



April 2024

Dear friends and supporters,

After several years of disruption due to the pandemic, we are now delighted to be re-booting the link society. Salisbury has joined Hereford in a new tripartite link with Muheza in Tanzania, working together to strengthen the bonds between medical services in Tanzania and the UK, and hoping to enrich the lives of patients and the professionals who care for them.



Link Society Visits Restart

In 2023 the link visits started again, both from the UK and from Tanzania. In January a small group from Hereford visited Muheza to re-establish contact and

to discuss the future direction of the link. Drs Karilyn and Richard Collins, and Drs Clare and Steve Scotcher met with members of the link at Muheza Hospital (St Augustine's) and Muheza Hospice and spent a week with the teams there, joining ward rounds, outpatients and home visits. There was a unanimous desire from the teams in Muheza to continue with the link, which has now been in existence for 39 years and has provided a wealth of support over those four decades, as well as numerous educational visits from both Tanzania and the UK.



Dr Karilyn Collins is pictured here with one of the second generation of children attending the Hospice Saturday Club. All these children, born to HIV positive mothers, have been free of the disease thanks to the care and support from the hospice team.

In October Dr Boniface, a surgeon from Muheza, visited the UK with an intense itinerary involving placements with the surgical teams in Salisbury, Winchester and Hereford. He was particularly pleased to be able to spend time with Mark Szymankiewicz's team in Winchester, continuing his involvement in the Mesh Hernia project that Mark has spearheaded in Tanzania.



Mark Szymankiewicz and the Salisbury Connection

Mark (aka Shim) leads the Salisbury arm of the Link Society, having worked as a surgeon at Muheza Hospital for five months in 2018 and 2019. He has established an educational network encouraging improved surgical techniques, especially for hernia repair operations. He is a fairly frequent visitor to Tanzania and maintains a close connection with Muheza.



Mark and Boni in Salisbury, October 2023

Muheza Hospice

The hospice in Muheza is one of the oldest in Tanzania, having been established by Dr Karilyn Collins in 2002. It is supported by Muheza Hospice Care, a charity affiliated with the Link Society. Over the 22 years since it was founded the hospice has received many visitors from St Michael's Hospice in Hereford, and several of the staff at Muheza Hospice have visited Hereford as part of the Link Society visits. The two hospices have a longstanding close relationship.



A group of young adults from Hereford visited Muheza Hospice in 2019

Despite precarious funding, the hospice in Muheza has gone from strength to strength. In October the Hospice Director, Edgar Ngelangela, took a delegation from Muheza Hospice to the first Public Health Palliative Care Congress in Dar es Salaam. Education is considered very important in Muheza Hospice, both for patients and staff. Every day starts with an educational session for all hospice staff, including the many volunteers.



Edgar (2nd on right) with 2 junior clinical officers and a palliative care nurse from Muheza at the Palliative Care Congress, October 2023.

Edgar Ngelangela recently secured funding for a new venture taking palliative care to the prison population in the region. This innovative work started two weeks ago with the first visit to Maweni Prison. The hospice team is proud to be embarking on this challenging new chapter, serving terminally ill prisoners who have never before had any access to palliative care.



First visit to Maweni Prison, 22nd March 2024.

Medical Students

Muheza continues to be a popular destination for medical students to spend their medical electives. The students come to Muheza from many different countries including Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Canada. Dr Richard Collins coordinates the student visits and ensures there is accommodation available for them. The feedback from these students is overwhelmingly positive.

Education Fund

The fees from the medical student electives help to support the Link Society's Education Fund. This fund is then available to pay for educational courses for staff at Muheza Hospital and Muheza Hospice who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees. Currently the fund supports Julius Chambi, a palliative care nurse working at Muheza Hospice, to study for the Palliative Care Diploma from Nairobi.



Medical Students in Muheza



Julius on a home visit with the Hospice Team

The Education Fund currently also supports Neema Mudu who is studying for her Monitoring and Evaluation in Health. In recent years the fund has paid for 9 degrees and diplomas for staff at Muheza.

