Friends of Nixon  Charity no. 1145455

[www.friendsofnixon.org](http://www.friendsofnixon.org)

 **TWELTH ANNUAL REPORT** 25th November 2023

*Introduction*

Through working in partnership to develop local solutions, 2023 has seen continued momentum in the Trusts’ support of the Nixon Methodist Memorial Hospital in Segbwema, Sierra Leone. We have been able to celebrate progress on significant projects including the arrival of equipment and resources from the UK and India, completion of a staff members’ higher training and accomplishing important steps in the process of re-opening the hospital’s nursing school which is moving towards the final phase of preparation for an anticipated intake in 2024.

Although economic, environmental and human resource challenges persist, the absence of a new global pandemic and stability following national elections have fostered an environment where development can be maintained.

*Trustees and Governance*

Founding trustee William Hobson sadly passed away in February 2023; his devotion to the work of Friends Nixon and the energy which he brought to our activity, notably the village latrine construction project, will be sorely missed. We were also saddened to hear of the loss of Reverend Patrick Kamara who supported the Friends of Nixon from its inception by acting as a signatory to our account in Sierra Leone, providing oversight and guidance. His memorial service will be held tomorrow.

Trustees remain actively engaged in both decision making and delivering the work of the charity through a mixture of virtual and in person meetings and through direct activity at the hospital.

We have adapted our method of financial transactions to make use of a new money transfer service (TransfaPay) which has made it easier to make direct payments to the accounts of businesses and service providers in Sierra Leone. This has minimised both movement of funds though intermediary accounts and the use of cash; as a result, both our efficiency and governance has improved. In addition, we have continued a move towards direct funds transfer to suppliers and contractors which has been possible with our current portfolio of activity.

We have made use of available technology to provide regular updates of our work in the form of exchange of emails, WhatsApp messages, videos and images. This has been augmented by visits to the hospital by three trustees at two different times in the year to provide in-person oversight, build relationships with local and national stakeholders including the leadership of the Methodist church of Sierra Leone and deliver follow up training.

Particular thanks need to be granted to our Treasurer Robert Dixon and Secretary Janna Burnie who have been instrumental in delivering the work of the Trust.

*Fundraising*

We have been fortunate that our incoming resources have returned to pre-pandemic levels and that these matched our expenditure for the financial year ending in August. We are privileged that the hospital is held dear by both those that have had a connection with its life over the last 70 years and by those that simply embrace the value and importance of its work. The Missions Project Group at Stamford remain central donors in their support of the hospital via Friends of Nixon. We continue to be thankful for this and for further generous grants from the Gibbs Trust and contributions from the Methodist Women in Britain. We are incredibly grateful to all those who have contributed to our ‘Mattress Appeal’ including the Circuits of the Lancashire Methodist District and their innovative ‘Baking for Beds’ events.

We anticipate significant additional funding will be required in 2024 to safeguard the electrical supply at the hospital; namely the replacement of the batteries of the solar system that are reaching the end of their life span. We are hopeful that our track record in delivering projects in an effective and accountable way will enable us to competitively seek out funding from other grant making bodies. This will allow us to both meet this considerable expense together with potential increasing demands as the nursing school develops and hospital activity increases.

*Charitable Activity*

Our activity this year has focussed on support of the future nursing school, development of a hospital mortuary and provision of new hospital mattresses. We have also continued staff member scholarship support and our funding of the provision of essential medicines through direct contributions to the hospital’s pharmacy.

August 2023 saw the arrival of a ‘Friends of Nixon’ funded shipping container to the hospital compound with both the required itemised training equipment needed for the new nursing skills lab and the chambers for the new mortuary. This notable event was the cumulation of months of work identifying the exact equipment needed, sourcing quotes and establishing the most economical method of meeting this resource deficit. Overcoming the logistical challenges of ensuring the safe arrival of this valuable cargo on its journey from Jaipur, India to Freetown, Sierra Leone through customs and safely on to Segbwema is an enormous achievement for the Trust.

We have worked closely with the hospital and the Nursing & Midwifery Council of Sierra Leone to support the necessary steps required for the nursing school to be re-established and deliver the State Registered Nurse (SRN) Qualification. The trust has funded and overseen the rehabilitation and refurbishment of two classrooms, the healthcare skills lab and the main student hostel including needed electrical and plumbing work. We have provided the necessary models, training equipment and materials required for the skills lab as per the SRN curriculum. In addition, we have funded 70 classroom desks and chairs together with 50 beds and mattresses for the student hostel. We subsequently funded further work to improve the security of the skills lab and provide the required structural dividing panels creating multiple clinical activity stations of an enriched learning environment. We gave support to a team led by a matron from the Nursing and Midwifery Council to set up the skills lab in preparation for an imminent visit where the hospital is seeking ratification of its facility and course.

We are heartened that several other partners, including international organisation The Container Ministry, and local stakeholders and individuals have shared in the vision for the nursing school and contributed to the progress that has been made.

Following an audit of the bed provision at the hospital it was identified that over half of the mattresses on the wards were in an inadequate state of repair. As a result of the subsequent application to the Trust and generous donor support, we have been able to procure and supply 50 new hospital grade hardwearing and waterproof mattresses. This will ensure comfort for patients as they receive treatment, reduce the risk of pressure ulcers and improve hygiene.

We have continued our support of the hospital pharmacy to provide essential medicines not covered in governmental schemes. We have reduced the value of this contribution as the hospital moves towards independent sustainability of this supply. However, the local management have requested ongoing support in this domain for a further period of time, especially given how central consistent availability of essential medicines is to the care patients receive.

This year we celebrated the graduation of ‘Friends of Nixon’ sponsored Aminata Swaray who achieved her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She has now returned to the hospital and is educating and inspiring her colleagues following this time of professional development. The hospital management continue to explore the training needs and skills gaps that the Trust may be able to support. Additional training was provided to 5 staff members in August who received a 2 week long refresher course on the basic use of Ultrasound, ensuring maximum patient benefit continues to be had from the previously donated scanner.

2024 will see the Trust re-establish its programme of supporting voluntary medical staff from the UK to support the team at the hospital with the first doctor due to arrive in April. We also plan to provide significant further investment in the electrical system; a prerequisite for the safe delivery of care and operation of the hospital. Our support of the educational work of the nursing school will remain and we continue to look towards the ongoing development of the hospital laboratory.

*Conclusion*

Thank you for the support that you choose to give to the hospital via the Friends of Nixon. Maintaining existing levels of healthcare provision in a challenging low-income environment is an unenviable task; improving it can often feel insurmountable. However, through partnership, persistence and generosity it is our ambition that the Nixon Memorial Hospital will not only survive but thrive.

 Dr Rob Burnie Chairman