

MARCH 2020 ONWARDS

Our world changed in March and of course our face-to-face services had to close. Despite the lockdown, we continued to offer practical support: financially via our Emergency Fund; by making referrals to food banks; and through the distribution of toiletries both to those in our group and to new arrivals in local hostels and hotels. Our WhatsApp broadcast group proved invaluable for keeping in touch, as well as signposting people to different forms of help.

As the weeks dragged on, we explored new ways to provide more meaningful social contact with each other to help combat isolation. Maggie Edgington, our Families Lead, worked extremely hard supporting individual families remotely with various issues, as well as liaising with Leicester Libraries to arrange for families to receive books, delivered to their door. We also worked with partners to arrange deliveries of toys, seeds and children's clothes.



Thanks to Sarah Jones, we started to offer weekly Soccercise aerobics sessions via WhatsApp video – on a tiny phone screen with a toilet roll for a ball where necessary! It was vital to see each other and do something interactive together, motivating each other to burn off those extra calories acquired during lockdown. We organised competitions and creative activities as well as a weekly quiz and catch up, run via Zoom for all at LCoS, volunteers and service users alike. Many in the group sent pictures and comments which we used to create a presentation of our lockdown experience to share with each other. None of these activities could replace the drop-in, but it did lift our spirits to see each other on the screen and communicate, having a bit of fun together.

In May our more formal English lessons offered in partnership with Leicester University made a comeback via Zoom and the NEST team continued to meet remotely to help clients with refused asylum cases.

Joel, an asylum seeker, has an allotment that we support with a small grant. With bumper yields, Joel was very keen to support our group and other asylum seekers in the city, and we've arranged delivery of these vegetables each week to the TREC foodbank for asylum seekers and refugees, supplementing their offering with fresh produce. In June, Maggie started arranging socially distanced outdoor visits to some of our families to maintain contact and to provide continuity for the children, seeing a familiar face during this difficult and confusing time.

In late July we were finally able to start regular face-to-face activities thanks to the Leicester Unitarians who allowed us to use Great Chapel Garden as a safe outdoor space for our work – and it felt so good to see each other again after so long.

Over August we focused on the distribution of toiletries, PPE, cleaning products and household goods, relishing the chance to meet in the garden each week, and running other outdoor activities alongside, such as walks and Soccercise. So far since April, we've provided more than 400 toiletry/cleaning packs both to our own group and more widely to new arrivals being accommodated in local hostels and hotels. We've also given out £2000 from our Emergency Fund.

As September approaches our sewing classes are scheduled to restart, and the football group will follow. We will be returning to the Bridge, although our drop-in can't be the same for now – we will have to run with much smaller groups, an appointment system and social distancing in order to keep everyone safe.

It's been a bumpy ride, but most importantly, we have all survived so far. Partners and the community have rallied round, lifting our spirits with their help and goodwill. The charity has been hard hit – we are now running services both online and face-to-face. But we are still here. We are hopeful and grateful for the help and support we've received from the local community. We remain committed to supporting the local asylum seeker and refugee community and are working harder than ever to keep things going and adapt to the strange new world that is emerging as a result of the pandemic. And that's all we can do.

Shai Bulough - LCoS Coordinator



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Committed to creating a culture of welcome for asylum seekers and refugees in our city and county



LEICESTER CITY OF SANCTUARY CHAIR'S REPORT

This report covers the period of our financial year which ends on 31 March 2020, but it would be impossible to write without noting the extraordinary situation we, along with the whole world, have faced since then following the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, life divides into 'before and during' Covid-19 – as none of us yet knows when 'after' will arrive or what it will look like. Our coordinator's report will tell more about what we have been doing before and during the pandemic. This part relates to how trustees have managed the charity through this period.

Trustees are legally responsible for ensuring we operate both lawfully and with the best interests of our beneficiaries in mind. We have met seven times since our last AGM in June 2019. The names of Trustees for the year are below - Sam David resigned in April 2020 due to other commitments, and we thank him for his service over a number of years.

We measure our activity against the Strategic Plan 2019-22 presented to the last AGM, and last November we also held Open Forum meetings where we were able to consult members, volunteers and users as to how they saw things and this has influenced our priorities in the months since. Trustees also worked through three sub-groups during the past year - a Funding Group made up of staff and trustees, and since June 2020, a Restart Group, overseeing our plans for emerging from the Covid-19 lockdown, and a Nominations Group looking at potential trustee names to put to this year's AGM.

