



# TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report  
for the Financial Year  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

# TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

## Trustees' Annual Report

for the Financial Year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

### Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees  
c/o Burns & Co  
2a Bank Street  
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

Trustees	Term(s) of office
Jane Blessley (Chair)	January 2019 - January 2022 January 2022 -
Fiona O'Brien	July 2017 - July 2020 July 2020 -
Ruth Connelly	July 2017- July 2020 July 2020 -
Nicky McGregor	December 2018 - December 2021 January 2022 -
Jan Lloyd	January 2020 - December 2022 January 2023 -
Lee Mead (Treasurer)	August 2020 –
Sarah Pratten	July 2022 –

### Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

### Appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity's trustees, for a term of three years. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the Trustees have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

During the year Jane Blessley and Jan Lloyd were reappointed as trustees and Sarah Pratten was appointed as a new trustee  
There are currently seven trustees.

## Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependants, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent.
  - The relief of financial hardship;
  - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
  - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

### Overview – Objective 1: To provide relief for refugees

Most of the refugees supported by the charity have reached the UK under one of the Government's Resettlement Schemes. At 31st March 2023, Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was supporting:

- ten families living in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone who had arrived under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its replacement, the UK Resettlement Scheme 2021 (UKRS). 9 families were from Syria and a further one from Sudan. The charity also supported two Syrian families who had claimed asylum and a further Syrian family who had reached the end of the five-year period under the SVPRS and had indefinite leave to remain.
- three Afghan families who arrived in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone (in December 2021 and February and May 2022) who had been evacuated from Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy 2021 (ARAP).
- Homes for Ukraine Scheme, under this Scheme the charity supports approximately 200 individuals. Because of the role of hosts, the model of support differs for Ukrainian refugees and they are dealt with separately below.

The total number of individuals supported on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 is approximately 287.

TWR works closely with Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and staff from KCC's appointed social care provider, Clarion, to support refugees resettled under the SVPRS, the UKRS and the ARAP in our area of Kent. As Maidstone does not have a Welcomes Refugees Group, we have a group of volunteers working to support families within the Maidstone Borough Council area. Our Maidstone volunteers also work with some of our SVPRS families in TMBC, as sometimes their location is closer to Maidstone. The Maidstone team of volunteers complete their DBS with us. We also work closely with our sister charities, Tunbridge Wells Welcomes Refugees (TWWR) and Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees (SWR).

## Support provided for refugees under UKRS

- **Befriending.** Each refugee family arriving under the Resettlement Schemes or ARAP is assigned a small team of volunteers to assist them on arrival. Whilst the Clarion Support Officers manage applications to schools, to GP registers, to the Home Office and to the DWP for benefits, the volunteer teams make welcoming and befriending visits. The support is tailor-made to the family, but often includes such matters as explaining the transport services locally, explaining how the NHS operates or the refuse and recycling system. Families are often taken out to visit local attractions or to be shown the shopping facilities. Befriending volunteers can appeal by means of WhatsApp groups for household items needed by the families or apply to the trustees for funding for an item, if a suitable donation cannot be found.
- **English teaching.** In addition to befriending support, there is an experienced and dedicated team of teachers who supplement the English lessons provided under the various Resettlement Schemes by local adult education providers. Often the small group teaching or individual coaching TWR provides is more successful, especially with those who have limited experience of education or who are illiterate in their first language.

In addition to the classes provided for adults, there is a very active team of teachers who volunteer in local schools to support Syrian, Sudanese and Afghan children. Currently two Afghan, two Syrian and two Sudanese children benefit from this support.

In March 2023, KCC started to undertake a review of the provision of ESOL under the various Schemes and TWR volunteers are participating in this review in the hopes of improving the provision especially for those refugees who are illiterate in Language 1.

