



Herts Welcomes Refugees.

Reg Charity 1172687 www.hwsf.org.uk Twitter: @HertsWelcomes



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Hertswelcomes>



Patron: Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Robert Voss CBE CStJ

Welcoming, Supporting, Integrating

Trustees' Report 1st Jan2020 – 31st December 2020

2020 has been an extremely challenging year for us all due to Covid19 and the restrictions we have all been under. In the first two months of the year, events took place as normal but since March, we have had to work in a totally different way.

The change to working through virtual networks was not an easy one, but we have achieved far more than we thought possible. Indeed, we have found that this has opened up opportunities and caused us to take a fresh view of some of our activities. Your generous support for the laptop appeal certainly contributed to us being able to do this. The importance of communication with our refugee families and individuals was also paramount especially in order to help them understand the changing government restrictions. For them it was also a very traumatic period, having come from areas where they were restricted because of war, they were now restricted because of Covid.

Management Changes

In line with our constitution two Trustees will stand down and seek re-election at our AGM. This year these will be the Chair Irene Austin and Area Convenor Samah Alrahabi. We would like to welcome Mala Mulholland who has undertaken the role of Treasurer and Trustee and we will ask members to ratify her appointment at the AGM. We would also like to formally thank Mick Hayter for his commitment and dedication as our Treasurer since we started. We are very pleased that he will remain as Trustee for the immediate future.

We also have two new Area Convenors, Joyce Farnsworth who has replaced Vicky Woodcraft in Welwyn Hatfield and Sobia Razzaq who has replaced John Borton in Watford and Three Rivers. Vicky and John will remain as Trustees. Vicky will continue as our Secretary and is our Safeguarding Officer. John will support us in developing our structures and strategies.

When lockdown started last March, our Management Group met weekly on Zoom to ensure that we could continue to meet the needs of the refugees. We continue to meet regularly on Zoom.

Resettlement Programme

The government's original resettlement programme ran from 2015 to 2020. Due to the pandemic, resettlement was suspended, meaning that families who were due to be resettled under that programme have not been. We are still waiting for it to resume, although we have been told this will happen soon. During 2020 only one new family was resettled in Hertfordshire, arriving shortly before the first lockdown but other refugees both individuals and families have been referred to us.

A new government resettlement scheme is in place. We would like more Hertfordshire councils to sign up to this scheme.

Communications, Mailchimp, Website and Facebook

We would like to thank Mark Kendall who has taken over as administrator of our newsletter and email account and to Lauren Frankel who continues to manage the communication on our Website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. We now have 322 members and 195 supporters and 887 Facebook followers.

Visits to our website have also increased in the last year. Veronica Raymond continues as our Membership Secretary.

Support for Refugee Partners and others, Befriender Network and Activities

During 2020, we provided support to 330 refugees and asylum seekers. This support has included providing hardship payments Chromebooks, household goods, clothing, food parcels bikes, Christmas gifts, language support and subject support for children. We are grateful to Herts Community Foundation for helping to fund our Volunteer Coordinator Role and providing hardship funding. Also to COSARAF for continuing to support our Volunteer Coordinator Role.

There has been an increase in other agencies referring their clients to us for the support we can provide. We think this is partly due to Covid, but it also reflects that we are becoming better known as a source of support. We became aware during the summer that there were two hotels accommodating asylum seekers in Hertfordshire, more than 100 people in total. Working with local charities, People Not Borders and Herts for Refugees, and a local church, we provided a range of support to the residents of those hotels. One of them has closed but we will continue to support for as long as needed.

We have sustained our befriender network despite the difficulties of COVID and restrictions. Thanks to the success of our crowdfunding appeal, we distributed over 40 Chromebooks to our refugee partners who needed them. We also had the lockdown restrictions translated and distributed to families on a regular basis to help them keep up to date. Our volunteer network met weekly during the first lockdown and now meets fortnightly. We were not sure whether this would be successful but it has provided a valuable network for our volunteers to exchange ideas and an effective way for us to provide support and training. We have 79 volunteers, providing a range of support within Covid restrictions and would like to thank all those who have given so much time to support the charity, our refugee partners and others who we have supported this year.