LCOs is very committed to the voluntary principle, and could not function as we do without a whole range of volunteers, from key senior volunteers of long-standing, through to those just starting with us, or only able to give a limited time. It's also important that many of our volunteers are themselves either currently or formerly seeking sanctuary in the UK. We employ three part-time staff - a Coordinator, Shail Buldough, a Finance and Admin Officer Alex Jakeman and, since July 2019, an Assistant Coordinator Shabana Momin. At the time of the last AGM this last post had been created, but not yet filled. In a highly competitive interview process Shabana proved the right candidate for what was initially a 12-month contract, and we were very pleased in July this year to be able to extend that following on our successful bid to the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund - which has gone a long way to securing our finances for the next four years. During the height of lockdown (from April onwards) we placed Shabana on furlough, and Shail and Alex worked reduced hours, but by August we were almost back to normal working hours for all three. I want to put on record Trustees' thanks to our staff and to all our volunteers and partners for all they do, going above and beyond the bare minimum to live out our vision for Leicester and those we serve.

As we begin to emerge blinking into the uncertain post-lockdown light, we can see that we have been able to safeguard both our resources and those we work with, and have continued to provide vital support for many of those we know and work with. Now we can start to resume face-to-face work in ways that we safely can, we are as committed as ever to playing our part in making Leicester a place of welcome and rebuilding of lives for those who have faced far worse than most of us ever have to contemplate.

Pete Hobson - Chair



Shail Buldough (Coordinator), Maggie Edgington (Families Lead), Shabana Momin (Assistant Coordinator)

TRUSTEE BODY 2019-2020

Ajay Aggarwal, Margaret Bonney, Jenny Dnes, Pete Hobson, Sam David (to April 2020), Clir Danny Myers, Golden Ngwenya, Eric Nkundumubano.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2019-2020

At the end of the 2019/20 financial year our funds stood at just over £31,000, a decrease of nearly £12,000 on the end of 2018/19. Income during the previous year had been boosted by a grant of nearly £15,000 from Enable and although we were awarded some grants during 2019/20, they were all under £5,000. However, donations held up well, which was encouraging.

The scale of activities during the year was maintained, yet overall expenditure fell by over £5,000. This was partly the result of the one-off consultancy costs in 2018/9 associated with the Enable grant. The decision to employ an assistant coordinator meant an increase in our regular employment costs. Other costs were broadly in line with the previous year. Late in March we heard the good news that we had been awarded a significant grant from the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund which will bring us nearly £30,000 a year for the next 4 years and secure our ongoing work - for which we are extremely grateful.

This means that we will not now need to dip into reserves during 2020/21 which is good news. However, we cannot be complacent and need to continue to ensure that our income from other sources is maintained, especially as our long-term grant from the British Red Cross comes to an end early in 2021. A full financial report is available on our website and we're very grateful again to John Orridge for providing the Independent Examiner report on these figures.

As a small charity, our finances are always subject to fluctuations and additional uncertainty is arising from the Covid 19 lockdown. We have been maintaining some activities online and have had some ongoing fixed costs. The full impact on our finances will not become clear until later in the year and will be included in our next annual report.

Jenny Dnes - Vice-Chair and Finance Oversight

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

We enjoyed a busy and fruitful period leading up to March 2020. During 2019, 408 asylum seekers and refugees received help via one or more of our services.

Our new Assistant Coordinator, Shabana, has been a great asset and the additional capacity allowed us to expand our activities and make new contacts. We also benefitted from our partnership with Leicester City in the Community (LCitC), which resulted in Sarah Jones attending our drop-in at the Hub each week, not only to deliver Soccerise but also to help us more widely. Sarah's involvement has also brought some fantastic new opportunities.

We've built on our Strategic Plan and have been working on how we measure and report impact. We've developed a Model of Change which shows how all of our activities map to our strategic aims. We've also developed an Impact Report for 2019 highlighting what we delivered during the year. All of these documents are available on our website. We were finalists for the YAL City Small Charity of the Year award (2019), a great recognition of all that we do.

DROP-IN AT THE HUB

Loneliness is a big problem facing many asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore our activities focus on bringing people together and creating community.

We served 3779 hot meals and welcomed 128 new people in 2019. We conducted a survey of our drop-in users to identify what they find most useful about the services and support at our Hub. We found that although the provision of material goods such as food and toiletries are important and helpful, the thing that is most valued is a place where people can overcome social isolation by meeting others.

where people feel part of a group and where people develop a sense of belonging. Almost all of those surveyed had encouraged others to come to the Hub and well over half had brought others with them. It was also clear that volunteering to run the charity with us was highly valued. In 2019 we benefited from 32 asylum seeker and refugee volunteers helping alongside us. We know that contribution helps to make

life meaningful for everyone, and for asylum seekers who are not allowed to work, being able to volunteer brings many benefits. It's a win-win for all of us, and running things together makes us feel like a family.