- **Transport.** It is often difficult for the charity's beneficiaries to get to medical or dental appointments or to social gatherings held by the charity by using public transport. TWR maintains a WhatsApp group of volunteers who are willing to provide lifts for these appointments or occasions. The charity also provides bicycles and related safety equipment for beneficiaries where this is needed and, for some beneficiaries, the trustees have agreed to provide some assistance to fund driving lessons. This is so expensive that it has been limited to cases where the beneficiary needs to drive in order to work or where the beneficiary is already a driver and only needs a few refresher classes to enable a UK driving test to be taken. In suitable cases, young person's or family railcards are provided.
- **Social Support.** TWR has undertaken several new initiatives in 2022 to 2023. A grant was obtained to provide activity courses in the school holidays in addition to the after-school clubs for children of school age already funded. The funding was provided by Clifford Chance London Foundation with a requirement that TWR match the spending with £4000 of charity funds. Courses have been attended both by the original cohort under the Resettlement Schemes but also by many Ukrainian school children too. Such courses aid social integration and provide children with a chance to

escape for a while from the anxieties of their position as refugees. The courses have been of all types – trampolining, gymnastics, climbing, drumming, Arts and crafts, football, badminton and the charity has placed about twenty children into swimming lessons at Tonbridge Town Pool. It has never been possible to fund swimming before because of the high cost and the initiative has been very successful indeed.

In May 2022, TWR was able once again to hold a picnic to celebrate Eid al Fitr at the end of Ramadan with a picnic held on 8<sup>th</sup> May at St Philip's Church Hall in north Tonbridge. All Muslim refugees from Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling were invited and Syrian, Afghan and Sudanese families attended with volunteers from Maidstone offering transport. Each family brought a dish to share and volunteers also contributed vegetarian and sweet items. There was football on the field outside, a seed planting activity, a face painter and a craft activity. Both families and volunteers enjoyed a sunny afternoon and the chance to renew friendships after so long apart and to meet new arrivals.

### **Support provided for Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

Refugees arriving under this Scheme are placed with British hosts and they perform many of the befriending activities which would otherwise be provided by TWR befriending teams or by support workers from Clarion.

TWR set up a small committee of volunteers in April 2022 to coordinate the support given to arriving refugees. The trustees decided that they had neither the manpower nor the expertise to act as a matching service for potential hosts and refugees. Instead, the committee provided information for both hosts and refugees and gave logistical help for example to enable refugees to access free sim cards from Vodafone and to distribute laptops provided by West Kent Mind. The team shared a toolkit with hosts and provided frequent newsletters full of information on things to do and practical support. There was a lot of coordination between hosts and refugees too. TWR not only distributed laptops provided by MIND, but also funded laptops for refugees including those in areas normally just outside ours where there was no similar support.

Shortly after the Scheme started, Tonbridge School decided to support refugees by offering a space for refugees to meet each other every Tuesday evening for two hours. TWR has acted as a partner providing information to Tonbridge School. Two volunteers attend at each of the Tonbridge School gatherings to gather information about the support needs of arriving families or families leaving hosts to live independently. Such questions are then followed up by volunteers.

Further emotional and social support was provided to both hosts and Ukrainian refugees by a volunteer holding a coffee evening on a fortnightly basis for hosts and refugees separately to enable them to air any difficulties and learn from others in a similar position.

The most urgent need for arriving Ukrainians was the provision of English lessons. Using premises provided by Tonbridge School, TWR's English coordinator for adults set up a programme for the Ukrainian students. Classes were run throughout the school summer holidays and have continued throughout the rest of our TWR financial year. There have been six classes a week, led by TWR volunteer teachers using course and practice books funded by TWR. At the start, there were too many students so a waiting list was needed. To enable those on that list to progress whilst waiting for classes, a system of conversation buddies was started. This entailed a refugee being matched with a volunteer with the intention that they should meet so as to give an added opportunity for practice in English. This has proved very successful and those volunteers have often become friends with the refugees and have extended support when the refugees have moved into homes independent of the original host.

Local schools saw an influx of Ukrainian children too. The level of English of these refugees was widely variable. The coordinator of English for children organised support for children in five local schools. The numbers of Ukrainian children have varied as some have returned to Ukraine, others have moved to different parts of the UK and in one case a school recruited a TEFL qualified Ukrainian as a teaching assistant. At the end of March 2023, 11 Ukrainian students were receiving help.

Using WhatsApp groups, TWR has been able to assist Ukrainian families to equip their new homes when they leave their original hosts.

The Ukrainian families have also benefited from the activities' courses during school holidays and after school clubs (including swimming) provided thanks to the London Foundation grant.

