



# **Morton Hall Visitors Group Annual Report 2022**

*Annual Report and Financial Statements for  
the year ending 31st December 2022*

*Registered Charity no: 1174056*

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## 1. A Brief History of Morton Hall Visitors Group

For twelve years, MHVG's volunteer visitors have provided crucial friendship, signposting and support to people in immigration detention at Morton Hall.

Being in immigration detention almost always has a detrimental impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing. The experience of detention can be especially retraumatizing for those who have fled violence and persecution, or for people who have been victims of human trafficking.

We believe that immigration detention should end and be replaced with more humane, community-based alternatives. But until then, our primary aim is to support our clients as they navigate these challenging circumstances by providing emotional support and befriending services.

Through our visits, MHVG specifically aims to:

- ease the isolation and anxiety experienced by people in detention by providing emotional and practical support;
- signpost to services that offer specialist advice and guidance;
- act as unofficial human rights monitors by observing the conditions in immigration detention and highlighting these realities to the public.

At the same time, we advocate for the rights of detained people and raise public awareness about their plight, as well as the broader legal situation for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. By raising awareness of these issues, we aim to promote more tolerance and understanding in the East Midlands.

MHVG was first formed in 2011 following the conversion of Morton Hall prison in Swinderby, Lincolnshire, to an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC). The third largest IRC in the UK, Morton Hall held up to 392 people at a time. Many were waiting to find out if they would be allowed to stay in Britain or returned to their countries of origin. None of them were being detained as punishment for a crime - although a proportion have previous convictions. Non British nationals, subject to immigration powers, can be held indefinitely as immigration detention is not automatically reviewed by the courts, and many can end up in Immigration Removal Centres for lengthy periods of time.

Our visits continued - supporting hundreds of people at a deeply distressing time in their lives - until Morton Hall closed its doors in August 2021.

Following Morton Hall's closure, its grounds were repurposed into the Swinderby residential short-term holding facility (RSTHF) and HMP Morton Hall, a prison exclusively for 'foreign

nationals.’ We began offering drop-in sessions at the Swinderby RSTHF shortly after its October 2022 opening.

Swinderby can hold up to 37 men at a time, for a maximum of seven days each. People are normally held in RSTHF facilities for two main reasons: for screening, or as a staging post before removal. Both of these situations are often extremely stressful for the detained person. The quick turnaround in the facility also marks a departure from the type of befriending services we provided at the IRC, where volunteers built relationships with their clients over a sustained period of time.

In the medium-term, we also hope to extend our remit to include pilot programmes at HMP Morton Hall, HMP Nottingham and HMP Stocken, where we would support non-British nationals serving custodial sentences, as well as those held under immigration powers.

Our group is looking to the future and adapting to the evolving needs in the region. Nevertheless, our commitment to providing friendship, support and signposting services to people in detention - regardless of their background or status - remains unchanged.



## 2. Chair's Report

Recent years have presented a major crossroads for us here at MHVG. First, the Covid-19 pandemic brought an abrupt end to our in-person visits at the IRC. Then, news of Morton Hall's repurposing meant more challenges as we navigated how to offer our services in a totally new environment.

Throughout 2022, we have worked hard to adapt to the evolving needs across the East Midlands. But our core objective remains the same - to support people experiencing detention through a deeply distressing period in their lives.

Disturbing scenes from the Manston Centre in Kent and the Government's horrific small boats legislation have reiterated the need for visitor groups like ours. Detention remains a cruel, unjust lever of our country's immigration system. Which is why we must keep working with AVID and others to support people experiencing immigration detention - providing some much-needed human connection within an increasingly dehumanising system.

At the time of writing, MHVG is currently offering drop-in sessions at the Swinderby RSTHF. In the medium-term, we hope to expand our services to prisons across the East Midlands, including at HMP Morton Hall.

Behind the scenes, the Trustees have been working on a number of projects to make sure MHVG has the proper foundations to grow when that time comes. From formalising our operational policies, to reassessing how best to measure the impact of our visits. And perhaps most importantly, recruiting a new Project-Coordinator - the brilliant Gemma Goodwin, who has joined our much valued Director-Coordinator, Camille, on MHVG's staff team.

As always, the Trustees are incredibly grateful to those who keep MHVG running on a daily basis - Camille, Gemma, Dave, our bookkeeper Cassie, and our examiner of accounts Estelle Fischer. I'm also delighted that we've welcomed so many new Trustees to the Board this year, who all bring a wealth of diverse experience - although we've said goodbye to Lynda, Francesca and Ellie, who will all be missed. And of course, we couldn't operate without our volunteer visitors. Thank you to each and every one of you.

