



# Community of St Mary the Virgin

## News from Botswana May 2022

Our donations to causes in Botswana are managed by CSMV Associate Margaret Taylor.

With grateful thanks for your generosity and loyalty to needs here, see below a report for the last 6 months from the work in Botswana.

### The Cross Hospice

The monthly funding of 4500Pula (just short of £300) supported by CSMV has been essential to the Holy Cross Hospice, one might say a life saver, especially as another long term donor was not able to continue after the end of 2021. The Hospice has been through a very difficult time, at last getting re-registered with the Registrar of Societies in March. This means they can now begin to operate normally again, though staff will have to be re-employed on a more sustainable basis. "Return to normal" means restarting the day centre being open daily for drop-in patients for company, medical check-ups, creative activities and meals. As well as restarting delivery of meals to house bound patients. Nursing visits to patients at home continued through the unregistered period, though I understand these can now be increased. Everyone connected with Hospice is heaving a sigh of relief, all are very thankful.

### Gabane Community Home Based Care Centre

The situation at the Gabane Community Home Based Care Centre was also seriously affected by the 2 year covid period. As I wrote previously the number of children attending was less than half the optimum number, 50, until the end of 2021, and had been as low as 15. Very thankfully it is now back up to 50. A change is that the council now require that any orphans attending must be at the council's request, we are no longer allowed to make individual contacts. However, one third of our attendees are orphaned children. As before the fees paid by non-orphan families support the non-fee-paying orphan families. The larger number of children now indicates that I should consider slightly reducing the amount I take them each month. I had to increase the contributions in December, when it was found that one staff member who takes a disproportionately large amount of responsibility, was being very much underpaid. I'm holding off doing this until the next finance committee meeting, when I can see what maintenance commitments look like.

It is so good to see the day centre pre-school in full use again, but sadly there is a downside. Your monthly donation enabled this school to keep going. There were three other pre-schools, that

I know of, in Gabane, which closed because of covid restrictions, with reduced numbers and reduced income. So far none of them have been able to reopen. Undoubtedly GCHBC has kept open because of you, hence in a way my concern to reduce the monthly donation slightly, because of possible over-dependence. We also gave a one-off thank you to the volunteer bookkeeper who prepared the June 2021 annual accounts for us.

## **Individuals Needing Support**

A few individuals have also benefitted from your help. Bushy, whose wife died in childbirth 6 years ago now, needs occasional help. He was retrenched in the early months of the pandemic, has only been able to pick up very occasional low paid work since then. Over the last six months I've supported him as needed when he has, on two occasions, wanted to help his parents in law who look after two of his children, and his mother who looks after the youngest. I went over to say hello when it was this youngest child, Matla's, birthday a couple of weeks ago and was astonished to find him twice the size he was when I last saw him before covid!

Loice, I have mentioned before, has a totally blind and dependent sister with a small child, in rural Zimbabwe; I passed on a donation to support her family. I sent a contribution of support to an elderly lady in Lobatse, she is dependent on a son who earns a little over the equivalent of about £70 per month. And lastly, I was also able to support a woman in Mmankodi, a village not far away, who needed help to get her daughter settled in boarding school.

I am constantly amazed at how people here cope on very little, with individual support ranging from 200 to 600Pula, the equivalent of about £12-£40. The exchange rate fluctuates slightly around £6.50 to £7 for 100 Pula.

That's all I have to report for the six month period, but my thanks, and the thanks of all those who receive, are as heartfelt as always.

God bless you, and THANKYOU.

Margaret Taylor