases of Covid 19 and no direct deaths (BBC News SL 21/04/2020). Looking back over the last year, before the Coronavirus pandemic, the ONL continued its work of raising awareness and funds in the UK and of practical work in Newton.

Only one water well has been completed this year, but there is a continuing need for many more. The proposal to provide piped water to Newton, among other areas, has so far come to nothing, so we will continue to work with the Newton Committee to dig as many wells as possible, to ensure a source of clean water for as many people as possible until it is no longer necessary.

The Preschool continues to need funding, whilst they try to find another source of income. We are a support charity and cannot employ people, so the school must find a way of paying the teachers' salaries. As SL is one of the poorest countries in the world, the Government cannot afford to fund Preschool education unless it is as part of the state system, so self-funding is essential. The problem continues to be obtaining payment from parents, who are on the breadline, for their child/children. We have considered matched funding, but this presupposes payment from parents

or carers and availability of funds! If anyone knows of a UK nursery or Preschool, school or organisation that might be willing to be “twinned with” the Preschool, please let one of the Trustees know. One of the major problems facing all our projects is the constant rise in the cost of raw materials, all of which must be imported. This is likely to be an even bigger problem following the current crisis, so the current inability to hold fundraising events is potentially a big problem for the future. Whilst everyone is suffering the economic effects associated with coronavirus, please consider having a collection box for your loose change, (we will get one to you, if you let us have your details), setting up a regular direct debit or making a one off donation (please contact our Treasurer, Tricia Selwood, or any of our Trustees or Events Committee members for details – the form is on page 7).

On a more positive note, we have continued to send funds to Pastor Brima James Kabia, to help develop the Tailoring Apprenticeship scheme and business. We have sent money to pay for “solar power batteries”, connections and switches etc., for the solar lighting system at the workshop and to purchase an embroidery machine – the latter to save the cost of travel to Freetown and the fees for using someone else’s! James is a very good communicator and we receive regular updates.

We have continued to exchange “schoolwork”, which we send along with such diverse items as spectacles, First Aid equipment, books, pencils, hoodies and educational toys to name but a few. Sarah Jones (the daughter of one of our staunchest supporters and an Events Committee member, Sue Lynch) was so inspired by our speaker last year, Sarah Dewey, that she acquired masses of school books and we have been sending these out too. Sarah, (again emulating her namesake) also organised payment of the shipping costs, which was an enormous plus.

We are always pleased to hear from people who have practical items to send, particularly if they are able to help with the transportation costs. We thank Rockel shipping for their continued assistance, in transporting the cartons to Freetown.

As always, we rely on the hard work and commitment of our Committee in Newton, who deal with the practical implementation of the projects. They give up their very limited free time to carry out their duties and we thank them all for their devotion to the Link and their community. Sadly, the Newton Secretary, Oseh Jones, died this year. He had been a member since the Link began and will be much missed. An enormous “Thank You” to all our supporters, whether financial or practical – especially to our Events Committee members and helpers. Without you, we would, literally, not be able to continue. We are always looking for more helpers, so please don’t be shy.

In addition, I would like to send a personal thank you to our Trustees for their continued assistance and support over the year.

Finally, please stay safe, and I look forward to meeting up with you all again soon.

Anne McCallum

Report from the TREASURER

A copy of 2019's Accounts forms a part of this report. Unfortunately, due to isolation of various persons, all the required signatures have not been obtained. As, no doubt, you will have seen copies of previous years' accounts, you will understand that we maintain two columns of costs and income for each year. One column is for funds raised for specific projects and the other column is for funds we can utilise for ad hoc costs and projects, when they materialise. Whilst I could discuss undertakings during 2019, as shown in the accounts, I think you are able to evaluate these for yourselves.



I would like to take this opportunity to issue a plea for those of you who can and who don't already do so, to set up a standing order to provide us with a regular income – otherwise why not use one of our collecting boxes for cash, since cash is now being used less and less.

This year, we will miss out on a couple of our biggest fundraisers (Cherry Fair and Afternoon Tea) because of the lockdown. Please remember, too, that for every £1 you donate we are able to claim back £0.25 from the government, provided you are a taxpayer and have completed (and returned to me) a Gift Aid Declaration.

Thank you for all your help in the past, keep well, and I hope to see some of you in the not too distant future.

