



# Annual report and accounts 2019/20



# AID WITH DIGNITY





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## A note from Chief Executive Paul Hutchings

I am writing this at the end of 2020 so it is strange to write about our year April 2019-March 2020 before we had all felt the enormous Covid upheaval. But that is for next year's report.

In 2019, we established the innovative Dignity Centre in Cyprus just 2 months after arriving. It quickly became a vital service for asylum seekers and refugees in Nicosia. It has been a fantastic success story.



After over 3 years working on 7 Greek refugee camps, we made the difficult decision to leave the country. Refugee camps have their role but every effort needs to be made to get people out of them and into the host community. It became clear that Greece was either unwilling to do that or was actively preventing it. As an organisation promoting dignity, we could no longer be part of that.





It has been a huge privilege to work alongside amazing volunteers who have come from all over the world to help on the frontline and behind the scenes. We could do nothing without their energy, enthusiasm, care and support.

We are also of course indebted to anyone who donated, especially those who raised funds, dug deep or have been regular donors.

We would also like to thank those organisations that supported us with grants: PHD Global, Van Mildert Exec and Outreach, Help Refugees, Carry the Future, LDS Charities, Thomas Sivewright Catto Charitable Trust, Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust, JP McManus, Ashworth Charitable Trust, CB and HH 1984 Trust, Marsh Christian Fund, and the Evan Cornish Foundation.

**With all your support we fight on!**



## A note from Chair and Co-Founder John Sloan

I am very proud of what we achieved in 2019 - 2020, When I look at all the services we provided I am constantly reminded that this is only possible thanks to our amazing donors and fantastic volunteers.

Whenever I visit one of our operations I can see immediately what a difference Refugee Support makes but unfortunately also see how much more we could do. Delivering Aid With Dignity can be done in so many different ways.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing Trustees who give their time freely and ensure we continue to use the money donated to us in the best ways to help those living in unimaginable conditions. And a big thank you to our CE Paul Hutchings who works tirelessly to ensure we continue to do our work.

We all recognise there is so much more to do. I am hopeful that the world will return to some form of normality soon and we can all continue with this important work.





## A note from Chair of Trustees Alan Strang

As Paul referred to in his report it is hard to reflect on 2019 exclusively given all the extraordinary challenges we have experienced in 2020. This makes all that Refugee Support has accomplished in such difficult times all the more impressive.




I was extremely proud to take on the role as Chair of the Trustees last year and will endeavour to provide energy and support wherever possible. We are really privileged to have such a diversely accomplished group within the trustee board.

We the trustees are pleased to sign off on all the financial accounts submitted with the warning that the Covid pandemic will undoubtedly impact on the year ahead and we will need to work even harder to on fundraising and grants if we are to achieve our pledge to maintain and expand our wide range of activities.

Many thanks to all the amazing group of people who have helped Refugee Support this year.



A photograph of a man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, sitting on the right side of the frame. He is surrounded by four children. From left to right: a boy in a yellow t-shirt, a girl in a pink t-shirt, a girl in a pink jumpsuit, and a baby in a blue long-sleeved shirt and denim overalls. They are all sitting in front of a wall covered in colorful handprints in various colors like green, blue, pink, and yellow. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

All things are better with  
RSE – everyone can see and  
knows the people at RSE  
work hard.

**Suleiman**



# Refugee Support Europe

John Sloan and Paul Hutchings founded Refugee Support in 2016 because governments across Europe were failing to protect and support people who had fled violent conflict. We thought we could help alleviate a temporary humanitarian crisis in Greece but sadly, government failure continues to this day. Outside of Europe, the situation is even worse.



Even if refugees make it to a safer country, tens of thousands remain trapped in makeshift camps or sub-standard accommodation, barely able to make ends meet. With hostile attitudes and inadequate governmental aid, there is not enough support for them to rebuild their lives and become independent.



## How do we help

We believe that how we provide aid is just as important as what aid we provide. We call this strategy Aid With Dignity.

Large humanitarian agencies are helping, but they move slowly and their resources are stretched. Governments step in, but it is often the bare minimum and sometimes dehumanising.

