



Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees

Registered charity no 1173570

Annual report 2022

Another year affected by the Pandemic and now by the war in Ukraine

Throughout this year we have continued to maintain effective communications via email, telephone and our monthly meetings via Zoom. The latter has had advantages in enabling colleagues in Swansea to join with us to meet and plan.

For the first time this year we have had a number of people seeking sanctuary* living in our area and we have tried to support them, while keeping in mind that in our country, in contrast to those who secure refugee status, people seeking asylum cannot work or access most benefits.

Welcome Days

Many people benefit from these days out – not only people seeking sanctuary but also the host communities and the organisations who support them. There are benefits in working together for a

“We don’t just do this because it makes us feel better about ourselves or to earn gratitude, but because it is the right thing to do.”

common goal and providing activities that local people including children can access. Community cohesion and intergenerational working are immediate benefits that areas that have hosted have noted as well as new friendships.

In holding welcome days during the summer and early autumn we followed all Covid-19 guidance- the events were mainly outdoors, we minimised handing of foodstuffs, and encouraged social distancing.

Both visits to BBNPA sites were facilitated by BBNPA paying for transport with First Choice coaches.

It was lovely to see people (not just ourselves) so energised by venturing out and meeting and whilst it left us all wanting more, it seems that the responsible way forward is to limit the days to small groups during unsettled or cold weather or larger groups when the weather improves and

* Throughout this document we have used the term ‘people seeking sanctuary’ to describe people seeking refuge/ asylum/ safety. We try to avoid depersonalising terms such as ‘Asylum seeker’ or ‘Refugee’.

Abbreviations used in the report:

BBNPA	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	BSL	British Sign Language
DBS	Disclosure & Barring Service	DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
EYST	Ethnic Youth Support Team	IELTS	International English Language Testing System
NASS	National Asylum Support Services	NRPF	No recourse to public funds
SASS	Swansea Asylum Seekers Support	UID	Unity in Diversity

we can be outdoors. A bonus was seeing members of the public who happened to be visiting the public spaces being curious about us, and then joining in and/or giving money.

Thanks to [BBNPA](#), [Penpont](#), [Llangattock Woodland](#) project and [Treberfydd](#) for making the visits possible.

Small groups	Early July: another welcome day at Treberfydd day for local Ukrainian guests and their hosts. October: Visit for people from Newport to the Llangattock Woodland Project
Holiday cottage stays	The gentleman who came to stay at the beginning of lockdown in 2020 stayed in the holiday home with a few short gaps until April 2022 and then moved to stay with local hosts. The holiday house has been sold. Thanks to owner and hosts for all their care.
Welcome days	August: A visit to Craig Y Nos Country park September: Penpont October: Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre with BBNPA staff and volunteers for people from Swansea and Ukrainians.

Hardship fund

Established in the early days of HBTSR to meet urgent or one-off needs, the fund has been in demand again this year. Requests come from Newport Gap Sanctuary, a number of support groups in Swansea and now from our own local refugees from Ukraine.

Advised by a small group of Hardship Fund advisers, we can usually respond within 24 hours, and the great majority of applications are successful. All decisions are subsequently discussed at monthly meetings. A form on our website collects the information needed but we respond to any request sent via a recognised support group, seeking additional information if required.

Individuals are asked to apply via a support group to enable us to assess and balance local needs.

This year, Crickhowell Supports Ukraine group asked us to assist them with managing their [hardship fund](#).

Hardship Fund payments

Month	Amount	Sponsor	Details
January	£136	Latin America Support	Travel and subsistence for one person to Liverpool
	£100	UID	Travel costs for supportive company for another person travelling to Liverpool
			N.B. Red Cross pays if the person has legal aid. EYST often sort out payment
February	£100	Local Vicar	Subsistence whilst studying and delay in submitting leave to remain form
		Maria	Walking boots & jacket
	£250	SASS	Goods to replace stolen items

