

Swindon City of Sanctuary



Registered Charity No. 1177624

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020



Over the past four years, more than one thousand people and organisations in Swindon have supported our work to make Swindon a welcoming and inclusive place for all.



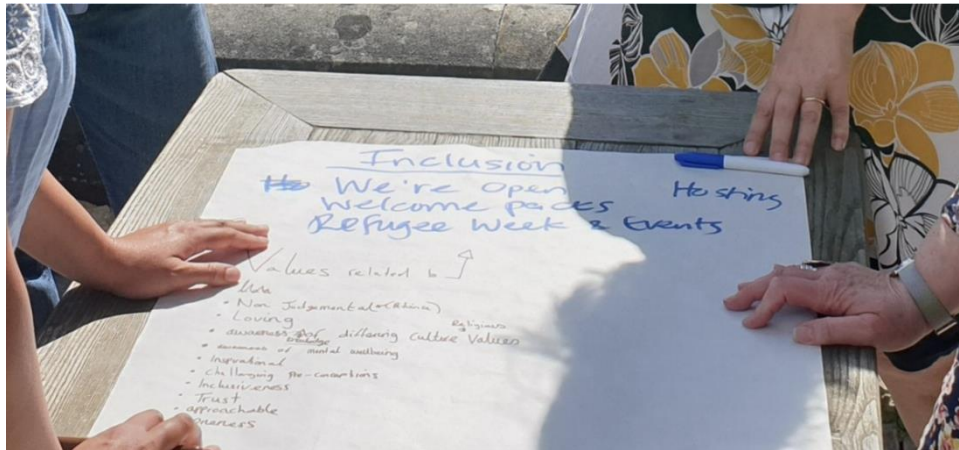
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Introduction and Summary

Our focuses for 2019-2020:

- The impact of our work
- Building stronger foundations for the future



Progress:

- **Schools of Sanctuary**, our flagship education programme, reached seventeen schools in the Swindon area – an increase this year of more than 50%
- Increasing the number of our weekly **We're Open** drop-in café sessions – more than 40 were held this year
- We created a new fundraising strategy to help define our future model, resource requirements and associated funding needs
- Our hosting scheme, **Room for All**, went from strength to strength expanding to accommodate more guests who would otherwise have faced homelessness
- In June 2019, an Away Day session for staff and trustees, led by external facilitator, Sarah Drummond from **The Everyone Foundation**, helped us develop, define and confirm our Culture and Values, to ensure that our internal environment reflected the ethos we aim to promote across our local community
- We successfully advocated on behalf of others with positive outcomes
- We contributed towards three national campaigns for change: **End Indefinite Detention**, **Lift the Ban** and **Families Together**; our contribution to the campaign to gain **Free English Classes to Speakers of Other Languages** (ESOL) for people seeking sanctuary, continued
- Staff, Trustees and Volunteers attended conferences led by the national **City of Sanctuary** and workshops led by the national campaigning organisation, **Asylum Matters**; this has enabled us to plan and develop our outreach
- In January 2020, staff and some trustees attended and spoke at Swindon's Holocaust Memorial Ceremony
- We contributed to the annual survey collated by national **City of Sanctuary** and national hosting network, **NACCOM**

Changes:

- In June 2019, we welcomed a new member of staff to the team, to coordinate our **Room for All** project; this has made a significant difference to our hosting scheme, helping us to professionalise support for guests and hosts.
- Our new accountant, from **Beans Business Consultancy**, joined us – initially, to produce our accounts for the 2019-2020 Financial Year – and has since become an invaluable asset to us, helping the Board of Trustees with financial oversight and giving us clear information on which to base investment decisions.
- We said farewell to two of our Trustees: Marina Strinkovsky and, our Treasurer, Simon Davies. Marina continued as a volunteer with us, as a valued host in our **Room For All** project; Simon moved on to support another charity closer to his home.

As you read through our Annual Report, you will see that all our key projects – from **Schools of Sanctuary** through to **Campaigning** – have made a positive impact in our community. Our social inclusion projects, **Room for All** and **We're Open**, have had a significant impact on the lives of many people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. There is, of course, much more to do: we look forward to expanding our team of staff and increasing our volunteer numbers which will enable us to extend our reach across more areas of our local community.