We are able to respond more quickly, more personally, and in more caring ways.

We go where refugees are first arriving and offer support they need to help them rebuild their lives.





The shop means a lot to everyone on camp. It's not just about food though. There is a lot happening here. Women's classes, children's activities, a lot of children's activities. The cinema. It is all happening because of kind people from Refugee Support. **Khan Ali**





## Activities and achievements

### Katsikas camp, Greece

In April 2019, we were working on just one camp in Greece at Katsikas near Ioannina. It accommodated just under 1,000 residents from over 20 nations who had been there for months and would almost certainly be there for many more.



The previous year we had created a facility on the camp with the support of **Help Refugees**. The concept of the facility was to offer a beautiful, peaceful, welcoming environment to provide essential services.



From January 2018 until we left, we distributed clothing, facilitated learning and entertained the kids but at the heart of the operation was a mini-market.

To distribute the food with dignity, we printed our own money (tokens) and distributed that to every family on the camp once a week. The bigger the family, the more tokens they received. They were

then invited to come to the mini-market at a time that was convenient to them and 'buy' whatever they wanted with their tokens.

The shop was always kept well-stocked, always had great volunteers working there, always opened and closed on time, and always treated everyone with respect.



With the help of **Carry the Future**, we also distributed nappies to every child that needed them and sanitary pads for every woman.

We started and supported many initiatives to improve living conditions, for example a communal garden. But what we really wanted was for people to leave the camp, to gain some independence and to start new lives away from the confinement of the camp.

We implemented a micro finance project to incubate 12 businesses that were mostly food related. But the Greek authorities set impossible conditions on how they should operate, threatening people with punitive fines if they continued.

It became clear that the Ministry of Migration had no interest in promoting integration. The longer we remained offering charity, the more we were supporting this inhumane policy of keeping people in a cycle of dependency.



From April 2019 until we left in September 2019, 61 volunteers working 970 days had distributed:

- 🌸 €90,000 of canned and packet food, fresh fruit and vegetables, almost all bought locally
- 🌸 50,000 nappies and 16,000 sanitary pads

Any equipment we had was donated to our friends at local NGOs **Second Tree** and **Habibi Works**. Our van was donated to **Khora** in Athens.





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RSE is so great – especially for me – we are so thankful for you, for supporting refugees. I like to come to the market everyday to see the volunteers. **Sharifa**

## Nicosia Dignity Centre, Cyprus

### What is the need?

There are approximately 15,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers from a wide range of countries, plus an estimated 10,000 still unregistered. This comes as a surprise to many but Cyprus has the highest number of refugees as a percentage of population in Europe.

Many refugees in Nicosia are homeless or in poor quality housing. Money is tight. Boredom and inactivity is undermining their mental health. They have limited employment opportunities. Other support services cannot cope.



### Why a Dignity Centre?

Just 2 months after arriving in Cyprus in April 2019, we opened a pioneering new service for the many refugees struggling to break out of a poverty trap. The





Dignity Centre offers a practical and emotional lifeline to help refugees rebuild their lives. Many members now call it 'The Dignity' and consider themselves part of a family.

It's much more than a drop-in centre. It's a place of hope. Somewhere they can start thinking about forging a new life far from home. And perhaps most important of all, reminding them that they are not forgotten and that people do care.

It is recognised as a key service and example of good practice by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies: **"The initiative is very interesting and innovative as it not only helps refugee women gain a life skill, but also contributes to their socialisation and economic empowerment in a safe space."** [glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WP6-Report-Cyprus.pdf](https://glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WP6-Report-Cyprus.pdf)

The Executive Manager of Caritas Cyprus said: **"Almost overnight, the services Refugee Support Europe began to provide improved the wellbeing of the vulnerable by helping them meet the basic needs with independence and dignity. Especially noteworthy is Refugee Support's approach – one that seeks to complement existing services and coping mechanisms rather than duplicating or disrupting them."** [caritascyprus.org](https://caritascyprus.org)



## What does the Dignity Centre do?

We completely renovated a 3-story building in the centre of Nicosia, close to other essential services, with new plumbing, electricity, internet, air conditioning, redecoration, furniture and fittings. Over the next 12 months, we continued to upgrade and redecorate the building to make it as welcoming as possible.



