

**S • M • O • A • T**

**REIGATE'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST**

# Newsletter - Autumn 2023

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**Date for your diary:**

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November**

The launch of our 2023 Christmas Appeal will take place during the 8am and 10am services at St. Mark's Reigate, introducing the projects we will be supporting. More information will be included in our next newsletter.

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## **Online giving (including Gift Aid)**

Available via **CAF donate**, thanks to the Charities Aid Foundation

In addition to contributing to our work through the Christmas Appeal, this now enables you to make a regular contributions to SMOAT by standing order. Links to give online via **CAF donate** are available via our website - [www.SMOAT.org.uk](http://www.SMOAT.org.uk)

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If you want to keep in touch with what we're doing on a more regular basis, check our web site where you can see updates on fundraising and other events, and book tickets online. Details and news are also regularly posted on our Facebook account, which you can access via

[SMOAT.org.uk/facebook](http://SMOAT.org.uk/facebook)



# REASONS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN SMOAT

There are several things about working for SMOAT that are truly gratifying. However, there are two things which are particularly satisfying. Firstly, and probably most obviously, is the fact that each year we help thousands of people. We give them a foot on the first rung of a ladder through education, a helping hand through opportunities to earn their own income, or perhaps most importantly the gift of life.

The second thing that I find immensely fulfilling is receiving reports from the organisations we support. They are so heart-warming and, of course, they give us the reassurance we need that the money we have sent from our supporters has actually reached the right place and is doing exactly what we expected it to be doing. It is something that we require of all the organisations we support.

At our recent Annual Meeting, we were able to give reports on all the projects we supported during 2022. The organisations we support acknowledge and respect our request for reports and are always very happy to be able to send them to us and share their news because our actions have made such a real difference to them. In fact, one lady couldn't give us as full a report as she would have liked for the Annual Meeting because she was in hospital. For me, just the fact that we know this lady is in hospital and had taken the time to apologise for not being able to report fully just demonstrates what a close and trusting relationship we have with all the organisations we support. She did commit to giving us a fuller report when she was better!

One of the thank you letters we received recently which particularly struck me was from Action in Africa, a tiny charity with an income of only £31,558 in 2022. Tina Rayburn, their Vice Chairman, came to talk to us at the launch of our Christmas Appeal. She was incredibly excited that we were aiming to raise £6,000 for an incubator in a dispensary in a remote area of Tanzania. This is what she had to say in her thank you letter:

*"We have just received your letter and cheque for £6,000. We are over the moon. Thank you so much. By initially showing an interest in Action in Africa, you have triggered an impact you could not have foreseen. Because you agreed to fund the incubator for Nyaishozi Dispensary, you gave us the confidence to launch an incubator campaign on a much larger scale – to provide each of our ten dispensaries with this life-saving piece of equipment. To date we have raised enough funds to pay for six incubators!*

*"By funding the incubator – the number one item on Rebecca's wish list (Rebecca is the nurse at the Nyaishozi dispensary), you enabled us to purchase other medical equipment she wanted – monitoring equipment for blood pressure and the foetal heartbeat as well as six hospital beds. This is all down to SMOAT.*

*“Working with Louise on the video for your Christmas Appeal was very educational – inspiring me to go home and create a video for our own Incubator Appeal. Filming our appeals will now become the norm. We are so grateful for your generosity and are looking forward to filming and photographing the incubator in situ when we visit Nyaishozi in August.”*

There were a couple of things about this letter that really hit home. Firstly, the fact that we gave them the money for the first incubator, freed up funds they had already raised so they were able to buy other equipment much sooner than anticipated. And, secondly, they are such a small organisation and I feel that through their involvement with SMOAT, they have realised their own potential and gained the confidence and skills required to be able to launch their own very successful appeal. Because of this they have been able to buy six incubators and, so, as well as through the incubator that we funded, indirectly I feel we have played a large part in saving the lives of hundreds of other babies.

This is the difference for me between supporting SMOAT and supporting other enormous charities, who we all know through huge advertising campaigns. Don't get me wrong, they are doing great work, but once your money leaves your account, you have no idea what has happened to it. Is it saving a life or simply paying a salary? With SMOAT, you know that all the money you give will go to the people who need it.

