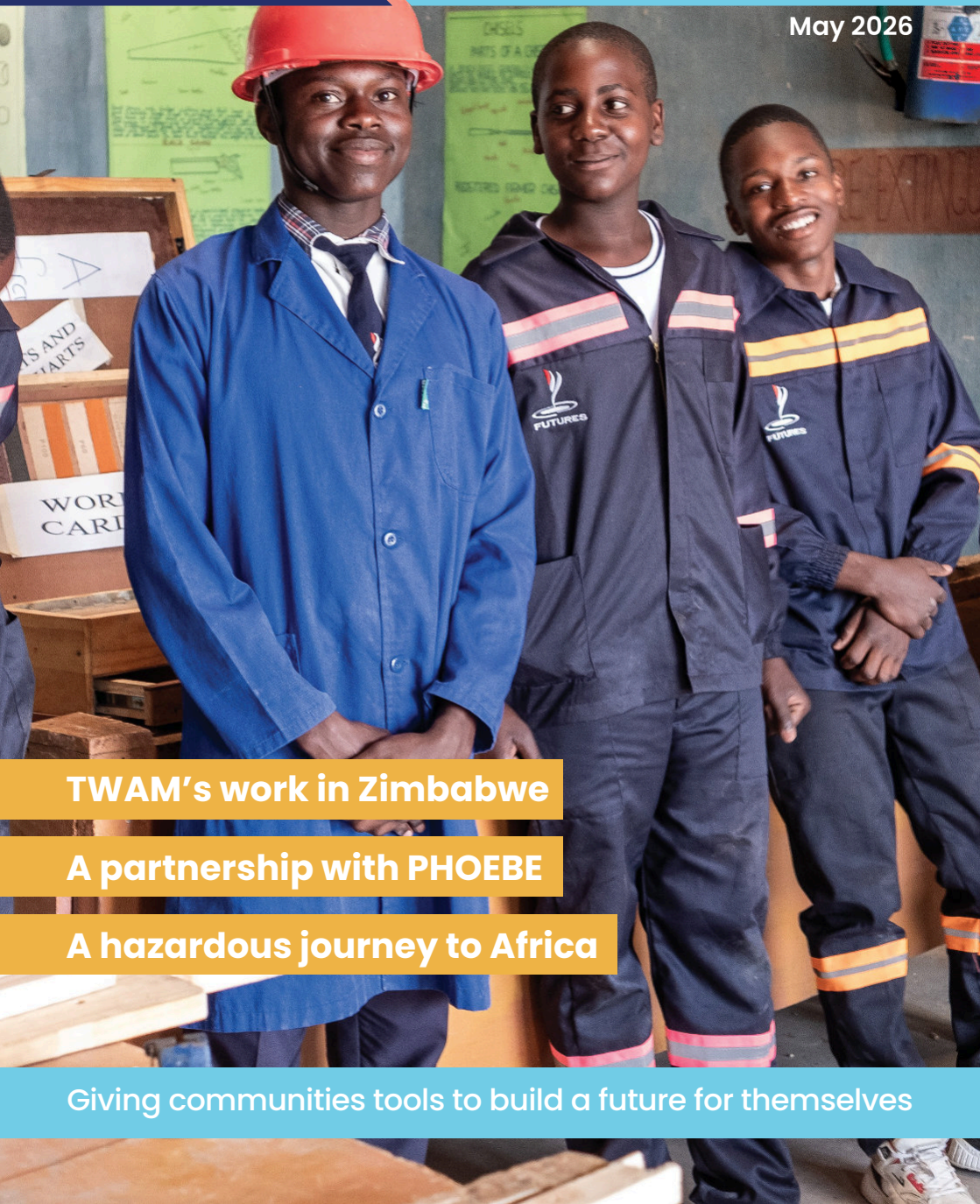


TWAM

Tools with a Mission

Our News

May 2026



TWAM's work in Zimbabwe

A partnership with PHOEBE

A hazardous journey to Africa

Giving communities tools to build a future for themselves

Welcome to TWAM News

Dear Friends

Warm greetings to our wonderful community! Welcome to May's edition of Our News. This edition celebrates our mission in Zimbabwe, a country in which we have worked for over a decade. We hope you are inspired by the stories of the PHOEBE Centre and the Futures Academy - both projects we visited in 2025, and which we are committed to supporting with tools.



We bid farewell to long-serving Trevor Maynard, our outgoing National Operations Manager. He will be missed, but part of his legacy at TWAM can be felt through our blossoming UK impact. You can read more about UK tool beneficiaries on page 11. Finally, we also celebrate the commitment and fellowship of the TWAM Chesterfield local group!

Thank you for your contribution of prayer, financial support and volunteering to our incredible mission. It is always a joy to celebrate together with you.

