

# BSSH-LION Volunteers' Handbook

## Part 2 - Living and Housekeeping at Benetolo House



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## **Benetolo House**

Accommodation has been provided in Area 43 of Lilongwe. This is about a twenty-minute drive from KCH LION. A 5-bedroom bungalow, 'Benetolo House', has been rented by the BSSH for the BSSH-LION project team. It consists of individual rooms (2 are ensuite), a large living area and communal kitchen. There is a large veranda, and a BBQ area outside. The house is set within an acre of wooded private grounds.

There is a housekeeper and gardener and night security guard for general cleaning, maintenance and security of the property. Your safety whilst away is of the utmost importance and whilst every effort has been made to ensure a secure and safe living space has been provided, it is advisable not to leave any valuables on display. BSSH does not accept liability for any property lost or stolen during your visit.

Address Benetolo House:

Plot no 43/2/133  
Ufulu Road  
Area 43  
Lilongwe

Benetolo House is your home and your sanctuary during your time in Malawi and is a place for rest and recuperation.

Whilst there will inevitably be some work-chat and some zoom meetings in the evenings and weekends, please try where possible to leave work at work, and not let it dominate the household. When work is necessary at home, please try and ensure an appropriate balance of surgery and therapy, particularly as the therapist will often be outnumbered by surgeons.

Please show respect and kindness both for other house residents and the house staff. It can be very challenging living and working closely with each other for many weeks. The work can be tough, mentally, physically and emotionally. Some volunteers will be missing home, family and friends. We all have our strengths and weakness, our irritations and our irritants. Be tolerant, respect each other's personal space and privacy, and support one another.

At the hospital, the consultant surgeon will co-ordinate the work of the LION Hand Unit with the support of the hand therapist, as well as supervise the trainee surgeon. At Benetolo House, these hierarchies should be minimised although responsibility has to be taken for

certain aspects of managing the house and staff. There needs to be a designated point of contact for the staff and landlord, and agreement about who is responsible for paying bills and looking after the car. You should look out for each other and may give advice to other team members, but you must respect each other's freedoms and personal risk thresholds.

Malawi has earned its name as 'The Warm Heart of Africa' not only for the warm climate and beautiful scenery but also from the warm hearts of its inhabitants.

So be like a Malawian during your stay and have a warm heart for all those around you. "

## Electricity

There is mains electricity supply throughout Lilongwe, however there are regular power cuts. The times vary, but they are often pre-arranged and are usually between the hours of 5am and 11pm. There is a generator at the BSSH house, but some basic backup in the form of solar lights/torches/candles etc is still advisable. Bring a torch with you and batteries (ideally rechargeable ones).

Malawi uses an English electricity system (i.e., standard three pin plugs), so don't worry about adaptors. Do bring power-surge protection plugs with you as there are frequent surges which may otherwise damage your electronic devices, such as laptops and mobile phones.

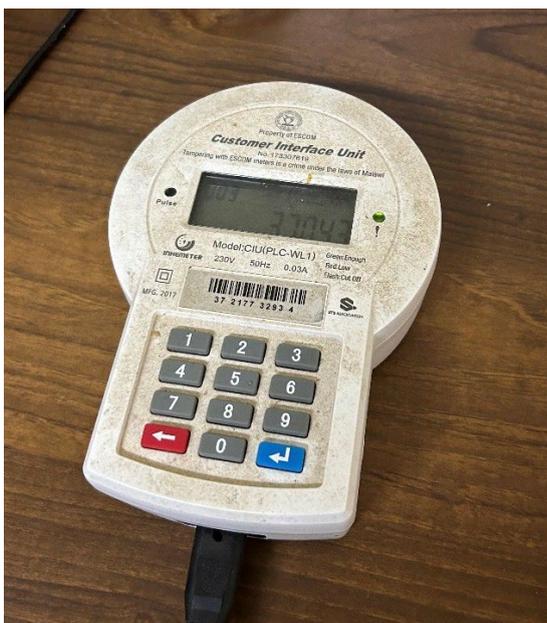
## Power Cuts and Electricity and Generator

The electricity is supplied by ESCOM Malawi.