I was interested to see on the Charity Commission website that one of those large organisations have 70 employees earning over £60,000 per year, with one person earning between £300,000 and £350,000 per annum. Yes, these are huge organisations which inevitably require a lot of administrative support but, nevertheless, I certainly wouldn't want to think that the money I thought was going to save lives, is actually only paying a salary. I found this article quite an interesting read: <https://www.goodbox.com/2019/06/how-much-money-goes-to-charity-when-you-donate/> .

Of course, the big charities can achieve a political voice and a 'seat at the table' to discuss and influence some of the bigger macro issues in the charitable sector and poorest countries. Their prominent and respected expertise helps influence international overseas aid policies and perhaps, most importantly, they educate and shine a light on issues that would otherwise largely go unreported. They certainly play a very important role. However, in terms of value for money on the ground for those living in extreme poverty, this is where our tiny charity, without its marketing and administration fees, can pack an almighty punch. We do need charities that work at both macro and micro levels to get the best of both worlds.

But, if you are looking for a small charity, where all the money raised gets to the projects being supported, then look no further than SMOAT. And, if you know people who give to the large overseas aid institutions, you might just want to give them a nudge towards SMOAT and tell them that they can put their confidence in us to get the money they donate to the people who really need it.

BARBARA PERKINS

# GEORGE ALAGIAH

In 2005 SMOAT was celebrating 25 years as a charity. SMOAT had been raising awareness of issues relating to health, education and agriculture and we felt it was time to celebrate and reflect on the first 25 years. But how to do just that? Well, we came up with the idea of taking over the Harlequin Theatre and having a speaker to address the audience. Who better to take on that role than George Alagiah. Some sceptics thought we would never sell enough tickets, but our determination and hard work paid off. It was a sell-out.



George Alagiah was one of the BBC's best-known journalists at the time. He had a lengthy career as a foreign correspondent in Africa and in 2005 was reporting from Sri Lanka on the tsunami. On Thursday he reported from Sri Lanka and on Friday evening he was at the Harlequin. The report in the Surrey Mirror states that "he came over as an accomplished, relaxed speaker who was always easy to listen to. He expressed his ideas cogently and authoritatively yet without ever giving the impression that he was lecturing his audience". He was also Patron of the Fairtrade Foundation at that time, before the BBC decided there was a conflict of impartiality and he had to withdraw from the role.

George Alagiah continued to work for the BBC and recent obituaries showed the high esteem that he was held in by his colleagues. He went on to write his debut novel, *A Burning Land*, an ambitious and moving story of life in South Africa. We were fortunate and privileged to welcome Mr Alagiah that evening in 2005. His passion and commitment came across and his contribution for SMOAT was much appreciated. Who will be able to follow in his footsteps for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SMOAT?

ANN DALE  
*(Former committee member)*

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## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The SMOAT committee were delighted to hold our annual general meeting at St Mark's after church on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June where we reported back on our giving schedule for 2022. Our treasurer Jean reports in this newsletter that we raised an impressive £21,058 which is incredible given the difficult financial times. We are truly grateful for our supporters, and are always delighted to demonstrate exactly how that money has been spent.

It is worth reiterating that SMOAT has no running costs, and all our work is done by volunteers. This means that 100% of your donations are directed towards very carefully selected small-scale projects run by organisations that we

carefully vet and monitor. This means that the money is spent entirely at the local community level, and not on UK salaries, marketing costs or admin.

Our 2021/22 Christmas Appeal was launched in November 2021 and raised a phenomenal £8,803 including gift aid. This money was topped up to £9,000 from our reserves and split equally between our two partners.

In Kenya, **Advantage Africa** used our £4,500 funding to support 20 beneficiaries with goats, water tanks and supporting training. The beneficiaries are all women-headed households, both mothers and grand-mothers, impacted by HIV/AIDs. In a short period of time, this project had a huge impact with multiple baby goats, provision of milk for the family and excess to sell at market. This has been truly transformational for the families involved and Advantage Africa made us the most wonderful short video where you can see our actual goats and families.

A single-mother, Kambua supporting 3 children, now has 5 goats and a least a litre of milk a day. She said “I never thought I would get this help to start earning an income for my family. Now our life is better than yesterday, and I know it will get even better day by day”.

