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## The Friends of Urambo & Mwanhala

# Friends of Urambo & Mwanhala

Linking the Tabora Region of Tanzania with the UK



## A Message from the Honorary Secretary

Dear Supporter

**Thank you for your stalwart support in 2024 which enabled us to have a record year in terms of the amount we were able to spend on projects in the Tabora Region. We managed to disburse £61,000 over the year which is a large sum for us and this allowed us to complete a number of projects which have been awaiting funding for some time.**

Below you can read the Chairman's remarks made at the 61st AGM, listing everything we have been involved with in 2024. Spending such an amount requires care from FUM officers to ensure that the money is well used; we owe thanks to Nick Vinall (Treasurer) and Simon Headington (Project Officer) who have been keeping tabs on the expenditure.

The sorts of control and feedback needed to run projects successfully is made much easier by the speed of modern communications and the increased simplicity of sending money to Tanzania now we have our own bank accounts in Nzega and Urambo through which we can transfer funds. Our work is made more effective because of the close cooperation of the Districts, each of which have assigned us a

liaison officer, Michael Mayamba in Nzega and Charles Mwisima in Urambo/Kaliua. Charles has just been transferred but we are yet to know who will take his place. Many thanks to him for the help and attention he has given to our

schemes these last few years. We are very fortunate also to be able to count on Venance Gomegwa in Nzega and Lucky Mgeni in Urambo who both work on a voluntary basis, helping with our project work; they oversee all village construction work for FUM using their skills and great experience. Overall, I think you as a supporter, can be confident that your valuable donations are being used in the most effective way possible. It has always been the case that our projects are in tune with local government development plans and arise from local requests and initiatives; our task is to decide which ones we can support within our limited means.

The AGM minutes are on the website as is the summary of our income and expenditure during 2024. At the AGM the Chairman

Mama Sitta and the DMO Dr Manyara





gave his report on the year's activities:

**"In Urambo District** the major project was the completion of a maternity unit in Usisya which serves six satellite villages; we have also funded the completion of the maternity unit at Kamalendi village after this government

accompanied by the District Medical Officer, Dr Manyama (pictured on the front page), opened the two clinics at the end of March. The first child born in Kamalendi was named Margaret in honour of Mama Sitta. As a gift to the clinics, Mama Sitta supplied each of them with sets of bed sheets.



project stalled due to lack of money. Kamalendi serves 4 satellite villages. These clinics allow expectant mothers easier access to medical services as otherwise some would face a 30km journey to the district hospital. We are grateful to Mama Sitta, the Urambo MP, who,

dispensary, maternity unit and staff houses to the village water supply. At last, we have been able to complete the rainwater harvesting project at Ibambo dispensary by fitting the very large storage tank with a solar pump and raised SIM tank next to the dispensary.



As a gift, Mama Sitta supplied bed sheets to the two new clinics

Construction of toilet for children with disabilities at Iyombo School



**In Nzega District** the major project was the successful completion of a maternity unit at Mambali village. In Iyombo village we have added a set of toilets for the disabled to the classroom built last year for children with special needs. The old bursary scheme for school children has been reborn under the guidance of Nikki Hirst and Michael Mayamba and has already made grants to 22 children, some disabled, who would otherwise be unable to attend school. In Isilyaza village, the house built for a family, all of whom had albinism was abandoned after the matriarch died and the family moved away. The house has now been refurbished by Gomegwa's team (see photo on page 3) and has been allocated to the headteacher at the Isilyaza primary school nearby.

With all these projects in far-flung villages, so as to make it easier for Michael and Gomegwa to visit, we have purchased a small motorcycle for their use.



New House at Isilyaza



A fortified flour scheme, masterminded by Mary Kenway and Dr Mary in Nzega is seeing great success. At the AGM Dr Mary was with us on Zoom and explained how she now shows expectant mothers how to fortify their own flour using a formula. You can read about this on page 5 of the newsletter.

**In Sikonge District** we have helped with the water supply at Sikonge FDC. A shallow well FUM funded a number of years ago was deepened and fitted with a new apron and hand-pump, a large rainwater harvesting tank was repaired and another, recently installed by the government, was fitted with a solar pump and SIM storage tank. Mr Joseph thanks FUM and says the water supply is working well.