### LANGUAGE LEARNING

Greek and English are critical for employment. Thanks to amazing local teachers who give up their time to help, we have been running classes in English and Greek for adults and in Arabic to children. **LDS Charities** also provided a whiteboard and books to help with learning.



### COMPUTER SKILLS

We have installed a bank of computers with internet access so that people can learn basic computer skills. Computer classes have been run by local asylum seeker **Jude** and we award certificates to everyone who completed them.



## BICYCLE REPAIR AND DISTRIBUTION

Bicycles are not only fun to ride but also essential transport for people. It enables them to work further away from home – something that would be impossible with public transport. Many have found and kept work after receiving a bicycle. Thanks to **CARE UK** who collected over 200 bicycles and sent them in a container, we distributed them to members who repaired them with resources that we provided.



## KITCHEN AND COOKERY

Our completely new and well equipped kitchen has been built thanks to support from **LDS Charities** to prepare food for fun and celebrations.



## HYGIENE SERVICES

Most people are living locally in crowded and poorly equipped apartments. Some are homeless. So we have washing machines to help with their laundry. And two showers so they can freshen up.



## BARBERS

Not only do people need to be clean and tidy, they need to look good! Our weekly Barbers service has been very popular. So while Members get a free haircut, our Barbers are learning new skills.

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## FOOD BANK

We served breakfast 3 days a week to over 80 people each day first in partnership with our friends at **Caritas** and then from the Dignity.

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## LET'S EAT! EVENTS

During the summer we hosted monthly, recurring meals for about 250 local refugees using a shared community space. We want to bring people together with food and have some fun! We organised three of those events in cooperation with the **British Army's 4th Regiment Royal Artillery** who are there as part of the peace-keeping force.

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## LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

It's important to have fun as well. One of the floors in the building is a chill-out space with a self-run cafe, charging points for mobile phones, games and table tennis.



### SEWING CO-OPERATIVE

The Sewing Cooperative is the jewel in the Dignity Centre's crown. It started off as a few sewing machines and soon became a production centre thanks to brilliant volunteers and great local talent.

Experienced tailor **Ba**, a refugee from Guinea Bissau, used his technical skills to create the designs. Volunteers advised on what fabrics and designs they think people would like to buy. Together we created a unique range of well-crafted bags, purses, aprons and cushion covers.

This enabled us to invest in people. There are sewing classes every week in order to improve people's skills and ensure the products are of the highest standard. Everyone has to work together. Everything is carefully quality-controlled. Members take huge pride in what they produce. The maker receives an agreed



fair trade price as soon as it is made and before we sell it.

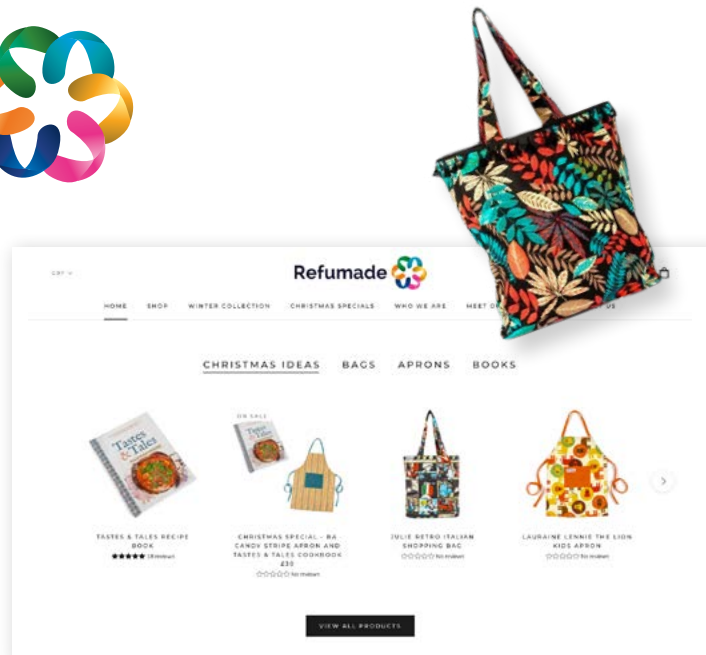
Over 50 members in the first year benefitted from the training and income they generated. But it's much more than a place to learn skills and earn a bit of money. It is a place of welcome that offers a sense of purpose.



