



Charity name LEWES DRG. IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES + ASYLUM SEEKERS

Charity number (if any) 1176074

For the period from (start date) 041217

to (end date) 310818

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 £
A1 Receipts					
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,096			1,096	N/A
DONATIONS	4,138			4,138	
SPONSORED WALK	1,142			1,142	
PLANT SALE	1,234			1,234	
TRAINING FEE	2,000			2,000	
GRANT	1,000			1,000	
GIFT AID	762			762	
<i>Sub total</i>	11,372			11,372	
A2 Asset and investment sales, etc					
<i>Total receipts</i>	11,372			11,372	
A3 Payments					
GRANTS TO FAMILIES, ETC	3,465			3,465	N/A
" " OTHER ORGS.	2,500			2,500	
ADMIN EXPENSES	670			670	
<i>Sub total</i>	6,635			6,635	
A4 Asset and investment purchases, etc					
<i>Total payments</i>	6,635			6,635	
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	4,737			4,737	
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,825			1,825	
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	6,562			6,562	



aims to promote the welfare of refugees & asylum seekers in and beyond the Lewes District by:

**raising awareness of issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers
providing practical help and responding to local issues as they arise
advocating and lobbying to improve the rights of refugees and asylum seekers**

The group initially met in January 2002 for anyone interested in the issues of migration, asylum and safe refuge, from a perspective of human rights and civic responsibilities. LOSRRAS became a charity and adopted its new name in October 2017.

Membership is open to all who share these aims, irrespective of personal affiliations or beliefs.

‘What has been done to you cannot be undone, what has been taken from you cannot be returned. All the same, we could become that country. We could as a nation stop being so lethally afraid of strangers, so dangerous on our self-protection.’

From *The Abandoned Person’s Tale*, as told to Olivia Laing,

‘Do you know what limbo means? It means the edge of hell...’

the words of an asylum seeker after 8 years waiting to obtain settled status in the UK, as told to Abdullah Gurnah.

Refugee Tales Volume 2

Main achievements between October 2017 and September 2018

At last year’s AGM two of our volunteers spoke about the achievements of the befriender service we set up almost two years ago to help support and settle families coming under the government’s Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This year we have continued this important work; we have widened our reach to other refugee families and asylum seekers in the district and extended support to include running English language classes, with some funding from the local authority and hosted at Hillcrest Community Centre, whose help has been invaluable.

LOSRRAS is committed to continuing to develop the practical help we can offer individuals and families in the area, but also to raise awareness of refugee and asylum issues and to advocate for a better welcome in the UK. This means, among other things, continuing and hopefully expanding our public meetings and discussions, and developing our newly launched website www.losrras.org.

Attendance at our open meetings this year has been good. We have been helped enormously by Lewes Quakers who provide us with meeting space at the Friends House in Friars Walk. We are in danger of bursting out of the space on busy evenings!

This year’s open meetings:

22 November 2017: *We are Family* – a successful evening of films and conversation about the global refugee crisis, jointly with the Depot Cinema, Lewes Actions on Refugees and Lewes Amnesty Group

14 March 2018: *Experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Sussex* - presented by Andrea Ruiz, Refugee Council’s children’s advisor for the South East

16 May 2018: *Global and local insights into the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis* - presented by Kyle Graw of Save the Children International, and Jintana Malisueng from Sussex University and former worker in refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border.

4 July 2018: *Refugee Week event* – a talk by Dr Jo Shawcross, Freedom from Torture, and reading of a short story by a refugee supported by LOSRRAS.

LOSRRAS remains committed to raising awareness of the issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees, especially those seeking to settle and rebuild lives in the South East. We also continue to add our voice to wider calls to make refugees welcome and for the fairer and more humane treatment of asylum seekers, and for the UK to take seriously its international responsibility to provide a safe haven for refugees. The next pages outline our main areas of activity in pursuing all three of our critical objectives.

Raising awareness:

As well as our series of open meetings, we have continued our education work. This year we taught all year 8 pupils at Priory School, as part of their rights and discrimination module. The students were helped to understand and to empathise with the plight of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and to think about how they might make such children welcome at Priory.

Our regular newsletters, sent to all members, cover local events and news but also include articles about refugee-related issues less well covered in national media. In June Lewes News published a full-page article about our work.

We make leaflets available about our work and encourage people to become involved in a range of ways, from donating items for asylum seekers to becoming actively involved in befriending or teaching English.

A growing number of LOSRRAS members took part in this year’s Refugee Tales Walk from St Albans to Westminster. With the Martyrs Gallery we hosted a Refugee Tales event where local actor and LOSRRAS volunteer, Jonathan Cullen, read one of the Tales to a visibly moved audience. We also hosted a local Refugee Tales walk featured in the Argos and Sussex Express.