Meter Number: 37 2177 3293 4

Account Number: 700288370 Name: SAITO KATSURO

It took some considerable time and effort to get the supply reconnected when the metering connection failed. The meter connects wirelessly to the ESCOM network via the "Gadget" in the kitchen. The account number is written on the Gadget under the bar code. Usage and the amount of credit left on the account can be monitored via the gadget.



## **Paying for Electricity**

The system needs to be pre paid either with a code purchased from ESCOM or via Airtel money. The main ESCOM office is in the City Mall (Game) complex. Go to the desks on the right with the above info. They only take cash. You will get a receipt with a 20 digit code (Tokens) Bring this home and key the code into the gadget. Then press blue ( bottom right) enter key. It should then say accept and show new balance

Airtel money can be loaded on to your phone, for cash by any lady under an airtel umbrella or various other Airtel outlets. (The nearest is a coupe of houses up on the left out of the front gate.) The airtel App can then pay ESCOM direct and produce a Token code which you put into the “Gadget” (Written notes on this in file)

We recommend you top up when the account drops below 7,000 units.

Numerous telephone numbers to report and discuss faults are also in the house file.

## **Electricity House Generator and other utilities.**

There is detailed information on how to manage utilities such as the electricity, water, internet and generator in the “**Benetolo House**” **Folder**, kept in the dining room. **Please make sure you are familiar with this information**, Note that most utilities have to be paid for in cash in a variety of arcane ways. The house residents need to keep an eye on usage, especially electricity, which has to be pre paid, and arrange payments accordingly. Expenditure on utilities can be claimed back from BSSH in the normal way.

## **Power cuts**

There are frequent power cuts, either as a result of the ESCOM load shedding program or due to storms or other random events. The load shedding schedule is on the ESCOM website but I’m not sure they keep to it!

If the power goes off, first check consumer unit trip switches to left of kitchen window. Often tripped by storms etc and can easily be switched back on. The generator is in the old chicken shed at the back of the plot. **Warning:** the door is very low and it’s easy to knock your head when coming out – **Be Careful or wear a crash hat!**

## Generator Procedure

Check fuse box switches are on in kitchen

Turn main switch to neutral. (on wall of kitchen courtyard outside back door – see photo)

Check indicator lamp switched to on ( note its upside down)

Go to generator, main switch on left. Usually starts fairly easily. If not get Charles to check the fuel. Turn fuse trip switch on gen to up position.(AC breaker)

Go back to kitchen courtyard. Turn main switch to “Generator” position.

When power back on again indicator lamp will come on - Reverse above procedure.



**Main Switch outside kitchen Door**



**Indicator Light next to switch**



**Starter**

**switch top left**

**Circuit breaker trip switch top right**

If the generator won't start:

1. **Check it has plenty of diesel** – Unscrew the shiny metal cap from the top, pull out the plastic filter and look inside with a torch. There is a gauge on the top of the machine but this is often obscured and hard to see.
2. **Check it has the correct amount of oil** – Open the panel on the front. Pull out the dipstick (it has a black cap), wipe it off and dip it, as you would on a car. The oil level should be between the two grooves. Too much oil will create smoke and potentially damage the engine.
3. **Use the starter procedure as detailed in the house folder.** There is a short video on the drop box showing the procedure.

The generator runs on diesel which is easily available (for cash) at most of the petrol stations. There is a 25 liter can that Charles keeps in his shed. You need to make sure he

lets you know when it is running low. Diesel used to cost about KW10k for 5 litres. The nearest petrol stations are at the end of the road towards M1 (left out of gate)

We tend to get through quite a bit of electricity. The generator struggles with all the hot water heaters on at once and or the AC and can trip out. At the very least it drinks up fuel so please be mindful.

The generator needs servicing yearly. This should be done by the Landlords but they will need reminding. A note of when the service was done should be made in the house diary.

## Water

There is a good standard water supply in Malawi, however drinking tap water is at your own risk as it may not be safe to drink. There is a water filtration system at Benetolo House to convert tap water into filtered water. When away from the house we recommend taking a water bottle with you or buying bottled water.