Our financial year runs from March to February, so this report covers the period just prior to the first national Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020. Referencing the global pandemic throughout this report is therefore inevitable. None of us could have foreseen the impact that the Covid-19 crisis could have had on our community and our charity. As we signed-off the 2019-2020 accounts and looked forward to a new year, we were already discussing the impact the pandemic might have on the lives and futures of our beneficiaries.

Those challenges will be the focus of our 2020-2021 Annual Report. We are thankful that the hard work and collaborative involvement of our staff, our Board of Trustees and our volunteers, gave us the momentum to deal positively with the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the subsequent Lockdown. Our actions gave us the agility to alter our model under difficult circumstances and to continue to support our beneficiaries.



Nicola Wood

Executive Officer

September 2020



Ben Jackson

Chair of Trustees

September 2020

Our Year in Numbers

150 volunteer sessions at **We're Open** drop-in cafe

70 competing footballers at **Football Welcomes** event

393 guests dropped-in to **We're Open**

200+ people attended Phosphoros Theatre's exhilarating production, *Pizza Shop Heroes*

40 **We're Open** drop-in café sessions

31 businesses pledged their support

11 guests accommodated in **Room for All** hosting scheme

3 national campaigns

41 bus passes donated by **Swindon's Bus Company**

30+ volunteers working to promote a culture of welcome

130 pledges of support from local people

7 Experts by Experience volunteers

17 schools across the town

100+ school staff involved in training, curriculum developments, special projects and dissemination

2,500 young people in local schools involved in projects and curriculum developments

10 regular participants at **6** fortnightly **Well-being** project Yoga sessions



Thanks

We thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed to our work and the many others who pledge to do so in the future.

We thank all our volunteers and supporters for their pledges, individual donations, grant funds and time. These essential groups of generous people and organisations have enabled us to continue developing our work to meet our objectives.

Air Photo Services Ltd	Swindon Arts Centre
Andrew Wood	Swindon's Bus Company
Arts and Humanities Research Council	Swindon Community Choir
Asylum Matters	Swindon Dance
BBC Wiltshire	Swindon & Gloucester Mind
Carole Bent	Swindon Heritage
City of Sanctuary (National)	Swindon Libraries
Coffee#1, Swindon	Swindon Link
Create Studios	Swindon Night Shelter
Darkroom Espresso	Swindon People's Assembly
Disability Experts	Swindon Quakers
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service	The Co-operative Group
Eastcott Community Organisation	The Emporium of Loveliness Charity Boutique
Good Gym	The Everyone Foundation
High Sheriff of Wiltshire	The Harbour Project
Honda of the UK Manufacturing	The Joffe Charitable Trust
Justin Tomlinson, MP for Swindon North	The Medaille Trust
Los Gatos	The Olive Tree Café
No Accommodation network	The Royal Soul Band
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner	Threshold Housing Link, Swindon
Post Office Limited	Viewpoint Community Media
Real Print Management	Voluntary Action Swindon
Refugee Action	Volunteer Centre Swindon
Robert Buckland, MP for Swindon South	Volunteer Event Organisers
Save the Children	Willows Counselling Centre
Social Media Support Limited	Wiltshire Community Foundation
South Swindon Parish Council	Wiltshire Law Centre
South Swindon Labour Party	Working Links
Staff in Schools of Sanctuary Network	Wyvern Theatre
Strength Outsourcing	
Swindon 105.5FM	
Swindon Advertiser	
Swindon Advocacy Movement	
Swindon & Marlborough Amnesty Group	

Our Charitable Objects

To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.

The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.

Our Impact: Culture and Values



TRUST

Trust is at the core of our organisation. We understand that all those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable in our welcome and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

INCLUSIVE

Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means that we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each person seeking sanctuary in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We endeavour to work in languages that are understood by the people we support as well as our local community.

OBJECTIVE

Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused, and we ensure we work ethically in all we do and who we work with as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

