

Annual Report of Women with Hope for the Year 2020

Women with Hope entered 2020 in good shape. For the first time for many years we had settled into a permanent home for our weekly meetings at Selly Oak Quaker meeting house.

Another first was that we held sufficient funds to meet our needs for the year ahead, although, as it turned out, not quite in a way that we had anticipated.

After the usual post-Christmas lull, attendance increased steadily throughout January. One of our earlier activities was a round the table consultation event on our long planned-for website. Together we envisaged how it might look and what we wanted it to include. On the strength of that event our consultant Brian Homer was able to begin the task of building and developing the site. We were well supported financially in this by Women for Refugee Women (WfRW) and by the end of the year we had a WwH website that was ready to go.

Our next hopeful and forward looking task was to plan for a WfRW conference, to be held in Birmingham for the first time. As the Birmingham based group within the WfRW network



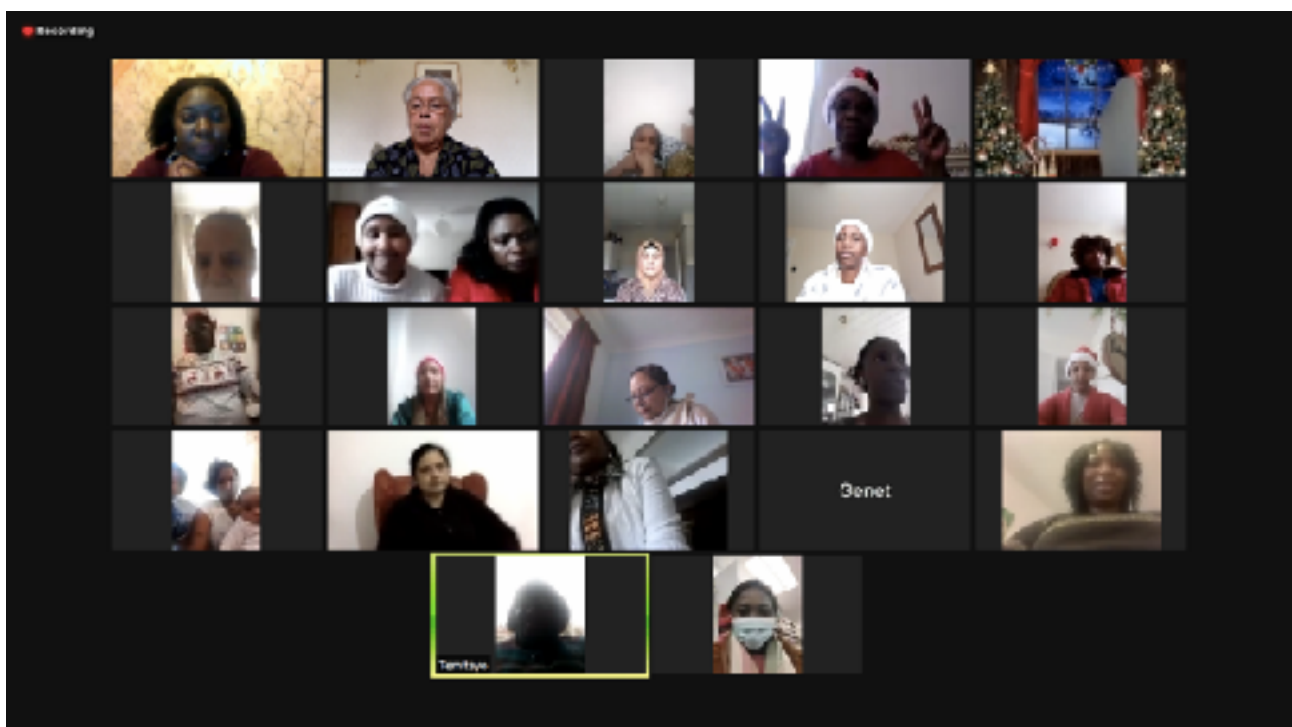
we at Women with Hope were honoured to be asked to host the conference.

