



Rhif Elusen / Charity no. 1174459

Aberaid Annual Report 2019- 2020

Presented at the AGM November 24th Zoom meeting

As most of you will know Aberaid has worked through the government Community Sponsorship scheme to bring a refugee family to Aberystwyth working with support volunteers. This scheme runs alongside the Ceredigion Council scheme where the families are supported by Red Cross workers.

Our first family arrived in 2018 but after only six months in Aberystwyth decided to move on to a city environment. After a further six months we were able to welcome a new family who arrived in February 2019. There are three main aspects to the work involved – firstly fundraising which initially requires around £9000 per family, secondly training and bureaucratic and paperwork matters and finally meeting and helping a family to settle arranging housing, financial support and benefits, schooling, language learning, health and medical care. Aberaid has a committee of trustees (7) and then a number of support volunteers who deal with the day to day needs with some overlap between the two groups.

The new family settled in very well and within a week of arriving the three children were attending the local school with its excellent support including two Arabic speaking teachers. As educational opportunities are one of the primary reasons why refugees choose to leave an Arabic speaking country our family are especially appreciative of this. Within six months the father of the family found employment in a local restaurant which brought developing self-confidence and fluency in communicating in English. He is currently learning to drive and hopes to pass his driving test very soon.

We are very grateful to Liz Mullan who as a volunteer teaches English to the parents – once or twice a week and now, of course, through Zoom.

This brings us to the huge adjustment that took place after March 2020 when nearly all our contact had to be through text, Whatsapp and Zoom although occasionally we have been needed for medical or form filling reasons. The father was furloughed for some months but is now back at work. We are grateful to a group of anonymous donors who bought the family a computer so that both parents and children could develop their skills and not lose out on education.

Over the summer months we sometimes met up outside - socially distancing.

Aberaid has always had a wider commitment to support all the refugees in the area and we were running a weekly lunch club with occasional social events as at Halloween, Christmas and Eid. Our last social and fundraising event was in February at the Morlan Centre. Fortunately, we were able to do that just before Lockdown.

Fundraising is now much more difficult and we have limited money behind us, however since late 2019 Aberaid has been paying for Arabic classes for children of the Syrian families. Ten children attend. This is something that is important to the families as younger children need to learn to read and write in their native tongue. The classes were paused during Lockdown but have started again since the autumn in an online version.

Before Lockdown Aberaid has assisted a scheme to promote Welsh for families and currently there is an online all women's Zumba class - Zumraeg.

Some members of Aberaid attended the coffee morning at the Arts Centre for English conversation. That was paused over Lockdown but is now working very successfully through Zoom. Aberaid is also working to develop a further network of English conversation practice where couples or individuals agree to meet online with an English speaker. More volunteers are most welcome.

Over the last year Aberaid Trustees and support volunteers have attended many meetings including:

- monthly Trustee meetings and, initially, weekly support volunteer meetings; these are now merged into a fortnightly Zoom meeting.
- meetings with various officials and others who support the Refugees - including the Home Office, the Red Cross, Local Authority Ceredigion Resettlement meetings and Citizens UK who supported our original application.

Aberaid wishes to extend its huge thanks to all our members and supporters in the community especially our volunteers, trustees, interpreters, members of the local Arabic-speaking community and council officials, all of whom have worked together to welcome refugees to the area. Thank you, Diolch yn Fawr and Shukran to all.

Moir Vincentelli

Aberaid Annual Account, 2020

EXPENDITURE

Arabic classes	£2,404.00	grant of £2,000 from Southall Trust
Family support	£2,266.60	top up rent, driving lessons, special medicines
Citizens UK	£500.00	Annual fee
Admin	£72.00	Bank account and DBS fees
translation	£42.41	
support for other families	£100.00	Contribution towards a camera
expenses of fund raiser	£260.00	covered by a grant via Ochr-yn-Ochr Cymru / Side by Side Cymru
fund raiser for Idlib	£931.35	
TOTAL	£6,576.36	

INCOME

membership and donations	£747.50	
grants	£4,780.00	Southall Trust; Home Office via Ceredigion C.C.
fund raiser, 23 Feb. 2020	£1,345.43	931.35 sent to Idlib, the remainder for Aberaid
TOTAL	£6,872.93	

Balance 9.11.2019	£2,513.41
income	£6,872.93
expenditure	£6,576.36
balance on 8.11.2020	£2,809.98

Michael Freeman
Treasurer 8.11.2020