April	£200		Removal expenses for 3 families (able to use same transport)
May	£600	Two Swansea Groups & Rachel	Help with safe house £600
	£200	SASS	Goal-posts for sports group
	£400	Newport	On-line accounting course
	£400		BSL course
	£80	EYST	Special glasses
June	£245	SASS	Football boots/socks/shin pads
	£40	Thanu	Two shopping trollies
July		ShareTawe	New sheets and towels for residents in housing association flat.
August	£250	Ystradgynlais Syrian Support	Help with housing move
	£250	SASS	Shared cost of new football kit
	£500	Newport	Help with legal costs for family to keep well known and trusted solicitor
September	£300		Major dental work required by Ukrainian lady. (led to sorting out eligibility and accessibility of Community dentistry)
	£56		Travel to school for 4 weeks
	£150		Clothing and milk for premature baby
	£1,080		Travel passes for 3 @ £360 each. Sophie subsequently found another funding source for many others.
October	£100		Transport for 2 beds
	£250		Funeral costs for Ukrainian person
	£62		Cycle helmets, lights, pumps, locks for local Ukrainian
November	£185.89	SASS	Trainers for 5 people
December	£240		Football coaching and kit for promising young footballer
	£1,000	SASS	To establish a fund to buy winter shoes/trainers for many new arrivals

Other expenditure and special funds

In addition to the main Hardship Fund, now we have:

- a separate Immediate Needs Fund administered by one of the volunteers at SASS, which also covered phone top-ups (*report below*)
- an Immediate Needs Fund held at EYST which has become an Urgent Accommodation Fund to avoid people becoming street homeless (*report below*).
- The Moving-On Fund (*report below*)
- Cycle maintenance (*report below*)

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- A separate Legal Costs Fund (*report below*)

SASS Immediate Needs Fund

During the pandemic we gave a monthly sum of money that allowed phone top-ups to be provided to a number of people in. With Wifi now being provided in many of the homes and a return to in-person teaching, the need was much less.

However as support groups restarted after the Pandemic, there was a need for small sums of money to help with immediate food poverty or similar at weekends when food banks and EYST – who also help with immediate financial needs – are closed. Thus the phone top-up fund has become the SASS Immediate Needs fund, administered by three volunteers.

Moving-on Fund

This was set up in March 2021 to help people newly granted refugee status with the expenses of setting up a new home. Grants could be up to £200 per Family/Person to be spent as needed. This fund was to help people for whom previously we might have found household goods but had been unable to help due to the pandemic. Applications are made via volunteers and the usual agencies.

With the return to more normal life we have started some limited deliveries of household goods.

Immediate Needs Fund, now EYST Urgent Accommodation Fund

Set up in March 2021 and administered by EYST and Welcome to Swansea, this fund was designed to save their workers the considerable work involved in trying to raise/find small sums of money that may be critical to individual wellbeing. For instance, before the fund was established, 10 emails were sent between groups trying to find £8 for one pair of cheap footwear.

This fund was so successful that a grant from a national charity was made available to EYST for a Case and Crisis worker and an associated hardship fund. Our funding was no longer needed.

We decided instead to respond to increasing concerns within EYST about the number of people who become street homeless and destitute as a result of their asylum claim. Despite working closely with Sharetawe, there are no quick fixes and no surplus of accommodation.

EYST has to provide information to the Council to prove that the asylum claim is being worked on and that EYST will apply for their NASS support when appropriate. After a few days, the council usually offer a room while EYST work further on the person's asylum cases.

The aim of the fund is to allow EYST to book a B&B room for a couple of nights while statutory

“To have an emergency pot that we could use at our discretion (for those moments when we've exhausted all options) would be a dream.”

services are sorted out. So far this has not been needed very often

Membership and Support

As at 27 December 2022

Email newsletter subscribers	521
Facebook followers	1,100
Twitter followers	1,222
Instagram	114

Fundraising/ Awareness raising activities

Our generous supporters have ensured that we continue to be able to support people seeking sanctuary who are in need in south Wales.

- A pop up Art shop in Bethel Square, Brecon in February was a successful opportunity to raise our profile and money. Thanks to the Brecon Rotary for this opportunity and to John Anderson for the card reading machine and to all Artists and volunteers who made this work.
- Treberfydd had an open garden fortnight which raised money and interest in HBTSR
- We managed to have various in-person fundraising activities in the summer and in the run-up to Christmas
- A number of donations were made at the Welcome Days.
- Hay Festival (live, for the first time since the Pandemic) provided great opportunities to raise money (*see below*).

