

# DONCASTER CONVERSATION CLUB (A registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation number 1159775)

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Charity number: 1159775

## **DONCASTER CONVERSATION CLUB**

(A registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Governing Document

Doncaster Conversation Club is a charitable incorporated organisation (“CIO”) registered as a charity on 8 January 2015. The charity was established under a Foundation Model CIO constitution by which it is governed.

### Trustees

The trustees of the CIO are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. The trustees serving during the year were as follows:

<b>Chair</b>	Alan Robinson
<b>Other trustees</b>	Nic Burne Jan Foster Ann Hindley Akeela Mohammed Basil Nadeem Simon Phailly (resigned 24.05.2021)

### Principal Office

Quaker Meeting House  
Shotton Walk  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire DN1 3RH

### Bankers

Co-Operative Bank Limited

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## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021**

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The trustees submit their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

### **Trustees**

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 2.

### **Trustees' Induction and Training**

Trustees are provided with key documents. The trustees are encouraged to attend and participate in appropriate training activities that will help them in their role.

The Trustees have the constitutional power to appoint new trustees and keep the composition of the Board under review.

### **Organisation Structure and Decision Making**

The trustees manage the charity. The full Board of Trustees meets a minimum of five times a year, including general meetings. The full board is mainly concerned with policy matters and the strategic direction of the organisation while more detailed trustee management issues can be dealt with through sub committees.

It is normally the case that sub committees can have delegated responsibility for matters such as

- Finance, dealing with financial decisions and monitoring of income and expenditure
- HR related matters
- Audit, including local and regional government and external audits;
- Governance matters such as the continued relevance of the constitution and of other policy documents.

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## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021 (continued)**

The governance of the charity, and the operation of sub committees, is under consideration as this report is being agreed.

Individual members of the board also have input to the work of the charity by way of their individual skills and knowledge, which frequently leads them to take on projects to improve and extend the work of the charity. If important matters arise in between meetings the Chair and the board members communicate via email and telephone in order to reach a decision.

During the year the day to day management of the charity is in the hands of Nic Burne and Jan Foster.

### **Related parties**

The charity rents the use of premises from the Balby (Doncaster) Local Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (“the Meeting”). The Meeting forms part of the Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (“the Area Meeting”) (Registered Charity number 1134536). The following trustees of Doncaster Conversation Club were also trustees of the Area Meeting:

Nic Burne  
Alan Robinson

Neither of the above received any payment for their trusteeship with either charity.

### **Risk Management**

The trustees have examined the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate those risks. Areas reviewed included: governance and management, operational, financial, IT, data protection, environmental and compliance. During the year under review and the subsequent period, the Trustees have carried out a complete revision of the policies of the charity, including risk assessments, and have put in place

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## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021 (continued)**

appropriate risk assessments to deal with COVID-19. A serious incident was reported to the Charity Commission following the closure of the regular weekly sessions due to COVID.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the charity are a) to advance education and relieve financial hardship amongst those seeking asylum and those granted refugee status, particularly by the provision of advice and information, so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community; and (b) to preserve and protect the physical and mental health of those granted refugee status, those seeking asylum and their dependents.

### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

Our main activities and a description of our client group are both set out below. All our charitable activities focus on work with refugees and asylum seekers and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

### **Activities**

The main task of the Charity is to respond to the needs of asylum seekers within Doncaster, and it is therefore necessary for us to be able to respond to circumstances as they change. That became very apparent during the year, with the onset of COVID-19 forcing us to close our usual Thursday drop-in and to determine new ways of working. The same events have caused the Trustees to meet on numerous occasions (in some instances weekly) to deal with the changing situation. Meanwhile, the town of Doncaster continues to be allocated asylum seekers, to whose needs we seek to respond.

Since its inception, the Charity has held an open door session for asylum seekers and refugees on a Thursday afternoon at Doncaster Quaker Meeting House. Due to COVID, the Charity was forced to close the doors after the session on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. At that stage we did not envisage that it would be such a long time before we would be able to reopen.

As a result of the closure a serious incident was notified to the Charity Commission. The report also certified (to the satisfaction of the Commission) that the trustees were confident of making necessary arrangements to deal with the changing situation.

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## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021** (continued)

Throughout the 12 month period under review in this report, therefore, the only regular times when members of the Charity were able to access the Quaker Meeting House was during the period when restrictions were lifted from 29.10.20-17.12.20, when the Health Inclusion Clinic was able to provide medical examination and advice to newly arrived asylum seekers who were invited to attend by appointment. Unfortunately, this was unable to continue as the medical staff who were advising were required elsewhere due to the ongoing needs arising from the pandemic. During the year, the Meeting House has also been used on an ad hoc basis when restrictions permit, for remote interviews with solicitors. Most of our regulars have access to our telephone numbers and we have continued to deal with issues as they have arisen. The doors may be closed, but our work has continued. We have all had to learn to adapt.

Prior to the pandemic, the charity had developed a working relationship with the Welcome Project at the Glenthorne Quaker Centre (Registered Charity no 232575) which enabled us to refer some of our members to the Glenthorne Quaker Centre for a weekend of relaxation in the Lake District. Glenthorne Quaker Centre too closed its doors during lockdown, but is now once more open and accepting guests. We have therefore renewed our contacts with them which (outside the year under report) has enabled one family to have a weekend there.

Although the charity was unable to meet physically for its weekly sessions, from the very start, volunteers felt the need to keep in touch with our client group. From the beginning, one volunteer has set out to meet with all new arrivals who are referred to us, in order to ensure they have the correct paperwork and are registered with local GP practices. A weekly zoom meeting was set up with the purpose of keeping all volunteers up-to-date with the latest developments, but also to maintain regular contact between volunteers and keep morale high..

