

ARCAID AGM 2020 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This time last year, about 40 people gathered in the Parish Centre for Arcaid's 2019 AGM and stayed on after the meeting to chat over a glass of wine. How very different things are this year! The past 9 months or so have been difficult for many people, and Arcaid's help has been requested by individuals and groups for whom life under the cloud of Covid has been exceptionally hard.

I'll highlight a few of these later in this brief report, but I'll begin with more local matters. We are bidding a reluctant farewell to our Treasurer Louise McDonald who has moved away from Farnham. She has been an Arcaid Trustee for 7 years and Treasurer for the past 4 years. Louise has looked after our finances and overseen the move to online banking which has hugely simplified the logistics of transferring money to our beneficiaries, especially during periods of lockdown and has halved bank charges. She has also risen to the challenges of trying to obtain answers to simple queries from extraordinarily opaque bank departments and done so with patience and good humour. On behalf of all the trustees, a very sincere thank you Louise for the many hours you've spent on Arcaid – we'll miss your wise and helpful input both as Treasurer and Trustee and wish you well in your new home. One of our trustees Mark Baines has very kindly offered to take over from Louise and we warmly welcome him into his new role on the committee.

The trustees have met by Zoom on several occasions during the year and there has been much discussion about projects at those meetings and also by email between meetings. We have disbursed over £46,000 during this financial year to groups and individuals all over the world - from Greece to Guatemala, Kenya to Cambodia - you can find details in the Treasurer's report. Every funding application is overseen by a trustee from start to finish and beyond and I am most grateful to every member of the committee for enabling Arcaid to do what it was set up to do: send funds to those who are in such need of our help.

And so to a snapshot of a few of the requests we have responded to this year - a full list is available on our website:



Arcaid bought an operating table and operating lights for St Joseph's Hospital in Tamil Nadu, India, desperately in need of basic equipment.

We received a series of urgent requests from St John Vianney School in Uganda following a serious fire which had destroyed the girls' dormitory. Arcaid paid for new beds, bedding, mosquito nets, and refurbishment of the dormitory as well as providing basic foodstuffs for the children in lockdown at the school.



Fire
damage

New
bunk
beds



We look forward to receiving photos of the refurbished dormitory and news that the school has reopened.

You will not be surprised to hear that half the requests to Arcaid this year were Covid-related – requests for food, masks and washing facilities for families who had lost their livelihoods or for children ‘trapped’ in schools by lockdown.



Left – Aprons full of masks about to be given out to poor families in Tshani, South Africa.

Below, distribution of food parcels to needy people in Daveytown South Africa, by Friends of St Martin de Porres, both projects through contacts of one of Arcaid’s trustees.

We have previously supported a very successful enterprise in Uganda called Sew for Life, and here they are, busy making face masks and giving a lesson in their use.



The picture on the left is of food parcels being put together for poor families at Peten Health Project, Guatemala and the two below show the distribution of food supplies to 25 families in the slums of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, both projects through contacts of Arcaid trustees.



This final picture is of a 'Veronica' bucket and shows the creative reuse of a plastic container, transformed into a 'washing station' at the We Yone Child Foundation in Sierra Leone. Arcaid was introduced to the foundation, which provides education, support and livelihood opportunities for poor families by a parishioner, Charlotte Woellwarth who is working in Sierra Leone. We funded a number of such washing facilities to help reduce the spread of Covid.

I hope this brief report gives you an idea of what Arcaid has been up to during this unusual year. It is counter-intuitive for me to express enthusiasm for technology, but thanks to meetings by Zoom, online banking and countless email exchanges both between the trustees and with projects, groups and individuals all over the world, we have been able to offer vital financial help to many needy people, which is what Arcaid is all about.

None of this would be possible without the most generous support of Arcaid subscribers. Regular contributions have continued to come in and have been significantly boosted by a number of extra donations, some of which arrived just when funds were particularly low and so were especially gratefully received. **THANK YOU ALL**

We look forward to seeing you at our zoomed AGM on
Monday 23 November at 8pm