Schools of Sanctuary

Several schools expressed interest in becoming Schools of Sanctuary and continued work with HBTSR as far as Covid-19 permitted. Hay, Llangynidr, Clyro, Cradoc and Llangorse schools helped with donations at the start of the Ukrainian war and also with Christmas presents that were shared with children in Swansea. During October, an asylum seeking man living locally visited 4 primary schools to talk about Africa as part of Black History Month. A Swansea-based refugee well-known to HBTSR visited four schools to talk about his asylum journey and to do some drumming. There was [an impressive display of work](#) on the theme of sanctuary in Llangorse school on 19 December.

Hay Festival of Sanctuary

Hay Festival was an in-person festival for first time since the Pandemic and we were again able to assist the Festival with planning charity collections as well as having a number of collections for ourselves.

The Festival provided a good opportunity for an Afghan woman whom we have been supporting to meet up with an Afghan journalist.

Thanks to the generosity of the many people attending we were able to raise a substantial amount for our activities as well as assisting with raising monies for DEC.

Thanks to Penny, the Box office team and Hay Festival management for all the opportunities.

Other Activities

Holiday Cottage

For a number of years the owner of a local holiday home had allowed it to be used on many occasions for short stays by people seeking asylum, when it was not otherwise booked. Scores of families have benefited from this arrangement to have respite stays in safety and comfort, with access to shops and the local landscape.

At the start of Lockdown, Sharetawe asked if we could accommodate a man who would otherwise be homeless or placed in a hostel/dormitory. The owner agreed to this use and we have been able to befriend, help with subsistence and ensure that he has been safely accommodated. Since April this year he has stayed with a local host family.

The holiday home has now been sold and at present we are not planning to replace this activity. Grateful thanks to the home owner and hosts.

Bicycles

Over 80 bikes have been donated this year to Newport Sanctuary or Re-Cycle Swansea.

Drover Cycles , Miv, Sean, and Lawrence have continued to collect bicycles which were then conveyed to Newport and Swansea. Miv, in particular, has ensured that a number of Ukrainian adults and children have been able to acquire a working bike. We are very grateful to everyone who has donated bicycles, given storage and transport, which has allowed so many people freedom to travel. We have assisted with purchase of bike parts, helmets, lights and locks.

Newport has a regular bike maintenance session and now has city centre premises offering a secure bike park and space to refurbish and maintain bikes. They credit our support for helping to start and maintain this popular activity .

We are grateful for the support of Oliver Greenow of Tailored imports and Tailored Plumbing for the use of his transport for the bikes on several occasions and also to Tommo who single handedly transported 35 bikes to Newport in the summer.

English Language Tuition

When the welcome centre for Ukrainian people was opened locally we were able to set up English teaching and support until Adult Learning Wales took over an intensive programme. Some supporters continue to teach guests informally.

Courts support group

People seeking sanctuary are understandably very anxious about attending immigration tribunal hearings and we have been able to offer moral support by attending with individuals.

We have a leaflet on our website explaining our role as observers and for morale support.

“It is so important for the country that there are groups like yours offering help and support to asylum seekers”

Now hearings have restarted and we have been able to assist 2 people since October.

Legal Costs Fund

We also hold some money that was donated specifically to help with legal cases. This money is ring-fenced with decisions on use made by a small group which can draw on the expertise of support group volunteers in the cities. This fund can help to pay for reports, fares to travel to hand in papers and advice.

We also made a substantial donation to Asylum Justice to help them to obtain translations, reports, etc.

Friendship and support

Many of our group have kept in touch with individuals throughout the pandemic and we have maintained contact with support groups. We have been told that this is greatly appreciated.

Sewing Machines

In September 2020 Newport Gap Sanctuary asked for our help in finding sewing machines and materials to start a sewing group. Tools for Self Reliance were kindly able to let us have machines that were not suitable to be sent to Africa and other kind people also donated machines. The sewing groups have continued to flourish and are a source of informal English conversation and teaching.

Several further donations of machines have been made by Tools for Self Reliance and a similar sewing group is planned in Swansea with machines donated this year.

Goods

Until the start of lockdown March 2020 we continued to be given large amounts of clothing, bedding, toys, household and kitchen items that were of use to people seeking sanctuary both here and abroad. In March 2020 we stopped collecting goods as none of the support groups was open and so we had nowhere to send items.

We had a superb offer from Dial-A-Ride Charity shop who agreed to collect specific items that people in the cities need. This is a great resource and has meant that we have scaled back upon collecting clothing ourselves and when offers are made we redirect them to Dial-A-Ride.

In March a request for toiletries/first aid kits and simple medications to go to Ukraine was tremendously well supported by local people and children.