The other £4,500 was sent to **Village Water** for their expansion to support safe water supply through wells and sanitation in Mozambique. The background field work for this project was completed by our ex-SMOAT trustee, Beth Prosser, who spent several months in Mozambique establishing need and setting up links with local communities. Village Water reported back that our grant directly supported 6 communities in Manica District, which ultimately benefitted around 2,600 people, of which 1,500 were children.



*These two photos show the old water point, and water collection from a stream, before the project started.*

Water-points were repaired which ensured safe water for drinking and cooking - replacing use of streams and water holes shared with animals



causing preventable waterborne diseases. Simple repairs like this, and maintenance training, break the cycle of dirty water leading to ill-health, missed opportunities for children to attend school and families to farm and earn a living.

*Left: New water point at Bairro 1 de Maio C (Village Water)*

The work that Village Water does extends significantly beyond the building and repair of water points.

Training is given for the community to maintain their new infrastructure, and local partners run hygiene promotion sessions (*photo, right*) and make sure that community members understand the importance of washing hands to prevent disease.



In April, the SMOAT team were delighted to hold a much-loved Bingo event at St Mark's. Topped up from our regular givers, we were able to provide £1,250 to **BRINOS**, one of our long-term partners who work in rural Nepal. Headed up by Neil Weir who has previously visited us at St Mark's, the Brinos team run ear camps and clinics, and have set up an Ear Care Centre clinic in the remote part of the Himalaya's called Nepalgunj. Because of the altitude, acute ear problems are common and render adults unable to work and children unable to learn.

Our funding has paid for a portable suction machine and portable screening audiometer which they are using on their many free community field-trips to diagnose and treat ear problems.

Brinos has now been running for almost as long as SMOAT at 35 years, and we were delighted to hear that Neil has been awarded an OBE for his work, in 2022.

Neil writes, "At our 66<sup>th</sup> camp in November 2022, Ram Bohara is heading up the Brinos Community Ear Care service in western Nepal. He has struck up good working relations with the district health authorities such that poor patients are receiving subsidies from their district governments' for surgery and travel expenses. This is a completely new way of getting government involvement in ear care."

**Doctors for Nepal** are a long-standing project partner of ours, working to support talented but poor students through medical school in rural Nepal. Their alumni – a selection of doctors, nurses and midwives, once trained then return to their remote mountainous rural locations to practise.



In the past we have provided funding for particular students including Dr Lalit, now a consultant, who also proudly uses his SMOAT-funded stethoscope on a daily basis. In January, Doctors for Nepal ran an equipment appeal and we were delighted to donate.

Our £1,000 has gone towards CTG and ECG machines and also Caesarean Section kits. All the machines went to remote clinics and are being put to good use.

In April, I forged a new relationship with exciting partner, **Wonder Foundation**. The Foundation works in a number of African countries, as well as in other parts of the world. Their projects are specific, locally led and very targeted.



Their aim is to empower women and girls through education. Together, we decided that SMOAT would fund the rollout of a successful pilot project in Cameroon – a new country for us. Our donation of £1,500 was used to

provide mentoring support for young women at the Sorawell Training College in Yaounde where they can train for jobs in the hospitality industry.

The scheme involved training 5 mentors, who in turn supported 50 girls for 6 months. The students are all from disadvantaged urban backgrounds, with limited education and poor self-esteem, and often younger sibling dependents due to the ravages of HIV/AIDS. In addition to their education, they need support to manage the stresses and responsibilities, and have the confidence to enter the formal work market – typically family members have lived hand to mouth and offer limited support or experience. The 6-month programme has been hugely successful, and the 5 trained mentors are now continuing their work to break the cycle of poverty.



Our early-autumn BBQ brunch is another much-loved SMOAT fund raiser, and this time we forged a relationship with another new partner, in another new country location for SMOAT.

**Hope Health Action** is a church-founded organisation running a hospital in the very troubled and impoverished island of Haiti in the Caribbean.

Back in our 2022 winter newsletter I described the acute power crisis fuelled by the rise in global oil crisis, and against a background of ongoing political



instability. The hospital was operating on a shoe-string of generators and at imminent risk of closure putting multiple lives at risk.

Hope Health Action launched an energy appeal, and we were able to donate £2,500 – a significant chunk of the £7,000 total budget they desperately needed. Our funding paid specifically for new PowerCube technology which upgrades solar capacity and stores power efficiently. This has truly been life-saving.

