

Letters - 12 March 2021

11 Mar 2021 | by The Friend

A beacon of light to Sheep and goats

From A beacon of light

Last year David Gray, principal of Brummana High School (BHS) in Beirut, and Sami Cortas, clerk of Brummana Meeting, appealed to Friends for support for families at the school affected by the terrible explosion in the summer, and the wider economic problems this country is facing.

We are really grateful that many Friends did respond, along with other donors in Lebanon and throughout the world, to support the school families directly affected by the devastating 4 August Beirut port explosion, who tragically lost either their homes or their businesses.

Thanks to you and the other many donors those families can now be assured that their children can continue their quality education at BHS.

Since the beginning of August 2020, over \$130,000 for the Beirut fund as well as the bursary and capital funds has been raised from 175 donors across the world through our three donations platforms in Lebanon, the UK and the US.

This campaign has been a truly remarkable community activity with students, staff, parents, old scholars, trustees, governors and friends of the school all participating. There have been many inspiring fundraising stories, not least from the school's Quaker trustees, generously providing a \$10,000 'BHS Gives' matching gift, several UK Quaker schools responding to the call for help as well as fundraising by the current BHS Student Council, whose president Franchesco Jarjoura was voted in on the back of his commitment to financial aid. Perhaps one of the most enchanting stories has come from the UK and from a British Friend, Sarah Barrett, whose great-grandfather was among the earliest pupils at BHS. Sarah was able to raise over £2,000 through her cycling fundraising efforts in the UK, travelling by bike many hundreds of miles across the east of England.

Due to the continuing multiple crises in the country, there is little doubt the school is going to need more generous support in the coming months and years.

As the principal David Gray consistently reminds the community: 'We live in hope, however, and shall not give up. Lebanon is in a state of collapse: our job as educators is to provide a beacon of light and rebuild.'

Thank you very much for so generously supporting Brummana High School families during such desperate times.

Will Haire

Convenor, Fundraising Committee,
Quaker International Educational Trust

Environmentally friendly

The 12 February edition of the Friend has just reached me, and I have read the report about those objecting to HS2. As someone who for a period worked for the rail industry, and is still involved with TravelWatch NorthWest, I suppose I am biased.

A big part of the problem with HS2 is its name: many people think the project is about getting from London to points north more quickly – we can get there quickly enough already they say. But the greatest benefit of the project is creating more capacity on the railways, particularly for freight trains, and, moreover, ones with electric locomotives hauling them. Is it not a good thing to get diesel-engined heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) replaced by electric trains?



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Living in Carlisle I often see the daily 'Tesco train' come through. This one train takes forty HGVs off the M6. Once the first part of HS2 is completed there will be many more opportunities for such rail movements.

Do the objectors to HS2 really disapprove of the transfer of freight from road to rail, and from diesel power to electricity?

Ian K Watson

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