



SMP 2024 AGM
Saturday, 23 November 2024
Edinburgh City Chambers
Minutes

Summary:

93 SMP members and invited speakers joined us for our 2024 AGM, which included a letter from his Excellency Dr Lazarus Chakwera read by Board member and Chair of FEHE Forum, Dr Yonah Matemba, a pre-recorded speech by Linda Dembo, Interim CEO at Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) and a pre-recorded speech by Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson MSP.

To see highlights of the 2024 Annual Gathering visit the past event page here: [SMP Annual Gathering & AGM: Friendship & Fundraising Fundamentals | Scotland Malawi Partnership](#)

Heather Cubie, Chair

Apologies: Ben Sparham, Benjamin Carey, Blessings Kachale, Cathy Ratcliff EMMS, Ceci Stephens, Elizabeth McKearnan WaterAid, Fiona Fraser Geoff Simm, Isobel & Alexander Reid, Joanna Keating, Joel Nkhoma, John Briggs, John Elliot, John Luanda, Dr Ken Jeffrey, Linda Bryson Kingcase Church, Lindsey Davidson, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Mark Wong, Tearfund

1. Approval of minutes:

- a. The Minutes of the 2023 AGM were approved.
 - i. Proposer: Emma Wood, Seconder: Caroline Beaton

2. There were no Matters Arising from the minutes.

3. *Securing the Future of the People-to-People Model* - Board Task & Finish Group report

Kevin Simpson informed membership of the work of the Task&Finish Group constituted of two board and SMP CEO: Jeremy Bagg, Kevin Simpson and Stuart Brown. It had been tasked with thinking about the strategic direction of the SMP. There were four main strands that had come out of the various in-depth conversations with several members of the SMP. The two questions they asked were: "What do you want to see more of?" and "What do you want to see less of?"

These four strands came out of the discussions:

- Showcasing the **impact** of the SMP and SMP's members (difference SMP makes, outcomes, not outputs)
 - Telling the story by offering a showcasing opportunity through a travelling photographic exhibition. This could be used as platform to connect with different geographical areas in Scotland, MPs, MSPs, local councillors and schools. Further information would be available soon and members were invited to speak to CM or SB to have input in this.
- Supporting members and their Malawi partnership through networking
 - Various forums were well-attended but to keep focused every forum should also have an output to it which could be used as a resource.
 - Evolve Youth & Schools work; expand the already existing online/global citizenship offering and the involvement with Malawian FEHE students and build upon this.
 - Expand to a friend's membership base, give people the opportunity to engage with the SMP through a *Friends of SMP* network (even without a personal connection/project)
- Building a financially sustainable future for the SMP
 - This was a huge challenge as we needed to improve our funding mix and increase our overall funding. Research would be commissioned on impact of the SMP.
 - A new Task & Finish Group on Fundraising would be led by Kevin Simpson and focus on fundraising for SMP to improve the funding mix and increase SMP's Impact. A compelling case for support needed to be made

- Maximising SMP's potential
 - The SMP had a long history, good reputation and strong network. Could that network and reputation be used to do something different/more and was there something the SMP could deliver for Malawi in particular?
 - Connections with business and the commercial world in a bilateral context could benefit the SMP.

The following questions were asked:

RMcN: What were the existing links to private sector that the SMP has? SB replied that links were rather limited, SMP member the Challenges Group did fantastic work with the private sector and we had useful dialogue with the Challenges Group. Although there was potential there was not much there at the moment.

KS thought that the creation of jobs in Malawi would be the best, and if supported by UK companies that would be even better.

HC encouraged members to speak to Kevin at networking sessions in the Main Chamber following the AGM.

4. **The Annual report.** The SMP Chair reported that:
 - a. There were two reports presented, the ARA which was the statutory annual report and accounts, this goes to the regulators. A second, general annual report was printed for all to take away with them after the meeting.
 - b. The narrative as presented in the annual report did not include the accounts but showed how much had been achieved with a tiny income. Great credit was given to the staff team who made such a sum stretch so far. Appreciation was also extended to the membership in general and all volunteers who helped in making AGM and Annual Gathering happen.
5. **Presentation of Annual Accounts,** John Fanning, Audit & Finance Committee Chair
 - a. Finance Officer vacancy – Alan Laverock, current Finance Officer would retire in March and the closing date for applications would be on 2 December 2024 to enable a handover. JF thanked Alan for his work.
 - b. John Fanning, Chair of Audit and Finance Committee presented the 2023-24 Annual Accounts.
 - i. They can be viewed here: [2023-24 SMP Accounts](#)
 - c. The accounts were proposed by Heather Cubie and seconded by Jeremy Bagg and adopted by the meeting.
6. **Appointment of Independent Examiners:**
 - a. The members resolved to re-appoint WBG Services (formerly Wylie & Bissett LLP) as the Independent Examiners for a further year this was adopted by the meeting.
7. **Membership Fees 2025/26**
 - a. A resolution brought to AGM by Board of Trustees is to propose an increase of £5.00 to individual members' membership from £20.00/annum to £25.00/annum from 2025/26 to help cover costs as funding had remained static for several years. SMP members approved the increase for individual membership fees, there were no dissenters.
Q asked regarding organisation fees: current organisation fees would remain the same but T&F group on Fundraising would look into this.
Q asked regarding donating on top of the membership fee: This was possible by using the "donate" button on website and a good option as donations could attract gift aid
8. **Election of Trustees:**
 - a. There were 5 vacancies on the Board
 - i. Heather Cubie and Davie Luhanga who were leaving the Board were thanked. All trustees were thanked for their contributions.
 - ii. Three Board members were willing to stand again. Prof Tracy Morse, Emma Wood and Prof Jeremy Bagg were happy to undertake another term in office.
 - b. New members wishing to join the Board were Sharon Brown and Bosco Chinkonda
 - i. Assembled members of the SMP approved their appointments, with no election required. They were accepted with a raise of hands and sealed with an applause.

9. AOCB

- a. Emma Wood, Board member and involved with grassroots charity StekaSkills thanked the SMP for the networking opportunities. She very much appreciated the collegiate and sharing way that was possible through SMP.
- b. The SG address welcomed the return of the women and girls' fund. Organisations like StekaSkills can make big impact in Malawi in single communities but it would not be possible in three separate countries. So they were unable to apply for the Women and Girls fund this time round. At an SMP event with the Westminster government the question was asked "what can you do for £10'000 other than organise a conference?" With £10'000 StekaSkills had developed a way in which poverty-experienced people get their voices heard, recorded a TED X talk and produced a film. EW would like to have it noted that it was a shame those grants are not available.
- c. HC reiterated that a small amount of money can go a long way!