### **Water Filter**

The filter in the kitchen is a simple gravity fed 2 chamber device. It takes 10 litres of tap water in the upper chamber when empty. Make sure the bottom chamber is empty enough for the water in the top to drip into, otherwise it will overflow. The ceramic “candles” should be changed every 6 months. There are spare candles in the larder. When these have been used please notify management team and more can be sent out. The candles were last changed at start of November 2023.

### **Water Meter**

There is a meter in the grass near the front gate. From time to time someone will come from the water board to read it. He will print out a chit and give it to Charles who will give it to you. You can take it to the local water office, quite nearby, (Charles will take you or if you ask him nicely he will go and pay himself – give him the cash for this) You can use a credit card! There is also a water board office in the Game complex opposite the Airtel office. (The bill has been about KW 45k a month,)

## Telephone and Internet

Most people have a mobile phone, and you will find that most of the staff at KCH-LION communicate via WhatsApp. You can buy a simple pay-as-you-go sim for little over £1 (with data and minutes on top), so make sure that your phone is unlocked ahead of travel. Airtel is the most widely used and recommended company.

**It is advisable to allow one of the Airtel card vendors to insert the sim and make appropriate adjustments to your mobile phone settings to allow proper usage.** You will need to have your passport /number available when you purchase a Malawian sim card. A 30 day data package eg 32GB or a combined data and Airtel mobile to mobile bundles are popular. Most communication at the LION and with the volunteers uses WhatsApp hence data is most useful for 4G

If you insert a Malawian sim into your phone, you can still keep using your UK number for WhatsApp without international charges (just select 'keep number' on opening WhatsApp after inserting the Malawian SIM card into your phone). This will allow you to keep in touch with family and friends.

Malawi is either an hour or two hours ahead of the UK depending on the time of year, so keeping in touch with family and friends is pretty easy.

We have a 4G router in the house which has its own SIM. The Data account needs to be prepaid and be linked to an Airtel phone account. It needs to be topped up regularly. It is primarily intended for project use but up to 30 devices can connect to it so if you want to use it for private use that would be possible but please consider contributing to data costs.

MK 12k for 27.5G (as at February 2023) Note personal data is probably cheaper.

Router Password: BCCAA715

(This may have changed depending on who's sim card has been put into router)

Note: at time of writing, original SIMS for Router and phone account have been lost or deactivated. The system can be reactivated by taking router to an Airtel shop.

Many people have been happy to use internet by "Hotspotting" off their own phones. Data packages from Airtel are quite cheap.

Local Sim cards can be purchased at any Airtel outlet, and loaded with Airtel money which can be used to pay for data and utilities etc. You need to get the Airtel Africa app on your phone. There is then a way of topping up with a credit card.

## Transport

There is a reasonably reliable bus service that connects the major towns, but the buses are old, and overcrowded. Single fares range from 700mkw+ for a single journey within the city. *(note at time of writing inflation in Malawi is exceptionally high so these figures are liable to be underestimates)*

Private taxis are readily available, be prepared to negotiate on the price as they will charge you tourist rates! Agree a price before you set off.

There are also a number of Tuk Tuk's if travelling short distances.

Lilongwe is small but spread out and travel is far easier and safer by car. A car has been purchased for BSSH team use. This is to be used primarily for commuting to and from work, but may also be used for general errands, social purposes and activities in Lilongwe. There is separate guidance about the car. (Appendix1)

**Please do not try to drive the car until you have familiarised yourself with the guidance** and undertaken an orientation drive with a colleague who has become familiar with the car and driving here. The main roads in Malawi are generally surfaced, however, smaller roads and side streets are often narrow and in poor condition, particularly the further you travel out of the city. If you want to travel outside Lilongwe, we recommend you should hire a more suitable vehicle (probably four wheel-drive). We also recommend that you consider hiring both a vehicle and driver.

Non native people rarely travel on foot due to the heat and security issues at night. You will see plenty of cyclists and motorcyclists on the roads, however we would not advise this as a mode of transport. Motorcyclists in particular are often unlicensed drivers and a lot of motorcycles are not roadworthy.

