

Advocating and lobbying

As well as the national work, we have also been active at a local level. Our discussions with East Sussex County Council members and officers have been fruitful in raising awareness of the needs of the refugee community, especially children, and have led to far more constructive engagement.

On-line activism has enabled us to keep members updated with relevant campaigns, on-line petitions and other requests for support.

We continue to attempt a respectful dialogue with our MP, Maria Caulfield, but have found this increasingly difficult to sustain since December's general election and her elevation to Government whip.

We have had a letter published in the Sussex Express trying to counter the dominant narrative about migrants crossing the Channel and to call for a safe passage and a climate of welcome for the relatively very small number of refugees who make their way, against all the odds, to our shores.

Positive stories

LOSRAS has always tried, as one of its central tenets, to do what we can to bust the sadly all too predominant myths about refugees. Myths that seek to portray refugees and asylum seekers as an unwanted drain on our society, who peddle claims that are without merit and take precious resources from the common good. The negative, racist and inhumane treatment of desperate people attempting perilous Channel crossings is the most recent example of dangerous government and media distortions.

Throughout the UK groups nationally and locally can tell a wholly different narrative, and we are proud to be part of that welcoming movement and end with a couple of local stories.

A young woman, currently living in Lewes, asked for some help teaching her to ride a bicycle. In her home country the roads are not easy to ride on, so she had never learnt. A suitable bike was donated and a British/Dutch woman of her own age agreed to meet up with H. They have now become firm friends. Within a few weeks H was confidently riding around Lewes and beyond, enjoying her newfound freedom. Our volunteer said: "H is now able to cycle to the station from home in order to catch the train to college where she's taking her business course. I think this is what's been most beneficial for her!"

A number of people we support have passed their driving test helped by our English teachers. Given the challenge of the theory test, this is a real achievement. We are currently supporting more to get their theory test, usually the practical presents no real problem. Passing their driving tests helps refugees in so many ways: a feeling of wellbeing and regaining part of the 'status' and normality which they have been forced to leave behind, as well as readiness to move into employment/self employment.

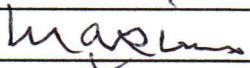
We sent out a request to members to support the Voices in Exile food bank for destitute asylum seekers during lockdown and for fabric to help a group of Brighton-based refugees making face masks. The result was overwhelming, as the photos show!

Very recently after the devastating fires in the Moria camp in Lesbos, members rallied to help an emergency relief operation based in Tonbridge Wells, and filled an articulated lorry with the most urgently needed items in under a week.

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Current account	4,592	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	4,592	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets			Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
M A Sims 	M A Sims	100121