

MOTEC LIFE UK Annual General Meeting
Sunday 28th February 2010
Louisa Draper, P. Ofori-Atta



SPEAKERS ROSTRUM



The High powered Executive table with Mr George Fynn (GHC) - centre.



Focused



Motec in pensive mood

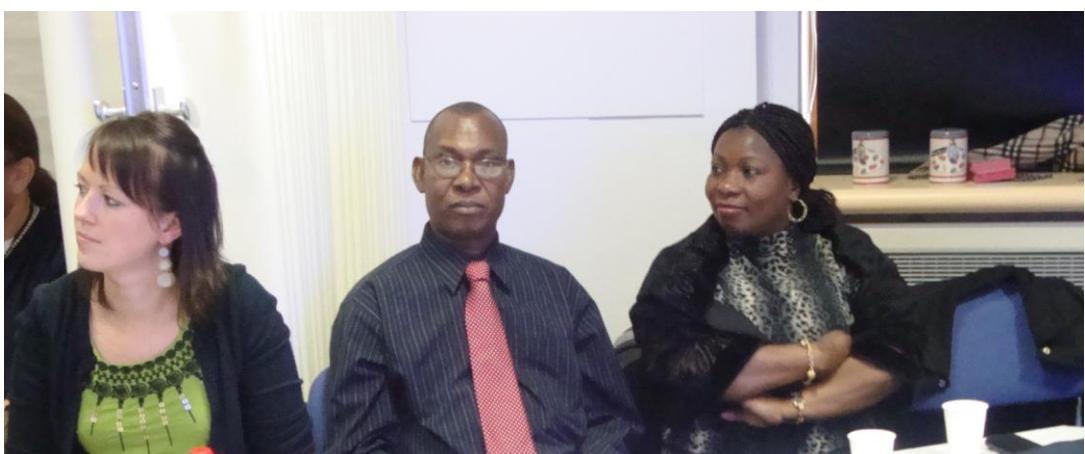
MOTEC LIFE UK's Annual General Meeting fell upon the last day in February and gave all members a chance to look back over the events of the past year and to look ahead to plans for the future.

The morning meeting focussed on some business issues. After a brief introduction from everyone and a coffee together, we kicked off with some minor administrative details about typos in the constitution. There was unanimous agreement to correct the typos. It was agreed to circulate the agreed amendment to all member by email



Participants glance through AGM pamphlets

Following this, our Vice President on behalf of the Presidency gave summaries of the year's projects in Ghana and at home and the collaborations and support which have made this possible. We have been hugely supported by several organisations this year, including St John of God International Development Company, MIDA-IOM SODirect, De Soutter Medical and Corin Medical. Target institutions (for us to help or collaborate with) include national organisations (Ambulance and Fire Service, National Catholic Health Service, Christian Health Association of Ghana, Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, Ministry of Health) and regional hospitals and organisations (Koforidua St Joseph's Orthopaedic Hospital, Akosombo VRA Hospital, Nkawkaw Holy Family Hospital, Sefwi Asafo, Jirapa Hospital, Pramso Jachie St Michael's Hospital, Donyina Maternity Clinic, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Lister Hospital, Military Hospital Accra and Medlab in Accra).



Muriel Raymond presented the years accounts, highlighting the lack of funds that is currently being provided by membership fees, which have until now been voluntary. It was decided that fees should be compulsory (except, by application, in certain circumstances) and that reminders would be sent out annually (invoices) to encourage members to remember to pay their subscription fee. A new 'Friends of MOTEC' scheme was created, for supporters who wanted to give a donation (of their chosen amount) but who may not have enough free time to attend meetings or become involved with working for the charity. We hope that this will encourage all sorts of people to become interested in MOTEC, and make a donation and we expect to publish a form soon for people who want to be our Friends!

We also discussed the forthcoming elections and nominations and proposed a timeline for events. This will be publicised on the website and in emails over the coming year.

Two members then took to the floor to describe their personal experiences in Ghana this year. Charlotte Warren updated us with some of the work that she will be doing to provide Information Technology and Systems support to our projects. The input from people like Charlotte, with diverse skills such as IT knowledge, is invaluable in building and strengthening infrastructure and supporting existing projects in Ghana. Dr Sarah Daniels warmed our hearts with an account of a 'book project' she has set

up to donate books to schools in Ghana. Building on the success of this project, she made an appeal for more books (e.g. school books and medical text books) that could be shipped on the container that will leave in March. We were all inspired by her initiative and hard work.



Participants soak up the atmosphere

On other matters, a decision was taken to hold next year's AGM slightly later in the year, at the end of March or early April. This would not only fit in better with the financial year, allowing us to get a clearer picture of the accounts, but also might mean slightly better weather, encouraging more people to attend.

A delicious hot lunch was provided by Elizabeth Edwards Caterers, which disappeared quickly! Plenty of cakes and drinks had been donated by MOTEC members, for those who were still hungry.

The afternoon session was packed out. It was great to see so many people (forty-four in total) attending to hear about MOTEC's work and provide their continuing support for the year ahead.

We were delighted to have Dr Tony Boret, MBBS FRCOG, as our guest chairman. Dr Boret is a consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Hertfordshire and also the Clinical Director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in West Herts NHS Trust. After some brief words of encouragement and praise for MOTEC's endeavours, Dr Boret proceeded to introduce the guest speakers.