### **Overview – Objective 2: To advance the education of the public about the position and needs of refugees and asylum seekers**

- The Chair and several volunteers were involved in a campaign with Citizens' UK to persuade MPs to support an initiative to regularise the position of undocumented migrants. The aim is to protect them from modern slavery and exploitation and allow them to take a proper place in the workforce benefiting from the protection of employment laws. It provides a societal benefit too because of tax and National Insurance payments and by filling jobs in those sectors now suffering manpower shortages, such as agriculture or care sectors.

The campaign culminated in a meeting with Conservative MP for Tonbridge and Malling, Tom Tugendhat, in September 2022 at which these arguments were put forward and he accepted the idea in theory, but had concerns about its practicality because of the danger of creating a 'pull factor' which might encourage further migrants to come to the UK using the dangerous small boat crossings.

- Several presentations have been given at meetings of local organisations – PROBUS Crowborough men’s club and Hilden Ladies’ PROBUS. Donations have been made to our funds from these clubs.
- TWR took part in various public events where we had stalls with activities for children, we explained our role in caring for families arriving in our area and raised public awareness by handing out our newly redrafted information leaflets. These were:
  1. Bishop Chavasse School Fair
  2. Tonbridge Calling at which we had very popular pig racing and hoopla activities which also raised funds
  3. Dragon Boat Race. This was very successful and raised £2220 in sponsorship and £532 on the day for funds as well as seeing us crowned as the best dressed crew, though not the best rowers. Again, the racing pigs proved very popular as did the Treasure Island lovingly crafted over a month by the same volunteer who designed the costumes.
  4. The Maidstone Mela. Our Maidstone volunteers organised this with an activity to raise awareness of the choices faced by refugees when deciding what to carry with them when they are forced to flee. There were many visitors to the stall to whom we were able to give information and leaflets.

### **Management and day to day running of the charity**

The Trustees normally hold a monthly trustees’ meeting and in this financial year these were online. Several times a year, there is an Open Meeting for the charity’s supporters. Reports of the charity’s activities were given and supporters invited to ask questions. In months where there is an Open meeting, a trustees’ meeting is not always held. The AGM was held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

At the AGM, it was reported that in future the AGM would be held shortly after the end of the financial year, in the summer. The December meeting would, in future, be a social with an update from the trustees.

There are no employees and all the support given to beneficiaries and the administration of the charity is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers can reclaim expenses and a mileage allowance, but many volunteers simply carry those expenses themselves.

There were seven trustees at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. In addition, there were approximately 75 volunteers including trustees and further supporters and donors of household items. Any volunteer who has direct contact with refugee families through befriending, teaching or giving lifts follows a recruitment process involving an application form, an interview with two trustees and the taking up of two references. They must also have an enhanced DBS certificate to cover both vulnerable adults and children and agree to the confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding policies.

Family teams deal directly with the beneficiary families, but report regularly to the trustees on what is needed. The two teaching coordinators also report back to the trustees on a regular basis. This is made easier because many of the trustees are themselves on family teams or are teachers.

## **Financial Review for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

The Accounts are attached and show income of £32,008. Of this, £27,891 was received in the form of donations from individuals and institutions. £4,068 was received in the form of a single grant.

Total expenditure for the year was £35,396. The Charity's running costs amounted to £1,099. Costs relating to insurance and safeguarding training accounted for almost half of these costs. A total of £22,419 was paid direct to, or for the benefit of, refugees as resettlement costs. This figure included £11,505 used to support refugees in further education from donated funds restricted for this purpose. Other resettlement expenditure included payments for IT equipment, driving lessons, assistance for paying household bills, clothes, furniture, hardship payments and travel costs for such things as Family or Young Person Railcards. £10,158 was paid for clubs and activities for school children and £1,720 for educational resources, as part of the English teaching programme.

Payments made from the bank account are usually input by the Treasurer, but can be input by one of three other Trustees appointed to this task. Once input, payments must then be authorised by one of the appointed Trustees other than the inputter. Spending proposals originating from volunteers or refugees below £50 must be pre-approved by at least one Trustee. Such proposals above £50 must be approved by a second Trustee.