NOTE: If you have any questions on the accounts, once you have reviewed them, please do email me: tricia@selwood-uk.co.uk or phone 01234 712919.

Do you want to make a regular donation?

How about £10 a month? Can't afford it.

How about £9, £8, £7, £6, £5, £4, £3, £2 or £1 ?

Even the smallest amount would be most welcome.

Olney Newton Link Standing Order Mandate

Please pay the following beneficiary:-

Olney Newton Link, Barclays Bank PLC, Grafton Court , Milton Keynes

Sort Code	Beneficiary Account Number	Beneficiary Account Name
20-57-40	10354082	Olney-Newton Link
First Payment amount	Date of first payment	ONL Reference (your name in capital letters)
Usual Payment	Start Date (same as above)	Frequency Monthly

Statement of Financial Activities

for the Year Ended 31 December 2019

Summary Income and Expenditure Account

in accordance with The Charities Act 2011

	Schedule	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2019 £	Total Funds 2018 £
Incoming Resources					
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>					
Voluntary income - Gift Aid	2	858	0	858	1,233
Sponsors/bursary	2	0	0	0	1,000
Charities/tithing	2	2,101	0	2,101	750
Individual Donations	2	2,487	0	2,487	3,964
Days of Advent	2	502	0	502	0
(Shipping) Pilgrimage	2	1,010	0	1,010	110
(Gazebo/Mudslide)Tailoring	2	0	385	385	200
Birthday (1/2 Marathon)	2	240	0	240	275
Bo School/Funeral	2	0	829	829	0
SkillsTCSeats/Waterwell	2	0	635	635	0
Activities for generating funds	2	4,754	57	4,811	6,067
Total Incoming Resources	-	11,952	1,906	13,858	13,599
Resources Expended					
Cost of generating funds	3	691	534	1,225	1,706
Charitable activities	4	9,807	2,170	11,977	12,500
Governance cost (No paid staff)		0	0	0	0
waterwell transfer		-500	500		
Total Resources Expended		9,998	3,204	13,202	14,206
Net Movement in Funds					
Fund Balances Brought Forward from 2018		1,954	-1,298	656	-607
Float		3,050	2,775	5,825	6,362
Fund Balances carried forward		-70		-70	
Cash at Bank		4,934	1,477	6,411	5,825
The Olney-Newton Link has no tangible assets, Debtors or current liabilities.					
Signed on behalf of the Trustees					

CHAIRMAN
Anne McCallum
c/o 4 High Street
OLNEY MK46 4BB
Tel: 01234 717965/711196



TREASURER
Tricia Selwood
16 East Street
Olney
Bucks
MK46 4AP
Tel: 01234 712919

visit our website: www.olney-newtonlink.co.uk

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Title _____ Forename(s) _____ Surname _____
Address _____
Town _____
County _____ Post Code _____
e-mail _____

(If you supply your e-mail address to us we may contact you from time to time about issues/events we think you might find of interest. You can opt out at any time by contacting us.) Please let us know if you want to cancel this declaration, change your home address or no longer pay sufficient tax.

Please treat all donations I have made to the Olney Newton Link, registered charity number 1117694, as Gift Aid donations.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date ____/____/____ (signature) _____

All information provided by you is held by the Olney Newton Link in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. We will not make your details available to any other organisation. NOTES _____

Please return this form to Patricia Selwood at 16 East Street, OLNEY. MK46 4AP.