Happy Hour at the AGM

Dr Louisa Draper started the afternoon's presentations, summarising some of MOTEC's achievements this year. She said that, whilst preparing for the talk, she had found it difficult to include everything and remember to thank everyone, as so much had been achieved, through the support of so many people. She also discussed how MOTEC had grown and diversified during the year, building on the successes of clinical and education projects, but also adding new projects such as the Surgical Centre, IT Support Services, two book donation projects and the NUWLIFE nutritional project aiming to reduce the incidence of malnutrition amongst the poorest families in the rural Upper North West regions. Particular progress has been made in education, with various successful projects including a trauma workshop, an 'educational tour' reaching hundreds of healthcare workers and patients and two exchange programmes, bringing nurses and doctors to the UK and India for training. She did comment though that "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb" (Nelson Mandela), saying that we must not rest on our laurels, but continue to work hard to build on our successes and continue to do everything we can to improve healthcare provision, especially in poor and rural areas of Ghana.

Our Vice-President, Christine Amakye provided a comprehensive summary of all the year's events and a detailed overview of what the charity has done since it started in 2006. She described some touching case-studies from Ghana, of people who MOTEC have helped. We have made eleven visits to Ghana in total, with another two visits planned for this year. She also identified problems that we must overcome including the difficulty of getting enough annual leave for visits and the hard work required of volunteers when abroad. She commented that we need to be careful not to spread ourselves too thinly and ensure that we have clear areas of focus this year in order to maximise the benefit from the limited resources (financial, staff etc) available.



Some of the equipment for the International Surgicentre at Sefwi Asafo, Ghana

Mrs Muriel Raymond read out the accounts to the audience and we all agreed on the need to secure funds from membership fees and to continue our drive to raise funds.

Mrs Sarah Olney of SO Direct then introduced colleague Reverend Paul Sage, who provided an update of some 'modern' ways to attract supporters, using online communities and social networking sites. He left us with a touching video that encouraged us all to think of ways to promote the 'message of MOTEC' to others.

Our keynote address was delivered by Mr George Fynn, the Minister Responsible for Trade and Investment at the Ghana High Commission London. He read out apologies on behalf of the Ghana High Commissioner Prof Kwaku Danso - Boafo. He had been called away on urgent duties and we remain truly grateful for his involvement and support. Mr Fynn presented an address entitled ‘Ghana - The Gateway to Africa’ explaining the economic targets of Ghana and the pivotal role of health care in the future plans of the country.

Dr Amakye then read out some messages of support from members and well-wishers who were unable to attend the meeting. Our Ghanaian Patron, Daasebre Professor Oti Boateng, sent his best wishes from a conference in Chile, reassuring us that he was safe and well despite the recent 8.8 magnitude earthquake that had hit the country. Our English Patron, Professor Lord David Alton also sent his wishes from abroad. He had taken time out during a busy trip in India to write to us and congratulated members on their “wonderful commitment and dedication to life-saving and life-enhancing work” and also sent best wishes for continuing success in the twelve months ahead.

One of our most dedicated supporters, Mrs Zena Bullmore MBE, sent a lovely handwritten note. “I hope MOTEC LIFE continues its work ever more successfully, so that Ghana’s health service can reach out to more and more of its people.”

Mr John Mitchell (on behalf of Rev Brother Laurence of St John of God International Development Company, who have provided huge financial support as well as encouragement and inspiration), praised the collaboration between SJOG and MOTEC, saying that by working together, we have managed to benefit the poorest people in Ghana. He finished his kind letter by saying that he looked forward to continuing to develop this partnership and friendship. Also, Mr Hans Eijkhout of Migration and Development in Africa (MIDA), Hague expressed his appreciation of the contribution of Motec to the MIDA – Ghana project and wished Motec well.

During the final stages often meeting, Miss Charlotte Warren explained her IT project for one of the target hospitals which was followed by a presentation of a book project by Dr Sarah Daniels.

Before the close of the meeting, the chairman summarised the events and gave his own uplifting words of support. He then presented some members of MOTEC with prizes for their hard work during the past year. Mr David Lewis was awarded volunteer of the year 2009.

A lively end to the meeting was provided by new member, Ms Josephine D. Djahlin, who had travelled from Birmingham for the day especially to attend the meeting. She said she was thrilled to witness the work of MOTEC and delighted to become a part of the charity. She then delighted us all with a surprise song! She sang a traditional Ghanaian song of ‘thanks-giving’. Many joined in with beautiful harmonies, and others remained silent, quite obviously moved by the emotion and tenderness of the moment. For those of us who did not know the song, or understand the words, we were still moved by the beautiful tune which resonated with humility and gentleness yet was proud and strong. Certainly a stirring and magnificent way to end the day.

Dr. Sarah Daniels closed the meeting with a message of thanks to all members and supporters and a message of hope and encouragement for the year ahead. In a direct response to Louisa's early message, she said "although there are many mountains to climb, just remember, that when you get to the top, the atmosphere is so amazing, the view so beautiful and the achievement so great, that we will always keep climbing."

Dates for the diary in 2010 & 2011:

Next Motec meeting – TBC

18th March: HELP NEEDED! Container - packing, Blue Box Storage, Hemel.

29th April: Charity Golf Day at Silverstone

26th June: Quainton Summer Delight – BBQ

End of June 2010. Fund Raising Musical Show, London

2nd October: Dinner Dance, St Johns Road, Hemel Hempstead

10th April 2011 – next AGM

Working visits to Ghana 2011 – 11th- 25th June, 8th to 22nd October

1st October 2011 – Fund Raising Event.



Interaction time - Mr and Mrs McDonald, Paul, Davies and Simon