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Caroline Herring has continued to recruit and induct new volunteers, particularly to provide language support and practice and subject support to children. Zoom has provided us with a new level of flexibility as we are not restricted to recruiting volunteers only to work in their home areas, allowing us to be more responsive to need. Our volunteers and Area Convenors have worked hard to maintain contact with our refugee partners during this difficult period. This pandemic has also highlighted the importance of electronic communication and last September we were successful in a bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for a project to develop videos and manuals to help those not confident with use of IT. This project involves some of our younger refugees and volunteers and will continue into March 2021.

More families have been requesting academic help for their children and we are pleased to help with this by providing subject specific volunteer tutors.

We are also grateful to Redmill Solutions who have provided us with money for an Educational Fund to be used to provide equipment and money for educational activities for young people and to Harper Collins for providing us with GCSE study guides for young people.

At the beginning of the year, until the lockdown in March, we were able to hold events such as New Year parties and meetings of Women and Men's groups but these had to stop and we moved to Zoom events. We are aware that not all our refugee partners have managed to access these events but there has been a good take up including the start of a Herts Women's group as well as local groups, some virtual events such as the afternoon tea shared with the St Albans Masorti synagogue(SAMS) and 1:1 virtual meetings. Zoom has provided more flexibility in enabling people from different areas to meet.

At the request of families, our Trustee Samah Alrahabi, applied for a grant from St Albans City Council to set up an Arabic school for Syrian children in St Albans and surrounding areas. Parents wanted their children to learn to read and write Arabic and the charity saw it as a development opportunity for some of the women to learn about running this type of school and working as teaching assistants. This involved undertaking a virtual training course. The school started in October but had to stop when

schools were closed. It will start again when restrictions allow. Three of the Syrian women have signed up with HWR as volunteers for the school.

Last November, we were asked to identify any women who might be interested in training as Doulas – to support other refugee women who are going through pregnancy and birth. Ten women have been referred and will start a Mother Tongue Pregnancy and Postnatal Peer Support training organised by Doulas without Borders and will be considered for doula training after the completion of this course.

Bike Scheme

We are very thankful to Chris Rigby for taking over and running the bike scheme last year when we had an increasing number of requests for bikes from unaccompanied young asylum seekers. Chris is moving away from Hertfordshire but we are very pleased that Adrian Ball supported by other volunteers has now taken over the scheme. .

Volunteer Fundraising

As our Treasurer has outlined we are very grateful to all our supporters who have fundraised for us in a very difficult year. We loved the coast to coast walk and the soup kitchen idea. We are all wearing masks designed and made by one of our Syrian partners who is a tailor. We still have funds from our Christmas appeal together with a successful appeal for Locality Budget which will add together to be given to families at Easter. We have set up a fundraising sub group to explore other ways of involving the community and individuals with fundraising activities. We have also signed up to Amazon Smile so if you shop with Amazon please buy your goods through Amazon Smile and name our charity Herts Welcomes Refugees as the beneficiary. Thank you to all.

Book group and Storytime

Last summer Mala Mulholland and her daughter Roma came up with an idea for a library for children. This idea took off and thanks to them, books were delivered to 124 children at Christmas. A new book was also purchased for each child by HWR as a Christmas gift.

Other activities developed with the use of Zoom, during the October half term break and Christmas holiday, Storytime took place for younger children and author sessions for the older ones.

The Storytime sessions are a lively mixture of stories, songs and activities based on a theme and using well known books and songs. We have been very fortunate to have had two enjoyable sessions with authors Onjali Q Rauf and Wafa Tarnowska. These are exciting new developments. Young people also took part in a competition to design bookmarks for HWR which will be produced during 2021.

Reserves Policy.

The Trustees have agreed a reserve to cover any unexpected reductions in income so expenditure to run operations, general expenditure and any future opportunities where needed. This figure is £6,000. This will be reviewed at least annually.

Our priorities for 2021

These remain roughly the same as 2020. We realise that in 2020, although we were able to provide continuing support we were not able to run as many activities as we would have liked. We hope this will change in 2021. We did not manage to set up an advisory forum as we were busy coping with Covid but feel now that with the use of Zoom, this will certainly happen in 2021. This year has certainly highlighted the need to connect people through the use of digital technology but we are also aware that we need to look at ways to support those who do not wish to engage through these means.

