

## ESS Alumni

### Report from the Chairman Jayant Tanna – 2015 to 2017

We have continued to provide opportunities for our members to meet, stay in touch and to engage in sharing life's joys and sorrows, challenges and opportunities. At the same time, we have engaged with the current students and teachers at Eastleigh High School and supported the maintenance and development of the school. We give some examples below.

#### **1) Report of the BGM,– Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – Mehfil Southall**

This committee was elected at the last General Meeting on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at the Mehfil Restaurant in Southall. There were 30 Members and 16 Spouses present. There were 26 Apologies including 4 from overseas. The meeting went very well with detailed and clear Reports which were appreciated by all those present. We raised £2500 by generous donations from 13 members. These were for replacing the computers at Eastleigh High School in Nairobi. The Chair thanked everyone for their time and contributions. Minutes are available elsewhere.

#### **2) Report of the visit to Eastleigh High School Nairobi – 28/1/2017 to 12/2/2017**

On behalf of ESS Alumni, Nisar Butt, our Treasurer and I went to Eastleigh High School, Nairobi, at our own expense, from 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017. We were accompanied by one of our members Bashir Butt. We had a very busy, exciting and rewarding experience which is reported elsewhere. The main points were:

**Maintenance:** We were disappointed by the lack of maintenance and the poor state of repair of the buildings, particularly inside some classrooms, corridors and toilets. I pointed these deficiencies and our disappointment at their lack of care and maintenance in the whole school assembly. The school promised to take action.

**New buildings:** The school has two new additions to its buildings. There is a newly built block of changing rooms for sports and games. It has about six set of toilets and showers. There is also a newly built dormitory block with three rooms which will take up to 50 boarders.

**New furniture:** It was noted that the total cost of replacing all the desks was about £30,000. We agreed on donating £10K each. So the school, Gurcharan Singh Gill and ESS Alumni paid £10K each. The new desks and chairs were robust and of good quality. The school had already received 350 new chairs and 270 new desks by 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The balance of 350 chairs and 430 desks will be delivered by Gurcharan Singh Gill as soon as they are ready

**Lesson visits and video sessions:** Mathematics under achievement is a major concern of the school and standards in examinations have been very low. As a part of my agreed programme, I visited lessons of all members of the mathematics department and gave them feedback. The Ministry has also agreed to provide support in this area. Mathematics teaching and learning is a major area of concern in a number of secondary schools in Kenya and the government is aware of it. Let us hope they put things right as soon as possible.

#### **Economic aspects of the school and pupils:**

Many of the pupils come from very poor backgrounds and had built up debts from previous years. One of our members, Shakoor Ahmed (1965), generously donated £1500. We were able to pay off the outstanding dues of 10 of these pupils. However, the needy pupils will continue to need support with fees again in the future. The amount comes to roughly £200 per student per year - £800 over the four years. I will be very grateful to receive your pledges of support @ £200 per child per year.

**Meeting with Nairobi Ex-ESS colleagues:** ESS Alumni Kenya hosted an excellent Dinner meeting at a lovely new venue – Concorde Hotel in Parklands. I was given the opportunity to

talk about our work in the UK, the 2016 Reunion in London and our visit to EHS in Nairobi. The Treasurer Jas Babra talked about the progress made by ESS Alumni Kenya since their formation and the need to make the organisation more lively and active. There were about 30 participants in all and we enjoyed meeting each other and exchanging news about our personal and social lives.

We also were lucky to meet some of the younger African alumni of EHS who were very keen to be a part of the alumni to help the school. They were Sila Sulwey, Vijedi Muhando Wicks, Dennis Ndalo, Paul Mugi Kiguta, Bernard Njau Waruiru and our first African Life Member, Reginald Okumu. It was a pleasure to meet them and to exchange ideas and suggestions for the future.

### **Meeting with the Ministry of Education Inspectors, Nairobi**

We were invited to Jogoo House to meet with the Ministry of Education officials and professionals in the Quality Assurance department to discuss our work and to listen to their plans for Kenya schools. I was invited to make a presentation on how we organise and support our schools in the UK as well as how school inspections are conducted by OFSTED. They were all very keen and enthusiastic to learn about the UK system and appreciated our efforts most warmly.

**Meeting with the governors, parents, staff and students:** The school organised a meeting with the staff, governors and parents in our honour. We met the parents of the 10 'Needy Pupils' we supported as well. I was given an opportunity to talk about our work. They were all full of appreciation and praise for the work that ESS Alumni had done for the school.

We learnt that the Principal. Fred Awuor was going to be transferred to Jamhuri High School. The new Principal appointed was Mr Peter Manundu.

### **3) Programme of Sunday Lunches**

We held our BGM Sunday Lunch on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Mehfil Restaurant, Southall where we had 20 guests and had some fun with some Karaoke music.

