

## **Bo Visit February 2013 John Archer and Jane Knight**

The Note sets out in summary form the main issues that were looked at during the visit.

It does not include the work undertaken by the Teacher visit at the same time as this is reported on separately

### **Bo OWL Issues**

#### **Youth Group:**

There was much discussion with the Youth Group. They held a major fund raising event whilst we were there that was well attended and raised quite a bit of funding to support applications for passports/visas.

We discussed the visitor number issue and the difficulty of us being able to handle any more than 4 visitors. There was, understandably, considerable disappointment with this, but it was met with acceptance and good grace after we had discussed it with them and put it in the context of a three year programme allowing others to visit in future years

#### **OWL Centre**

The Committee agreed to look at options for building upgrade provided by JA, including: well completion, water collection upgrade, showers, electrical overhaul, room upgrades, new room provision and solar panels. Bo OWL to check out estimates and discuss options further with Leam OWL.

Discussion took place on the potential of the building for greater usage and incomes when nearby projects are completed. It was felt by some that this would not make that much difference. However, the need for an upgrade was understood JA presented overview summary of OWL Leam Financial profile estimates for next three years that we discussed at our Committee just before leaving for Bo. This enabled us to clearly show that our funds would be very limited and, taking into account existing commitments, effectively spent up by the end of 2015 (other than annual membership fee income/other donations). This will enable Bo OWL to think in a more focussed way what their own priorities would be

#### **OWL Bungalow Project**

Site visited – bungalow completed to roof – internal fitting out required to complete. Photos taken

Intention is to rent out, either long term or short term, depending on opportunities. Was not able to secure specific income estimates

Open area between bungalow and road to be cleared and laid out as open area Informed Maada that we would need to discuss release of £6500 with OWL Committee on return to UK on basis of information gathered on project in Bo

#### **OWL Farm**

Visited farm – clearly productive and a good investment

#### **Other Issues**

Need to get new members of BO OWL. It is clear there are very few, if any, new adult members of OWL. Some discussion took place on this at the Committee meeting there. There was a view from some that greater involvement of Elders was required, but in truth, it needs greater involvement of youth group people. , greater involvement of Youth Group

## **Bo City Council**

Visit by Mayor to UK – to be arranged – programme to be discussed/agreed

## **Mayors Priorities.**

Mayor Harold Tucker provided an overview of his main priorities for his mayorship:

- Revenue generation. His first 6 months were to concentrate on revenue generation initiatives. He was visiting Freetown a great deal to lobby for investment in Bo
- IT literacy – he wanted all councillors to develop IT literacy. Potential here for recreating the OWL IT support unit for the development of Councillors?
- Waste – was working with a Belgian company who wished to develop a commercial approach to plastic waste management. Was also working on the main WASH project programme (see later for this). Was also keen on working with District on shared waste issues
- Disability – wished to help the disabled – hoping to remove school fees for disabled. Had already introduced free bus travel for disabled. Wished to pursue this more – potential assistance via OWL on disability issues?
- Wished to see more counselling training within the Social Welfare ministry, to avoid local conflict issues
- Education – wanted to expand education links between more schools, focussing more on the less effective schools in Bo
- Fire Force – a major concern. Recently a new IT training centre had burned down. Fire Force could not prevent it and so the owner had lost everything and Bo lost the training potential. There needed to be more training in prevention – possible link with WCC Fire and Rescue Service through OWL?
- Health – proposal for a 40 bed hospital through a link with Belgium. Would link in with volunteer health workers/doctors from Belgium. Major problem generally – SL doctors become specialised and stay in Freetown. Very difficult to get doctors to come to/stay in Bo. Can OWL develop a Health link? We informed him that there had been one in the past, but was not part of our current work – possibly explore?
- Asset Management – the Mayor wished to develop a review of the Council's assets. Not sure how this was to be achieved.

The Council is to move to its new offices (completed as part of a donor project several years ago) during March. Council Chamber to remain at Coronation Field.