Our priorities are:

- To continue to support our Refugee Partners, other refugees and asylum seekers in response to Covid and other possible changing needs.
- To continue to run events that support wellbeing and integration into local communities in line with Covid restrictions.
- To develop our use of digital technology and level of support to connect people together.
- To be open to supporting asylum seekers and refugees not coming through the Government scheme.
- To encourage local councils to accept more families under the Government's new resettlement scheme.
- To develop our methods for supporting children's education and integration.
- To continue helping with access to employment.
- To develop an Advisory Forum to enable our refugee partners to contribute to the development of the charity.
- To explore other fundraising strategies sometimes in partnership with other organisations.

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

Treasurer's Report 2020

As this will be my last report as treasurer I would like to thank everyone for your wonderful support over the past five years. It's been a privilege to have served and been a part of an amazing response to the refugee crisis caused by conflicts in Syria and beyond. You have responded to requests for financial help, particularly in this difficult year, in really generous ways and far exceeded all our expectations. As a result I'll be able to pass on the accounts to Mala Malholland, our new treasurer, in a very healthy condition.

I would like to thank all those who give anonymously as gifts are always appreciated, however large or small. As a result we made a surplus of £6,174 (compared to a deficit of £2,724 in 2019) and now have Total Funds of £32,734.

During the year we benefitted from several fund raising events and we are very grateful to all those friends who organised and undertook these and, of course, those who supported them.

- The Christmas Appeal raised an amazing £6,803 (plus Gift Aid of £485 to be claimed in 2021) and which enabled us to give generously to every family.
- The Laptop Appeal raised £10,572 and we have purchased about 40 Laptops or Chromebooks so far.
- One of our clients, a tailor, decided to thank HWR for all the support he and his family had been given by making masks and, in so doing, has raised £515.
- Gill & Steve Lamberts raised £1,869 by walking 294 miles along the Pennine Way. Gill & Steve said "this took us 19 days in fantastic weather and was the best option in the Covid circumstances". Well done to both of them. Anyone else up for a challenge?

- During the year we were able establish a Hardship Fund principally using a donation of £5,626 from the staff at Ocado from their Annual Giving Fund. So far we have used £4,920 to alleviate particular hardship situations being experienced.

We received £1,130 in Gift Aid refund (£404 in 2019) and this shows how worthwhile this form of giving is. If you pay tax please consider giving this way and contact either me, or Mala, for more information.

We continue to employ a part-time Volunteer Coordinator (Caroline Herring) with the valuable help of Community Development Action *Herts* who host the post. She is coordinating volunteers in providing language support and events for the families across the whole of the county. We are very grateful to the Councils, COSARAF Charitable Foundation, Herts Community Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund for helping to fund this. We will need extra finances to enable this post to continue throughout 2021 and beyond.

9th February 2021

Contd/

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

Treasurer's Report 2020 (contd)

We now have 57 families and other refugees to support and their needs continue to change as they become more settled into their communities. Due to Covid-19 and lockdowns our volunteers were unable to provide transport. Consequently we have reimbursed part or all of the taxi or fare cost. Looking at the expenditure in more detail (2019 in brackets) our major expenses have been:

- . £920 (£2,941) for the provision of televisions and licences.
- . £1,302 (£1,941) for bikes & safety equipment.
- . £5,509 (Nil) Christmas gifts were paid for from the Appeal proceeds.
- . £1,236 (£1,650) Taxis & Fares.
- . £257 (£914) for education related costs.
- . £2,200 (£662) for driving lessons to help lead to independence & employment. .
- £2,394 (£2,294) for Household goods.

We still use Virgin Money Giving (VMG) for online donations and are grateful to everyone who supports us in this way particularly several friends who give a regular monthly donation – often from places a very long way from Hertfordshire! VMG also claim Gift Aid, where appropriate, on our behalf.

We continue to be registered with the Fundraising Regulator and complied with their guidelines in all our fund raising and in particular:

- Where possible our volunteers have overseen fund raising events.
- During the year we were not bound by any voluntary scheme for regulating fund-raising and no complaints were received about our fundraising activities.
- We do not contact anyone individually asking for donations although we do periodically ask our volunteers and supporters for donations for specific reasons and which are detailed in the appeal.

We couldn't operate as we do without our Volunteers who gladly give their time and expertise free of charge and this is very much appreciated.