INFORMED

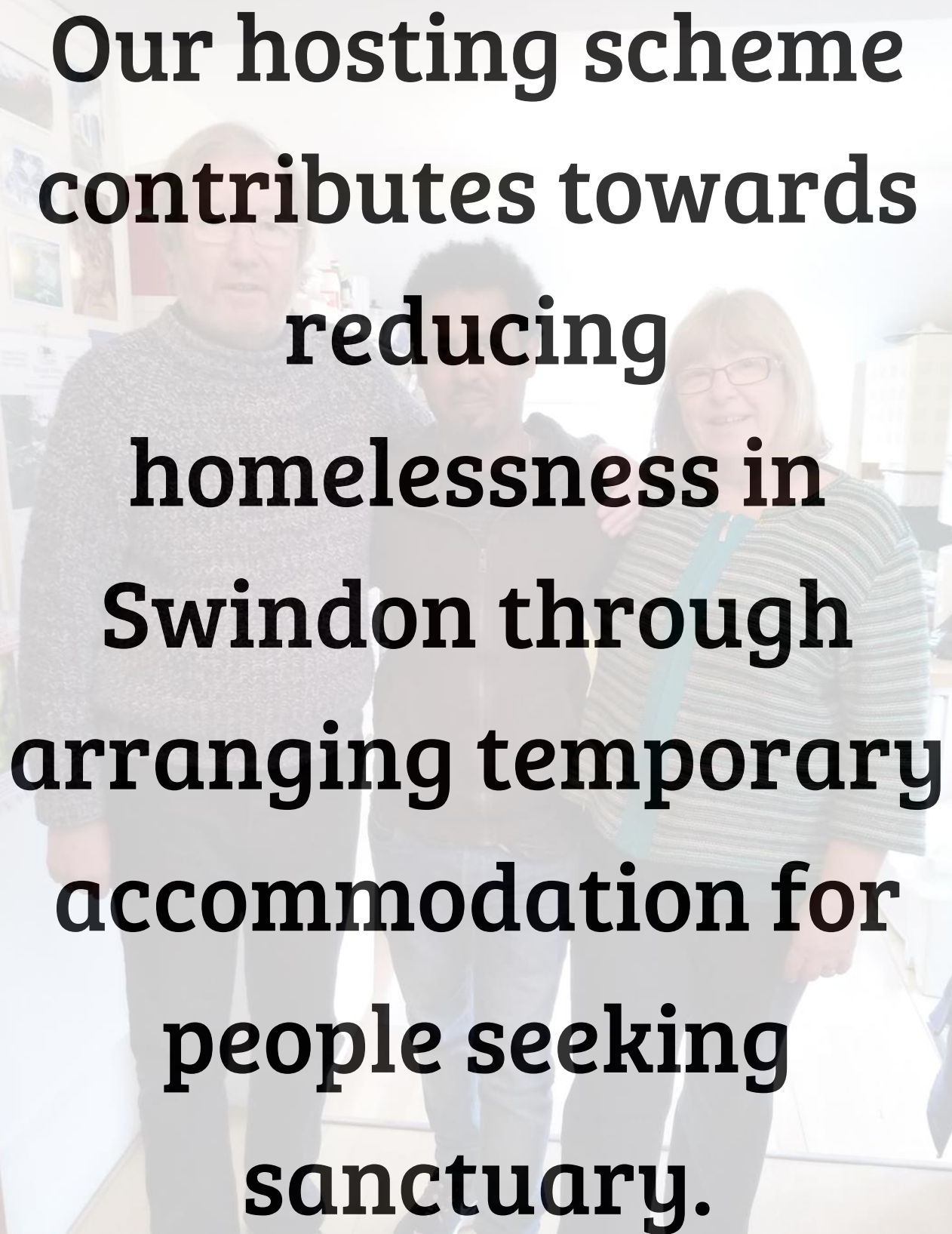
Across our organisation, we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting people seeking sanctuary, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create a better understanding between us all.

INSPIRATIONAL

We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections, and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place to be for all who live here.

POSITIVE and COMMITTED

We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated, and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

A photograph of three people standing in a room. On the left is a man with glasses and a grey sweater. In the center is a man with a beard and a dark jacket. On the right is a woman with glasses and a striped sweater. They are standing in front of a wall covered with various papers and posters. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, black font.

**Our hosting scheme
contributes towards
reducing
homelessness in
Swindon through
arranging temporary
accommodation for
people seeking
sanctuary.**