Much love



John Noble

Chief Executive Officer

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 7:12



TWAM receives a warm welcome from the Zimbabwe Diamonds and Allied Minerals Workers Union (ZIDAWU), a remote resettlement community offering skills training in carpentry, sewing and baking.

Tools with a Mission

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About us

We are a Christian charity that collects donated usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.

We support local people, meeting local needs with life-transforming skills training projects. We supply tools to equip training centres and to give to trainees when they graduate. With this support we see long-term sustainable livelihoods created.

Thanks to over 500 volunteers in the UK and your support, we will continue to transform lives and communities.

Financial support



We keep our costs very low, but we still need a lot of support. We value all gifts, whether one-off or regular. You can donate online, send donations to our Ipswich postal address, or request a Standing Order and/or Gift Aid form.

Time to donate?



We are always looking for more volunteers to help in our centres. At present we particularly need volunteers in our refurbishment centres. Please visit twam.uk/volunteer to browse our available roles or call us on 01473 210220.

Tools to donate?



To find your nearest collection centre, or to contact a local collector, have a look at our website or call our Ipswich office.

Prayer support



TWAM depends on prayer. If you don't currently receive our quarterly prayer diary and would like to, please contact our Ipswich office.



Thank you Paul!

Paul is one of our Ipswich drivers. He says: "I have been driving for TWAM for the last four years. It's great to work for a charity that you know has a positive impact on so many people and families across Africa. It is good to meet people when collecting tools and lovely to hear so many stories from those who have donated previously loved tools. And the TWAM staff and volunteers are such friendly people to work with."

We are looking for volunteers to drive our vans in the Midlands and the North of England. If you have experience and time to spare every week, please email volunteering@twam.uk.

Could you join us?

TWAM is a Christian charity that welcomes people of all faiths and none. If you would like to find out more, please get in touch on 01473 210220. More details can be found at twam.uk/volunteer.

Our partnership with PHOEBE



At the heart of our mission in Zimbabwe are our partners at the PHOEBE Centre.

The organisation's name, PHOEBE, says it all: Promotion of Health, Opportunity, Equality, Benevolence and Empowerment.

Deeply embedded in the communities they serve, PHOEBE delivers support to women and girls facing mental health challenges, while courageously confronting all forms of gender-based violence. Their mission is simple yet transformative: to empower women to lead safe, fulfilled lives.

PHOEBE's focus on mental health is both rare and essential. In a setting where very few organisations operate in this space,

PHOEBE identified – and stepped boldly into – a gap in national provision. With strong relationships across local councils, schools and the Ministry of Health, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding, their work is trusted, respected and firmly rooted in local need.

One of PHOEBE’s most powerful approaches is its “Experts by Experience” (EBE) model.

Women who have lived with mental illness are trained, supported, and then given the means to teach and guide others. This approach not only reduces stigma but transforms experience into expertise. The Women Recovery College – a flagship Phoebe Centre project – nurtures this journey, with graduates going on to become EBEs themselves, strengthening a cycle of peer-led care and resilience.

Their programmes are wide and varied. When we visited PHOEBE in September 2025, we saw how peer-to-peer counselling offers safe, empathetic spaces for women to be heard, and how teacher training equips educators to recognise mental health challenges in students – and, crucially, in themselves. Girls Kick Out Depression (GKOD) uses football as a tool for connection and confidence, and is now welcoming boys too, recognising the importance of addressing suicide risk across genders. Meanwhile, caregiver support programmes ensure families are not left behind, providing practical training for those caring for loved ones with mental illness.

What makes PHOEBE especially inspiring is how mental wellbeing is woven

together with practical empowerment. Their training sessions connect mental health and self-care with purposeful activity, recognising that working with your hands can rebuild confidence, dignity and self-worth – an ethos that many of our supporters and volunteers will know all too well! And this is where TWAM comes in.

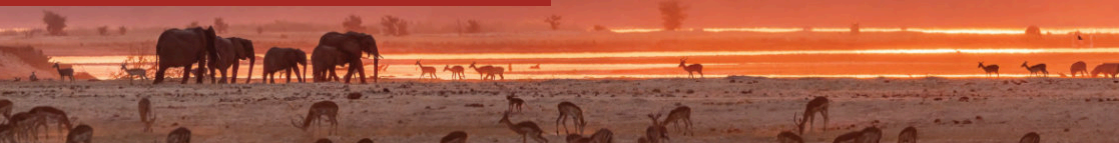
We are proud to support PHOEBE with practical tools that turn recovery into opportunity. Their recent request includes equipment for agriculture, sewing, poultry and livestock rearing, and peanut-butter making, as well as pressure washers, lawnmowers and trimmers. Toolkits have been identified and offered, and we hope to send them to PHOEBE this year. These tools are instruments of independence, income and renewed purpose.