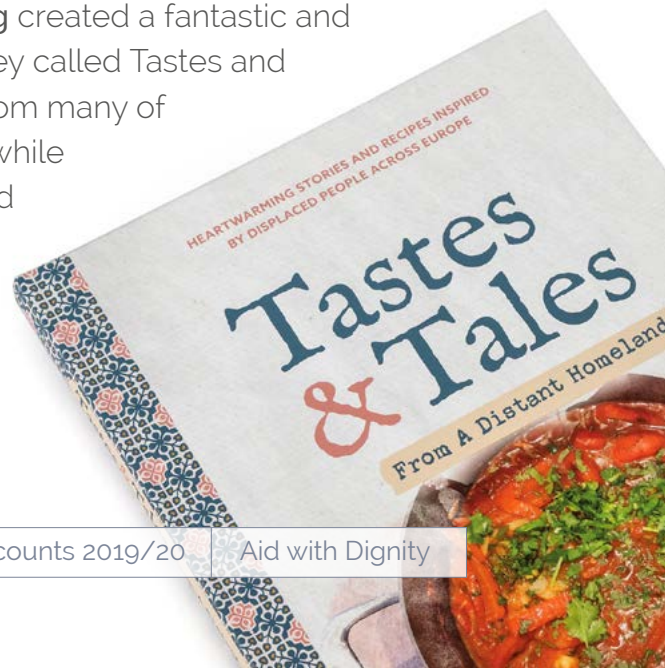
# Refumade

We created a commercial, online shop to sell the items at [refumade.org](https://refumade.org). This ensures that what we are producing has market value and the revenue helps to subsidise this important service.

We call it **Fashion with Heart**.



Alan and Katherine Strang created a fantastic and acclaimed recipe book they called Tastes and Tales. It includes stories from many of the people that they met while volunteering in Greece and Cyprus and is also on sale on Refumade.



## COVID-19

In March 2020, the Cyprus government reacted quickly to the dangers posed by the novel Coronavirus and locked down the island. This immediately halted all Dignity Centre activities and the impact on the Centre Members was harsh. Fortunately, our two superstar managers in Cyprus - **Paula Tamarit** and **Laura Matteini** - rose to the challenge and immediately started a food delivery and morale support service.





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I am happy to be able to work as a tailor at the Dignity Centre, where I have found another family. **Ba**



## 3

## Events



After a lot of work, and a lot of help, we had a fantastic night of entertainment that raised a massive £47,750 to support our work in Cyprus. And then a generous donor topped up the total raised to £50,000! This will make a huge difference to shattered lives.

We had an iconic London venue – **The Bedford** – who not only provided the space for free and have the best staff in South London but their parent company also sponsored the night with a generous cash donation.

There was brilliant entertainment with **Tony Moore**, **Ian Shaw**, **Jem Cooke**, **My Fine Companions**, **Mama Moonshine**, **Catching Cairo**, **Gracie Convert**, **Blingo HipHop** and **RNB Bingo**, **Alan Allen** and **Rob Mello**.



Our dedicated organising committee included **Ade Meehan** of **Soho Radio** and **Philippa Brown** of **PHD Media** who secured some fantastic prizes for our auction and raffle. Performers **Tony Moore** and **Nick Kidney** were critical in making the music happen.

**Andy Mattock** of **Brighton Website Design** built the website and worked with **Paul Sharville** to create the identity.

And then we had a huge team of volunteers on the night who helped to run things smoothly. In all, over 100 people gave their time for free and over 300 people bought tickets or contributed generously to the final total.

And none of it would have been possible without the driving force behind it all, trustee and all round superstar **Eve Linieres**.