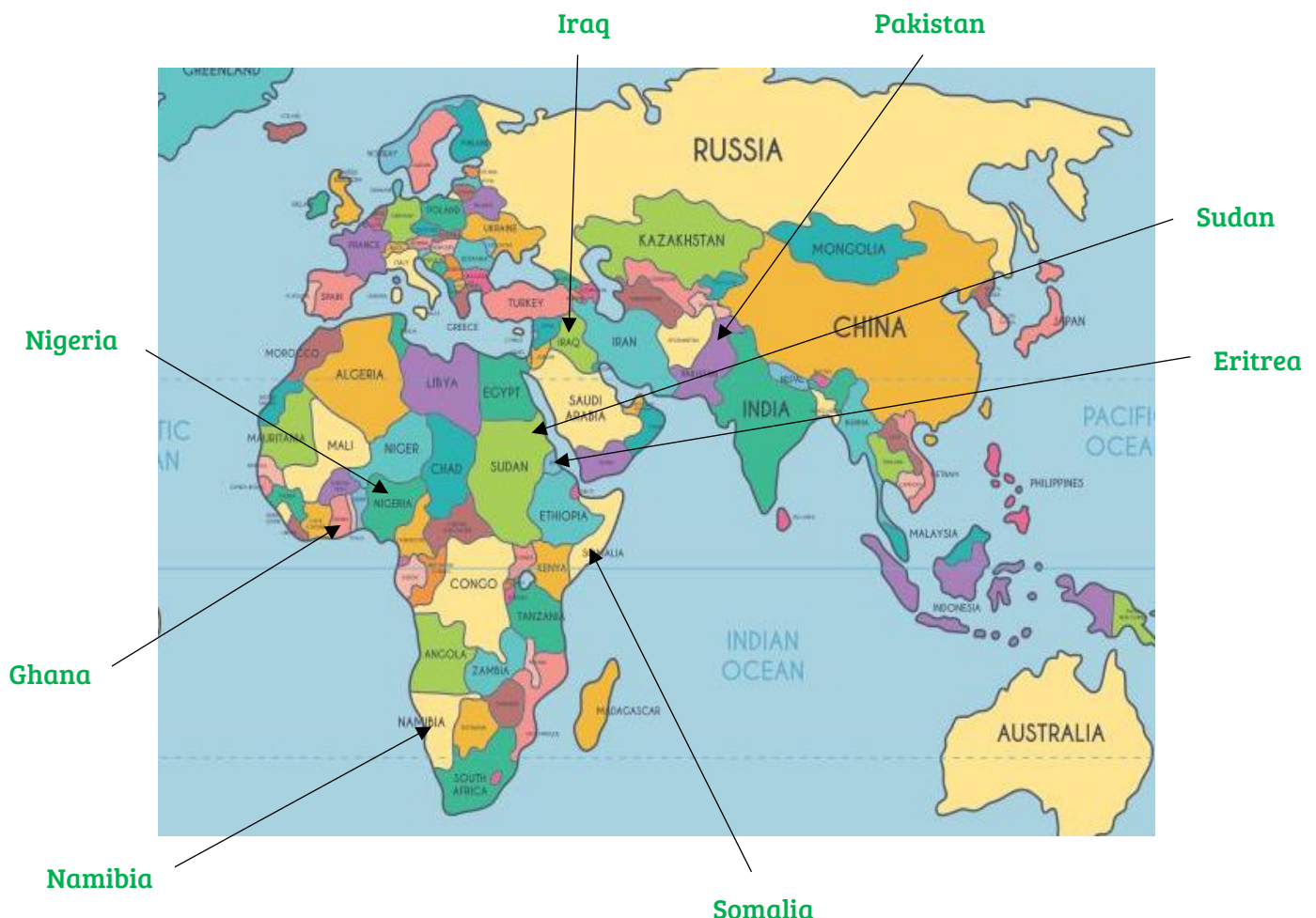
Our Impact: Room for All

Providing a safe place to live for people seeking sanctuary who would otherwise face homelessness.

Room for All in numbers:

- **15** volunteers attended our training course
- **13** referrals from other local charities (The Harbour Project, The Medaille Trust, Swindon Night Shelter, Threshold Housing Link)
- **11** guests accommodated
- **8** host households
- **3** volunteer support workers
- **1** new link with a community organisation (Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind)

Our **Room for All** guests this year have come from a diverse range of countries including Iraq, Sudan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Pakistan, Ghana and Namibia.



OUR PROJECT

Having already coped with a traumatic journey to get to the UK, on arrival, people seeking sanctuary very often face a hostile environment. Ahead of them is a long and unpredictable asylum process. Even having gained refugee status, the struggle for acceptance is still not over.