St Marys Church in Brecon became the de facto sorting and packing depot for a few days for which we are very grateful. St Mary's in Hay also gathered loads of items. The NMCC church in Neath had arrangements to send these items to a centre near the Ukrainian Border but the sheer volume of goods and the cost and logistics of transport across Europe necessitated a rethink about both our delivery and distribution and also for the NMCC Church. We took 3 van loads down to Neath and a number of our supporters visited to help sort and pack.

Thanks to Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools, Clyro, Cradoc, Hay and Llangorse primary Schools, to the two St Mary's Churches in Brecon and Hay, to Brecon Cathedral, to the Tower cafe, to the Old Railwayline Garden Centre and to Tailored Imports and to the team of helpers including Jasper, Carola, Gail, Rowland, Christina, Sue, Ali S and Allie E.

We posted [a full report](#) on our website

Ty Mawr Lime continue to provide us with a warm, secure storage area where we have been able to keep things

Stores Group: Sue, Erica and Carola have continued to visit the store to check that items are in date and sort any suitable items to be transported.

Homes for Ukraine, Wales Super sponsor

We have worked closely with Powys County Council and the Ukrainian resettlement programme. It has been good that the council have recognised the various support groups for people seeking sanctuary across Powys although they have not always taken account of the geographical boundaries and that our volunteers are not paid workers.

When the Homes for Ukraine and Super Sponsor scheme of the Welsh Government started we had a limited collection of toiletries and treats to make into welcome bags for people arriving in the local welcome centre. We were asked by Powys County Council to attend meetings to help plan for arrival of guests. We also helped to set up the rooms, sort a massive collection of clothing donated elsewhere and found bikes for some of the people. We were initially asked to run a volunteer programme to help welcome, entertain, teach and take people to appointments. This offer was rapidly overtaken and replaced by statutory services.

In addition a supporter arranged to refurbish 35 laptops he had managed to obtain from his employer, Kingspan. We helped to raise the money for replacement parts and arranged to distribute the laptops to arriving Ukrainians.

We made a donation to help a group in Llandrindod who support Ukrainians in hotels and homes and we also contributed toiletries.

It has been more problematic trying to work out how best to support hosts and guests in the community. We have asked the Ukrainian support staff at Powys County Council to let arriving Ukrainians know about us and give information. We have run Welcome Days to include Ukrainians and have maintained a page on our website with Ukraine-specific information and keep this updated. There are several drop-in groups for Ukrainians locally and we have offered support. We were able to help a lady and her family to raise funds for Ukraine by sharing stalls with her in Hay and Brecon. We have been invited to bring some supporters to a party to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas on 7 January 2023.

As of early November there were 292 Ukrainians in Powys and the numbers of hosted placements in Powys was second highest in Wales.

Christmas presents.

We gave £1000 each for Christmas food vouchers or gifts to UID, SASS and Newport.

Llangynidr, Llangorse, Hay and Clyro Schools gave [over 180 children's presents](#), and these were taken by Tim, Val, Ailsa & Lawrence to Swansea for distribution.

Lobbying, Awareness raising and Education.

Throughout the year we have continued to highlight important petitions and causes. We have been helped in this by the fortnightly briefing of Asylum Matters and the regular updates for Lift The Ban Coalition and Together with Refugees. We have regular correspondence with our MP and regional MS.

We have drawn attention many times to the Nationality and Borders Bill [now Act] in conjunction with the 'Together with Refugees' coalition. And more recently have demonstrated our opposition to the concept of sending traumatised people seeking safety to Rwanda.

Our activities are described on our website:

- [Letter to Welsh lords about the Nationality and Borders Bill](#)
- [Information stall in Hay](#)
- [St.Valentine's Day 2022](#)
- [Landmark Day, March 21](#)
- [Fill the Skies with Hope](#)
- [Stop the Flights to Rwanda](#)

Ailsa and Lawrence were able to present Fay Jones MP on Christmas Eve with a box containing a number of Orange planes and a letter asking her to voice our concerns about the flights to Rwanda; we also asked that the government provide safe routes for those seeking sanctuary and the right for them to work.

In addition we marked the one-year anniversary of the take-over by the Taliban in Afghanistan with a successful [kite making workshop](#) at Hay Castle organised by Rachel Giaccone.