I am confident that as a team, we are prepared to take on this new chapter and keep doing what we do best - providing support, solidarity and services to vulnerable people in detention. I hope our Annual Report leaves you with that same belief.

Carey Roach  
Chair, MHVG

### 3. Coordinator's Report

*Looking forward.*

MHVG's work this year has been characterised by patience and determination. As we have seen the broader political context become more and more difficult for those we work with, we have also experienced challenges on an organisational level as we adapt to working in two new settings of immigration detention in the Midlands; "short-term" detention and prisons.

To do this, we have consulted partner organisations to ensure MHVG is fit for purpose, and have launched, explored, and piloted work in four new facilities to inform our work and our focus going forward. Through retraining and development, we end 2022 with a talented and committed team of volunteers ready to support people in the fast-developing immigration detention estate.

Following the success of our pilot drop-in at HMP Stocken in June, we launched our drop-in in Swinderby Short Term Holding Facility as soon as it opened in October. We offered 6 drop ins with between 2-4 volunteers in place between October-December. We also expect to launch monthly drop-ins in HMP Morton Hall in quarter 2 of 2023.

We remain the only face-to-face befriending organisation to offer specialised support to people in immigration detention in the Midlands, and we are proud to begin 2023 with two fantastic projects to build and grow.

Thank you to our members and funders for your support in what has been a challenging time. We are thrilled to be getting back to our underpinning face-to-face work and values. We are again supporting people in person, signposting them, giving friendship, celebrating resilience, sharing in grief, at a time of significant hardship for all those affected by the UK immigration system.

Camille Herreman  
Director-Coordinator, MHVG

## 4. Achievements, Activities and Performance

### Responding to Change

Following the closure of Morton Hall IRC in 2021, we identified two main areas where a need for MHVG's services continued to exist in the East Midlands - the Swinderby RSTHF and multiple prisons. This includes HMP Morton Hall, but expands further to the likes of HMP Stocken and HMP Nottingham.

The Trustees made a strategic decision to spend 2022 prioritising starting up visits at Swinderby, as well as organisational development to ensure that we are prepared to expand our remit in a responsible and sustainable way. However, we kept in contact with management at numerous prisons in the region, as beginning those visits remains a priority for us in 2023.

In doing so, MHVG has continued to respond effectively to this ever-changing climate - laying the necessary foundations to expand, while continuing to offer our services to people experiencing immigration detention in the region.

To support these objectives, MHVG has undertaken several actions in the last twelve months. These include:

- Continuing to liaise with Mitie Care and Custody and Home Office representatives at Swinderby RSTHF, successfully negotiating a service agreement that allows us to offer visits there;
- Adapting our practices to reflect the particularities of visiting in short-term facilities, including our training materials and client databases;
- Maintaining relationships with management in prisons that we hope to offer our services to in the medium-term;
- Informing our network about this new chapter of MHVG by updating the website and sending updates via email;
- Establishing close working relationships with Larne House Visitors Group and Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team (MIDST), who both work in short-term holding facilities;
- Continuing to attend meetings through the AVID network to share information and best practice with other visitor groups across the UK;
- Maintaining our membership of Clinks, an organisation that promotes and represents the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families;
- Recruiting a new Project-Coordinator to join MHVG as a job share partner for Camille, again increasing our staff capacity to two days per week.

### Volunteers

Volunteers - visitors, trustees and people who support with essential administrative activities

- remain the lifeblood of MHVG.

In 2022, we had 15 active volunteers. We recruited 5 new trustees and one additional visitor.

As visits became possible again in the last quarter of 2022, re-engaging existing volunteers became a priority. We took multiple steps to do this, including:

- Reviving our newsletter to share updates, training opportunities and other events with our network;
- Restarting monthly volunteer meetings to create a space for volunteers to connect with each other and ask questions;
- Organising a volunteer kick-off event and social in January 2023, which would bring together our volunteers in-person for the first time since the pandemic.

### Visits

2022 and the end of Covid restrictions marked the opportunity to finally begin offering in-person visits again. But we have encountered some challenges with access as we adjust to operating in new centres.

We have continued to enjoy a positive relationship with Mitie Care & Custody, who operate Swinderby. We attended a tour of the facility shortly before its October opening, where Camille and the Trustees were able to meet face-to-face with management and ask questions.

