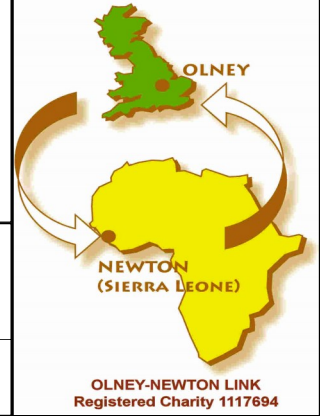


Olney—Newton Link



“To advance education and to relieve poverty

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

January 2024

www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

ONL

Happy New Year to all our supporters!

From all the trustees in the UK
And greetings from Newton too

Hello all, I wish you we all a blessed 2024. May we live long to celebrate many, many more New Years in good health and prosperity. James Kabia



James Kabia is the Baptist minister in Newton. He is also very active in working for the whole community and is managing the building of a new community centre which we are supporting. The photograph shows current progress.

In this edition....

News from Newton Pages 2,3
Sierra Leone and Inflation Page 4
Fund Raising Pages 5,6

To get in touch with The Olney-Newton Link contact Anne McCallum, Chair
Telephone 01234 711196

For the newsletter e mail:
olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

The new Community Centre

James Kabia sent an estimate for the construction of the community centre building.

Concreting of pillar and beams:

- 1) 70 soft cotton tree boards @ le.85,000= le .5,950,000.
- 2) Two cartoon assorted nails @ le 750,000= le 1,500.00.
- 3) Binding wire: 1,300,000.
- 4) 1/2" granite stones 4 trips le.2,500,000= le 10,000,000.
- 5) Ball stones eight trips @ 1,200,000 =9,600,000.
- 6) 3/4 granite stones four trips @ le.2,000,000 =8,000,000.
- 7) Ten dozens of sticks @ le.200,000 =le 2,000,000.

Transportation le. 1,750,000.

Workmanship.le 8,000,000.

Total Le. 39,150,000.

This is old leones.

New leones: Le. 39,150 (just under £2000)

When you read Brian's article (page 4) you will realise that due to rampant inflation this amount really is just an estimate. We are in communication with James to revise the estimate and add more funds if needed.



Builders need to do
their laundry and dry it too!

Goods to Newton

**Thank you all for your help in collecting items
that are needed in Sierra Leone.**

Message to Newton from Anne

We have sent you 4 boxes by Rockel Shipping, containing books, some for Komba's school (the Christ Evangelical School)- maybe he could distribute the rest, to other state run schools. Also medical supplies, spectacles, school uniform and other children's clothes and 20 new bowling club shirts for adults, which we hope you can find a use for.

Another sewing machine is also included.

We have paid for delivery to you.

Please let us know when they reach you. I believe the ship should dock about 27th January, 2024.

Please can we have some photos, especially of the bowling club shirts.

Many thanks

Anne

From James Kabia

Wao!! Thanks so much. Looking forward to receiving them. Merry Christmas and happy 2024 for us all.

(The shipment was delayed and should now arrive early in February.)

Donations

The Baptist Church has donated £633.79, which was raised by the Saturday coffee mornings. We are their current chosen Charity. Thank you so much.

We are also very grateful to all our personal donors who have sent differing amounts in the last few months. Most prefer to remain anonymous.

I'd like to remind you all that every penny raised goes to Sierra Leone. We do not employ any staff in the UK or in SL. All those who work to help us are unpaid volunteers. We do not own any premises or have any outgoings other than a small amount for insurance, which is needed at the events we organise.

It was very good to get this message from one of our donors....

I think the work you are all doing is amazing, having worked for UNICEF in Africa and India I have experienced first hand how much is needed. What always strikes me is the amazing happiness of those I worked with and I see this reflected your work.

Inflation in Sierra Leone

Whilst writing this I am reliant on electric light and mains power to drive my PC and to see what I am typing. This is nothing special to me but is an everyday presumption. We are all well aware of inflation and the ever-increasing costs of living. Add into the equation climate change and the impact on our food supplies. Casting our minds now to conditions in Sierra Leone we must consider the impact on living conditions there.

