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# The letter

**Newsletter February 2021 - The Friends of Butoke Charity  
(Registered Charity no. 1140094)**

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## **How much did you raise in 2020?**

Welcome to The Friends of Butoke Charity's annual newsletter.

In 2020 the Charity's income was £28,810.55. We sent a total of £16,213.55 to Butoke to support its work. A big "thank you" to everyone who contributed, whether by donating each month, supporting one-off projects or by buying Christmas cards. As always, 100% of the money you give is sent to Butoke. The running costs of the Charity are covered by the Trustees.

The reason that we raised a lot more than we spent last year is the Maternity Unit: we have raised the funds necessary to build and equip it but that money has not yet been spent. We are hoping that the Maternity Unit will be built and equipped this year.



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## The Justice Project

A number of you responded to a plea for funds to reinstate the Justice Project, which Butoke had been unable to fund for some time. The Justice Project enables Butoke to enforce the legal rights of rape survivors, widows, orphans and those accused of witchcraft, as well as providing them with other support.

We received \$3000 ear-marked for this project and Butoke has to date spent \$2275 of that helping seven girls and women who had been attacked. This money has paid for legal representation (necessary for cases to be prosecuted), relocation of the girl and her mother in one case, medical assistance and basic necessities for the victims: clothes, food, soap.

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## The Priory's annual walk

Bridlington Priory is a long-standing and generous supporter of Butoke. Due to the coronavirus restrictions Bridlington Priory Church's annual walk to raise funds for the Friends of Butoke was curtailed both in scope and length. Nevertheless a small group of people did a splendid day's walk, during the October half term, in the distinctive landscape of the East Yorkshire Wolds, full of V-shaped flat-bottomed valleys caused by glacial action. The community of Bridlington Priory was typically generous and hundreds of pounds was raised to be sent to Butoke.



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## Projects for 2021

Much of the money that we send each month is spent on the day to day running costs of the orphanage and the shelter for old people. Our main additional projects this year will be:

### *The new Maternity Unit*

We explained in our newsletter last year that Dr Jean had twice had to deliver babies in Tshimbundu whilst en route to supervise the building of the new school. In each case the new mother was unable to travel to one or other of Butoke's clinics.

Initially the idea was to open a small maternity unit with six beds in Tshimbundu in a building provided by the local community. However, following a visit to the DRC by one of Butoke's Canadian supporters with whom we liaise closely, it was decided that the project would be more sustainable and effective if a building was purpose built. We and Butoke's Canadian supporters have raised the necessary funds. We should particularly mention the Methodist Women in Britain who have very kindly donated £2500 towards the cost of equipping the clinic.

The beginning of the building work has been delayed by Covid-19 and also Butoke's desire to see all the work on the primary school in Tshimbundu completed before the work on the Maternity Unit began. That was the agreement with the local community: demonstrate your commitment to communal projects by finishing the work on the primary school and then we will build the Maternity Unit. We hope that the work on the Maternity Unit will certainly be begun and perhaps will also be completed in 2021.

### *The Justice Project*

Butoke is keen to continue the Justice Project this year. Butoke believes that this project not only helps the individuals who receive assistance but also has a wider effect in the communities where it works. This year Butoke hopes to undertake educational work with those communities in relation to the rights of girls and women.

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## **Coronavirus in the DRC**

Reports from Butoke last Spring were dominated by news of Coronavirus restrictions with a national lockdown imposed – although Dr Jean pointed out that for people who live day to day, and in the absence of any social security net, telling people to stay at home was pretty



much inviting them to starve.

However, as the year progressed, although Coronavirus resulted in schools being closed for large parts of the academic year, it did not disrupt Butoke's activities as much as we feared it might. Although it is doubtless difficult to get accurate data, most sources seem to estimate Congolese Coronavirus deaths to date as being less than 1000.

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## The main activities of Butoke in 2020

The general political atmosphere was relatively stable in 2020 but the communities that Butoke works with are now plagued by violent criminal activities carried out by young people who were recruited into the militias during the fighting in 2017 and 2018. Butoke's activities this year have been relatively unchanged but have inevitably been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

**Education:** Butoke has continued to run a secondary school and two primary schools. Its schools have been shut for long periods. Some form of education continued by radio, television and with materials distributed by UNICEF but, as Dr Jean observed, there are many families who cannot even afford a small radio.

**Healthcare:** the Musue Bantue Health Centre is Butoke's main clinic. Butoke also operates a small clinic in Tshikaji. Butoke provides us with details of the conditions treated. Malaria, typhoid and conditions caused by malnutrition seem to be prevalent.

**Agriculture:** Butoke continues to work with around 30 local agricultural associations. Butoke insists that women are involved in the management committees of its association partners.

**Fish farming:** Butoke introduced fish farming to a number of its association partners to increase the amount of protein available to villagers. It organises a total of 27 fish ponds. Butoke was pleased with its own fish harvest last June: two ponds produced 108 kgs of fish. Half was eaten and the other half was sold at \$18/kg.

**Orphanage and shelter for the elderly:** Butoke continues to operate an orphanage and shelter for the elderly. It generally has about 30 young people who are resident and around another 20 who live with foster families but who are fed by Butoke. There are usually around ten elderly people living in the shelter for the elderly.



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## Easyfundraising and smile.amazon.co.uk

**Easyfundraising** is a great way to help the Charity raise funds at no cost to yourself. Many big online retailers (John Lewis and booking.com, for example) will make a small donation when you visit their website through the [easyfundraising](#) portal. Over the last 3 years the Charity has received £1018.22 in this way. Firefox has an [add on](#) which will tell you when you visit a website that will make donations via easyfundraising.

If you access **Amazon** via [smile.amazon](#) rather than the normal URL, Amazon will give a small percentage of each purchase to your chosen charity. The Friends of Butoke Charity is one of the charities you can choose.

Can we ask you to consider selecting the Charity as your chosen charity for smile.amazon? If you have never used smile.amazon before, you will be prompted to choose a charity the first time you use it.

Alternatively, if you have used it before and perhaps selected a larger charity, you can change your chosen charity to The Friends of Butoke Charity. You can find details of how to do this [here](#). However, you need to go to "Your Account" via smile.amazon (**not** the normal amazon URL) and then scroll down to "Shopping programmes". Under that heading you will find "Change Your Charity" - that is what you need to change your current charity to The Friends of Butoke Charity.

## Christmas cards - it's not too late (or too early)

We raised £840 from the sale of Christmas cards, thank you. However we still have boxes of them left which are cluttering up Paul and Marleen's attic. If you would like to stock up for next year, they are going at the discount price of £3.50 per pack of 10 plus postage. [Email Paul](#) with orders.



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## Just remind me again, what does Butoke do?

Butoke is a small NGO working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its core activities are to run several schools, one big and two small clinics, an orphanage, and a food security programmes. The on the ground expertise comes from a medical team lead by Dr Jean Lumbala, who is also a trained agronomist. The Friends of Butoke Charity raises funds to help Butoke continue its activities. We have four trustees: Matthew Pollard, Adriane Pollard, Marleen Tiemens and Paul Evans. Our accounts are independently examined each year and copies of the independent examiner's reports are available on request.

More information about Butoke's activities are available on our [website](#).

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