MHVG first began offering visits at Swinderby on 17th October, and have operated a rota of volunteers available to visit every Monday since. Unfortunately, these offers have been declined by Mitie due to the centre being empty. Although hopefully a positive sign that fewer people are being detained in the East Midlands, this is one of the new challenges of working in a short-term holding facility - the rapid turnover creates uncertainty over when there will be clients present in need of our support.

There is, however, cause to be optimistic about the future of our visiting capacity. We have published a flyer which explains the services offered by MHVG and outlines our contact information, to be circulated to all new arrivals at Swinderby. This is aimed at increasing awareness of our services, encouraging potential clients to self-refer.

At the same time, we kept relations warm with the management of prisons in the area. In August, we attended a Community Day aimed at non-British nationals at HMP Stocken. Attended by around 30 people, this was our first in-person event in two years.

There, we spoke to the majority of attendees about their concerns, conditions at HMP Stocken for 'foreign nationals' and provided short term emotional and practical support. MHVG was warmly received at the event, giving hope for expanding our services there in the near future.



### **Training**

As we adapt to offering services in the RSTHF, we have had to adapt our training approach, too. Operating in a short-term holding facility is a significant departure from our work at Morton Hall IRC, where visitors were able to build trust and rapport with their clients over a sustained period of time.

Now, we have to be prepared to support clients for only one session each before they are likely transferred out of the facility.

To ensure our volunteers are equipped to offer high-quality services in the RSTHF, we have:

- Offered refresher training to existing volunteers in October, when our Swinderby visitor rota first began;
- Worked with MIDST to adapt our training resources to reflect the particularities of visiting in a short-term holding facility;
- Held a joint volunteer meeting with MIDST, a visitor group that supports people detained at the short-term holding facility at Manchester Airport. This provided MHVG volunteers with the opportunity to ask questions of their peers and learn about the way they work.

### **Partnership Work and Organisational Profile**

MHVG has continued to raise the profile of the organisation and its mission, particularly as we adjust to this next chapter.

Much of our partnership work has occurred throughout the AVID network. We continue to enjoy good relations with AVID, who act as a consortium for visitor groups across the immigration detention NGO community in the UK. Highlights of this work include:

- Building closer links with other visitor groups through regular meetings;
- Attending AVID's AGM;
- Feeding into AVID's new charter, which seeks to develop a theory of change as well as shared values across its member organisations

Beyond Avid, we have continued membership of Clinks. We have also worked to increase MHVG's profile by updating the website to reflect the new stage for the group.

### **Organisational Development**

Another priority in 2022 was organisational development. This was to ensure that MHVG is prepared to expand our remit in a way that is both responsible and sustainable.

As a first step, we had an intense drive to recruit new trustees after our board was significantly depleted by Spring 2022. Now, we have 6 trustees on the board - including a new Treasurer and a newly elected Chair. Our board draws on a wide range of professional and

personal backgrounds, ranging from experienced HR professionals and academics to longstanding MHVG volunteers.

Once our new Board was in place, we began several projects to implement new practices and systems. These include:

- Initiating an audit to identify gaps in our existing formalised policies. We then drafted and updated approximately 10 policies - including on safeguarding, expenses, staff remuneration and health & safety - to ensure we could safely start operating visits again;
- Creating induction materials for both new staff and new trustees, to ensure a smoother and clearer onboarding process;
- Developing a formalised risk register to track our mitigation actions and progress;
- Creating a fundraising database to strategically forecast upcoming funding opportunities;
- Undertaking an impact practice project to identify how we can better measure output and outcomes, to ensure our services are making a positive difference. This has resulted in numerous recommendations that we will continue implementing into 2023.

### **Fundraising**

Grants received in 2022 comprised £5,000 from ICS and £2,000 from the Allen Lane Foundation.

## 5. Trustees' Report

The trustees for the year ending 31st December 2022 and up to and including the date the report was approved were:

Name	Position	Dates
Carey Roach	Chair	Appointed March 2022
Lynda Wilson	Chair	Appointed August 2017 Resigned April 2022
Eleanor Hull	Treasurer	Co-Opted June 2021 Resigned September 2022
Cassandra Taylor	Treasurer	Co-Opted September 2022
Francesca Bargiela	Trustee	Appointed August 2017 Resigned April 2022
Christopher Leaman	Trustee	Appointed March 2021
Bethan Godley	Trustee	Co-Opted July 2022
Clara Della Croce	Trustee	Co-Opted August 2022
Erika Loggin	Trustee	Co-Opted October 2022

### Charity number

Charity number 1174056. The charity was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 1 August 2017.

