14th February 2024

Dear people seeking sanctuary in Wales,

This Valentine’s Day we are writing to share love and solidarity with you, to make it clear to you and to political leaders that we welcome you into our community. We are signing this message to you to show that people in our part of Breconshire as well as many other parts of Wales are standing together with refugees and calling for a fair, new plan.

Given the chance, we know communities like ours go the extra mile to welcome people seeking sanctuary – opening our homes, volunteering our time and help, speaking up, donating. And also if given the chance, people seeking sanctuary do much to enrich our society as they build new lives amongst us.

We’re grateful for the wonderful contributions to our communities, culture and economy made by people seeking sanctuary; our friends who have been granted refuge such as T who works for the Welsh government to help all people find employment, A who is working as a hospital doctor and C working as a home carer, to only mention a very few.

In the last year, people in the area of Hay, Brecon and Talgarth have held 14 days welcoming more than 600 people seeking sanctuary to share food and activities with us. In addition, more than 300 Christmas presents, 60 bicycles, 20 sewing machines, 30 laptops and countless small electrical items have been donated to help provide welcome and comfort.

We want you to know that there is overwhelming support across our area for a new, fair, just and compassionate plan for people seeking sanctuary. Our government is still trying to banish to Rwanda, people fleeing persecution despite the highest court in the land ruling the scheme unlawful. Tens of thousands of people are stuck in limbo waiting for their refugee protection to be processed, separated from their families and barred from working. The current policies aren’t working for sanctuary seekers or for local communities.

So we have come together to say that we’ve had enough; enough division, short term thinking and wasted human potential. We are calling for a new, kinder and fairer approach to people seeking sanctuary.

With love from,
Dr. Ailsa Dunn, Secretary to Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Professor Tim Butler Chair of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Lawrence Duffy, Treasurer of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Mrs Claire Armstrong, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Mrs Melrose East, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Professor Val Fraser, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Mr Adil Gatrad, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Mr Rowland Jepson, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
Mrs Lis Lifford, Trustee of Hay Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees.
M/s Carla Rapoport. Executive director Lumen Prize
Mr David Raikes.
The Very Revd Dr Paul Shackerley, Dean of Brecon.
Rev Anna Bessant.
Mr John Fitzgerald OBE. Trustee Glasbury Arts.
The Venerable Alan Jevons, Archdeacon of Brecon.
Mr Tom Bullough, Author.
Lady Sally McColl
John Meredith, Diocesan Director of Education
Mike Gatehouse, Hardship adviser
Rev Margaret Blake.
Patrick Blake.
Hilary Bright.
Harriet Tod.
Ben Rawlence, Author and director of Black Mountains college
Owen Sheers, Poet and Author,
Rachel Podger, Artistic director of Brecon Baroque Festival.
Dr. Maria Duggan. PublicServiceWorks
Maureen Douglas.

Show your HEART for Valentine's Day
- calling for Safe Sanctuary
- A Fair and Humane Asylum System
- Stop the Removals to Calais
- Strengthen international collaboration for safe routes
Join us for a day of Orange Heart activities at Hay Castle on 13th February, 10am-4pm
Come and make kites, flags, cards and paper planes!
#FairBeginHere #TogetherWithRefugees