



Karuri School Project

www.karurisch.org

U.K. Registered Charity Number 1139387



News Update — October 2011

In the beginning ...

After her arrival in Kenya in October 2010, and with support from her local parish priest and a social worker, Wangari opened her school with approximately 70 pupils, aged 5 - 12 years, in January 2011. Initially only day pupils were admitted as more work was needed on the dormitories. A head teacher and 4 other teachers were appointed (total monthly salary bill £310) and the school opened from 7.00am to 5.00pm.

In February, following a successful Charity Commission Registration, we applied to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs for gift aid registration. This has now been granted.

By April the school had been formally named as the Sacred Heart Primary School.

By the beginning of September, the cow had calved, to everyone's delight. The water tank was almost complete, and it seemed likely that a transformer would be positioned close to the school, making the thought of electricity in the near future become a possibility. A container sent from the UK with gifts for Wangari and the children had finally arrived in Nairobi, causing great excitement. So things were looking good.



Various individuals and Primary Schools have raised money for the purchase of cows. So far, two have been bought (one in calf) and we intend to expand the 'herd' as the number of children grows. Thanks to everyone involved in the recent 'Cattle Drive'.

During February and March, it became clear that staff and pupil safety needed addressing, and steel doors were purchased and installed to make the site less accessible to unwanted visitors.



Additional roofing sheets were purchased and the kitchen area erected.

A quiz was recently held at The Good Shepherd School. It was a lovely evening, and £250 was raised for Wangari and the children in Kenya. We will be meeting shortly to plan our next fund-raising events which will include, as Christmas approaches, the opportunity to join with family and friends for a wassailing evening.

Then, disaster struck ...

We received news of a major set-back. Torrential rains washed away parts of the school ground, causing the children's pit latrines to collapse. Thankfully no-one was hurt. Wangari was distraught at the thought that she might have to close the school, but it was decided to continue as normal, with everyone sharing just one long-drop toilet. An engineer has confirmed that due to an excess of underground water, the toilets cannot be repaired, and the only solution is to build flushing toilets and a septic tank. We are now looking at raising money for this project as a matter of urgency.



Visit to Wangari's School by two committee members in May.

When we arrived at Nairobi, we were welcomed at the airport by Wangari and her brother Peter. We stayed with Wangari at the Catholic Mission in Naivasha – security can be a problem in Kenya, and here our safety was assured. Although safe and comfortable, the Mission is about half an hour's drive to the school, and Wangari would dearly love to have her own accommodation on site.

We found that Wangari had made contact with the local Bishop, and this has led to support from local priests, their accountant, reliable builders and a local social worker. Their support, advice and temporary accommodation have been a great source of help for Wangari.

We visited Sacred Heart School as often as possible. We led a couple of workshops, introduced a laptop computer and helped plant trees around the perimeter of the school for privacy and security. This should be completed shortly.



A workshop for staff



Planting trees

We delivered sweaters kindly knitted by members of the Catholic Cathedral, Northampton and other supporters.



What a difference a sweater can make

Wangari is working hard to ensure that the essential areas of the school will be completed as soon as possible, to enable it to become self sufficient, as well as being suitable for boarders. During our visit, the dining area, kitchen and store room were completed. Work is underway to provide water for the school, with plans for underground storage and a borehole. Guttering has been completed, allowing rainwater to be collected for washing. The architect visited whilst we were there and it is hoped that verandas will be built around the school building, to stop damage caused by torrential rain.

We were very lucky to have the opportunity to look at many other schools in the area, as well as visiting hospitals and orphanages. Wangari looked after us amazingly well. She and her friends welcomed us into their homes and took us on many visits to safari parks and other places of interest. Wangari has boundless energy and it was a privilege to see how well her school is flourishing.

Patricia Moore and Sheila Dowling, June 2011