We have our electricity supply virtually continuous thanks to nuclear, wind, hydro, solar and fuel sourced generation. This also supports our transport, water and food supplies and food preservation by refrigeration. In Sierra Leone there is no nuclear or inland wind generation [wind is not evident], hydro is limited due to geography and the climate conditions, solar is being developed but, as we know, is expensive and requires some form of storage in batteries which also are expensive and reliant on minerals which even the motor industry is struggling to achieve for electric vehicles, so fuel is the answer. Where does the fuel come from? Imported. How is the fuel paid for? In US dollars. What is the source of the dollars? Exports. So as with most countries exports are the lifeblood of a modern economy and Salone is no exception.

When Salone, as the country is also known, suffered from the Ebola outbreak nearly ten years ago there were many lives lost and foreign investment withdrew; the problems were severe. When Covid struck the country went almost immediately into lockdown, based on the Ebola experience, and kept the virus virtually at bay. This was essential since people had to go about their daily business to survive and get food; there could be no 'door delivery' or bulk shopping without the means to preserve food or the funds to bulk buy. This also unfortunately again set back exports and foreign investments, adversely affecting balance of payments and inflation.

Although we record our funding to Newton in pounds sterling the true costs are reflected in the relationship with US dollars which reflects the changing costs of goods. [The pound has also slipped in relation to the dollar]. An indication of the change is evident in a chart showing the

[US Dollar to Sierra Leonean Leone Exchange Rate Chart | Xe](https://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=SLE&view=2Y)

which you can view at

<https://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=SLE&view=2Y>

This may explain why we are having to be cautious on valuation of projects and the need to supplement our initial funding of projects, and the difficulties which our friends are experiencing whilst trying to maintain an element of pride in their work. There is also an element of changing climate conditions which is certainly affecting their confidence in weather conditions and their ability to carry out construction projects in the 'seasons' that they formerly were able to plan on.

Brian Lintern

Fund Raising



The Quiz

A wonderful evening—challenging, fast paced and very good food!

Thanks to Cat, Rob and Malcolm and all the cooks and servers and washers up and everyone else who helped in any way.



We made £961 for the link which has been sent to Newton to help build the new Community Centre.

Congratulations to the winners, the Mad Hatters, with a magnificent score of 124. And thanks to all the other teams for their enthusiastic participation.



The Christmas Tree

We enjoyed decorating a Christmas Tree in St Peter's and St Paul's Church once again.

Our theme (obviously) was Sierra Leone so the decorations included bunting in the flag colours, bits and pieces from Africa and baubles in shades of blue and green.

Thank you Rose and Anne for your efforts in making it look so good.



Dickens of a Christmas: the Bottle Tombola

The takings have been counted from yesterday and we made an incredible total of £1075, from which only £25 has to be deducted (for the stall fee)!

This was a fantastic achievement considering the weather*!

A huge thank you to all who helped in any way - with donating bottles, setting up, manning the stall, providing cups of tea and mince pies and taking it all down afterwards. It was good to see some new faces, it is always great to have new helpers!

Anne McCallum

Editor's note... there was a stream running though the stall! The raffle tickets got damp and started sticking together! Gloves got wet then hands got cold and some people had to go home and change into waterproof gear....

Not the best weather, thank goodness for our gazebo.



Labelling the bottles and folding the raffle tickets



Running the stall



Choosing your ticket and winning!

Carol Singing

Thanks to those of you who came along for carol singing on Friday 17th December in the evening. There were about 18 of us altogether and we had a great evening, with no rain, snow, fog or ice - a first, I think!

Altogether we've raised £200 for ONL, so thank you everyone for your support.

Sally Jones



FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2024

Soup Lunch	And other events... dates to be advised soon

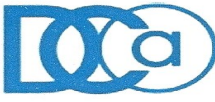




More details can be found on our website: www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

A big THANK YOU to all of you who have continued to donate to the ONL through standing orders in these difficult times.

If you'd like to contribute, check our website, olneynewtonlink.org.uk and select 'donate' from the menu
- or drop an envelope through our treasurer's door -
Tricia Selwood, 16 East Street.

You could also ask us for a collection box in which to put your small change - assuming you're still using real money, that is!

A big thank you to our GOLD sponsors

	<p style="text-align: center;">David Coles Architects</p>
	<p>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</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Heron Opticians</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a friendly, professional family business.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Stephen Oakley</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Souls Garages</p>

Contact Anne or Tricia for more details of bronze, silver and gold sponsorship