

In 2024 our two parishes supported as our 'Charity of the Year', STEKAskills, the UK charity linked with the Steka Children's Home in Blantyre, Malawi (home of Gift, Sandra and Abigail, who all spent some time in our parishes when studying at Queen Margaret University). We raised over £20,000 to help with the building of a Women's Hostel, which would enable women to study safely and to complete their courses at the new Skills Centre, the wonderful initiative of Godknows and Helen Maseko (the founders of the Children's Home) in the rural area outside Blantyre to enable the home children – and many others – to learn skills that would help them find employment. After several hiccups – inevitable in one of the poorest countries in the world with rampant inflation – the Hostel will be opened on Sunday 4 October....

An Update from STEKAskills in Malawi



Emma Wood, Chair, writes: 'Muli bwanji ('How are you?' in Chichewa). We are so looking forward to the opening of your women's hostel on Sunday October 4th and wish you could all be there with us. I'm happy to report that my family will be there to represent you and ensure everybody knows about all the effort you put into raising the money for this amazing building. And it really is amazing – built in beautiful, environmentally friendly hydraform bricks to an incredibly sophisticated plan which creates airflows through the specially designed roof and open bricks in the bathrooms. The showers and toilets are among the best I've seen in Malawi or the UK, and the large windows let in so much light! Outside the covered 'conde' or terrace is wide enough for sitting and chatting whilst appreciating the views of the mountains and countryside. The women who live here will feel

so privileged to have such a beautiful home. And because of the high spec, Godknows and Helen believe that they will be able to generate income during holiday periods by letting it out to organisations wanting premises for conferences and meetings. We will be sure to send you lots of pictures from the launch.

Inevitably a building like this is not cheap and we have exceeded our original budget – thanks then to the donation from Father Jock's 40th celebrations for helping with this. We have also supplemented the cost with money earned from selling all our bags / aprons and beaded decorations, but it means that our funds are at a rather critically low level. Consequently, we are holding a fundraising concert on October 24th. It will be a wonderful evening with a range of top acts including Mairi Campbell, Davie Luhange and more. The ticket price includes a hot meal, and we know it will be a lovely sharing of good food and community as well as first rate music. We would be very grateful if you could spread the word and get groups of friends together to buy tickets. Buy online or we could sell tickets after masses <https://events.humanitix.com/stekaskills-cabaret-night-with-mairi-campbell-davie-luhanga-sarah-hoy-fin-moore-and-chef-an-evening-sharing-music-and-food-for-malawi>

Finally, my family will be travelling to join me in Malawi next Tuesday (29 September) so if anyone has phones/ laptops or Lego to donate could you possible leave it at the Parish House before then. *Zikomo* (Thank You)'.