There are many road traffic collisions, therefore whenever travelling on the roads (regardless of your mode of transport), remain vigilant of other road users (including animals).

Do not travel alone after nightfall. Always carry a torch/head torch with you when heading out in the evenings.

## Driving in Malawi

You can drive in Malawi using your UK driving license (don't forget to bring it!) for your first three months. Thereafter, you will need to get a Malawian licence.

Be careful when driving, and try to avoid driving at night as there are no streetlights or pavements. Driving at night outside the main towns is not recommended due to the security risk. There are also drink driving issues and lots of people/chickens/goats/dogs etc. in the road.

There are no road-side recovery services in Malawi, therefore it is important that your vehicle is well maintained and regularly serviced. It is advisable to check your tyre pressures, water and oil levels etc. regularly. Top up on fuel more often than you would in the UK and carry a full jerry can with you as there are regular petrol shortages. Petrol prices are nationally set, and there are petrol stations in most settlements on major roads.

### Other points:

Speed Limits:

- **Urban Roads 50 kmph** ( Note this means slow down through all villages)
- **Rural Roads 80 kmph**
- **Motorways 120 kmph** (we are not sure what constitutes a motorway here and there are not many roads I would want to drive this fast on)

The Car runs on petrol. The nearest petrol stations are at the end of the road towards M1 (left out of gate) 1 tank is about MK 100k ( Note fuel prices nationally set) Almost all stations only take cash. There is a log book in the car. Please fill milage in from time to time and report it back to us at intervals.

Please check oil and tyre pressures regularly. There is a mini compressor in back of car, which can be used to check pressures as well as top up.

Charles will clean car each morning and inside from time to time. The documents are in the glove compartment on passenger side. These are the originals so please don't lose them or let overenthusiastic policemen confiscate them. You may be stopped frequently, but the police are usually friendly and don't want too much from you.

Route finding, in town especially, can be challenging. There are not many road signs. Beware of google maps. There are quite a few one way streets that google doesn't seem to know about and will send you down the wrong way.

The car belongs to Jonathan with Martin as proxy owner. The driver however is liable for any accidents, so please look after our car.

Please see other comprehensive notes about the car on file. (Appendix1 at end of this handbook)

## **Food shopping**

**Basic groceries will be bought each week for Benetolo House, so the majority of your food will be provided. Food supplies in the house may also be used to make packed lunches for your day at the hospital, if desired.**

There are regular supermarkets as you would find in the UK, as well as street stalls and local corner shops. You will often find that Malawian produce is cheaper in the supermarkets than items imported from South Africa or elsewhere.

There is a list of Lilongwe supermarkets in the house files. Foodlovers, seems to be the best especially for meat. They are a bit more expensive than elsewhere but is much more like a UK supermarket. The nearest is on the M1 about 10 minutes north of the junction at end of Ufulu Road. Shoprite and Chipiku are about the same. There are big ones at City Mall (Game) Sana is a "down and dirty" warehouse type of place. Ok for packaged goods but less good for fresh. There is one quite near on Mphonongo Street. First left off Ufulu road in direction of M1.

It is often better to get fresh fruit and vegetables, rice and potatoes etc at the market. Mercy likes to come shopping with us and will make sure you get good produce and a good price. If you give her a list and cash Mercy will go to the market for you.

## **Drink**

There are excellent local spirits (Malawi gin, Malawi vodka etc.) at decent prices. Wine is imported from South Africa and there are a variety of beers. Beer is mostly bottled.

Carlsberg is the only brewery with a licence to operate in Malawi, hence it is readily available and very cheap. Imported beer is considerably more expensive.

Note to buy local beer or soft drinks in most supermarkets you need to have a supply of empty bottles to hand in before you can buy new ones. By now there should be a decent store of empties in the house.

The BSSH is a charity and not permitted by the Charity Commission to fund alcohol, therefore, it should not be included in the regular grocery shop. Volunteers and guests are welcome to buy alcohol themselves for responsible use at Benetolo House.