All of our fifteen supported clinics continue to receive their annual equipment grants, a scheme overseen by Jo Taylor. We are continuing our support to the FDCs in Mwanhala, Sikonge and Urambo. Every six months the three FDCs are awarded grants to cover the fees of students who could not otherwise pay the amount required. These grants, administered by Di Cooper, have been increased by 10% this year.

Our fundraising was unusually successful in 2024. The walks raised nearly £10k and due to several generous donations we were able to spend over £61k on projects in the year, but although we are in good shape financially, 2025 is likely to be less active. The reserves have been shrunk from £30k at the start of the year to only £20k now."

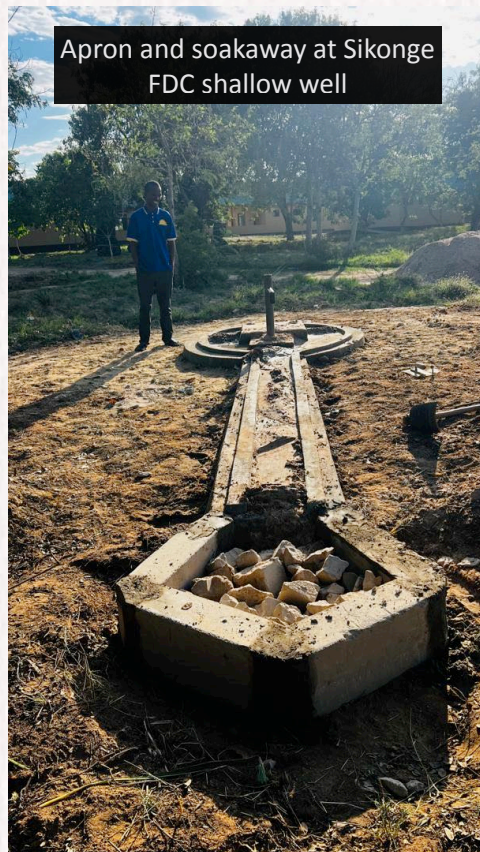
At our recent AGM, the Chairman congratulated Michael Myamba on the successful completion of his Masters Degree and he thanked all our Tanzania team for their hard work during the year. He welcomed Dr Iain Chorlton who is once again able to give time to FUM and will rejoin the officers. The Chairman at this point welcomed several people joining the Zoom meeting from Tanzania giving each a chance to say a few words to the meeting. Mama Sitta passed on her thanks and greetings to everyone in FUM and said how much she appreciated our support. Lucky had joined us at this point as had Dr Mary and Dr George. Lucky passed on his thanks and reported that all our projects were working well.

During the rainy season it becomes very difficult to reach

many of the villages away from the urban centres and so our work pauses. Now the rains are coming to an end things can get going once again. The Officers met in April to decide on the projects we can support, including the refurbishment of the Dispensary and Maternity Clinic in Isegenhe village, Nzega District. FUM funds, along with money from Cranbrook School in Kent, were used to refurbish the Dispensary back in 2013 when a group of Cranbrook students visited the village and spent a week working there. There are always opportunities for school groups to do the same and so if you are a keen, energetic schoolteacher thinking that they might lead a group to Tabora themselves, please be in touch.

I mentioned the rains making travel difficult and so it does, but this year, unfortunately, the rains have been very patchy and much less has fallen. The main casualty has been the rice crop which has failed, and in Sikonge the situation is particularly difficult. Mr Joseph, the FDC Principal writes: The weather here is very hot, especially

Apron and soakaway at Sikonge FDC shallow well





in the afternoons, and cold at night. It has been three months now without any rain, which has greatly affected crops such as maize, causing them to dry up completely. If this situation continues, we might face a significant food shortage this year.

In Urambo it seems that things are not quite so bad. In reply to my query, Lucky writes: We will not die for hunger, other crops have grown well, moreover other people are harvesting maize now.

In Nzega District things are not rosy either with no prospect of a good harvest, but I have heard that at the beginning of April the rains started again and so, provided it keeps raining for some weeks, it should be possible to rescue some of the crops. Our friends have experienced worse seasons before and do not seem to be too downhearted and cheered me up



with this colourful photo of Nzega market.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, Jo Taylor comments on the support

we have given to our clinics and Mary outlines details of the fortified flour project, designed to help pregnant mothers. There is also progress on the school bursary scheme which is so important to the small number of families we are supporting. We are always anxious to increase the numbers we support and so I urge you to sponsor a child.