Also affected by the global fuel crisis, was our existing partner **Educaid** in Sierra Leone, West Africa. I contacted Erin to see if we could fund anything at Lumley School following our hugely successful refurb of the Strong Girls Incubator which provided support and education for young teenage mothers. Erin, delighted to hear from me wrote back immediately.



When asked what they would like funding for, the unanimous reply was a request for funding for a generator (left) for the Rolal secondary school. In an email to us she said, "I appreciate this might not seem glamorous, but it is an urgent need for us". Educaid has been working to upgrade the solar systems at all of their schools, but a back-up generator is still essential for the rainy season and also for devices that

have a heavier burden to protect the solar supply. The school has 260 students, of which 224 are residential, including 47 girls in the Strong Girl Incubator programme.

They were delighted when we offered to pay for the generator in full costing £2,500 which will help the solar power not to be overburdened, and therefore more reliable, and cost-effective.

The generator has been installed and is supplying the back-up power source required during the rainy season, which is between May and November. However, it had its uses during the dry season too



as it was temporarily transferred to Lumley School while they were having repairs made to their solar system. So, already, as you can see in the photo here, the generator has made a huge difference to them.

In October, we initiated a relationship with another new organisation, **Empathy**, working in Laos in South-east Asia. Started by a Scottish fisherman, Andrew Hepburn, in 2010, Empathy has been working alongside the marginalised rural poor. Andrew has set up a number of income-generating projects and supporting teams which provide livelihood projects for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Andrew asked us if we could fund a cohort of 8 girls for the next cohort of their 'Dignity' young women's skills programme costing £1,600. This provides an intensive high skill residential seamstress course and provides each woman with their own refurbished foot powered original singer sewing machine. They can then start their own business from their villages. The training has been hugely successful, and we received some fabulous photos of the beautiful women sewing at their machine.

### **The Big Give**

Based on our success in 2021, in December 2022 we decided to repeat and expand our giving via the mechanism of the 'Big Give'. This is a nationwide campaign which allows smaller organisations to secure match funding from foundations for donations received within a set 2-week window in December. This means that the funding SMOAT donates, is essentially doubled. We work closely with all the recipients to ensure that the projects are a match to our SMOAT objectives and that all of our funding is spent at local level.

In 2021 some of our existing project partners decided to join the Big Give, and last year we used the mechanism to research some new partners – we look forward to working with them all in the future given the success of their Big Give projects.

**IT Schools Africa** (renamed ITSA Digital Trust in May 2023) is one of these new organisations. We donated £1,500 which has been doubled. They are working in Malawi where nearly 50% of the population are under 18 and they need skills to improve their future livelihoods. Digital education in Africa is in its infancy due to a lack of working computers and the skills to use them. IT Schools Africa repair and update school IT equipment and provide training for teachers.

Our donation, which was doubled as part of the Big Give, will be funding the training of digital skills to 24 students. This is a really fabulous organisation working hard to repurpose recycled IT equipment, and provide skills and training to future generations across Africa.

When looking on the Big Give website, the name **Well Boring** immediately and unsurprisingly caught my eye...! However, looking beyond the obvious pun, I was excited to see that this organisation is 'right up our street' working at the front line of sanitation.

We funded £1,000 which is match-funded, which will support the refurbishment of wells and digging of new bore holes in a Kenyan primary school. Each well provides safe water for over 1,000 children. Our contact Chris Dann has recently come out of hospital, so we are waiting for confirmation of which well SMOAT has funded.

**Legs for Africa** was another new organisation which caught my eye. This one is doing incredible work - Legs4Africa works to rehabilitate amputees in Africa by recycling prosthetic leg parts from the UK (which would otherwise end up in landfill), they upgrade mobility centres and train their staff, and they support organisations which provide peer support for amputees.



We have received a report to say that the money we donated, £1,500 which was match-funded, has been put towards their ongoing outreach and community engagement projects in Ghana - with additional training for peer support specialist counsellors for amputees across the country.

It is a 12-month project, and we can't wait to hear more.

Finally, we have a new partnership with **Our Moon Education**. This is a really tiny organisation started by a family in Tunbridge Wells, who built a residential college in a rural location in Chibombo in the central province of Zambia, starting in 2019 and they have an ambitious plan to raise £45,600 in total over several years, building it wing by wing.