One of our colleagues, Dr Parvin Syal (1964) from Los Angeles visited the UK to promote his book about stories of the Asian experience in Kenya. It was called 'African Quilt'. We organised a Sunday lunch in June 2015 at the Mehfil in Southall and invited Parvin to talk about his book. The book had received wide acclaim in Los Angeles and in Nairobi. Harish Luther also talked about his book 'Mysteries of Kenya Revealed' which was well received.

A Sunday Lunch held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Chak89 in Mitcham, Croydon. We had a good attendance with 24 participants including wives. Anil Lakhani was one of the speakers and he gave an interesting account of blood disorders as a Consultant haematologist at Bromley Hospitals in Kent. Davinder Duggal also presented an account of water and flood management from his time with the government department.

Another Sunday Lunch was held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at Santhi Restaurant in Leicester. We had a good attendance with 21 participants including wives. Nasrullah Khan was one of the speakers and he gave an interesting account of his professional career in local government, Race Equality and Cultural Diversity.

### **4) Membership**

We have only 120 paid up members including 70 Members who have paid for 2015-16 and 50 who are Life Members. It is good to note that 40 Members have already paid for 2017- 18 years as well. I urge all those who have not yet paid for 2017-18 to do so now. Money, as we all know, is the backbone of any organisation and ours is no exception. I therefore urge all of you to support us and pay your membership and encourage other ex ESS family members and friends that you know to do the same.

### **5) ESS Alumni Diamond Jubilee Reunion - 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2016**

We started preparing for this event in February 2016. It proved to be one of the most difficult, frustrating and onerous tasks ever for us. It made huge demands on our time, our patience and our reserves of energy and endurance. But finally we made it a huge success! We had 186 people attending including spouses. We had 110 ESS alumni including 9 from overseas. There were 17 others (including spouses) who were ex-students from other Nairobi schools. The Chief Guest was the High Commissioner of Kenya to the UK, HE Lazarus Amayo. We also were privileged to have the Principal Fred Awuor attending on behalf of Eastleigh High School. The feedback received from members is summarised below:

#### **Feedback from 47 participants – Percentages**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Total</b>
Venue	45	45	9	2	100
Food	28	53	11	9	100
Music	40	47	11	2	100
Formal Speeches	57	40	2	0	100
Informal Opportunities	38	60	0	2	100
Organisation	64	34	0	2	100
Magazine	83	13	4	0	100
<b>Overall</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **What aspects were good?**

1. Provided opportunity to reminisce about younger days but not many from my year
2. The speeches were all very good – this event was just right in content and duration
3. Good get together opportunity, enjoyed company of old boys, shared many memories, very good speeches esp from KHC, good to meet Principal, Good organisation by Chairman and committee
4. A good gathering from different Years, well organised, very good idea to support the school and poor children who need financial support
5. Very well organised event, thank you!
6. Venue good, food was good, info about ESS Alumni was good
7. Well attended function, lots of hard work, many thanks!
8. Venue, food, ex-students from overseas all good
9. Music excellent! Meeting friends all ex-Kenyan!

#### **What aspects were less successful?**

1. None(12)
2. Main course not as good as starter
3. Music too loud, difficult to speak to people (4)
4. Group Photos chaos(2) – better from guest list or seating

#### **What aspects would you retain if repeated?**

1. All (16) even venue
2. Music and food were very good
3. Seating in Year Groups good
4. Formal speeches were good

#### **What improvements and why?**

1. None(6)
2. More grilled food – non-veg
3. Better selection of Starter and Main
4. Formal Dress to be worn
5. Too hot later, needed a/c
6. Inform membership on aspect of charity

**6) ESS Alumni website [www.essalumni.org.uk](http://www.essalumni.org.uk)**

We have developed an excellent website and most of you have appreciated our efforts. We have profiles of students, staff, all past school activities, sports and results etc. If you have not already done so, please let me have your profile and photos. If you have any of the missing school magazines, photographs or other memorabilia, please lend these to us for posting on our website. We have had excellent feedback from everyone so far and would like to make it even better, with your help.

**7) Financial Report**

The Accounts show a healthy position as a result of careful spending and meticulous record-keeping. The current balance at present is £8918.30. The accounts are displayed elsewhere.

**8) Acknowledgement**

I would most sincerely like to thank all the generous donors for our ESS projects like computers, new desks, and fees for needy pupils and redecoration of EHS. They deserve special praise.

I am most indebted to all my committee members. Nisar Butt, our Treasurer, has been my constant and unswerving support. He has kept very accurate accounts and kept us afloat. Vijay Patel, our Secretary, has always been a source of help and support. Vijay has shared hosting our committee meetings with me. Harish Luther, Pradeep Luther, Varinder Singh and Anil Lakhani have all participated in meetings, given good ideas and shown interest and commitment. I would like to thank them all most sincerely for their co-operation and support.

**9) Finally....**

I thank you all for your encouragement, good wishes and very helpful and supportive feedback. I wish you all good health, happiness, peace and the very best of luck in your lives!

With every good wish!

**Jayantilal Tanna  
Chairman - ESS Alumni**

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2017**