My thanks for your continued support over the years and for some, decades. All your contributions are well used as we squeeze every drop of value from your gifts. Ever on the search for more supporters, I wonder if it is possible for you to share this newsletter with friends and family, perhaps encouraging more people to join FUM.

Thank You.

*Rod Smith*

## School Pupils Sponsorship

**Supporters will remember from the autumn newsletter that we have reimaged our secondary school sponsorship scheme. Existing sponsors were asked if they were happy to join the new scheme and, happily, most were.**

The old scheme, directed at children from Imeli School had suffered during the COVID disruption and Michael Myamba, our Nzega Liaison Officer, felt that our support could be better targeted in future. We were happy to follow his lead, with the result that now the priority pupils are:

- a) Disabled children,
- b) Children from families who are not able to cover the costs of school and
- c) Children who have been rescued from domestic violence.

The children come from all parts of Nzega District. So far 22 children have been helped (12 girls and 8 boys) each pupil receiving school uniform, books and stationery for the year. The girls also receive sanitary products. The local television became very interested by the scheme and part of their story can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoVGCv11FJE>

The cost per child is £35 for the year. If you would like to join in and support a child please contact our education officer, Nikki Hirst. Details are on the back page of this newsletter.

A pressing topic is funds to enable young girls to attend school during their periods. Many cannot afford the sanitary products necessary and so for several days each month do not attend school. With Mama Sitta, the Urambo MP, Nikki is looking for ways to help these young girls. The cost is modest and so, even if you can't manage the full sponsorship for a child, you might consider helping a young girl with sanitary products. A very modest input of around £6 p.a. is sufficient for a year of support. If you are interested, do get in touch with Nikki and discuss with her how you might help.



# The Nutritional Flour Project:

## An update following Dr Mary Mkamwa's report to the AGM

Mary Kenway

**It was a pleasure to be introduced to Mary Mkamwa at the FUM AGM and I was very grateful to Rod for giving us the opportunity to hear first hand about the Nutritional Flour project, which she oversees.**

Mary explained how young women are initially identified at their first ante-natal visit to one of the seven FUM sponsored clinics in Nzega District, during which they are screened for their HIV and nutritional status. If they are found to be both HIV positive and undernourished, they are encouraged to join the programme and given four bags of nutritional flour to take home.

The flour, Mary told us, is purchased from Youthtide (approved by the Tanzanian Food and Drug Authority) and contains ground maize, rice, groundnuts, millet and pumpkin seeds. The resulting mix contains fibre, fat and protein as well as being rich in

vitamins and minerals. The flour is sealed in plastic bags to ensure that it can be transported and kept safely.

The purpose of the flour is to help the mums during the first three months of their antiretroviral therapy. This therapy is very arduous and made all the more difficult if they are emaciated. The nutritional flour helps them to withstand it, thereby reducing their chances of developing AIDS, and the likelihood of their babies developing the disease.

Mary described some of the challenges she faces, such as communications with the village clinics during the rainy season. However, the numbers of women with HIV are reducing both nationwide and locally and we are glad to be helping to eradicate it in our own small way.

We are very lucky to have Mary offering her services free of charge. Not only does she provide support when these women are at their most vulnerable, but she also returns one month later to follow up on them.



Dr Mary at Mwanhala clinic teaching pregnant women about a healthy diet and how to make their own nutritional flour

In recent months, Mary has begun an education programme as well, enabling the patients to make their own nutritional flour when the harvest permits. The flour is made to careful specifications; the ingredients are the same as the Youthtide blend and the ladies are taught to use measuring cups to ensure the right balance of grains. (Measuring scales, she explained, are not readily available.) In this way, the women can monitor their diets throughout their pregnancy. This is also regarded as an important step towards making the project self sustaining in the future. Although the Youthtide



A pregnant woman receiving her Nutritional Flour in Malilita clinic



flour is relatively cheap for us to buy (at less than £1.50 per bag), if the villagers are able to make their own nutritional flour, then they will not be so dependent upon deliveries getting through in the rainy season, or reliant upon outside intervention in the future.