New developments at the Hub include a conversation table, where people can practice English and build confidence speaking in a relaxed, informal setting. Our volunteers Margaret and Phil started running this table in the summer of 2019 and it has proved very popular. We also developed new partnerships around health and wellbeing. LifeLinks became regular visitors providing wellbeing activities, along with Haymarket Health, who are experts in sexual health. In terms of first aid training, the Joe Humphries Memorial Trust showed 20 service users what to do if someone suffered a cardiac arrest and how to use a defibrillator. Volunteers in the family corner enjoyed a short training course on paediatric first aid, especially tailored to their needs.



One of the highlights of this period was a visit from ex-Leicester City player Matt Piper, organised by Sarah. LFC made a film of our drop-in, (available on their website), and later that day we enjoyed a ground tour of the King Power stadium where we got a glimpse behind the scenes, including the changing rooms and communal hot tub. We gave mock interviews in the press room, relaxed in the memorial garden, enjoyed refreshments in a private box, took endless photos and had an unforgettable afternoon out!

ENGLISH CLASSES AND UNIVERSITY OF SANCTUARY

207 English classes were delivered in partnership with Leicester University during 2019. 63 students benefitted from a scholarship for the pre-session English programme run by Leicester University's Centre for International Training & Education (CITE). 21 of them moved on to academic degrees either at Leicester or at other universities.

TRIPS

There were 13 trips in 2019, including the Central Fire station, an afternoon at Joe's allotment to see where the organic vegetables are grown, and a rather bustling outing to the seaside.



One particularly memorable trip was the visit to Billesdon. Villager Bill had arranged horse and carriage rides - providing his four beautiful high-stepping English Hackney horses and a trap. Everyone enjoyed a thrilling 30 minute ride out of the village, through a lovely patchwork of fields - definitely a high point of the year!

SEWING/I.T.

48 sewing/I.T. classes were provided in 2019. There are 10 regular attendees, and two members of the class are now helping to run the group, supporting the sewing tutor and sharing their skills.

FOOTBALL

There were 46 sessions with an average of 35 young men attending in 2019, and between four and five teams playing each week. The group won a tournament in Doncaster in December.

NEW EVIDENCE SEARCH TEAM (NEST)

NEST helps refused asylum seekers to understand the reasons for their refusal and helps them gather new relevant information. 27 NEST cases were handed in 2019.

"Many NEST clients have no one else to turn to. After a recent 1 ½ hr meeting with a client, he told me that in 10 years, no one had ever spent so long going through the details of his case with him - not even his solicitor." NEST volunteer

BIKE SCHEME

12 bikes with helmets, lights and locks were given to isolated people. "Helped me more than anything to travel to City and Leicester College and shops." - Bike recipient

LCoS 2019/20 - Full Balance Sheet Breakdown										
Final Draft - Unapproved										
		Apex	General Fund	Get Growing	Leicester Community Fund	Near Neighbours	PCC	Red Cross	Swan Mountain	Total
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES										
Opening Balance			37,608.82	435.00	2,500.00		1,687.13	-2,969.59	4,000.00	43,261.36
Voluntary Income										
Regular Donations			22,625.61							22,625.61
Other Donations			1,377.55							1,377.55
HMRC Gift Aid			368.30							368.30
Grants		1,700.00				3,195.00	4,995.50	13,703.37		23,593.87
Total incoming Resources		1,700.00	24,371.46	0.00	0.00	3,195.00	4,995.50	13,703.37	0.00	47,965.33
RESOURCES EXPENDED										
Operating expenses										
Accounting			570.28							570.28
Administrator / Facilitator		1,500.00	17,915.56		1,898.80	1,083.89	5,428.36	8,863.64	1,500.00	38,190.25
Emergency Fund			1,951.70							1,951.70
Equipment			545.95	75.80			282.31			904.06
Food			72.19	85.20	210.26	492.11		844.16	35.53	1,739.45
Insurance			984.87							984.87
IT			114.99							114.99
Other			195.00							195.00
Room Hire		110.06	2,742.98		390.94	519.00	239.02	2,700.00	780.00	7,482.00
Stationery and Materials			10.33			200.00	47.38	52.00	75.00	384.71
Telephone			23.40					59.69		83.09
Training			355.00							355.00
Travel		89.94	1,586.95	274.00		900.00	685.56	1,751.29	1,609.47	6,897.21
Total resources expended		1,700.00	27,069.20	435.00	2,500.00	3,195.00	6,682.63	14,270.78	4,000.00	59,852.61
Net movement in funds		0.00	-2,697.74	-435.00	-2,500.00	0.00	-1,687.13	-567.41	-4,000.00	-11,887.28
Total Funds carried forward		0.00	34,911.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-3,537.00	0.00	31,374.08

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