

Report to the Annual General Meeting from the Health Committee

The Health Sub-Committee has met several times during the year and I again wish to thank each one of them – without their input we would not be able to achieve the results that we have – so a big thank you to Liz Mackay, John Geater, Melanie Southwood, Chris Chinnery, Edwin Rew, Derek Tomblin, Eve Martin and Ray Keen.

This year has not been without its problems so far as the Health Centre is concerned and I have to say my visit this February was probably the most difficult I have made. This was not because of what I had to do but one of timing and of seeing the lack of improvement since my last visit. Our CHO Binta Bah was to be married the week following my visit and she was also sent away to a meeting for three of the days I was there which meant I had very little time to talk with her. Added to this was the forthcoming election which seemed to be foremost in the minds of many causing an early shutdown of many activities.

I have to report a rapid deterioration to the structure of the original building – in particular the original roof is leaking; more damage to electrical sockets; the need for new doors; lack of tiling to the maternity unit walls; we have still not been given the official notice that we may expand the small exterior building to use for the TB Patients – I had been told that nothing would happen in the two months prior to the election and that I had to wait until the resumption of normal Council business which may take some time. Although the laboratory is ready for use the long awaited Staff member has not materialised. CHO Binta reported that the lack of finance meant that she had no money to even replace or repair even minor items. Unfortunately the chairs which were provided via The Conquest Hospital are now unfit for purpose and need to be replaced. Although the borehole was now working satisfactorily, a new problem had arisen of villagers coming at night to use the water from the outside tap leaving no water for use by the Health Centre – this problem was overcome whilst I was there by instructing a local metal worker to make a frame which meant the water could only be reached by unlocking a padlock – for the cost of £84 which has subsequently been agreed by the Trustees.

On the positive side, I am pleased to report that the Facility is being used to capacity. Very busy clinics during the week together the Aids and TB Clinics each morning. Although there was only one birth whilst I was there this year, a number of road traffic casualties were brought in for minor surgery – which was performed with great professionalism despite only basic equipment. Every pregnant woman is now tested for diabetes at her first visit. The flooding problem has been overcome with no re-occurrence.

I am pleased to say that I have been asked by the Trustees to obtain Quotations for the work required and am hopeful that during the coming months we will be able to bring the Facility up to a standard which will make it not only good for the patients but also the hard working Staff and Volunteers at the Health Centre. We are also hoping that we will be able to send a part/container together with the Schools and include items that are desperately needed, including replacement chairs.