

News Release:

**RAF LINKED CHARITABLE APPEAL COMPLETES KENYA DELIVERY VISIT**

A charitable appeal operated from RAF Shawbury, in North Shropshire, has completed a hugely successful delivery visit to Kenya, in East Africa.

The RAF Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal delivers ‘Aid through Football’ by collecting donated items of football kit and redistributing them to children and adults across the globe. The Appeal is run by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE and was set up in 2006 to deliver kit to Africa. It quickly became global and to date has delivered over 225000 items of kit, including over 65500 football shirts to 57 countries worldwide.

The Appeal team, led by Neil with the assistance of Flight Lieutenant (Retired) Tony Kinchley and Warrant Officer Louise Simpson MBE, have just returned from 10 days in Kenya completing 54 separate deliveries across Nairobi and to outlying areas including Gilgil, Kandara, Juja Farm and Ruiru. The visit was completed by a total of 11 people from RAF Shawbury and its local area and included a mix of Military and Civilians from all walks of life. The visit was completely self-sufficient with all members paying to complete the trip, which included deliveries in many of the slum areas of Nairobi including in Mathare, Kibagare and Ngando. The final deliveries of the visit were completed in Kibera slum. Kibera is Africa’s largest slum with over one million people living in an area of around 3 square kilometres with no permanent running water or electricity supplies and no sewerage system. In Kibera the team operated with the fabulous Kibera Project KIMTA, visiting several small schools and football teams.

As part of the visit the team also spent 2 days at Gilgil, 3 hours north of Nairobi near the Great Rift Valley. The team spent time at the Restart centre and visited many other schools and clubs in the area. Kits delivered by the team included items donated by football teams and individuals from across the United Kingdom from England, through Premier clubs like Manchester United and Leicester City to clubs including Aston Villa and QPR. Also delivered was a large amount of kit donated by the Appeals local club, and one of its top links, Shrewsbury Town FC. Items were also donated by clubs throughout Grassroots football including County Football Associations; member clubs of Sheffield & Hallamshire CFA, Hampshire CFA, Essex CFA and Worcestershire CFA amongst many others.

Neil said; ‘This was undoubtedly one of the most successful visits we have completed. The travelling team were fantastic, and we delivered more kit than ever before with over 14500 total items delivered across 54 deliveries. The interaction with adults and children across clubs, schools and individuals was fabulous proving that football certainly can raise a smile. I would like to thank all the people, clubs and schools that donated items delivered on this visit and to the Appeal. In donating items, they have assisted the Appeal in delivering vital ‘Aid through Football.’