New Equipment

The plaster cast cutter in Muheza Hospital had become old and blunt, and a request was made to the Link Society for some replacement blades. The manufacturer, De Soutter, was contacted by the Link Society and kindly provided a new saw as well as new blades.

12 year old Daniel, who had been involved in a collision with a motorcycle while cycling and suffered multiple leg fractures, is seen here for removal of the plaster cast using the new cast cutter.



Salisbury Hospital provided a new tonometer to measure eye pressures to monitor glaucoma. Seen here being used by Emmanuel Kibula in Muheza Eye Clinic.



Link Society Visits Planned for 2024

Several visits are planned both from Muheza and from Hereford.

From Muheza, Emmanuel Kibula and Magdalena Chikoma are hoping to visit Hereford and Salisbury in September. Emmanuel is a general surgeon at Muheza

Hospital who also works in the eye clinic. He is keen to develop his skills in Ophthalmology particularly. Magdalena is a nurse anesthetist who is keen to develop her skills in anaesthetics. They are in the process of applying for visas.

From Hereford, the Collins family are planning to visit in August with their grandchildren. In October a group of five staff and volunteers from St Michael's Hospice in Hereford are planning to visit. This group will include an occupational therapist, a member of the communications team, a manager, a retired physiotherapist and a doctor. In November two play therapists from Hereford Hospital will also visit. One of these, Sarah Brotherwood, visited Muheza 14 years ago, and is keen to go back and introduce her colleague Gemma Mussell to the joys and challenges of paediatric care in Muheza.



Sarah and Gemma

Fundraising

Muheza Link Society relies on donations and regular giving. Its funds are mainly used to enable Tanzanian health care professionals to come to the UK for educational placements.

Muheza Hospice Care is affiliated with Muheza Link Society and provides financial support to the hospice. This financial support is crucial as it pays the salaries of staff at Muheza Hospice.

Regular donations are vital, especially with Gift Aid, but have been tailing off in recent years. Several recent fundraising events have helped, but the continuation of the Link Society's work relies on ongoing fundraising. To enable the fantastic work of Muheza Hospice to continue, it relies absolutely on the charitable funding it receives from Muheza Hospice Care.

Please consider supporting by regular giving or by a one-off donation, or please consider a fundraising event. The accounts are given below.

Muheza Link Society:

Sort code: 20 39 64 Account no: 50162043 Name: The Hereford Muheza Link Society

Muheza Hospice Care:

Sort code: 09 01 50 Account no: 05946174 Name: Hereford Muheza Link Society Acc 1

Work is ongoing to modernize and facilitate the process of giving donations, and to streamline Gift Aid. It is hoped that a new website will also help.

Fundraising in January 2023. Steve and Clare Scotcher climbing Kilimanjaro.



Trustees Change

Trustees and founder members of the Link Society, Drs John and Bridget Wood, have stepped down from their roles as trustees, after almost 40 years. They send their best wishes and hope the society will thrive for another 40 years!

Mark Shim and Clare and Steve Scotcher have agreed to take on roles as new trustees.



John and Bridget

Things to Celebrate!

Successful reboot of the Link Society

Exchange visits have restarted

Zoom meetings enable improved communication between Tanzania and the UK

Education fund has continued to support diplomas and degrees

Muheza Hospice is expanding its remit by providing palliative care in prisons

Successful grant application enabled the aging hospice vehicle to be replaced

Equipment supplied through the Link Society has improved patient care

Hernia surgery has improved

Medical students continue to rank the hospital highly

More visits are planned for 2024 (and 2025!)

Current Challenges

Ongoing concerns about funding, especially for Muheza Hospice

Difficulties obtaining UK visas

Accommodation at Muheza (may need an upgrade)

Websites

Making giving easier!

Updating our database of supporters and keeping in touch better.



Thank you for your interest and support.
We would love to hear from you.

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Karilyn and Richard Collins (Chairman)
Stephen and Clare Scotcher (Secretary)