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# THE PARISH OF CORPUS CHRISTI TONBRIDGE AND

#  ST PETER’S HADLOW

**TWINNED WITH PARISHES IN MALAWI**

***MALAWI* TWINNED WITH LINK PARISHES I**

##  I Give and it will be given to you… The measure you give shall be the measure you receive

 ***N***  Luke 6.38

  *Web Page: www.malawi-twin.org*

 Newsletter No 64

 February 2016

Dear Parishioners and Friends

What a year we had in 2015 with our parish twinning project!

Our total income for the year came to £31,720.54, which included Gift Aid of £4,861.35. This gives a total since the start in 2002 of:

£295,165.07

When we add to this the value of goods and services donated by our parishioners, friends and companies to our Container project – some of it brand new - you can imagine that 2015 was a very good year indeed for Malawi-Twin.

In April 2015 we reported to you the results of an assessment made by Brian of the value of the seven containers sent so far; this came to £185,080 - an average of £26,400 per container.

We now have a truer picture of the immense benefit we have been to our friends in Malawi.

Apart from a number of gifts to the parishes for ongoing maintenance, your team has concentrated on four major projects – *The Containers, Sponsorships, Microloans* and *Solar Lights*. These projects benefit not only our four parishes but many other institutions – especially in education. We are also reaching out to the people in remote communities who are cut off from the facilities available to those in or near to towns and cities.

The following is a breakdown of the spending on each of our main projects:

**The Container Project - £4,571.06**

Not too much on this because it is ongoing at present and you received a newsletter last month**.**  The value of our giving to those in Malawi, far exceeds the amount spent from our funds. We have so far received in donations from parishioners, over half of the cost to hire space in the container. This leaves funds available to purchase items of school equipment, printing inks and other sundries to help educate over 10,000 students in the eight areas we assist.

There is one small anecdote: At our second packing session on January 16th, more volunteers turned up than Brian had requested. They worked really hard in very cold conditions and, in that one session, they packed and sealed a total of 92 cartons. A wonderful achievement!

**Sponsorships - £7,070**

The Sponsorship project is gradually changing, partly due to a shift in the type of support being given by our sponsors and partly due to our *Microloans* project.

A number of students have progressed to higher education and their sponsors continue to support them. Some are in boarding schools and they are being fed and housed throughout term times, which needs a higher level of financial support. It also means a firmer control on their lives out of class times, which leads to a better education and character formation. This is why the level of giving remains high.

Some of those involved in our *Microloans* project are now earning sufficient to send their own children to secondary school. This enables them to pay their own way rather than be dependent on others and fits in with the ethos of our Malawi project.

**Microloans - £5,660**

This project is a great success in four parishes. The people included are all women who are left alone with children to care for.

They work collectively in groups of 20 or so and pool their resources.

In most cases they are active members of their parish – usually members of the CWL – or CWO as they call it and are now able to aid parish funds.

Fr Denis recently wrote to describe this project, combined with the *Solar Lights* project, as “Life Changers”.

In our Film Show next month you will see the very latest photos received from Malawi regarding Microloans and the Solar Lights

**Solar Lights - £3,060**

This has been left till last because we have a lovely story to finish with.

Fr Charles, the new parish priest of *Chiringa*, wrote to tell us that his people are bringing their solar lights to church.

Jill has told you about the dramatic change to the lives of those living without electricity, who have been given a solar light.

Now we learn that they are finding their way to church in the fading light – and lighting up the church, which gives the priest a longer day in which to celebrate Mass and administer other sacraments. If more Masses could be celebrated in the communities as a result, then this would be an added benefit of our *Solar Lights* project.

This has turned out to be an ‘upbeat’ newsletter because there is so much good news to share with you – and this happens to be in the Year of Mercy when we are called to help others.

Thanks be to God and to all who have helped in any way to improve the lives of our friends in Malawi.

Peter Wells

On behalf of your Malawi team