Their present campaign aim is to build a Learning Forum - a building which would house two large classrooms, a children's classroom, small group study pods, and a library/computer room. It would be powered by a solar system. Their budget for this part of the build is £8,000 so our contribution of £1,000, match-funded to £2,000 will make a big difference to this project. They hope to have built two of the classrooms by the end of the year and they have most of the funding they need to complete the whole build.

NAOMI FLOOD

# A Very Worthwhile Beetle

I bought my first car in 1971. I say “car”; some may wish to challenge this description, on the grounds that it only had three wheels, while also actually being a van. Yes, a Reliant Supervan III, fabricated largely from fibreglass and plastic (apart from the engine, of course) - an ancestor of Del Boy’s version immortalised in the legendary television sitcom *Only Fools and Horses*.

Unsurprisingly, some of those who had never previously come across a three-wheeler found my Reliant’s appearance disconcerting. A three-year-old member of our family spent a long while peering beneath it before concluding that, yes, the fourth wheel had definitely gone missing.

Similar surprise has been experienced by those encountering a rear-engined Volkswagen Beetle for the first time. Many a comedy moment has been plundered from the astonishment expressed when the car’s bonnet is lifted to reveal ... an empty space. Has the engine been stolen? Was it ever installed in the first place?

That sense of something significant missing was prevalent in St Mark’s Church Hall at about 2.20 p.m. on Sunday March 12th. The Hall was set up for SMOAT’s first fundraising event of the year: a Beetle Drive. Everything seemed ready - tables, each with four chairs, for the players, the tombola surrounded by prizes waiting to be won, a refreshment area... but was anyone actually coming to play Beetle? Thankfully, yes. All of a sudden, in they streamed, and ten minutes or so later 60 participants were seated and ready to begin.



It was a most enjoyable afternoon. Multi-generational teams, with players' ages ranging from the very young upwards, played with a competitiveness that had to be heard to be believed. Beetles were drawn that would defy identification by the presenters of BBC's *Springwatch*. The tombola did such a trade that complete re-stocking will be required before it next emerges. During the interval, tea, coffee and cakes were consumed before, re-energised, the contestants emerged for the second half. At the end of it all there was a winner, but it really was the taking part that provided the enjoyment.

And, for a relatively small-scale fundraiser, the event raised the remarkable total of £420. This helped SMOAT to give £1,500 to Project Uganda, a charity operating in that country, which used the donation to complete a rainwater-harvesting project at one of the schools with which it works.



In this country it is so easy for us to take the availability of fresh, clean and safe water for granted, even in times of very dry weather. In sub-Saharan Africa rainwater harvesting plays a crucial role in helping to improve sanitation, limit the spread of disease and, in schools, keep students healthy and minimise absence through illness.

All in all, the Beetle Drive represented an afternoon very well spent. A sincere thank you to all who supported the event in any way.

DAVID LEAR

# Treasurer's Report – 2023

This report covers the year-end accounts for 2022 and the activities to date for 2023.