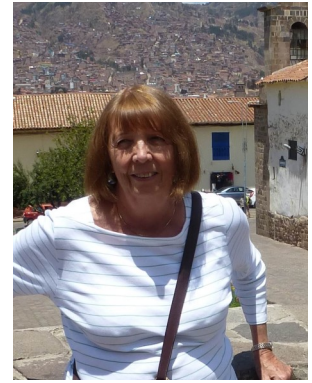
Fill in this form to apply for Gift Aid

			Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2019	2018		
			£	£	£	£		
SCHEDULE 1								
Unrestricted funds balance			4934	0	4934	2980		
Float			70	0	70	70		
Restricted funds balances								
<i>Restricted funds are those that are allocated to a specific project</i>								
Olney Link								
All Schools			0	329	329	329		
Ousedale School			0	27	27	27		
Olney Middle School			0	56	56	56		
Olney Infant Academy			0	156	156	749		
(Lavendon School)	Bo School		0	294	294	0		
Newton Blossomville School			0	180	180	123		
Waterwell			0	50	50	500		
(Bursary)	Kabia- Tailoring		0	385	385	500		
(Skills T C Seats)			0	0	0	491		
			5004	1,477	6,481	5,825		
SCHEDULE 2								
Individual Donations	Coll.Boxes,S.O.s, CAF & Other		2487	0	2487	3472		
Donations- (Lions)			0	0	0	250		
Gift Aid			858	0	858	1233		
Corporate Sponsorship			0	0	0	1000		
Olney PCC Tithing (2 years)			1731	0	1731	0		
Days of Advent			502					
Probus, URC, Cameo			371	0	371	0	nnnnnnnn	
Seats for Skills TC			0	585	585	491		
(Rob Birthday) Bo School			0	564	564	275		
Waterwell			0	50	50	500		
(Gazebo) Tailoring workshop			0	385	385	200		
(Shipping) Pilgrimage			1010	0	1010	110		
1/2 Marathon			241	0	241	0		
(Mudslide) Funeral			0	265	265	0		
Activities for Generating Funds :-	(sub total)		7200	1849	8547	7531		
Tea Party/ BBQ			474	0	474	454		
Soup Lunch			335	0	335	462		
Easter Extravaganza			196	0	196	0		
Cherry Fair			255	0	255	421		
Dickens			1,026	0	1,026	1,246		
ONL Carol Singing			151	0	151	134		
Pancake Race			87	0	87	153		
Autumn Antics			292	0	292	251		
Tinkers Lane Concert			454	0	454	484		
Ousedale Concert			0	0	0	636		
Windmill Singers			712	0	712	993		
Quiz			650	0	650	743		
Car Raffle			0	0	0	81		
School fayres and small events			120	57	177	9		
(own fundraising)			11,952	1,906	13,356	13,598		
SCHEDULE 3								
Cost of Generating Funds								
Insurance			165	0	165	158		
Transport of Goods			480	270	750	553		
School Liaison/Bursary			0	0	0	50		
Gazebo/Mud slide/Funeral			0	264	264	500		
Memorial Plaques/school liaison			0	0	0	0		
Float			0	0	0	70		
Various for small events			46	0	46	375		
(own fundraising)			691	534	1,225	1,706		
SCHEDULE 4								
Charitable Activities								
Bursary			0	0	0	0		
Skills Centre & Photocopier			0	1,076	1,076	8,000		
Preschool			2,750	0	2,750	4,500		
Waterwell			2,560	1,094	3,654	0		
Tailoring Workshop			4,497	0	4,497	0		
Link Schools/churches			9,807	2,170	11,977	12,500		
(own disbursement)								

Report from the SECRETARY

The trustees for 2019 - 2020 were:

Anne McCallum (Chair)
Brian Lintern (Vice Chair)
Tricia Selwood (Treasurer)
Janet Howe (Secretary)
Debbie Hall
Tom James
Brian Partridge
Marilyn Watkins



The trustees met 5 times this year and used e mail for consultations between meetings. Communications from the minutes are sent to Newton. We receive messages from the Newton Committee who use WhatsApp to send accurate information to us, enabling well informed decisions to be made.

Discussions in the trustees' meetings have focused on ways to help the people of Newton financially (e.g. to provide funds for labour and purchase of materials to build water wells) and by providing support (e.g. for developments such as the Preschool and the tailoring initiative). The committee has also tried to provide information about Newton for the people of Olney in order to promote cultural understanding in the UK.

I am also editor of the newsletter (not the secretary's job but a separate role). We send hard copies to a few people, but most people opt to receive this by e mail. If you would like to help by becoming a trustee please return the nomination form attached to the e mail.

Janet Howe

Report from the SCHOOLS committee

Newton Blossomville School
Olney Infant Academy
Olney Middle School
Ousedale School, Olney Campus



We have managed to meet up a few times this year to discuss our collaborative work. Olney Infant Academy is currently without a representative, but efforts are ongoing to secure a new contact there.

Olney Middle School have reluctantly decided to put their link on hold temporarily. Emma Wallace at Newton Blossomville has therefore taken over the link with Christ Evangelical School in Newton, Sierra Leone. Both schools are Church Schools, so the link should work very well.