### Doors and security

Malawi is generally a safe country for foreigners to live in but it is a very poor country and there is a huge discrepancy in wealth and materiel possessions between us and most of the local population. We must be aware that there is a possibility that some may want to address that discrepancy by relieving us of a few of our possessions. We live in a nice area of town, which paradoxically makes the discrepancy more obvious and possibly the risk greater. Therefore we should take sensible security precautions.

**We have a security contract with “Protelligent.”** This is on an annual contract paid directly by BSSH. There are two panic buttons in the house. One in the living room by door to corridor, and one at other end of corridor by main bedroom door. In addition there are 4 mobile “Key Fob” type buttons. When a panic button is pressed a siren will sound and a security team will arrive within 5 minutes to deal with intruders. At present Charles and William each have a fob, one is in the outside “guest room” and one is spare. If you would feel safer to have a button in your room feel free to use the spare, but please keep track of the fobs and make sure everyone knows where they are. Don’t just leave them in a drawer when you leave.

The alarm system should be tested weekly. Protelligent suggest on a Wednesday. Ring their control room on: +265 88 598 2006, tell them you are just testing your system at Benetolo House, then press the button to set off the alarm. After a few seconds press the button again to silence it.

The Front gate is kept closed at all times but only padlocked at night. Its best to keep doors closed to stop bugs or other unknown intruders coming in.

Don’t leave keys in locks! Someone might want to get in. Resident of “guest room” outside needs set of keys for living room to verandah door to get in when Kitchen Deadlock bolted.

Beware of lock on corridor door. It has jammed and imprisoned people in their bedrooms.

There is a night guard, William, for Benetolo House, as well as the current house keepers, Charles and Mercy.

The front gate is a primary risk point. Thieves are known to observe when people come and go, therefore it is advisable that you do not open or close the gate by yourself (day or night).

- Keep the gate padlock locked at all times after dark.
- Look around you when you arrive at the gate to check nobody is close by.

- Tell Charles, the housekeeper, when you are going out (and if possible, when you expect to return). You can message him on WhatsApp to inform him but he doesn't always have data so you should call him if you want him to come to the gate.
- To alert the housekeeper of your return, honk the car horn twice when you wish to get in through the gate.
- If in doubt, it is safer to stay in the vehicle and lock the doors than get out so keep the engine running and be ready to drive away at all times.
- We have agreed that we won't bother Charles to come to the gate after 22:00 Mon-Sat or any time on Sun, but feel free to contact him at any time if there is an issue.
- If you expect to return after 22:00, someone from the house should open/close the gate for you. William the security guard should be able to do this, but remember he may be patrolling another part of the property.

With this process, it's not just about you staying inside the car where you are safer, it also alerts any potential thieves that there is someone on guard, manning the gate 24/7, which should serve as a deterrent.

Most of the outside doors are fitted with security grills. We recommend that these are padlocked at night. The occupant of the outside bedroom will need a set of front door keys and padlock keys in case they need to get into the house at night as they will not be able to get in through the back door which is usually bolted on the inside.

### **Waste and Bin Collection**

The refuse is collected from outside the main gate on Tuesdays. Note that this is a private service and has to be paid for.

Charles will collect the rubbish during the week and leave it outside the gate on Tuesdays

Charles needs to have 7000MWK monthly to pay for the bin collection.

(note a one off starting payment of 20000MWK was paid on 6/5/23)

It has recently been reported that Kaza Kitchen has started a recycling service. Bottles and packaging are being collected in the pantry and need to be taken to Kaza Kitchen from time to time. Note their opening hours are limited. Not open at weekends and most evenings.

## **Money**

The currency is the Kwacha (MWK). On November 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, 1 GBP was worth 1,900 MWK, but global financial conditions have led to significant exchange rate volatility for the Kwacha and corresponding inflation.

Whilst ATMs can be found throughout the city and there is an ATM at the LION, it is best to exchange your money at Lilongwe airport as they offer better rates than elsewhere. Apart from larger restaurants and supermarkets which take credit cards, most transactions in Malawi seem to be cash based. This includes most petrol stations, utilities and staff salaries.