Mary's talk was very well received and, as a result, I have had a lot of positive feed back about the project, especially the educational aspect of the programme, which has been

Mary's own initiative. We are looking forward to receiving some photos from Mary on her next follow-up visit, which we hope to share with you in the autumn newsletter.

Meanwhile the preparations are beginning in Liskeard for the next big fundraising Fairtrade Cake & Coffee morning, which will be on 12th June. If anybody would like more information about that then please email [marykenway@icloud.com](mailto:marykenway@icloud.com) Everyone is welcome!

Plastic packaging ensures that the flour can be transported and kept safely



## Medical Matters by Jo Taylor

**This year before sending the normal TSh 750,000/- to each of the 15 clinics FUM supports in the Tabora Region, it was decided to investigate more thoroughly what purchases the clinics make with this money and to establish whether we thought the Government should in fact be making those purchases.**

It was confirmed purchases include items such as weighing scales, both for adults and for babies; screens to provide more privacy; stationery so the clinics can keep the records they have to record relating to births, babies, mothers and other patients; mattresses to replace worn out stock and occasionally cleaning equipment. One clinic had used its funds to be able to complete the installation of mains electricity to the dispensary and clinic buildings. When we asked the FUM liaison officers whether these items were provided by the government, we were told that the strain on resources means that the clinics are underfunded and that FUM's



The maternity ward in Mambali

grants enable the clinics to make "necessary purchases" so they can better serve their patients. The FUM Officers were pleased to receive this information and voted to keep the level of funding for each clinic at TSh 750,000/- each year.

Jo asked our liaison officers to contact the clinics to ascertain

how they plan to use their FUM money this year and what they did was to ask the Medical Officers to convene a meeting of the village elders and together to decide on this. Within 8 days Jo has received copies of all the written requests from the clinics we support in Nzega District. Michael, our liaison officer in Nzega, has agreed these are all needed purchases, as does Jo. Next the request will go out for the money to be transferred to FUM's bank account in Nzega and Michael will oversee all the purchases for us. This year the requests have included gas cylinders to power the fridges used to store vaccines, medicines, decontaminants, soaps and stationery.



One of FUM's friends in Nzega District is Dr George. He was the DMO in Nzega District Hospital but stood down when he was doing extra studies. He is now the senior doctor in the new hospital in Nzega District. His paper from his studies showed how if those patients who could afford to paid a small amount for their visits to the clinics, all clinics could afford more medication. Pregnant mothers and those with young babies are exempt from these payments. It seems this is helping the clinics as FUM has not been asked to fund the purchase of medicines for the past couple of years.



Clinics do not only receive their TSh 750,000/- each year. Many are on our list of projects FUM have supported or would like to be able to support. Most now have a reliable water supply and now FUM is trying to support all our clinics to have a new maternity ward. Much of

this funding comes from our sponsored walks so all thanks to Isabel and Julie who arrange and run these walks. Some of the clinics already have a newly built maternity ward, financed by FUM and its supporters, but there are still more which need this extra facility. This is because our clinics are in very remote areas, maybe 30 km or more from the nearest hospital, and are so vital for supporting pregnant mothers, births, vaccinations and other patients. More and more mothers see the benefit of medical support for the birth of their babies, so this extra space is a huge benefit for the clinics.

## 2025 Sponsored Walks

**Once again, there will be two 15 mile sponsored walks in 2025 to raise money for the clinics which FUM supports.**

On Saturday September 20th there will be a circular walk on the North Downs near Guildford. This will be 15 miles with a 10 mile alternative for those not wanting to walk the whole distance. We take the walk at a leisurely pace and have plenty of time for refreshment stops. If you would like to join this walk, please contact Isabel Heycock.

There will be a sponsored walk in Devon, on a date to be confirmed. Each year we walk a different route and have enjoyed a variety of terrain



West Devon 2024

including coastal paths, various paths and old railway lines over Dartmoor, Devon and Cornwall farmland, and we have followed local rivers, all on established old footpaths, bridle ways or disused railway lines. The scenery has been varied with glorious views over beautiful countryside, but unfortunately the weather has not always been favourable and we have experienced fog and driving rain as well as gloriously hot days which can be equally as challenging. The day is always interesting with a lovely friendly group of all ages taking part. If you would like to join us on our walk, please contact Julie Overnell for details.