A whole series of new difficulties face people seeking sanctuary once they have been given their 'Leave to Remain' (i.e. given refugee status). They are issued with a letter of eviction from the Home Office and have just twenty-eight days to leave their asylum accommodation. Within those twenty-eight days, they will:

- Receive their national insurance number and their biometric residents' permit (BRP)
- Need to apply for Universal Credit, which can take up to five weeks
- Need to look for a job and find somewhere else to live

People with families will be found somewhere to live by the local council. Due to the limited timescales, single people may end up destitute and with nowhere to live.

Homelessness is not a good start to a new life in Swindon.

As well as people who have their 'Leave to Remain', others at risk of homelessness are those referred to by the Home Office as *Appeals Rights Exhausted (ARE)** and *Vulnerable Migrants**. For these people, who are neither eligible for social housing, supported housing, nor any benefits, homelessness and destitution are their only options.

This is where our hosting scheme project, **Room for All**, is essential. **Room for All** provides a network of volunteers who offer a spare room in their home as short-term, rent-free accommodation to people who are at risk of homelessness and destitution. **Room for All** has prevented and relieved poverty for all guests this year, protecting them from becoming 'sofa surfers' or, worse still, 'rough sleepers'.

This initiative meets one of our **Charitable Objects**, *"The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon."*

It also reflects Swindon City of Sanctuary **Culture and Values**, in the following ways: based on **TRUST, INCLUSIVE, OBJECTIVE, INFORMED, POSITIVE and COMMITTED**

OUR SUCCESSES

The continued success of **Room for All** is enhanced by generous pledges of support from individuals and organisations within and beyond our community.



- **INFORMED, INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** During 2019-2020, our second and very successful operational year, we continued to use our funding from the **Wiltshire Community Foundation (WCF)** and the grant from the **No Accommodation Network (NACCOM)**, to develop and extend our **Room for All** initiative.

NACCOM, which we joined in February 2017, nationally supports schemes like **Room for All** that work to prevent destitution amongst people seeking sanctuary.

As last year, our membership of **NACCOM** enabled us to continue:

- To take advantage of being part of a strong network through the mutual support offered at regional and national meetings
- To learn from long-established hosting schemes
- To take pride in the development of **Room for All**
- To add our voice to **NACCOM**'s national campaigns to improve outcomes for people seeking sanctuary nationally

"Most Home Office accommodation does not have access to IT or WiFi facilities to enable people seeking sanctuary to engage with online support."

Nicola Wood, Executive Officer, Swindon City of Sanctuary

- **INFORMED, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, TRUST:** This year, the expertise and commitment of our new Hosting Co-ordinator, led to:
 - An expansion in the number of host households
 - Further recruitment and training of new support volunteers
 - Links with the **Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind** (one of the many branches of the national charity providing mental health services in local communities across the UK)

Through **Mind**, we were able to refer people seeking sanctuary for vital support which extended to participation in an excellent range of activities including walking, swimming, yoga, crafts and a job club. This opportunity for social inclusion was hugely beneficial for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon; the chance to meet new people in a local community can be one of the most important welcoming and inclusive actions leading to a sense of stability and belonging.

- **TRUST, INFORMED, INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED: Room for All** not only filled a crucial need in reducing homelessness in Swindon, but also provided the support and welcome that is at the heart of a City of Sanctuary.



"I had a very good time; they are a very good family. I can't describe them in words! I felt very comfortable, like it was my house." **Room for All** guest, Swindon

"As always, incredibly rewarding – we have a new son." **Room for All** host, Swindon



- **TRUST, INCLUSIVE, INFORMED, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Room for All did more than just provide a room last year for the eleven guests accommodated with their hosts. Each of our guests built a close relationship with a dedicated volunteer support worker who kept in regular contact to provide support and practical help.
- **INCLUSIVE, INFORMED, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** On the practical side, funding from our Local Giving donors and generous gifts from local supporters, meant we could provide our guests, who are some of Swindon's most vulnerable people seeking sanctuary, with the means to lead a dignified and independent life – whether it was a 'settling-in' pack of toiletries or a discounted bus pass from Swindon's Bus Company (which was given free-of-charge to guests with transport needs). This simple, generous arrangement with Swindon's Bus Company has been essential. For guests being hosted in town, as well as places 'out of town', this provided a vital communication link which contributed towards reducing people's isolation.
- **INFORMED, TRUST, INCLUSIVE:** Further support from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations enables us to create 'move-on' plans towards permanent accommodation.
- **INFORMED, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, TRUST, INCLUSIVE:** Our informative and comprehensive training programme for Room for All volunteer hosts and support workers, which is constantly being updated, provides essential knowledge and realistic expectations. In August 2019, our training course was attended by fifteen volunteers. The training included:
 - An introduction to Swindon City of Sanctuary
 - An overview of the Room for All initiative
 - An explanation of essential definitions
 - An awareness of the issues our guests may face
 - An introduction about being a host - with hosts sharing their experiences
 - An explanation of the 'move-on' process

The value of these training programmes cannot be under-estimated. Responses from potential and established hosts, attending the training programme in November 2019, noted:

"... the detail that the PowerPoint went into was very informative."