It is advisable to budget for a weekly spend of around £150. If you are planning weekend trips away, you may need to allow additional funds for accommodation, game park entry etc. Whilst you may be able to pay for these using a card, it is often easier (and cheaper) to pay by cash so take plenty.

.Malawi is more expensive than you may expect. Lunch in the hospital café costs 3,000-5,000 MWK. But for meals and drinks elsewhere expect to pay similar prices to home.

## **Foreign exchange bureaus**

- Lilongwe international airport – various banks and Victoria Forex
  - Opening times: at least one most of the time.
  - Offer the best rates, so best to exchange money at the airport for use during your time in Malawi
- Golden Forex Bureau, the Gateway Mall
  - Opening hours 8am - 4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12 Sat, closed on Sundays
  - Similar exchange rates to those offered at the airp

**LEISURE & SOCIAL** (various suggestions from volunteers and friends so we cant vouch for all!)

## **FOOD**

### **Lunch/Cafés**

- Kaza Kitchen (excellent café)
- The warm heart, area 10 (great salads and light bites)
- Mugg & bean, area 6 (excellent coffee)
- Lark café, area 43
- Wimpey, at the crossroads (excellent coffee)
- Urban café, area 43
- Coco's café at August House, area 43 (great for lunches, coffees and milkshakes, nice garden too)
- Land and Lake, area 3 (good wraps)
- Meravi Bakery and café, great pastries and iced coffees, also has a lovely little gift shop inside it and is close to the Hospital)

### **Restaurants**

- Woodlands
- Four Seasons (great bar for drinks/socialising)
- Elle B's
- Chennai Spice, area 3 (Indian)
- La Cantina (Mexican, great cocktails and is close to Benetolo House)
- Mama's Kitchen, area 9 (Korean)
- Mamma Mia's, central (Italian) – good pizza
- Bonobo's, area 3 (Chinese)
- The Golden Peacock, central (Chinese)
- The Farmer's Daughter (Burgers, pizza, ribs)

### **Bars/Nightclubs**

- Four Seasons (bar)
- Kitchini Club (bar with pool tables)
- Café 92
- Epic (nightclub)

### **Sports & leisure activities**

- Football – Malawians are big soccer (as it is called in Malawi) fans. The Orthopaedic residents play one evening per week, and would welcome any visitors to play with them
- Basketball – a fairly big sport in Lilongwe with regular live matches that you can go to watch, as well as practice courts in some of the residential areas
- Climb Malawi – an indoor climbing club
- Volleyball – Malawians and expats play a light-hearted game on Saturdays, with league games taking place on Wednesdays, social on Wednesdays from 8pm.
- Ultimate frisbee – Sundays, area 3
- Running club, Lilongwe Hash – meet at various places on Mondays at 5.
- Crossfit
- Golf – there is a golf club located in area 3
- Birdwatching – everywhere, there are over 645 species of bird in Malawi!

There is a large community of expats, clinicians and wider members of the multi-disciplinary team from Europe (mostly Norway), America and elsewhere, so you will find plenty to do.

### **Swimming pools**

The following hotel swimming pools are open to visitors. A daily rate is charged as indicated below: *(see prev note re inflation)*

- The Golden Peacock, 4000mwk per adult/day, 3000mwk per child/day
- Sunbird Capital Hotel
- Ufulu Gardens, 12000mwk/day. This hotel with a swimming pool and restaurant is just across the road from the team house.

## Yoga

- Area 43 Yoga (area 43) 6000mwk per session. Contact number: +265 991 15 56 73
- Hatha yoga with Katherine Peverelle, Area 43. Contact number: +265991155673.
- Synergy yoga (area 43) 10000mwk 90 min
- Soul safari yoga (area 12) 15,000 kw 90 min (currently not running)
- Tiger Lily yoga (area 3) 5000mwk 1 hour