South Downs 2024

**The North Downs walk will be on Saturday 20th September 2025.**

Contact Isabel Heycock,  
[iheycock@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:iheycock@hotmail.co.uk) for further details.

**The Devon walk is on a date to be confirmed.**

Contact Julie Overnell,  
[jjeo@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jjeo@hotmail.co.uk) for further details.



# Projects Update

## by Simon Headington

**2024 was an exceptional year for FUM with £61.000 being transferred for projects in Kaiua, Nzega, Sikonge and Urambo Districts. Sadly, this year we have less money we able to commit and so the list of projects we hope to tackle is smaller. Nevertheless, we have two substantial projects starting in Nzega District and one in Urambo.**

### **Mwasala Maternity Unit**

Mwasala is a village in the northeast of Nzega Rural District, close to the borders with Shinyanga Region and Igunga District.

The Mwasala Dispensary was built with FUM and Cranbrook School funds 29 years ago, when a school-work party went to the village during the construction phase. Over the following years FUM have helped the village by paying for a staff house and a second Cranbrook group went there about 15 years ago to refurbish the clinic. More recently, the Friends of Nzega, as one of their final acts when winding-up their organisation, paid for a new borehole and pump.

Mwasala is built on very sandy soil and, unfortunately, the dispensary's foundations have given way. When the problem first showed, FUM paid for a repair but at the beginning of 2024 we were told that the clinic had finally become unusable.

Nzega Rural District has started work on rebuilding the clinic which is expected to open before the end of 2025.

Meanwhile, as the old building is too dangerous to use, services are being provided from the office of the Village Executive Officer.

Following a request from the village supported by the DMO and Michael Mayamba, our liaison officer, FUM has agreed to fund a new maternity unit alongside the new clinic. Once these two projects are completed Mwasala ward will be well provisioned with medical services. It is good to know that the village has now been connected to the mains water supply. Things are surely looking up for our friends there.

### **Isegenhe Clinic repairs**

To the east of Nzega is Isegenhe, one of the first

villages FUM became involved with, helping with their clinic and maternity unit. Over the years we have helped them maintain and improve their buildings and in 2013 a Cranbrook School party spent ten days in the village helping refurbish the clinic. The two buildings are showing their age and it is time for major repair work and improvements. This work will start as soon as the Mwasala project is completed.

### **Kiloleni: Water Distribution System**

We completed the first stage of a major village level water distribution system in Kiloleni with a 2.8km water pipe connecting a solar powered/pumped borehole with the Dispensary & Maternity



Connecting pipes for the water supply to Kiloleni secondary school



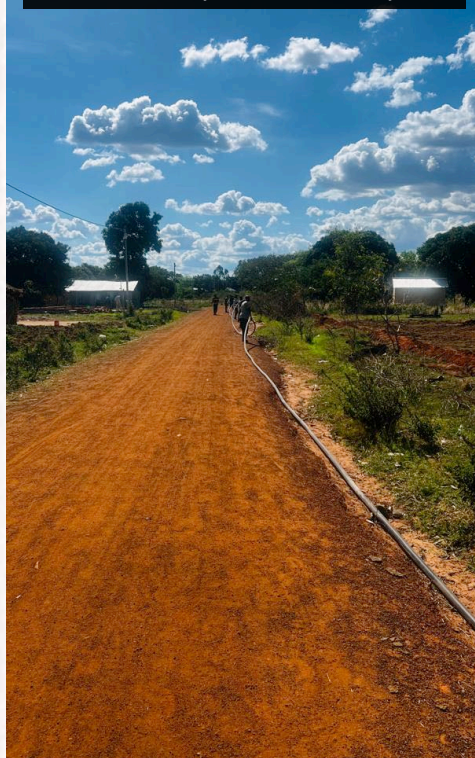
buildings. The design allowed for the future extensions of the water pipes to the two schools and the village centre.

During 2024 the system was extended to the secondary school, and more specifically to the girls' dormitory.

Lucky Enoch reported, in March 2025, that: "We are grateful for supporting the implementation of this water project at Kiloleni Secondary School, as it is a very important area that needed access to water because a girls' hostel was built in the school and they were having a lot of trouble getting water to use. Considering the effects that a girl can experience when she struggles to find water far away from the school campus, you agreed to help provide this project and now all students, particularly the girls in the hostel, are sure to get clean and safe water for drinking and other domestic uses".