It took place on the 14 February in Carrs Lane Centre and was a hugely successful and joyful event, with women attending from across the country. Thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of Margaret Mary Bamilekuu and Fuh epse Tandu Emeline Lem and our old friend Elizabeth Leather, the Women with Hope choir performed quite spectacularly on the day, singing *Shosholoz* and *Amen*. Audio tapes of the performance can be found on our website. Others of us spent our time dispensing drinks and biscuits to the apparently never-ending stream of conference participants.

WfRW used the occasion to launch *Sisters not Strangers*, a new network, and also an important new report *Will I ever be safe: Asylum seeking women made destitute in the UK*.

In March everything came to an abrupt and unexpected halt with the first lockdown of the Coronavirus Pandemic. During the early weeks of closure we, like others, found ourselves at a loss to know how to move forward. During that time we kept in touch through letters postcards and telephone calls until eventually, in May we were able to start to meet again by Zoom.

Our Zoom meetings evolved gradually and we are grateful to a range of speakers and workshop leaders who were ready and willing to join us and contribute. The meetings have often been informative, sometimes uplifting, sometimes tearful but always supportive. Those attending stressed time and again how important the meetings became for them, emphasising the sense of family and belonging that they gained from attending



Throughout the Pandemic we made use of our funds in different ways to support migrant women:

- 1) We devoted our travel budget to providing women with top up vouchers for mobile phones, in recognition of the important role of phones in the lives of our members. They provide a means, sometimes the only means, of remaining in touch with friends and families, and with supportive organisations. They are also essential for continuing to receive immigration and health advice and to comply with Home Office and other official requirements.
- 2) We donated our refreshments budget to other community organisations that were able to provide specific Pandemic related services that we, as a charity without paid staff or a regular presence, were unable to provide. In this way we supported charities providing emergency food and toiletries to migrant women in Birmingham.

Our programme of phone top ups was augmented by generous grants from Women for Refugee Women, and the Barrow Cadbury Trust. The generosity of these organisations enabled us to provide very much more than we would have otherwise been able to afford.

During October when there was a brief respite in lockdown regulations, a small group of women enjoyed a day out in Warwick. Organised by Agnes Tanoh and Mary Bamilekuu this was the only occasion that women were able to meet physically during the year, and despite the fact that the weather was far from friendly, it was a good day out.

We ended the year with a joyous online Christmas party with singing, dancing, music and a quiz. Everyone entered into the spirit of Christmas, and, as was the case throughout the entire difficult year there was no word of complaint about what might have been.

**Women with Hope
Financial Account
1 January - 31 December 2019**

Income	
Opening Balance	4,000.00
Donations received	1,530.00
Grant income	7,216.00
Operational income	224.00
Total	12,970.00
Expenditure	
Travel	2,015.00
Food & refreshments	177.52
Volunteer expenses	160.00
Premises rental	807.00
Entertainment	310.00
Insurance	240.80
Admin & Legal	226.00
Total	3,936.32
Closing balance held at The Reliance Bank	9,033.68

Notes

1. Women with Hope developed out of Hope Projects Women's Group and has been in existence for a number of years.

2. Women with Hope was inaugurated as an independent organization on the 20 February 2019, though this account covers the full year of 2019.

3. Women with Hope gained charitable status on 31 October 2019 and shortly thereafter Hope Projects transferred the balance of funding held on its behalf into the Women with Hope Bank account.

4. Donations received comprise:

Meena Centre	£1,000.00
Lichfield Hope Support Group	£300.00
Niamh Bryan	£230.00

5. Grant income comprises:

AW60 Trust	£216.00
Roughley Trust	£7,000.00

6. Operational income is derived from sessions by Women for Refugee Women for research purposes.

7. Women with Hope does not yet have a Reserves Policy. In accordance with our Financial Controls policy adopted in September 2019, this will be reviewed in the first Trustees Meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

The surplus of £9,033.68 shown at the end of 2109 is analyzed as follows:

Grant income for 2020:	£7,216.00
Donations:	£1,530.00
Total	£8,746.00

Against budgeted expenditure for 2020 of £8,220.00 this creates a surplus of £813.68 to carry forward.

Treasurer: Senait Jones
Independent Examiner: Adrian Martyn