## Gym & Fitness Studios

- Fit For Life Health and Wellness Club, 538 Zomba Street. Contact number: +265 992 10 68 61
- WEKHA Fitness. Contact number: +265 997 39 39 66
- Latitude gym, Mphonongo Street, Area 43, Lilongwe, Malawi. Contact number: +265 999 975 959/60/6, Front Office WhatsApp: +265 999 955 962. Mail address: [13gym@thelatitudehotels.com](mailto:13gym@thelatitudehotels.com)
- Fitness Studio, 2QJ5+PWF, Lilongwe, Malawi. Contact number: +265 998 21 96 40
- Fit N Fit Gym, Lilongwe Golf CLUB. Contact number: +265 993 01 03 44
- Flex Appeal Fitness Studio, 2QCG+6HF. Contact number: +265 880 10 60 62
- Fitness Factory, at Sana mega store, Lilongwe. Contact number: +265 994 54 89

## Water sports

Snorkelling, diving and kayaking are all available at Lake Malawi.

## Sights to see/places to visit

### Day trips

- Salima – a great spot to enjoy Lake Malawi. It is 80 – 90Km away, 1.5-2hr drive from Lilongwe.
- Dedza – Pottery and cafe about 2 hours south of Lilongwe. Can walk in local hills.
- Malingunde and Kamuzu Dam – a reservoir and dam, beautiful surrounding scenery. It is 25-30Km away, 50 minute drive southwest from Lilongwe.
- Lilongwe wildlife park

## Weekend trips

- Blue Zebra Lodge – eco lodge on a nature reserve island south of Senga Bay 2.5hour from Lilongwe. Contact details below, and they also have a travel desk at Lark café. Discount available to Benetolo house guests!  
Blue Zebra Contact details +265 992 244244, [info@bluezebra.mw](mailto:info@bluezebra.mw)
- Nkhata Bay – a popular picturesque spot on the edges of the north of Lake Malawi. It is over 300km away, approximately a 5 – 6 hour drive from Lilongwe, but a good spot to enjoy some diving on the sides of the lake.
- Cape Maclear / Monkey Bay - Popular resort on Lake Malawi. Plenty of lodges at various price points. 4 hours from Lilongwe.
- Liwonde National Park and game reserve. South of Lake Malawi
- Boat safaris on the Shire River at Liwonde
- Mount Mulanje – Malawi’s highest peak at >3000m. You can trek, hike or camp on the mountain, and there are several paths and trails. It is a fair way from Lilongwe so not possible to do in 1 weekend. A link to a comprehensive Hiking Guide to Mount Mulanje created by the Mountain club of Mulanje is available here  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ybnsvosaxsxw8wf/Hiking-Guide-to-Mount-Mulanje.pdf?dl=0>
- Luwande National Park, Zambia (5 hour drive) – Accommodation available at Mvuu Lodge. There is a travel desk at Lark café. You may get a discount if you mention Benetolo House/BSSH

## Appendix 1

### **Guidelines for Use of the BSSH LION Nissan X-Trail Car**

1. The BSSH LION Car cost \$9000 USD and is intended to last the 5 year duration of the project. It was purchased by Jonathan Jones and Martin Wood, with advice from Boston Munthali and 2 experienced UK expatriates, Russ and Kate Smith. The vehicle is registered under the name of Jonathan Jones. Martin Wood is also an owner by proxy. They are the only people who can arrange the COF (MOT) and insurance documentation. They are also the only people who can sell the car and this will require their physical presence in the country.
2. The BSSH LION vehicle is an expensive asset, purchased with charitable and donated funds and its primary function is to facilitate the running of the BSSH / BAHT / LION Hand Unit. It needs to be treated with appropriate respect and in keeping with the expectations of BSSH Members and the Charity Commission.
3. The Team Leader holds the day to day responsibility for the car, its serviceability, and guidance on use and discernment on the needs for the task, the team and the individuals on the team. He or She has the final say on this.
4. The vehicle must only be driven if it is in roadworthy condition. It is the responsibility of the volunteer team to routinely check for problems, and of the volunteer team leader to arrange, or delegate the arrangement of repairs as necessary. Oil and water levels must be topped up regularly. Costs of vehicle repair and servicing will be covered by BSSH.
5. The Nissan X-Trail is a petrol fuelled car and there is a jerry can for taking reserve petrol in the boot of the car as occasionally garages run out of fuel. The price of fuel is set nationally so is the same at all fuel stations.
6. Car insurance in Malawi is different from UK. The Car is insured third party only and the maximum amount claimable is 2,000,000 MK, which at the time of writing is approximately 2,000 USD. This might not cover all the costs of an accident and it is possible that volunteers may have to contribute towards the costs of repair, depending on the circumstances.
7. Driving in Africa is very different to driving in Europe. Even in urban areas, like Lilongwe, it requires considerable concentration to avoid the numerous hazards on the road, such as pot holes, precipitous road edges, sleeping policeman, bollards, not to mention some erratic and bullish driving tendencies from other road users. Tuk-