In the early stages of the pandemic, Local Authorities were directed to take in street homeless people under the “everyone in” umbrella. DCC was involved in this, as we had and continue to have a number of refused asylum seekers who are now in the care of the local authority and are accommodated in local hotels

At one point we were able to arrange for small groups (no more than 6) to go for a walk, maintaining social distancing, but this was brought to an end by renewed government lockdown restrictions.

The charity works closely with the local theatre, and has been involved in the National Theatre’s Public Acts production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle. Unfortunately this production had to be put on hold, but remote meetings have continued, and a short film of personal stories has been produced.

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## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021 (continued)**

Once again we were able to join up with the Baby Dinosaurs Charity and 76 Christmas presents were distributed to children from our asylum seeking families.

Asylum seeker children were able to benefit from laptops for schoolwork supplied by Sheffield City of Sanctuary.

The Trustees have met at least once a month during this time to ensure that we are all kept aware of the latest developments. As soon as closure took place, we addressed the issue of how and when we could reopen, and several volunteers attended numerous zoom calls to consult with other organisations to share ideas on best practice. The building was prepared for access by enquirers; one volunteer made the screens for the desks and produced a floor plan of how we can operate safely within the government guidelines. All necessary personal protection equipment and materials was purchased.

We have taken advantage of the interval in providing face to face services to upload all our data on to an online Case Management System. This has taken many hours from dedicated volunteers to set up, but will be a much valued asset when we reopen. We have secured our own zoom account, which has enabled our ESOL tutors to maintain contact with their students, and lessons to continue.

We continued to work with other organisations. With the help of the Local Authority, we organised 30 food parcels each week from food provided by Fareshare Yorkshire and the Hygiene Bank to be provided to our members on a rota system

The issue of asylum has remained active during the pandemic, and it has been necessary for volunteers and trustees to attend numerous meetings, both in order to co-ordinate work with asylum seekers and refugees in Doncaster, and to maintain their own knowledge of asylum law and practice, to which there have been several changes during the year under review. Several volunteers continue to be involved in various asylum related groups/meetings/forums. These have continued throughout the pandemic, all remotely, but some more frequent than before due to the ongoing situation

### **Contribution of volunteers**

The charity is run entirely by volunteers and the report above makes clear our reliance on them. We rely on grants and donations to keep going. We are extremely grateful to Doncaster Quakers for their continued support and for the use of their Meeting House for our Thursday drop-in, and for occasional use during the pandemic.

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021 (continued)**

### **Achievements & Performance**

The charity continues to work for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the area. Large numbers of individuals and families have been helped by our activities. It is very satisfying to see an asylum seeker being granted the right to remain, and to begin to develop a new life in the UK. As a side effect, many volunteers have acquired skills which they are able to use for the benefit of the community in all kinds of activities.

### **Funding**

The charity continues to rely on grants and donations, and is grateful to those who have contributed.

### **Public Benefit Statement**

Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives, and in planning its future activities, which is an annual process. Many examples of such public benefit have been described earlier in this report.

### **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements**

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the group for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make sound judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;



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- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for maintaining proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and charity, and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP where applicable. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that there have been no financial irregularities during the year which would adversely affect the maintenance of our responsibilities.

Approved by the board on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and signed on its behalf by

Alan Robinson

(signed) Alan Robinson (Chair)

## Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the period from

01/04/2020

to 31/03/2021

## Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds(£)	Restricted funds (£)	Endowment funds (£)	Total funds (£)	Last year (£)
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
DCC	491	-	-	491	1,659
Gainsborough	200	-	-	200	300
Donations: SYHA and Y & S Hedley	600	-	-	600	
Brelms Trust	-	4,620.00	-	4,620	4,620
Laptop Fund	-	4,440.00	-	4,440	
RAS Fund B Gillham	-	500.00	-	500	7,785
Pathways to Employment	-	-	-	-	2,502
Joan Brebner Mem	-	-	-	-	460
SYCF Covid 19	-	5,000.00	-	5,000	
Southall Trust	-	-	-	-	4,900
XP School Bikes	-	776	-	776	-
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	<b>1,291</b>	<b>15,336</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,627</b>	<b>22,226</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>1,291</b>	<b>15,336</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,627</b>	<b>22,226</b>

### A3 Payments

DCC	1,915	-	-	1,915	3,293
Gainsborough	-	200	-	200	5,375
SYHA	-	500	-	500	7,785
St. Georges	-	730	-	730	1,219
AFCL	-	597	-	597	-
Brelms Trust	-	1,123	-	1,123	930
Laptop Fund	-	3,373	-	3,373	4,586
RAS Fund B Gillham	-	240	-	240	-
Pathways to Employment	-	238	-	238	-
Joan Brebner Mem	-	-	-	-	-
SYCF Covid 19	-	4,568	-	4,568	-
Southall Trust	-	153	-	153	-
XP School Bikes	-	776	-	776	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>1,915</b>	<b>12,499</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,414</b>	<b>23,188</b>

<b>Total payments</b>	1,915	12,499	-	14,414	23,188
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 624	2,837	-	2,213	- 962
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	4,374	2,953	-	7,327	-
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	3,750	5,790	-	9,540	962

## 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	DCC General Fund	3,750	-	-
	Restricted Funds	-	5,790	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>3,750</b>	<b>5,790</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	None	-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	None		-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	<b>Details</b>			
	Five Laptop computers	DCC General	-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	<b>Details</b>	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Insurance	DCC General	-	

Accounts approved by the Board on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Alan Robinson

(signed) Alan Robinson  
Alan Robinson (Chair)