Room for All host, 2019

- **TRUST, INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INFORMED:** Our hosts and support worker volunteers also benefit from this project. Guests become part of the host's family; strong bonds and relationships are formed. Hosts and support workers equally commented on how their involvement with the hosting scheme enriched their lives, simply through learning about someone else's culture and language, and listening to personal stories.

"Every guest teaches you new things about where they have come from, what the journey was like and what they need to do now they are in the UK."

Room for All host, 2019

- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INFORMED:** Swindon Fire Service (Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service) has continued to pledge their support to our hosting scheme this year, by again providing free safety training and advice to hosts – this includes a 'Safe and Well' check of hosts' properties.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Unfortunately, not everyone referred to the scheme this year was accepted due to their individual circumstances. Some people were deemed too high risk or did not meet the criteria.
- We still had no hosts who could accommodate couples.
- The capacity of our hosting scheme to expand depends on having volunteer hosts available to help. As some people's asylum cases become more complicated, the length of time their cases take to progress increases. Hosts are generally able to offer guests a room for a period of three to five months but any longer than this means alternative hosts have to be found.
- Without the kindness of volunteers opening up their homes and providing their generous and much needed support, a number of vulnerable people seeking sanctuary would be homeless. The indignity of homelessness, added to the trauma and loss already experienced through the asylum process, can only exacerbate

vulnerability. Consequently, our drive to recruit new volunteers as **Room for All** hosts and support workers continues.

- Sadly, Covid-19 had a dramatic impact on our **Room for All** project. Early in 2020, we could not have anticipated the enormous extent of this impact; but our quick action to respond to the changes brought about during the Lockdown, enabled us to continue to support our beneficiaries already in the hosting scheme, despite the restrictions. However, to protect hosts, support workers and guests, plans were put ready to suspend, if necessary, our flagship project of 2018-2019, **Room for All**.

"I was touched to know kind people still exist in this world. Thank you so much, I can't even imagine where I would be were it not for this scheme. I hope it carries on growing and helping more people facing similar challenging situations. Thanks to this scheme, I am now able to afford to relocate to another city where a new exciting job is waiting for me on Monday."

Our Impact: Transport Fund



Being able to travel means that people seeking sanctuary can ... begin to take part in the life of their new community.

Transport Fund in numbers:

- **41** free bus passes
- **41** opportunities to access English classes
- **41** chances to take part in community life

OUR PROJECT



Swindon's Bus Company again generously pledged its support for another year by providing reduced bus passes for us to match-fund according to individual need. For 2019-2020, the fund was again supported by individual monthly donations from the public via **Local Giving**.

This partnership project with a significant local organisation meets one of our **Charitable Objects**, *"The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon."*

It also reflects the **Culture and Values** of **Swindon City of Sanctuary** in the following ways:

OBJECTIVE: The project started in 2018 and continues to provide monthly bus passes to some people seeking sanctuary who live on the outskirts of the town. Without means of transport, accessing English classes, asylum advice, health care, social activities and volunteering opportunities which enable participation in community life, can be an additional and unnecessary challenge.

INFORMED: We provide a free bus pass to some beneficiaries who are accommodated through **Room for All** who have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF), either because they

are awaiting fresh evidence to submit as part of a new asylum claim, or because they are still waiting for the Universal Credit system to catch up with their needs.

INCLUSIVE: A weekly TravelPass from **Swindon's Bus Company** costs £14.50 (correct at time of writing), more than one third of the income of someone seeking asylum, therefore the idea of travel into the town centre becomes untenable without support. To have a bus pass means greater opportunity for participating in community life.

OUR SUCCESSES

Bus passes issued this year have again provided a vital lifeline to beneficiaries living further out of town. Beneficiaries were able to continue to participate in English classes and community activities and events, in the centre of town such as **We're Open, Well-being** (yoga, counselling) and voluntary work.