Responding to local issues:

Our main initiative in this area is our befriending and teaching work (see page 2). This involves over 20 volunteers, without whose generosity and commitment we could not continue our work. We are also supported by the Lewes Quaker Quilting Group, who continue to make exquisite quilts for each member of families moving into the area.

As well as ongoing support, we held a successful day of family-based activities at Lewes Castle, and ran a crèche to enable parents and older children to watch *The Idol*, an Arabic language film put on by the Depot.

Members have also provided short-term accommodation to individual asylum seekers, who would otherwise be homeless, and we have provided bus passes and, in one case, help with rental costs to enable individuals to study. LOSRRAS has made a range of donations to individuals/families to help with setting up home, towards immigration legal costs, obtaining citizenship, travel documents and for family trips out.

We continue to collect items of clothing for Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, and support Calais collections.

LOSRRAS is represented at Brighton and Hove Refugee and Migrant Forum meetings; we have good working relationships with several Brighton-based groups, and hope to develop these further.

Lobbying and advocating for change

LOSRAS petitioned East Sussex County Council to accept more unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and continue to work with Safe Passage on this issue. We used our annual Refugee Week stall in the Cliffe Precinct to promote the campaign. At this year's Lewes Societies Fair, more people signed the petition, including, Janet Baah, the Mayor of Lewes, and Maria Caulfield MP.

As well as joining the annual walk, LOSRAS members work closely with Refugee Tales lobbying politicians to support the introduction of a 28-day time limit to bring indefinite immigration detention to an end. Members also helped to run a stall and fringe meeting at this year's Labour Party conference.

Members attended a Safe Passage lobby of Parliament and one organised by Women for Refugee Women to mark International Women's Day. LOSRAS regularly notifies members of various on-line petitions and events that are consistent with our aim to promote the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers.

Funding

Our funds come from membership subscriptions, donations and fundraising events. Becoming a charity has enabled us to benefit from gift aid. This year we also received payment from Hastings Borough Council for training we provided to potential volunteer befrienders across East Sussex.

Fundraising activities:

The plant sale at the Market Tower every spring goes from strength to strength, thanks to our green fingered members and to the generosity of local garden centres, Woodruff's Yard, Wye Vale and Goldcliff.

The sponsored walk raises funds and provides an opportunity for members and supporters to walk and talk together on the South Downs.

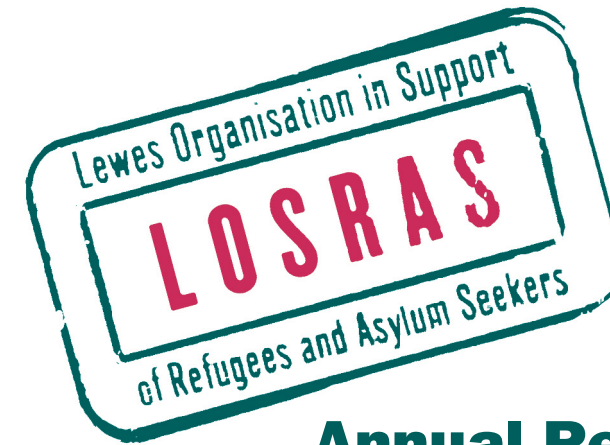
Generous donations were received from many of our members and from the Lewes Holocaust Memorial Day Group, the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, St Anne's Church, Seaford Methodists, Angels with Attitude and the We are Family event at the Depot. Longstanding member, Val Simanowitz, celebrated a significant birthday and collected donations. Our work would be impossible without such financial help.

Thanks too to Chalk Cliff Trust for a grant of £1,000 for the family activities day at Lewes Castle, and to the Waitrose Community Matters fund (green tokens) for choosing us as one of their charities.

LOSRAS has made donations to local groups working directly with refugees and asylum seekers (set out in full in the financial report)

Membership

LOSRAS ended this year with 130 individual paid up members and 5 affiliated organisations.



Annual Report

October 2017 – September 2018



Lewes Organisation in Support of
Refugees and Asylum Seekers



You've been forced out of your
home, and your homeland.

You have to live on about £5 a day.

You're forbidden to work and made to
move around the country.

You can be detained even though you've
committed no crime.

**ASYLUM SEEKERS FACE THIS UNJUST
TREATMENT EVERY DAY IN THE UK.**

LOSRAS supports refugees and asylum seekers
(separated children, adults and families) by:
giving practical help, campaigning for better treatment,
fund-raising and myth-busting.