## Talk at Omnicom

**Gong Communications** convened an event at **Omnicom Media** and attended by 50 people. We celebrated the contribution of refugees and made a plea for greater inclusion. Not just because it makes sense, but because this is a moral obligation.

It featured talks from co-founder **Paul Hutchings**, Techfugees founder **Mike Butcher** and author **Dina Nayeri**.





## Book Club

Throughout 2019, **Pippa Blunden** organised a monthly book club. We read some great books including *The Lightless Sky* by our new Trustee **Gulwali Passarlay** about his inspiring journey as a young boy from Afghanistan to the UK.

And we were also thrilled to have **Dina Nayeri** talk about her stunning book *The Ungrateful Refugee* which includes her visit to two of the Greek refugee camps where we were working.



## Brighton Marathon

When **Saoirse Walsh** suggested running the Brighton Marathon for Refugee Support she was joined somewhat enthusiastically by **Emily Thompson**, **Benny Bruce** and **Paul Hutchings**. A last minute injury prevented **Rosa Maria Granero** from joining but she still raised some funds and together we added £4,300 to the fundraising pot!



## UN Nansen Award

For the second year running we attended the prestigious UN Refugee Agency's Nansen Award. It was won by **Azizbek Ashurov**, a lawyer, whose work has supported the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic in becoming the first country in the world to end statelessness. Together with our friend **Pooja Pradeep** of Letters of Love we were thrilled to meet him.



# DIGNITY CENTRE

Refugee  
support



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Sometimes you have a talent in you that you don't know, you only need someone helping you to find it and let yourself give it a go. **Eva**

## 4 Volunteers

Volunteers are our lifeblood. We know that the tangible support volunteers have offered to refugees either in the frontline or behind the scenes has made a huge difference to their wellbeing.

We know that when you volunteer, whether you intend for this or not, you get back more than you put in. But it is extraordinary that all these people have done so much to support refugees for no financial reward whatsoever.

It would be a long list if we mentioned everyone who has helped on the frontline. During the year 2019-20:

- 🌸 In Cyprus, 125 volunteers worked 2020 volunteer days
- 🌸 In Greece, 59 volunteers worked 1290 volunteer days





We give special thanks to our extraordinary Coordinators who managed those volunteers. **Dan Ransom** ran our Katsikas operation in Greece from May 2018 until we closed. **Kelley** and **Stephen Reszetylo** and **Maggie Duff** got the Dignity Centre in Cyprus up and running. **Paula Tamarit** and **Laura Matteini** have continued to innovate and improve everything we do in Cyprus.



Before any volunteer worked in Greece or Cyprus they were interviewed by one of our brilliant recruitment team: **Bethan Edwards**, **Carla Tagliaferri**, **Ellie Kostick**, **Fatima Jaffer**, **Ian McAuslane**, **Letitia Garcia**, **Lorenzo Colombo**, **Sarah Thorne**, **Talitha Fernandez**.

We have to get our message out and indebted to all the specialist expertise that helped us with our communications: **Andy Mattock** (Design), **Bella Aquilina** and **Frederica Cerqueiro** (Instagram), **Bob Maddams** (video production), **Brandwatch** (Optimisation and Office Space), **Chloe Murphy** (Website newsletter), **Desiree Birinci** and **Andrew Robillard** (Twitter), **Susi Doherty** (Email newsletter), **Pragmatic Agency** (Website), **Will McInnes** (Marketing).

Special thanks to these individuals who all raised over £1,000 during the year (in some cases much more!): **Alan Strang**, **Alexandra Wheeler**, **Bethan Edwards**, **Birgit Federle**, **Danielle Freedman**, **Eliza Baring**, **Eve Linieres**, **Gerrit Berger**, **Gerry Clancy**, **Maggie Duff**, **Maxwell Haigney**, **Olivia Hoggard**, **Peter** and **Beatrice Hutton**, **Rhys Evans**, **Sarah Brierley** and **Tony Conn**.