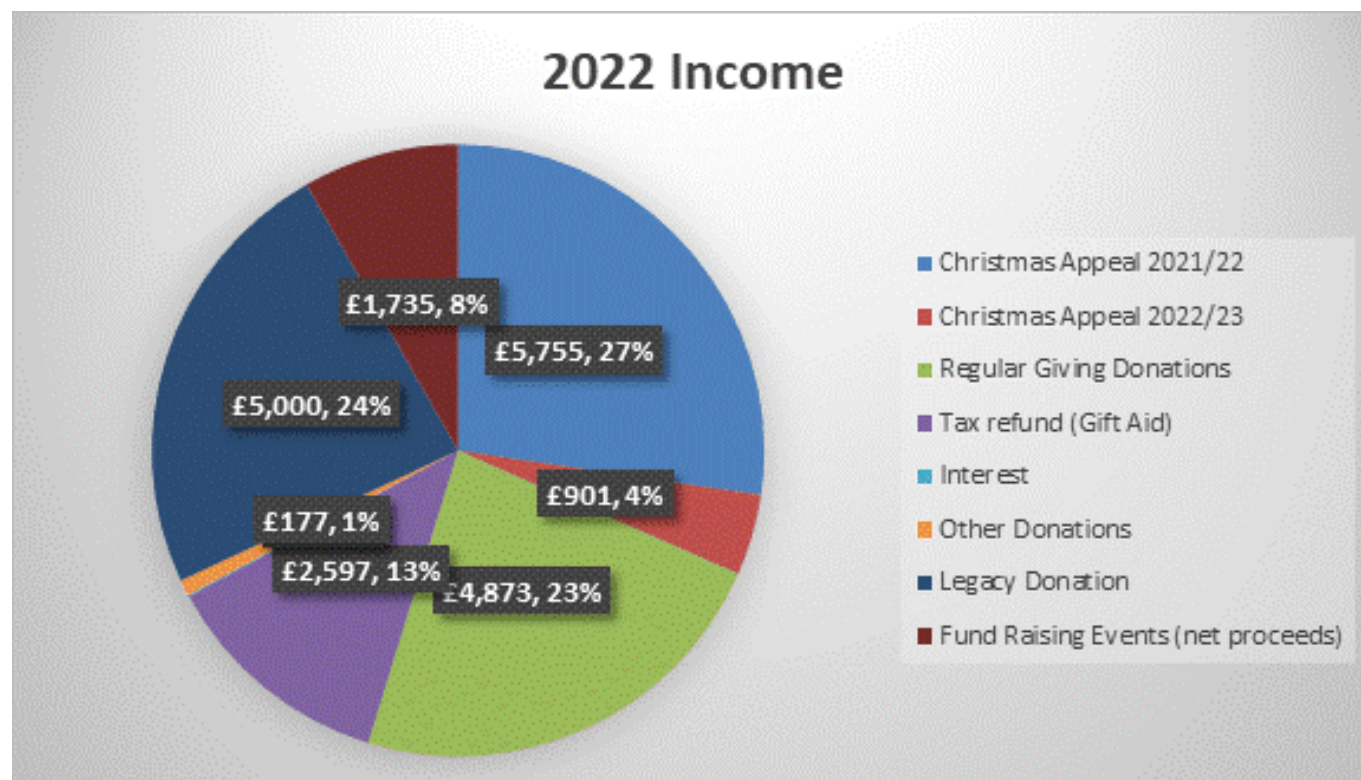
## SMOAT Financial Review of 2022

Our total income for 2022 was £21,058. Our expenditure during the year was £203, covering our liability insurance and newsletter printing costs, giving a net income of £20,855.

The results compared to 2021 are shown in the table below:

	2022	2021
Total Income	£21,058	£28,677
Total Expenditure	£203	£271
Net Receipts	£20,855	£28,406
Gifts Made	£24,050	£19,830
Excess of Income over Gifts	<b>-£3,195</b>	£8,576

The breakdown by category is shown below:



In 2022 we were delighted to re-start our face-to-face events after the impact of Covid on previous years. In spring we held our bingo event and raised £529 for Brinos; this was topped up to £1,250 from regular gifts.

For Mother’s Day we had another at home event and made and delivered chocolate brownies. This raised £386 for the Wonder Foundation, and we topped this up to £1,500. In September we had a very successful Barbecue Brunch. This raised £821 which was topped up to £2,500, for Hope Help Action.

