



Link-up! Members' Meeting

THURSDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2020

**Zoom worked well again for our second successful meeting, hosted by members,
Gentian and Gillian.**

Attended by: Annie Bainbridge (Umberleigh), John Collier (Exeter), Gillian Dale (Exeter), Gentian Dyer (Exeter), Richard and Emilie Hayes (Malaga, Spain), Hilary Noakes and Peter Nickol (Exeter), Penny Pullen (Exeter), Emma Sarton (Essex), Mark Smith (Wolverhampton), Dawn Swettenham (Chester), Peter Von Lany and Abi Williams (Exeter).

Everyone briefly re-introduced themselves and welcomed Peter von Lany who had not attended before, but he and his wife Hirut have a long association with EEL and a particular interest in environmental projects.

- Mark Smith drew our attention to the support EEL had been able to provide regarding Covid 19 – particularly hand sanitiser, fertiliser and seedlings to ensure crops for the future. The majority of children have been able to return to school. 34 Librarians are still being supported in schools and a suggestion was made that we should try and encourage employment of females as Librarians. Mini-books for use in primary schools are still being made primarily by female deaf students. There is very high unemployment in Ethiopia.

EEL connections with VAO are getting good results with teachers trained in 20 schools to screen for eye problems and from a base in Nekemte Hospital 750 pairs of glasses have been made available. This partnership also helps with payment of our core team Nekemte.

- Lines of Communication.

A paper circulated by Gillian before the meeting aimed to clarify the new structure of EEL meetings. Quarterly Link-up! Member's meetings and Trustee meetings provide a simple, transparent and two-way line of communication across EEL where information can be shared, proposals put forward and discussed and decisions made.

To test the system John Collier brought a proposal to the table requesting further support for the building of a toilet block and two hand-dug wells. It was agreed that further detailed information was needed and Mark Smith will assist with this before the proposal goes to the Trustee meeting on 16th December.

- An Ethiopian film about sexual abuse was circulated by Annie before the meeting and provoked a lively discussion about the issue, not least the fact that this film had been able to be made in Ethiopia recognising the reality of the problem. This format of sharing a film in advance so members could discuss it worked really well.
- The meeting ended with a light-hearted Christmas themed quiz, led by Gillian, testing member's knowledge of the differences between Christmas traditions in UK and Ethiopia – we had some very knowledgeable people attending the meeting so we all learned something new!

The next meeting will again tie in with Trustee meetings, so will be early March 2021.

We were delighted that three Trustees were able to attend this meeting.

For now as far as we know Link-up! Meetings will continue in Zoom format.

Thank you to those who joined us, it was great to see you. The meetings are informal and everyone is extremely welcome. Most of all we need your ideas, enthusiasm and participation to make Link-up! a rewarding and effective experience for all EEL.

We look forward to seeing you at the next one.

Please send your suggested topics for the next meeting to eelyearofthe@yahoo.com