

## Chair's Update no 25.

7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

I am very pleased to update you all with highlights from the past quarter's activity from STEF, - both here in the UK and at the Veterinary Centre in Thailand. At the end of April, during a tour through Southern Thailand marking 170 years of Anglo Thai business and commerce relations, His Excellency Mark Gooding, British Ambassador to Thailand, accompanied by the DEFRA Regional Agriculture Attache Rickie Jennings, paid a visit to the STEF Veterinary Centre. Our senior vet Dr Aon gave a presentation about the work of STEF to the visitors, followed by a tour of the hospital facilities, highlighting to the Ambassador and local officials some of the specialist equipment we use, some common injuries and ailments elephants present to the hospital with, and our hopes for the future.

The Ambassador unveiled a plaque recognising our major donors and expressed his sincere gratitude to all STEF's donors, who enable us to carry out our valuable work. We were thrilled to be included as part of the Embassy's Road Show and to receive the support of the Embassy in this way.



The Ambassador expressed his gratitude to all major donors after unveiling our new Donors plaque



Dignitaries from Takua Thung district and Phang Nga province attended the visit



The Ambassador and Rickie Jennings toured the STEF facilities with our Founder Jake, and me



HE Mark Gooding planted a national tree to commemorate his visit and the landmark year

Essential fundraising, both in Thailand and the UK continues, and in May, in Thailand, the Mangosteen crop ripened! The Mangosteen fruit tree plantation was planted by Jake and team on land adjacent to the STEF Veterinary Centre to produce a harvest of delicious soft fruit that STEF could sell to locals to raise funds. This year, STEF arranged a special delivery of the fruit to a mountain school in Phang Nga province to help raise awareness about STEF's work.



Boxes of Mangosteens provided a healthy fruit snack for this school class



Educating about the natural environment is a key mission for STEF

Giving educational talks is such an important part of STEF's work. Only by engaging and informing the next generation, can we hope to safeguard Asian elephants for the future. Back in the UK, I was delighted to give a talk to the year 4 pupils at the Perse Prep school, Cambridge, as part of their inspiration week. We discussed how the protection of habitat for "umbrella" species like Asian elephants can lead to the protection of many thousands of other smaller species, also reliant on this habitat. In the words of David Attenborough, surely a worthwhile mission indeed.

During May and June, STEF have been pleased to facilitate an undergraduate research project undertaken by a veterinary student, Kiran Sarvepalli, from Tufts University Veterinary School, USA, looking at the prevalence of shedding of Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV) in blood samples and faeces from healthy elephants in Phang Nga province. This information will help us better understand the environmental conditions when juvenile elephants may be at increased risk of contracting the disease from adults in their proximity.



Kiran hard at work in the STEF lab



Assisting with treatment during a mobile clinic visit

Development of our volunteer programme is an important part of STEF's strategy to raise awareness of the endangered nature of the Asian elephant and to facilitate the education of future professionals in elephant health care. We are currently fund raising to improve the quality of the accommodation on site for our volunteers and hope to build a new bathroom and kitchen diner as soon as we can, to give volunteers the best experience possible, as we recognize the importance of training the next generation, and of course we greatly value this source of income for STEF.

Naming STEF as a beneficiary in a Will creates a powerful and enduring legacy. We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt thanks, a recent bequest made by the late Victoria Godwin, of Vancouver, British Columbia. Vicky's love of elephants and her generosity to STEF will facilitate our valuable work and help secure their future.

***We would like to say thank you to the Edith Murphy Trust, for their first, generous donation to STEF in June!***

We would like to thank the staff at Blackpool Zoo also, for their help and enthusiasm in planning our first face to face event at the zoo, on World Elephant Day, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2025! I look forward to sharing photos with you of the event in the next quarterly update.

We would like to thank the Anglo Thai Society and FanClub Thailand for their support helping us to raise awareness to a wider audience. Our small team's efforts must continue to raise urgently needed funds to ensure that we can sustain our valuable services and plan for the future. We are always interested to develop even more collaborations and relationships with new funders, donors and businesses

As ever, our **enormous** thanks are extended to Vernon and Shirley Hill, The Two R's Charitable Trust, The Anthony V Martin Charitable Foundation, The Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust, The Hawthorne Trust, The Marjorie Coote Animal Charity Trust, The Marchig Animal Welfare Trust, The Beryl Evetts and Robert Luff Animal Welfare Trust, The Graham Kirkham Foundation, The Alborada Trust, The Castanea Trust, The Ofenheim Trust, The Animal Defence Trust, The Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust, The Calypso Browning Trust, The Robert Clutterbuck Charitable Trust, The Michael and Shirley Hunt Charitable Trust, The Alice Noakes Memorial Trust and other Trusts and individuals.

In the meantime, on behalf of us all, have a lovely summer and thank you once again, for your continued interest and support of our hard-working charity.



Dr Merry Smith MRCVS  
Chair of Trustees  
For and on behalf of The Trustees of Southern Thailand Elephant Foundation

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