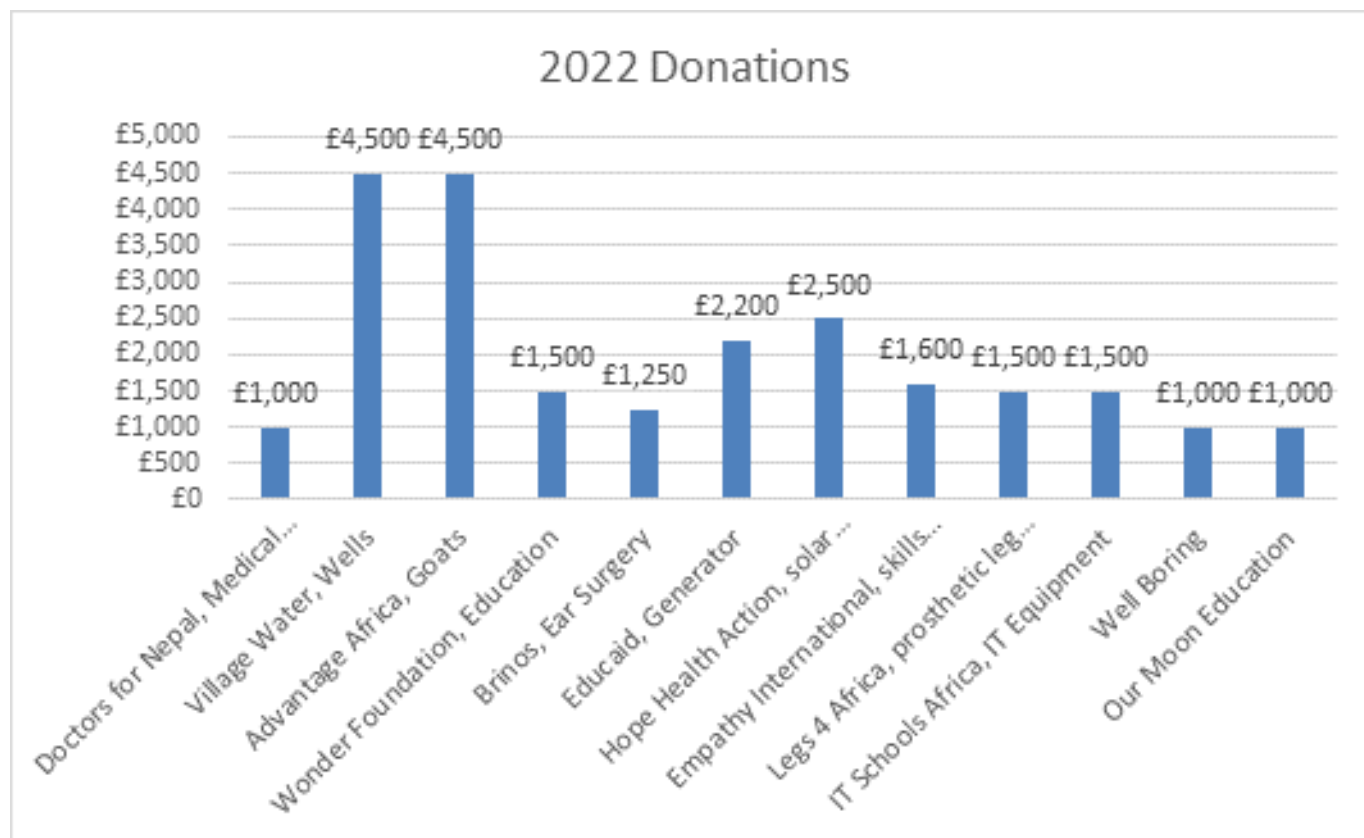
We received a very generous legacy of £5,000 that helped uplift our income significantly.

Our Christmas Appeal raised £7,525 in donations – this includes donations received prior to 2021 year-end. With Gift Aid we raised £8,803. This enabled us to give significant donations to Village Water and Advantage Africa.

Again regular giving has been critical to helping us support vital development projects. Please do consider if you are able to make a small regular donation.

We received £2,597 in Gift Aid from HMRC. If you are a tax payer and are not currently registered with us for Gift Aid please consider completing the Gift Aid form (available on our web site, or by our notice-board in St. Mark’s foyer) so we can claim the tax back on it – this will increase the value of your donation by 25%.

In total we made gifts of £24,050 – the extra donations over income were made possible due to the surplus last year. The donations made during the year are summarised below:



Again it has been a challenging year for us and our supporters. Thank you so much for continuing to support us.

## 2023 Activities to Date

2023 got off to a good start with our Beetle Drive in February. This raised £419 for Project Uganda. This was topped up to £1,500. We have also made donations of £2,500 to Zambia Orphans Aid and £6,000 to Action in Africa from our Christmas Appeal. We have made a donation of £1,000 to Afrinspire funded from regular donations.

A huge Thank You again to you all for continuing to support us through your donations and by attending our events.

JEAN WALLER  
(Treasurer)

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We are now making tickets for some SMOAT events available online through TicketSource.

For event details, see [www.SMOAT.org.uk](http://www.SMOAT.org.uk)

**For more information please contact any of the committee, listed below.**

*To join our mailing list, or to switch to receiving an electronic (rather than a paper) copy of the Newsletter, e-mail richard@smoat.org.uk*

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