We continue to receive WhatsApp messages and photos from Komba, the Headteacher at Christ Evangelical, updating us on what their pupils are up to. Newton Blossomville has been sending out books to the schools in Newton that they no longer need. Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, contact with the schools in the UK and Sierra Leone is now limited.

Marilyn Watkins

Report from the EVENTS committee

The Committee has dwindled slightly in numbers over the past year, and currently consists of : Anne McCallum, Janet Howe, Tricia Selwood, Rose Platt, Sally Jones and Sue Lynch. However, we can call upon a number of willing supporters to help out with one-off events, and this is much appreciated.



During the past year we have organised our own events, such as the Soup Lunch, the Quiz Night, and Autumn Antics. We also set up tombola stalls at local community events such as the Cherry Fair, and Dickens Day. We aim to organise events that not only raise funds, but also inform people about the work of the charity in Sierra Leone. We have also benefited from the generous involvement of groups like the Bozeat Windmill Singers who presented an enjoyable concert on our behalf, and the carol singers participating in the 24 Days of Advent initiative. We would also like to thank the local businesses and individuals who support us with publicity and the provision of raffle prizes.

Our fund-raising events came to a prompt halt in March with the implementation of the Covid -19 lockdown, so we are especially grateful at this time to those who contribute through regular giving.

Sue Lynch

Shopping in Newton...in the market... no fridge or freezer so you have to go out every day—and how do you maintain social distance?



Items for the next Newsletter, letters and comments would be welcomed by the Editor, Janet Howe.

*What would you like to see in the newsletter?
Email: olheynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com*

The next deadline is: Friday 24th July

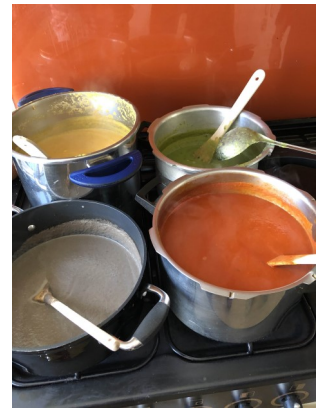


Fund Raising

Sadly we haven't been able to hold many functions since February. However the Soup Lunch was very successful.

There was a choice of 4 soups (Spicy Tomato, Pea and Ham, Mushroom and Carrot and Lentil) and coffee and cake afterwards. There was also a raffle with some lovely prizes, thank you to those who donated them.

£382 was raised for the ONL so a huge thank you to everyone who came and gave (there isn't a fixed ticket price, but donation boxes are put out). Thank you to those ladies and gentlemen who made soup and cakes and who helped serve and clear up afterwards!



Thank you too to Rod Parker whose collecting box raised £40 and Harry Robinson whose box collected £113. Have you thought about putting one in your hall or place of work? Small change put in now and then quickly mounts up! Ask Tricia or Anne for one.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2020

To be announced...

More details can be found on our website: www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

CORPORATE MEMBERS SCHEME

We are fortunate to receive support from local businesses, both financial and practical. Corporate members sponsor the Link's work through a series of packages:

Bronze Membership, £100 per annum – Benefits:- your website link and name on ONL's website.

Silver Membership, £150 per annum – Benefits:- your website and name and description on ONL's website and your company name and logo in our newsletter.

Gold Membership, £200 per annum – Benefits:- your website name and link and profile (maximum 30 words) on ONL's website and listing as sponsor in newsletter and logo.

Platinum Membership, £500 per annum - Benefits; link, profile (maximum 200 words) on ONL website, logo and advert carrying their logo in newsletter

Our very grateful thanks to those who have already joined the scheme—**David Coles, Heron Opticians, J Garrard & Allen, Souls Garages and Stephen Oakley.**

GOLD



David Coles Architects

J. GARRARD & ALLEN
SOLICITORS

J Garrard & Allen, Solicitors, has been established for over 200 years. The firm has a local and international clientele. We like to provide a friendly, efficient and prompt service to our clients, many of whom have been with us for years. The firm is pleased to sponsor the Link's work. For more details of the areas of law covered by the firm, please view the website—www.jgalaw.co.uk



Heron Opticians

a friendly, professional family business.



Stephen Oakley



Souls Garages

SILVER

BRONZE