**Update on shipping to Malawi**

At the SMP's ['Forum for Faith Links with Malawi](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/news-events/past-events/faith-in-action-a-scotland-malawi-church-networking-day/)' on the 18th March 2017, concern was raised by some churches that the [Raven Trust](http://www.theraventrust.org/) would soon be ending its shipping service to Malawi.  The Raven Trust has sent more than 100 containers of donated equipment to Malawi over the years, helping communities across Scotland donate equipment to the north of Malawi.

At the meeting, the SMP said that we would speak with the organisations and individuals involved and look to come back to attendees with an update.

We understand that the Raven Trust is indeed in the process of winding up as a charity.  However, it currently looks likely that another SMP member will take over the Raven's Trust work in the north of Malawi, although this will not include the shipping of goods from Scotland.  As this will be a merger of two charities, there are various official steps that need to be taken before further details can be shared.  We expect to hear more on these plans by mid-summer and will update this group as soon as we know more.

Separately, another SMP member is now in the process of establishing a new charity, likely to be called "Banana Boxes", which will look to offer a similar shipping service to that previously offered by the Raven Trust.  Again, there is officialdom to get through as this new charity is established, but we look forward to updating members as soon as we know more.

With this information, we hope that those currently engaged with the Raven Trust can be reassured that this work will continue in some guise beyond 2017.

A related subject discussed at the meeting was the relative pros and cons of sending goods to Malawi.  We all recognise that while a great deal of good has been done over the years sending donated goods to Malawi, there is also a considerable risk of unwanted, inappropriate or unusable items being sent to Malawi unless the highest standards are followed in deciding what should/shouldn’t be sent to Malawi.

The SMP recognises that it is essential our members do not undermine local markets by sending goods in to Malawi that are available locally.  Our strong preference as a network is to, where ever possible, source goods in-country rather than send from Scotland.  Accordingly, in consultation with our members and our partners in Malawi, we developed a checklist of ten points we encourage members to consider before sending goods to Malawi: [CLICK HERE TO READ OUR CHECKLIST](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/malawi-information/sending-goods/).

We also have a [Practical Guide to Sending Goods to Malawi](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/files/2814/3687/2736/Sending_Goods_to_Malawi-A_Practical_Guide_2014_FINAL.pdf) available online.  We will look to update this later this year, once we have the full picture on the various developments underway.

We hope this is a useful update.

The SMP Team