Having grown from humble beginnings – originally operating from a private home before 2017 – PHOEBE’s vision has expanded. After meeting with the local chief, land was allocated for the development of a dedicated training centre. Fencing is already in place, and a student architect is designing new buildings that will support future programmes and livelihoods. And this is all the more remarkable considering that their primary funding comes from the UK, with connections to CYM Ipswich and Community Action Suffolk.

PHOEBE exemplifies how global solidarity can create local change. By supporting TWAM, you are supporting PHOEBE in turn, helping women rebuild self-confidence, overcome adversity, and prepare for a more hopeful future.

TWAM in Zimbabwe

A place where natural beauty meets poverty and need



In a country where 35% of people live in extreme poverty and employment opportunities are scarce, TWAM is working to improve lives and bring hope for the future.

TWAM has been working in Zimbabwe for more than 10 years. Home to around 17 million people, the landlocked country has eight currencies and 16 languages - facts that often serve to complicate our communication with partners and recipients.

The people of Zimbabwe have little potential to improve their lot. Unemployment, rocketing inflation and economic crises do nothing to help them in their efforts to make a living. Often, they have multiple jobs through necessity. The country is rich in mineral resources, giving opportunities for some in mining industries, but most are employed in agriculture - or their own subsistence farming - while earning a small amount from small-scale manufacturing or services.

Many of our readers will know - and some will remember - that Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain in 1980. Previously called Rhodesia, the new parliamentary leader was Robert Mugabe, who remained in power until being removed by a military coup and being replaced by the existing President, Emmerson Mnangagwa. But Mnangagwa is 83 years old, and a succession battle looks to be an inevitability, adding further instability to the country's outlook.

Despite our experience of working in countries where economic and political factors loom large, it is never easy. Situations can change rapidly and our plans often have to be adapted to meet new challenges. But with your support we are committed to overcoming these obstacles and bringing tools, training and livelihoods to people who otherwise have little hope for the future.

You can read more about how our tools make the hazardous journey to countries like Zimbabwe on page 8.



Empowering young people in Rusape

In the town of Rusape in eastern Zimbabwe, Futures Academy is helping young Zimbabweans build brighter futures.

The Academy currently offers courses in hairdressing, carpentry, building, mechanics, electrical and solar installation, textiles, and metalwork. They also provide computer literacy training to International Certification of Digital Literacy standard, giving trainees essential digital skills. Plans are also emerging to introduce new areas such as bakery and catering, which could open further pathways for employment.

And in 2023 a milestone was achieved when the Academy successfully integrated formal vocational qualifications into its

curriculum - meaning that students not only gain practical experience but also leave with recognised credentials that strengthen their prospects in the job market. Some graduates have already returned to the academy as employees, eager to retrain the next generation.

TWAM is proud to support Futures Academy as a special project, empowering young people who might otherwise have very limited opportunities. When we visited in September 2025, our eyes were opened to the massive change the Academy is making on people's lives - as well as the very significant challenges the Academy faces.

Financial constraints affect almost every aspect of their work. There are too few tools for students to train effectively. Instructors are often underpaid, and many young people struggle to afford course fees. While the Academy has boarding space for students travelling from distant areas - and sufficient land and animals to support future development - resources to expand remain limited.

Solutions, such as potential micro-finance schemes to help graduates start small businesses, are being explored. With continued partnership and support, and with a shipment of tools in the pipeline, TWAM hopes to help this inspiring initiative grow and develop!





A hazardous journey... ...from harbour to home

Here at TWAM we often talk about the journey of a tool – from the UK donor to being packed in a container and shipped.

But what happens next?

From the moment TWAM tools arrive at the busy harbours in Africa, their journey is anything but simple. What looks like a straightforward delivery is, in reality, a long and sometimes risky process that tests patience, trust and determination.

The containers for Zimbabwe dock in Beira - the major port of Mozambique. We communicate with the organisations who will receive the toolkits via a WhatsApp group, and they excitedly wait for updates on when the ship arrives in port.

Lengthy customs inspections

Once in port, the hurdles begin! Customs inspections can take weeks. Officials might ask for detailed descriptions of every item inside a container – nearly one thousand individual packages. There is sometimes the challenge that we will have to unpack everything - and repacking a container the right way can be almost impossible. We are always relieved when inspections proceed smoothly.

Even then, challenges continue

In one instance, our container was loaded onto a lorry together with a second, unrelated shipment, which became stuck in customs. Because the two containers were travelling together, extra storage fees quickly mounted. Our

local partners spent long days at the port, negotiating and advocating, trying to protect our tools and keep costs under control.