The Mayor intends to celebrate his first 100 days in office showing what he had achieved. There would be an invitation for attendance to members of OWL.

It was clear that there was significant awareness of OWL's activities with the Mayor and some at least of the Councillors. Maada knows the Mayor well and effectively led the liaison meeting between OWL and the Council

We agreed that we would run through the Mayors priority list and see if there were any areas where OWL could assist. We ensured that the Mayor understood that although we were willing to assist, we were only a small organisation depending on volunteer support.

In addition, we were advised of the roll out of the UNDP sponsored Local Economic Development (LED) Project and need to consider whether or not we can provide support in any way

### **Planning Project**

New approach agreed – more simplified – collecting data and mapping it, to be followed by assessment of development opportunities - to be pursued by Cllr Tucker (chair of Development Committee)/ Willie Momoh – linked with Development Plan preparation and Local Economic Development Programme promoted by UNDP  
It was hoped to encourage close working with BDC – email exchange of emails/contacts with BDC Development Officer and VSO worker to encourage shared working – to be developed by JA – resulting from good meeting with BDC new Chairman and his key officers

JA to remain in email/phone contact to advise on project progress

JA to advise on Cllr Tucker's ward profile questionnaire

New Director of Ministry of Housing taking over – need for him to be involved/informed

### **Water projects – Rotary support**

Provide Rotary with update on water projects. These were visited and it was seen that there was a mismatch between what had been financed and what had been undertaken. This was to be reported back to Rotary

### **WASH Project**

There was considerable discussion on this with many parties.

Outcome – WeltHungerHilfe taking over project management and finalising project plan.

Much further discussion is already taking place on this in view of potential role of OWL and timing of commencement of project.

OWL now an integrated partner with Glenn Fleet and Derek Greedy going out in June to advise on project progress

### **Contacts Made**

A good number of contacts were made with new people. The main ones were as follows:

- Harold Tucker – new Mayor – clear interest in OWL – see issues above
- Councillor Bob Tucker – chair of Development Committee
- Council Vice Chairman – (can't remember name)
- Joseph Bindi – new Chairman of Bo District Council – very active and receptive
- Julia Amara – development Officer with BDC – effective and keen

- Sunita Prabhu – VSO worker placed via WHH with BDC for 12 months (11 to go) to work on a process for developing their Development plan – very good and also willing to work jointly where that would assist
- Charles Nach Mback – Project Manager, UNDP, Local Economic Development programme. Very helpful, diverted on his trip to Makeni specifically to meet us and explain programme. Considered OWL a very useful link and that planning work could assist LED work
- Sahr Moigua – Executive Secretary - Local Council's Association – involved in developing the SL Local Council's Association to provide training, develop the capacity of local government and lobby for appropriate legislation. Good contact, with close contact with CLGF/Lucy Slack. Came from Freetown specifically to meet us
- Hans Peter Muller – Project Manager in Bo for WeltHungerHilfe NGO, concentrating on support for the rural areas in Bo District. Very experienced and helpful person who is prepared to maintain good links and will be a good contact in Bo.

Contact with people already known:

We made contact with almost all the members of Bo OWL, plus many others whose names I cannot all remember.

Some of the non OWL ones were as follows:

Rashid Ansumana – Mercy Hospital project – completing his PhD and still willing to provide mapping support to the Council

Eric Moosa – former Environmental Health Officer

Roland Alpha – President of SL EH organisation – came to UK on Fellowship

Martin Walshe – DfID, Freetown – useful discussion on WASH and general liaison issues with OWL. He advised us to contact Lyn Featherstone MP as soon as possible.

Certainly within 3 weeks, so we could brief her on issues before a relevant visit she has arranged.

Keith Thompson – colleague of Martin Walshe at DFID who works on economic development

#### **Other follow up issues:**

Offer of microscopes from Warwick School. Interest shown by Bo school. Need to investigate shipping options.