TWR does not have any outstanding guarantees to any other person or organisation. It does not have any debts secured by a charge on property. None of the trustees or persons related to them receive remuneration in any form and there are no transactions with any trustee or related parties. The trustees aim to retain a reserve of six months' average expenditure in the bank, and this was adhered to in the financial year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

## **Achievements and Performance**

1. TWR was able quickly to respond to the needs of refugees arriving from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The number of its beneficiaries rose from about 80 to 280 within a very short period, but the charity expanded its English teaching rapidly, both for adults and children, to address the need.
2. In response to the increase in numbers of adult students, the charity introduced a new conversation buddy scheme for Ukrainians, but this is now being expanded to refugees from other nationalities.
3. The charity developed a toolkit for hosts of Ukrainian families and supported refugee families and hosts by assisting at Tonbridge School gatherings and a volunteer also offered coffee evenings for Ukrainian refugees and their hosts separately to provide social and emotional support
4. The charity managed to obtain grant funding for activity courses in the school holidays. This enabled children to have fun and integrate with other children on the courses.



5. TWR introduced a new swimming programme in conjunction with TM Active at the town pool. Through this about 20 children have been funded for courses of 15 weeks of swimming lessons.
6. A pharmacist with a Syrian qualification has been supported to obtain a UK qualification through the support of London lawyers.
7. TWR has continued to run WhatsApp groups to find household items for refugees and to offer donations to them. The drivers' WhatsApp group continues to provide lifts for appointments and to deliver items from donors to recipients.
8. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, TWR has managed to attract sufficient funds to offer increased support for its beneficiaries through hardship payments, funding IT items and activities.

### Future Challenges

Despite the many achievements of the last financial year, there are also challenges which should not be ignored. These are:

1. Housing. It is very difficult to attract new private landlords to the Schemes. This is due to a number of factors:
  - The severe shortage of rental properties means commercial rents outstrip housing allowances for those on benefits
  - The number of rental properties has plummeted because of higher mortgage interest rates and new regulations for landlords
  - Many of the families arriving on the Schemes are larger than the UK average so there are fewer properties which can house them
2. With more Ukrainian families moving out of their hosts' homes, TWR anticipates that there will be higher demands for household items in the coming year
3. As the cost-of-living crisis affects more and more people and businesses, we may find it more difficult to raise funds

### Strategic Aims at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

1. To continue welcoming refugee families, including through our befriending and English programmes.
2. To support refugees with educational and vocational courses
3. To maintain a hardship fund for families struggling financially
4. To encourage families to set and achieve their own goals, encouraging self sufficiency
5. To raise sufficient funds to continue to meet these aims

This report was approved by the trustees by email on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 and signed on their behalf by Jane Blessley

J. M Blessley

Chair of Trustees



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1173758

Set out on pages

10 and 11

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2022.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- 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:

Date:

23 May 23

Name:

Matthew Sellen

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Address:






CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
**TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES**

No (if any)  
1173758

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2022	To	Period end date 31/03/2023
------------------------	---------------------------------	----	-------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
One off donations (inc fundraising)	21,126	2,049	-	23,175	25,072
Regular giving	4,716	-	-	4,716	4,027
Sales (greeting cards)	-	-	-	-	55
Grants	-	4,068	-	4,068	2,000
Interest	49	-	-	49	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>25,891</b>	<b>6,117</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,008</b>	<b>31,154</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>25,891</b>	<b>6,117</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,008</b>	<b>31,154</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Running costs	1,099	-	-	1,099	1,611
Refugee support	10,914	11,505	-	22,419	6,028
Activity fund	6,090	4,068	-	10,158	440
Teaching resources	1,720	-	-	1,720	385
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>19,823</b>	<b>15,573</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,396</b>	<b>8,464</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>19,823</b>	<b>15,573</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,396</b>	<b>8,464</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>6,068</b>	<b>- 9,456</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 3,388</b>	<b>22,690</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>24,236</b>	<b>10,576</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>34,812</b>	<b>12,122</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>30,304</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,424</b>	<b>34,812</b>

## 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 £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash at Bank	30,304	1,120	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>30,304</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
L. R. Mead	Lee Mead	23/5/23
J. M. Blessley	Jane Blessley	23/5/23