Supporters will remember that the project started with the

Unrolling the pipe to carry water to the secondary school and beyond



building of a maternity unit in the village, then the sinking of a borehole to provide water. The borehole yield was such that it was sensible to use it to provide water to the secondary school near the clinic. Now the scheme for 2025 is to extend to the primary school and on to the village centre. To control

water use we will fund the village to put in place a government approved electronic payment scheme which will enable the village to charge for the water used. In this way the village has an income which can be used to maintain the system. The Kenilworth Uyogo Friendship Link has provided the same system in Uyogo village and success there gives us confidence for Kiloleni.

### Looking to the future

The requests for assistance we receive far outweigh our ability to meet them. We are already considering projects in three other of our supported villages, Maboha, Uhindi and Nyasa, each of which have clinics in need of major support or lack maternity units and there are many smaller tasks which warrant attention. Does anyone have a lump of cash under their mattress?

### Movement for Good Awards

## Nominations are open for Movement for Good's Health and Wellbeing Charities £5000 Prize Draw.

If you have a minute, we would be hugely grateful if you could nominate FUM.

It is easy. Just click on the link and search for The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala. We fall under the Health charity type.

Do spread the word to anyone you think may also want to support by voting for us.

**Nominate us [HERE](#)**



# FUM Officers

<b>Secretary</b> Rod Smith Tanner House Sissinghurst Rd Biddenden Kent TN27 8EX <a href="mailto:secretary@fum.org.uk">secretary@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Chairman</b> Richard Pratt Redwood Ridgeway Horsell Surrey GU21 2QR <a href="mailto:chair@fum.org.uk">chair@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Treasurer</b> Nick Vinall Shrewsbury Cottage Bakers Cross Cranbrook Kent TN17 3JW <a href="mailto:treasurer@fum.org.uk">treasurer@fum.org.uk</a>
<b>Medical Officer</b> Mrs Jo Taylor Jubilee Cottage Headcorn Road Frittenden TN17 2EJ <a href="mailto:medical@fum.org.uk">medical@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Education Officer</b> Nikki Hirst Railway Ramblers' Rest Two Bridges Road Princetown, Yelverton Devon PL20 6QT <a href="mailto:friendsum.ed@gmail.com">friendsum.ed@gmail.com</a>	<b>FDC Liaison Officer</b> Di Cooper 3 Chard Road Exeter Devon EX1 3AY <a href="mailto:alandi40@alandi40.plus.com">alandi40@alandi40.plus.com</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b> Julie Overnell The Mangold House, 19d Station Road Bere Alston, Yelverton Devon PL20 7EJ <a href="mailto:membership@fum.org.uk">membership@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Fundraising Officer</b> Isabel Heycock 143 Elsenham Street London SW18 5NZ <a href="mailto:fundraising@fum.org.uk">fundraising@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Projects Officer</b> Simon Headington Heath Bank Main Street Great Longstone Bakewell DE45 1TA <a href="mailto:simon@headington.net">simon@headington.net</a>
<b>Website</b> Martin Kenway 3 Tremeddan Terrace Liskeard Cornwall PL14 4DU <a href="mailto:webmaster@fum.org.uk">webmaster@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Newsletter Editor</b> Martin Kenway 3 Tremeddan Terrace Liskeard Cornwall PL14 4DU <a href="mailto:newsletter@fum.org.uk">newsletter@fum.org.uk</a>	<b>Assistant Newsletter Editor</b> Elena Davidson 34 Cunningham Road London N15 4DS <a href="mailto:elliedavidson@icloud.com">elliedavidson@icloud.com</a>

## The new and improved FUM Website

If you haven't visited our website recently, why not take a look?  
[www.fum.org.uk](http://www.fum.org.uk)



## Easy Fundraising



Some supporters will know of Easy Fundraising already and may be registered to give their support to other charities. Those of you who aren't, please consider joining and nominating The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala as your supported charity. Then, each time you make a purchase from one of the participating retailers, Easy Fundraising will pass a small donation to FUM.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>



## The Final Word

Please share this newsletter with friends and family, perhaps encouraging more people to join FUM. And don't forget to nominate FUM for the £5000 prize draw on page 9 and on the Easy Fundraising website (details above). It's quick and easy and could provide even more funds to help with our numerous projects.

Rod Smith