tuks, bicycles and pedestrians seem oblivious to other road users and the potential risks. It is advisable to drive more slowly than you might in the UK in order to be able to respond to the unexpected.

8. Driving at night is especially dangerous and should be avoided if possible, unless it is a familiar route in town. The roads have no street lighting and signposts are non-existent; there are no markings on the road edges or cats eyes. Many roads have deep monsoon drains along the edges which are invisible at night and many cars do not have headlights.
9. It is common practice for Police to stop cars especially when driven by Mzungus (white visitors) to check the car details and certification. This may be accompanied by a hefty cash fine if the documentation is not up to date. There are many Speed cameras around as well which are portable and well hidden.
10. The main purpose of the car is for the daily transport of BSSH Volunteers to and from the KCH /LION Unit. In normal circumstances, the team are expected to travel together to the LION in the morning and home in the late afternoon. Working hours are approximately 7.30am to 4.30pm. There is a BSSH office at work, where volunteers can relax or study when not working or whilst waiting for a ride home. If any one volunteer has to remain at work for more than 1 hour after the normal end of the working day, then BSSH will reimburse a taxi fare to take the rest of the team home at the normal time. In general the vehicle should be left for the last person at work to return home (as they may be alone and in the dark) and the team members returning earlier should hire a taxi. Volunteers are free to fund their own taxis home if they wish to travel at times other than when the team vehicle is leaving.
11. At evenings and weekends, the vehicle may be used for reasonable trips around Lilongwe, eg, to go shopping, eat out, recreational activities and so on. Team members will need to negotiate use of the car and lifts with each other. BSSH would not expect to fund more than 1 tank of fuel per week for the project so any use over this will need to be paid by volunteers using the vehicle for non-work purposes.
12. Any volunteer who wishes to drive is required to have a valid UK Driving License and carry this at all times when driving. No one should feel pressurised into driving the car in this challenging environment. In the event that none of the volunteer team wish to drive, BSSH will fund a taxi for the team to the LION in the morning, and home in the late afternoon.
13. Drivers of the BSSH LION vehicle should be familiar with automatic transmission, 4WD and navigating rough terrain. Before driving independently, the volunteer should have a familiarisation tour around Lilongwe and then at least one



introductory drive accompanied by a driver with recent local driving experience. Wherever possible, the driver should be accompanied by another volunteer as a co-pilot or in case of an accident. We have found it helpful to have a co-pilot for spotting hazards and navigating, especially in rush hour or at dusk. Fines for speeding, driving infringements and parking offences are the responsibility of the individual volunteer and will not be covered by BSSH.

14. The BSSH Car may be used at the weekend for R & R excursions around Lilongwe city limits. The car should not be taken long distances from Lilongwe.
15. Volunteers are free to hire a different car commercially for the weekend if they prefer or if they wish to travel more than 600km. At the time of writing, the cost of car rental is between 100 – 150 USD for day trips or 250 -300 USD for overnight trips.
16. If any of the team members wishes to work at KCH/LION Hospital at the weekend, e.g taking part in a Saturday Waiting List Initiative, then this should take priority over a weekend excursion with respect to the use of the vehicle.
17. Lastly, we wish to emphasize that purchasing, registering and insuring any vehicle in Malawi is a monumental task and one that we would rather not repeat. Whilst we appreciate that the car can be used for recreational purposes within the guidelines above, we ask that volunteers seriously consider the risks and consequences of any journey they undertake, particularly out of town.

BSSH LION Leadership Team, February 2024