For Zimbabwe, the tools travel by rail to Harare, the capital, and once cleared by customs officials there, they are released to our in-country partners. This inland journey is closely monitored. For example, in our first shipment to Burundi last year, our country partner Georgette met our container in Kobe to document its progress. It was wonderful to watch the excitement building on WhatsApp when the recipients realised that their toolkits were getting closer and closer.

A cause for celebration

Once the container arrives, volunteers transfer everything into a secure storage site. Recipients start their journeys from far away, sharing and sometimes hiring vehicles, and negotiating difficult terrain.

Once they arrive, our in-country partner ensures the correct organisations collect the correct tools by checking gift certificates and ID documents, and distributes them accordingly. After such a tough journey, there are smiles and celebrations all round. The tools have finally made it to their new homes!

Despite delays, obstacles, and additional costs, TWAM remains committed to ensuring the right tools reach the right organisations. Every tool delivered is proof that perseverance really does pay off!

As this article illustrates, sending tools to Africa can be complicated and costly. The volunteers who facilitate this process are our dedicated Country Coordinators, to whom we say a huge thank you!

Photos show Francois Nikwibimpaye (previous page) and unloading begins in Karuzi, Burundi (below).



Farewell and hello

Supporting UK projects

Farewell Trevor



We are sad to announce that Trevor Maynard has departed TWAM for a new role as a Management Tutor. Trev, or Mr Tools as he is affectionately known in Africa, has been with TWAM for eight years - his contribution has enabled the charity's growth in many different ways, and we are so grateful to him for his work, his good nature, his big heart, and the pastoral care he has given to so many. We wish him well in his new role.

Welcome Sam



We are delighted to welcome Sam Curtis to the TWAM staff team, to take over from Trev as Operations and Logistics Lead. He has a background in small business management and lives with his wife in Bury St Edmunds.

TWAM is now officially empowering good causes here in the UK with tools and toolkits - and has already made an amazing difference!

Our Ipswich team recently supplied agricultural kits and gardening tools to Framridge - a Suffolk-based charity whose mission is to tackle UK food insecurity and social isolation by creating a space where everyone feels welcome and supported. They tell us that TWAM tools will help them improve their growing space, support hands-on learning, and increase the food they can grow for our community.



Meanwhile, in Rugby, TWAM tools have been used to erect garden fencing at Bilton Infants School (above). Helped by TWAM volunteer, Hugh, and several local parents, posts were concreted in and rails, railings and gates fitted. The resulting enclosure is part of the school's re-cycling and gardening programme, and provides important infrastructure.

Community engagement is all part of TWAM's greater mission. We look forward to sharing more UK stories soon.



TWAM in Chesterfield

Sometimes we don't hear enough of what our many refurbishment friends across the country are up to, but they are a crucial part of our mission to collect and refurbish tools in the UK.

The dedicated TWAM local group in Chesterfield is a wonderful example of this work in action.

The group's long friendship with TWAM began in 2014 thanks to David Sanderson, who had retired to Chesterfield after many years serving with the Church Army in the UK and overseas. David founded an outreach called Thom's Blokes at St Thomas Church Brampton, bringing together retired men for fellowship and service. After visiting the Midlands Refurbishment Centre in Coventry with two volunteers, Alan Smith and Alan Sheldon, the group returned inspired to support TWAM's work. They began modestly, collecting tools in David's garage and spreading the word at fetes, galas, and community events. As interest grew, so did the team -

eventually reaching around a dozen volunteers.

In 2018, their prayers for more space were answered when a local farmer offered an unused portacabin, free of charge. The team quickly transformed it into an organised workshop, where to this day tools are sorted and prepared. And when the van arrives to collect, Alan and the team get to work packing it for our refurbishment centre in Rugby. Although David sadly passed away in 2020, his legacy continues through Alan and the team, whose commitment, fellowship and practical service are helping tools reach communities in Africa.





Just one toolkit can have positive repercussions for a whole community. People like Mollin from the PHOEBE Centre, featured on page 5, share their skills to help create many livelihoods. Please continue to support us to ensure that every suitable tool is used to transform lives in Africa.

Please accept my gift of:

£15 £25 £50 £100 £150 £250 Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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You can donate online at twam.uk/donate or using the account details below including your surname and postcode as a reference.

Barclays Bank Account No: 33190994 | **Sort Code:** 20-44-51

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You can donate by credit or debit card by ringing our head office on 01473 210220. We're open Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm.

Would you like to receive our monthly **Supporter E-News**? It's packed with up to date news and inspiring stories. If so, you can either write your email address below, or go to **twam.uk/stayintouch** to sign up online.

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Tools with a Mission



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