Website and social media

The website is maintained by City of Sanctuary and Ailsa with help from Mike and Paul. It contains all our newsletters, reports, event write-ups, policies and links to other groups.

Facebook remains a public group with posts approved by Steve and Ailsa.

Our Twitter account is run by Maria and continues as an active campaigning force.

Our Instagram account is run by Alex.

Neil and Cate continue to help with design of our leaflets and posters to ensure that we have a consistent, recognisable and effective visual presence.

Administration.

All policies are on our website and are reviewed annually by the Chair and trustees. We have over 500 people on our mailing list who receive regular mailings with details of meetings, activities, updates, and petitions. All are welcome to attend our Zoom meetings .

We have met monthly via Zoom and report upon activities, income, expenditure, any issues, plans and seek views and aim for consensus about future work.

Officers and Trustees are appointed at the AGM with Trustees able to co-opt additional Trustees between AGMs as needed. Trustees have met three times this year and have kept in touch regularly.

Please let us know if you'd like to take on or assist with any of the roles listed below.

Post Holders as of December 2022	Holder
Chair	Margaret Blake
Vice Chair	Sally McColl
Treasurer	Lawrence Duffy
Secretary	Ailsa Dunn
Trustees	Margaret Blake* Lawrence Duffy* Ailsa Dunn* Melrose East appointed 12/2017 Sally McColl appointed 12/2017 Val Fraser co-opted 11/2021 appointed 13/01/2022 Adil Gatrad co-opted 11/2021 appointed 13/01/2022 *appointed 06/2017 when the Charity was first registered
Safeguarding Lead	Dr Aideen Naughton
Hardship Fund advisers	Mike Gatehouse, Lynne Rogers and Lawrence Duffy. Appointed annually
Fundraising coordinators	Rachel Giaccone and Jane Dodds
Welcomer/ information officer and group	Philip Oliver and Lynne Rogers, Lawrence Duffy, Ailsa Dunn, Adil Gatrad, Margaret and Pat Blake, Sue and Gez Richards, Penny and Andrew Leonard, Sally and Colin Mc Coll, Ellen McCombe, Mac McCarthy, Mike Gatehouse, Melrose East.
Supermarket liaison	Virginia Brown
Stores Group	Sue Richards, Carola Tipton, Erica McCarthy, Ailsa Dunn
Webmaster	Paul Funnell
Facebook administrator	Steve Buzza/Ailsa Dunn
Twitter lead	Maria Duggan
Instagram Lead	Alex Benfield
Schools Liaison/ educator	Sue Richards,

Post Holders as of December 2022	Holder
Risk Management	Melrose East
Courts Support Group	Claire Armstrong, Margaret Blake, Pauline Paterson, Sarah Andrews, Sue Richards, Rowland Jepson, Barbara Price, Reg Price, Philip Oliver, Lynne Rogers, Melrose East, Lawrence Duffy, Ailsa Dunn, Lis Lifford, Corinne Harris, Clare Shirtcliff, Ellie Lonsdale, Hilary Bright, Ellen McCombe, Roger Taylor, Adil Gatrad, Rowland Jepson, Janet Bodily, Neil Stone, Maria Duggan, Jonnie and Tina Hill, Allie Exton, Virginia Brown, Gillian Hall, Maureen Douglas, Angharad Kuck, John Anderson, Kirsty Morgan, Virginia Brown
Policies	Mike Gatehouse
Transport group	Lawrence Duffy, Tim Butler, Val Fraser, Adil Gatrad, John Anderson, Jim and Claire Milner, Gaynor and Jim Hooper, Trish Fretten, Hilary Bright, Trina Lodge, Tina and Jonnie Hill.

Some standout highlights

1. A Swansea asylum-seeking man for whom we have provided travel passes, assisted with FFP3 Face mask fitting and supported from time to time, was awarded most inspiring student of the year by Gower college. He was also student of the year in Maths and Science, and received an Adult learning Wales award for 'Different Past, Shared Futures' was able to start University to study Pharmacy this autumn. Supporters attended his tribunal at which he was finally granted refugee status.
2. The pop up Art shop in Bethell Square.
3. The amazing response from our area and schools to our appeal for toiletries and first aid items to help Ukraine,
4. The continuing Orange heart campaign for Together with Refugees.

Thanks to all our supporters and friends for all that you have done this year to help raise the profile of and directly help people seeking sanctuary.

Ailsa Dunn 31 December 2022