## Profit and Loss

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Donations, Grants and Fundraising</b>		
Donations via Prism	-	42,356
Income - Facebook with Gift Aid	23,585	31,435
Direct Donations from Individuals	34,429	4,239
Direct Donations from Companies	43,770	50,631
Grant Income	41,115	10,509
Interest Income	104	121
Donations via Just Giving inc Gift Aid	17,607	65,670
Non-Financial Donations	-	21,842
Donated goods for Refugees	-	(21,842)
Fundraising Event organised by RSE	37,668	-
Income via Virgin with Gift Aid	51,377	92,605
Donors via Paypal	2,040	5,292
Gift Aid from HMRC	2,069	2,505
Sales of Paintings and other crafts	103	-
<b>Total Donations, Grants and Fundraising</b>	<b>253,868</b>	<b>305,363</b>

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Humanity Project Costs</b>		
Dignity Centre Costs (Building)	52,641	6,115
Country Specific Personnel	13,747	6,434
Cost of Food Purchased	60,241	177,650
Cost of Clothing for Refugees	-	5,379
Refugee Activity Costs	14,142	19,611
General Camp Costs	12,302	4,458
Cost of travel, cars and subsistence	17,095	21,172
Advertising for donations and volunteers	12,337	2,146
<b>Total Humanity Project Costs</b>	<b>182,506</b>	<b>242,965</b>
<b>Funds remaining after Direct Costs</b>	<b>71,361</b>	<b>62,398</b>

# Profit and Loss continued

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Fund Raising Shop</b>		
Recipe Book Sales	24,623	-
Sewing Shop Sales	23,036	-
Sales - Amazon	1,080	126
Sales T-Shirts	105	-
Postage income	360	-
<b>Total Fund Raising Shop</b>	<b>49,204</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Selling and Distribution Costs</b>		
Commission on sales	617	-
Postage for online Sales	3,284	18
Materials, purchases and labour		
- for goods to sell	27,692	41
<b>Total Selling and Distribution Costs</b>	<b>31,593</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Profit from Fund Raising Shop</b>	<b>17,611</b>	<b>67</b>

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Administrative Costs</b>		
Cost of Personnel	48,125	44,764
General Admin costs	4,176	978
Legal and Accounting	944	8,475
Banking costs	2,117	5,869
Depreciation	4,472	2,474
<b>Total Administrative Costs</b>	<b>59,835</b>	<b>62,560</b>
<b>Funds Remaining After Activities</b>	<b>29,137</b>	<b>(221)</b>



# Balance Sheet

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Assets		
Fixed Assets Computers & Printers	503	266
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment	(266)	(188)
Fixed Assets Motor Vehicles (Vans and cars) bought	(450)	8,927
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Motor Vehicles	450	(3,818)
Fixed Asset - Equipment	3,461	433
Less Accumulated Depreciation Equipment	(3,077)	(433)
<b>Total Tangible Assets</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>5,187</b>
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>5,187</b>

## Current Assets

Cash at bank and in hand	90,789	61,794
Accounts Receivable	22	319
Stock to resell	11,419	5,764
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>102,231</b>	<b>67,877</b>

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-19
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Creditors including credit card and cash accounts	6,674	7,019
Salaries and HMRC Payable	7,320	6,324
<b>Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>13,994</b>	<b>13,343</b>
<b>Net Current Assets (Liabilities)</b>	<b>88,237</b>	<b>54,534</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>88,858</b>	<b>59,721</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>88,858</b>	<b>59,721</b>

## Capital and Reserves

Retained Income account	59,721	59,815
Current Year Earnings	29,137	(95)
<b>Total Capital and Reserves</b>	<b>88,858</b>	<b>59,721</b>

## 6

## Our trustees (during 2019-20)

Bea Shrewsbury, Eve Linieres, Rana Toukan (until June 2019), Emilia Ransom (from July 2019), Erin Leonard (from July 2019), Alan Strang (from November 2019)

Our trustees meet every two months to scrutinise the accounts and organisations activities but all are actively involved in supporting the organisation.

We said goodbye to Rana who had been a trustee and huge source of support since RSE was first established. With the objective of having more specific roles for each trustee, we interviewed and recruited Emilia to help with campaigns and Erin to help with volunteer outreach.







Refugee Support Europe

Charity number 1174070

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Refugee  
support 

