

Olney—Newton Link

“To advance education and to relieve poverty in the village of Newton, Sierra Leone, by the provision of charitable assistance”

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October 2026



Contractors discussing plans for the Community Centre

Goshen High School



Mr Abdul Kabia, Headteacher

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Goshen High School

Dear Chairperson Anne and Olney Newton trustees

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you today in your capacity as a Trustee to provide an update on the school's infrastructure and to respectfully request your assistance regarding a critical situation affecting our students.

Due to the deteriorated condition of the Zink building, we are unable to utilize it for the current academic year. Consequently, the Administration and Staff of Goshen High School have collectively agreed to relocate classes to an alternative building on campus. While this alternative structure is currently more functional than the Zink building, it presents a significant challenge: it lacks proper doors and windows.

Despite these shortcomings, the staff and students are making the best of the situation because the environment is still superior to the current state of the Zink building. However, the lack of barriers exposes the children to the elements and compromises security and focus.

We have attached photographs and videos documenting the children attempting to learn in this environment without doors or windows. As you will see, while the students are resilient, the conditions are far from ideal.

We are reaching out to ask if you, as Trustees, can help facilitate the installation of these doors and windows. Any assistance you can provide to secure these facilities for the kids would be immensely appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support of Goshen High School and our students.

Sincerely,

Abdul Kabia

Principal

Goshen High School



In response to Abdul's request we have been able to send nearly £2000 to finance the cost of window and door installation.

Thank you to Ousedale School students who raised the amazing amount of money £703 through cake bake sales!

Trustees decided to supplement this amount as the building was being left insecure and open to the elements. Advancing the education of children is one of our priorities for the future of Sierra Leone.



Doors, frames and keys



Goshen School

The Community Centre

In the last newsletter I explained that the contractor engaged to put the roof on the building was involved in a road accident, which caused his death. Very sad news. We sent our condolences and were pleased that the family decided to return the money we'd already paid the firm (this doesn't always happen in Sierra Leone, laws are different to ours).

New estimates were sought from other builders: due to inflation in Sierra Leone these were more expensive so we sent a little additional money (£178) for the new contractor.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bangura, the headman supervising the construction, was away travelling and then the Deputy Headman, Mr. Sulaiman, became ill, so there was no one able to supervise the work while it was being carried out. We are pleased to hear that Mr. Sulaiman is now recovering but in the meantime the rains came and so the work was not possible.

Abdul Kabia has investigated for us and he has checked that all the building material is being kept safe and Mr. Suleiman still has the deposit. Thank you, Abdul, for all you do for us.



As the rainy season has now ended we look forward to receiving photographs of the roof being erected very soon.

But – read this note from Brian Lintern...

Like here in the UK the weather in Sierra Leone is unpredictable which hampers activities. Traditional construction of dwellings using mud bricks and 'wattle and daub' is now difficult to time; historically such work could be done in the dry season and completed with roofing protecting the construction. Nowadays sudden rainstorms arrive out of season and can destroy walls before the roofing can be done to protect the structure. The alternative is to use generally imported materials which costs substantially more and uses foreign currency and markets with which SL struggles to compete due to lack of exports to improve exchange rates.

Donations



Thank you very much to the Parish Church for their donation - £712.50 has been received from St. Peter and St. Paul's Church tithing.

A cheque for £50 has been received from Bridgebuilder as a result of our participation in Lifepath. We enjoy doing this - role play activities illustrating children's lives - and it helps educate local children about Sierra Leone so fulfilling part of our charity's objectives.

Cameo donated £50 as thanks for a talk given by Anne and Rob.

There are 6 monthly donations by standing orders totalling £82 each month. Thank you to all those who donate this way.

We are very grateful for these donations and can assure you that we take the utmost care to ensure that all funds sent to Sierra Leone are wisely spent - we always make sure at least two people collect money sent and we ask our network of people there to check on work being done and how funds are spent. We do not employ anyone - all the work is managed and organised by volunteers.

SLCMK Dinner



During Claire (nee Lintern) and Mahmoud Tarawally's recent visit, Binta Bah Pokawa, this year's AGM speaker and Newport Pagnell Town Councillor, invited a few of the trustees to join members of the Sierra Leone Community Milton Keynes at a dinner in their honour. Unfortunately, it was midsummer and none of the other trustees were available, so I enjoyed the evening on behalf of everyone!

The meal, at The Grand Sultan, in the MK Theatre district, which Binta has chosen in advance, was delicious - a mixed mezze platter. We chatted about life in SL, now and in the past, and the changes seen over the years. The atmosphere was great and there was a lot of laughter!

Binta was an excellent host, and it was a chance to meet up with people I already knew in the MK SL diaspora and to meet new people, including Binta's contact at Oxford Brookes University, Amy Harris, lecturer in textiles. She and Binta linked up when Binta discovered Amy's connection with Jericho, Oxford, as Binta's home town in SL, is also called Jericho!

At the end of the evening Binta produced take away dishes and delicious home cooked Salone Jollof rice for everyone - a perfect end to a very enjoyable evening.

Anne McCallum



Fund Raising

The Cherry Fair



As you can see it was another lovely sunny day (so yes, we needed ice cream to keep cool!).

The stall was very popular with a superb mix of varied items to win, from bottles, books and plants to cuddly toys.

Thank you to all who helped, tiring work but very worthwhile as £358 was raised for the ONL.

Thank you too to Emma from the Village Schools Federation and her willing helpers who ran a pre-loved books and toys stall. Very useful if like me you were going to be looking after grandchildren in the summer!

The VSF is linked with the Christ Evangelical School in Newton - they are helping raise funds to contribute towards a new building for the school. Initially they need to fence the area for security and then they have a plan for a super new building to replace the flimsy wooden structure they are using at the moment. The £71 taken at the fair will be put to good use.

Wine and Cheese Evening

What a lovely evening! Plentiful wine and cheese with extras, of course, salad bits, chutneys, celery, biscuits.... and wonderful company. We agonised over our wet weather alternative plans but they weren't needed because (like the whole summer) it was warm and dry. We are so grateful to the Cowper and Newton Museum for allowing us to use their marquee and the gardens were beautiful. Thank you.



We were especially pleased to welcome Binta (she spoke at the AGM, is Sierra Leonean/British, has been a citizen of the UK for years and very excited to be in a new role as a local chief in Sierra Leone) and Claire and Mahmoud Tarawally, Brian's daughter and son in law who were visiting from Bo in Sierra Leone. Thank you to all who came. We raised £386 for the link.



Forthcoming Events 2026

Friday 6th November

Quiz Night at the Olney Centre

7.15 for 7:30pm start

Tickets -book in advance- from
Phonebox

Anne 07375 425325

Sally 07719 222820

Sunday 6th December

Dickens of a Christmas

Come and support our bottle tombola!

Donations of bottles are needed by the end of November, to Anne please. Anything in a bottle is good– from whisky to washing up liquid!



We are busy finalising details of a

New Sponsorship Scheme for local businesses.

Details will follow soon.

In the meantime our thanks go to those who have supported us in the past – David Coles, Garrard and Allen, Heron Opticians, Stephen Oakley and Souls Garages – and we hope you will be able to join the new scheme.