### Registered and principal address

The Sycamore Centre  
33A Hungerhill Road  
Nottingham  
NG3 4NB

### Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling

Kent  
ME19 4JQ

### **Structure, governance and management**

MHVG is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation that is governed by a constitution adopted on the 1 August 2017

### **Method of recruitment and appointment of trustees**

The trustees of the charity are appointed by the members at the AGM.

### **Our objectives**

For the public benefit, to relieve the needs of people in detention in the East Midlands who are suffering financial hardship, distress or are otherwise in need by providing emotional support, advocacy and practical support, particularly through - but not limited to - the provision of a trained visiting network.

### **Our main activities**

1. Through a network of trained volunteers, we visit and support people in detention in the East Midlands, whether held indefinitely under immigration powers or non-British nationals who are serving custodial sentences.
2. We advocate for the rights of detained people and raise public awareness about their plight, as well as the broader legal situation for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

### **Public Benefit Statement**

Our main activities and who we aim to help are described above. All our charitable activities are focused on supporting people in detention and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities, our Trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the prevention and relief of need.

### **Achievements and performance**

Please see Section 4 for a summary of our achievements and performance in 2022.

### **Financial Review**

We started the year with £6,341 in the bank. The net payments for the year were £8,213 and the net receipts were £7,007. Grants received in 2022 comprised £5,000 from ICS and £2,000 from the Allen Lane Foundation. We also received £7 in interest from our bank account. At the end of the year, our closing balance was £6,229, with a further £112 in petty cash.

Given the lack of visiting activity for the first half of the year, the main item of expenditure was the Director-Coordinator's wages. However, we did begin offering our visiting services again in October, accounting for staff and visitors expenses. We continued to employ a bookkeeper to handle our accounts, totalling £285.

### **Reserves Policy**

Last year, we adopted a 'reserves policy' which sought to ensure sufficient reserves are maintained to cover the winding up costs should it be desirable or necessary to cease activity. These will be sufficient to cover staff redundancies, rent and utility costs and any professional fees likely to be incurred. The reserves target has been met for 2022.

**Signed on behalf of the trustees:**



Carey Roach

Chair

Signed: 10th April 2023

## 6. Independent Examiner's Report

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of:**

**Morton Hall Visitors Group Registered Charity number 1174056  
The Sycamore Centre, 33A Hungerhill Road, St Anns, Nottingham NG3 4NB**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Morton Hall Visitors Group, for the year ended 31 December 2022.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

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

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible but not required, to be subject to an independent examination, it is my responsibility to examine the accounts 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 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 in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts did not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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: Estelle Fisher**

*Estelle Fisher*

**Name: Estelle Fisher, Postgraduate Diploma in Audit Management and Consultancy,  
Institute of Internal Auditors, Advanced Diploma.**

**Address: 35, Mere Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7LH**

## 7. Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022

				2022			2021
<b>Receipts</b>							
	Donations			0			220
	Grants			7,000			11,250
		ICS	5,000		Bergman Lehane Trust	250	
		Allen Lane Foundation	2,000		29th May 1961 CT	5,000	
					WF Southall Trust	3,000	
					Allen Lane Foundation	3,000	
	Interest received		7				
<b>Total receipts</b>				<b>7,007</b>			<b>11,470</b>
<b>Payments</b>							
	Wages, NI, Pensions & Payroll		6,662.58			16,204	
	Bank charges		81			102	
	Insurance		396.93			339	
	Office/Phones/Website		158.27			144	
	Visitors Travel/Expenses		190.02			-	
	Staff Travel/Expenses		268.2			-	
	Membership/ Subscriptions		36			72	
	Publicity		100			780	
	Equipment		0			-	
	Events		35			-	
	Professional fees		285			391	

<b>Total payments</b>				<b>8,213</b>			<b>18,545</b>
<b>Surplus</b>				<b>-1,206</b>			<b>3,019</b>
<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>				<b>2022</b>			<b>2021</b>
	Cash in bank			6,229			7,435
	Cash in hand			112			112
	less Liabilities due in year						-
<b>Total</b>				<b>6,341</b>			<b>7,547</b>
	Represented by bank balance b/f			7,435			4,417
	Cash in hand b/f			112			112
	Surplus income over expenditure			-1,206			3,019
<b>Total</b>				<b>6,341</b>			<b>7,547</b>

## Notes

### *Basis of accounting*

The trustees have taken advantage of section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 and have prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

### *Taxation*

As a registered charity the organisation benefits from rates relief and is generally exempt from income tax and capital gains tax but not from VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is included in the cost of those items to which it relates.