Our thanks go, once again, to Geoff Harper, our Independent Financial Examiner, for examining our accounts, making many very helpful comments, and also to my fellow Committee members for their valuable help and support throughout the year.

I'm very glad that we're in a good financial position going into 2021

Mick Hayter


Treasurer until 31st December 2020 & Trustee.

Once again, to thank you all for your continued support and involvement as without this we could not and will not be able to do all of this.

Trustees:

Irene Austin Chair, Samah Alrahabi, John Borton, Mick Hayter Catherine Henderson, Mala Mulholland, Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott, Vicky Woodcraft,

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES				
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020				
INCOME		2020		2019
Donations		£		£
Individuals including PayPal Account		5,700		6,052
Gift Aid reclaim		1,130		404
Churches & Faith Groups		1,140		1,552
Groups & Companies		-		550
Charitable Trusts & Virgin Money Giving		5,112		3,131
Christmas Appeal		6,803		-
I T & Laptop Appeal		-		3,519
		19,885		15,208
Other Income				
Events (Walk, Coffee mornings & Sundry)		2,471		1,873
Christmas Card Sales (net of costs)		-		280
Masks (net of costs)		515		-
		22,871		17,361
EXPENDITURE				
Support provided to refugees				
TV'S & Radio's		299		2,073
TV Licences		621		868
I T & Laptops		608		5,030
Outings		-		1,559
Bike Expenses		1,302		1,941
Household goods & furniture		2,394		2,294
Books & Art Materials		102		248
Driving Lessons		2,200		662
Taxis & Fares		1,236		1,650
Christmas Appeal		5,509		-
Housing costs		150		319
Legal Fees		-		100
Education Related		257		914
Clothes & Groceries		172		802
		14,850		18,460
Administration Costs				
DBS costs		351		582
Public liability insurance & Trustee Indemnity		392		229
Subscriptions & Courses		558		211
Display Screen		-		149
AGM Expenses		-		136
Miscellaneous		433		192
Website Annual Fee		113		126
		16,697		20,085
SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		6,174		- 2,724
Signed				
<i>M J Hayter</i> 4/2/21	M J Hayter. Treasurer			
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HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES				
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020				
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FUND		2020	2019	
INCOME		£	£	
COSARAF Charitable Foundation		5,000	5,000	
The Funding Network		1,402	3,800	
Councils		300	300	
Donation		-	50	
Herts Community Foundation		1,750	-	
National Lottery Community Fund		875	-	
Prior year adjustment		1,120	-	
Deficit for the year		135	-	
		10,582	9,150	
EXPENDITURE				
Salary & Management Fee		10,106	6,931	
Travel		264	40	
Telephone		80	120	
Subscriptions		80	-	
Sundry		52	160	
Surplus for the year		-	1,899	
		10,582	9,150	
BALANCE SHEET as at 31 DECEMBER 2020				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Barclays Bank Community Account		27,119	16,186	
Payment in Advance		5,615	-	
		32,734	16,186	
Barclays Bank Standard Community Account		-	-	
		32,734	16,186	
ACCUMULATED FUNDS				
Balance at 1 January 2020		10,143	12,867	
Add: Surplus of Income over Expenditure		6,174	- 2,724	
Balance at 31st December 2020		16,317	10,143	
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FUND				
Balance at 1 January 2020		6,043	4,144	
Add: Excess of Expenditure over Income		- 135	1,899	
Balance at 31st December 2020		5,908	6,043	
"DESIGNATED & RESTRICTED FUNDS"				
		10,509	-	
TOTAL FUNDS		32,734	16,186	
DESIGNATED & RESTRICTED FUNDS	Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance
Designated Funds				
Hardship Fund	-	6,426	4,920	1,506
Restricted Funds				
Laptop Fund	-	10,572	8,541	2,031
Herts Community Foundation	-	5,000	4,000	1,000
Natl Lottery Community Fund	-	5,000	1,543	3,457
Arabic School Fund	-	1,549	374	1,175
Educational Fund	-	1,000	-	1,000
Library Fund	-	340	-	340
Total	0	29,887	19,378	10,509
Signed 	M J Hayter. Treasurer			
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Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Herts Welcomes Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').


I report in respect of my examination of the accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Geoffrey Harper

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Address: 14 Church Street. Guilden Morden. Hertfordshire. SG8 0JD

Date 5th February, 2021