"I had training provided by the Hospital and started volunteering there in 2018, in the most busy ward, caring for the elderly who have chronic disease. I gave them lunch, tea and coffee, and helped with their personal care. I chatted with them, I would tell them stories to make them happy. I'd also tell them jokes too and would help to feed them. They really appreciated that and I feel very happy and blessed I could help them."

The words of a lived experience Volunteer

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

This project's success was dependent on beneficiaries being able to travel to various activities and events which worked well until March 2020 and the national Covid-19 Lockdown. Being unable to anticipate the impact of the pandemic has been challenging. At time of writing, our plans and challenges remain:

- To maintain funding and support from **Swindon's Bus Company** and **Local Giving** for next year
- To create, and provide in the Home Office accommodation for people seeking asylum, straightforward information guides and leaflets (digital and printed), relevant to need, showing how to access local services via public transport
- With the interruption of Covid-19, our beneficiaries might not be able to travel to, nor engage with, their socially inclusive activities. We are therefore concerned that isolation brought about by limited opportunities may have an impact on health and mental well-being
- To anticipate and consider contingency travel alternatives in the wake of Covid-19.

The context in which refugees and asylum seekers have grown up, and the experience of fleeing from home, varies greatly and may impact mental health in different ways.

Not all refugees will have had their lives threatened, but fear will always have been present.

Those who have grown up in the context of war may have lived with chronic fear and become accustomed to it as a way of life...

(City of Sanctuary [Resources | Health Stream of Sanctuary \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](https://cityofsanctuary.org/resources/health-stream-of-sanctuary))

Our Impact: Well-being Project

Improving the mental health of people seeking sanctuary through exercise and access to counselling

Well-being Project in numbers:

- **11** beneficiaries
- **10** people attended regular yoga sessions
- **5** people received 1:1 counselling sessions

OUR PROJECT

At the beginning of 2020, we started our **Well-being Project** for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. We wanted to focus on how those seeking sanctuary could best cope with their life since arriving in the UK. Cultural changes can have a huge psychological impact on individuals. Language barriers, dealing with new forms of bureaucracy, new customs, even hostility, can all take their toll on the physical and mental well-being of those seeking sanctuary.

“When people are not able to fulfil these needs, or are frustrated, or they experience too much change in too little time, they become very stressed which can exacerbate or trigger serious mental health difficulties.”

City of Sanctuary [Resources | Health Stream of Sanctuary \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](https://cityofsanctuary.org/resources/health-stream/)

This initiative meets one of our **Charitable Objects**, *“To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.”*

The **Well-being Project** is reflective of the **Culture and Values of Swindon City of Sanctuary** in the following ways:

INFORMED: We were conscious that any services we planned to provide would be undertaken with the strictest confidentiality and in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. Reminders of difficult periods in the life of a person seeking sanctuary that may have happened in the past or that may be occurring in the present, could cause further stress and anxiety, so they would therefore need skilled and qualified volunteer support.

POSITIVE and COMMITTED: From January 2020, yoga and 1:1 counselling sessions were held fortnightly, every Thursday, in the function room at the **Bakers Café**, a community café in the town centre. This venue was not only easily accessible for people to attend, it was also a welcoming and friendly place for meeting. Every fortnight, there were two yoga sessions: one class for men; one class for women.

Sadly, as with all of our projects and initiatives, there was no escape from the impact of Covid-19; this led to temporary suspension of the **Well-being Project** in March 2020.

OUR SUCCESSES

In such a short time from January to March 2020, the **Well-being Project** was a great success:

- A skilled yoga teacher (British Wheel of Yoga) and accredited counsellor (HPD, DipCHyp, MCNHC, NLP Master Practitioner) with experience of working with military personnel who suffer from PTSD, joined our growing Volunteer Team at **Swindon City of Sanctuary**, and set up a series of yoga classes and counselling sessions.
- All yoga classes were well-attended, attracting ten regular members; they were also very beneficial for all participants. With safeguarding and privacy being paramount in this project, detailed individual feedback has been difficult to collect. However, testament to this project's need and success is the fact that a group of 'regulars', who attended all the fortnightly classes, quickly formed.
- The 1:1 counselling sessions provided much-needed support to all five participating beneficiaries. One person, in particular need of mental health support, began receiving regular counselling.

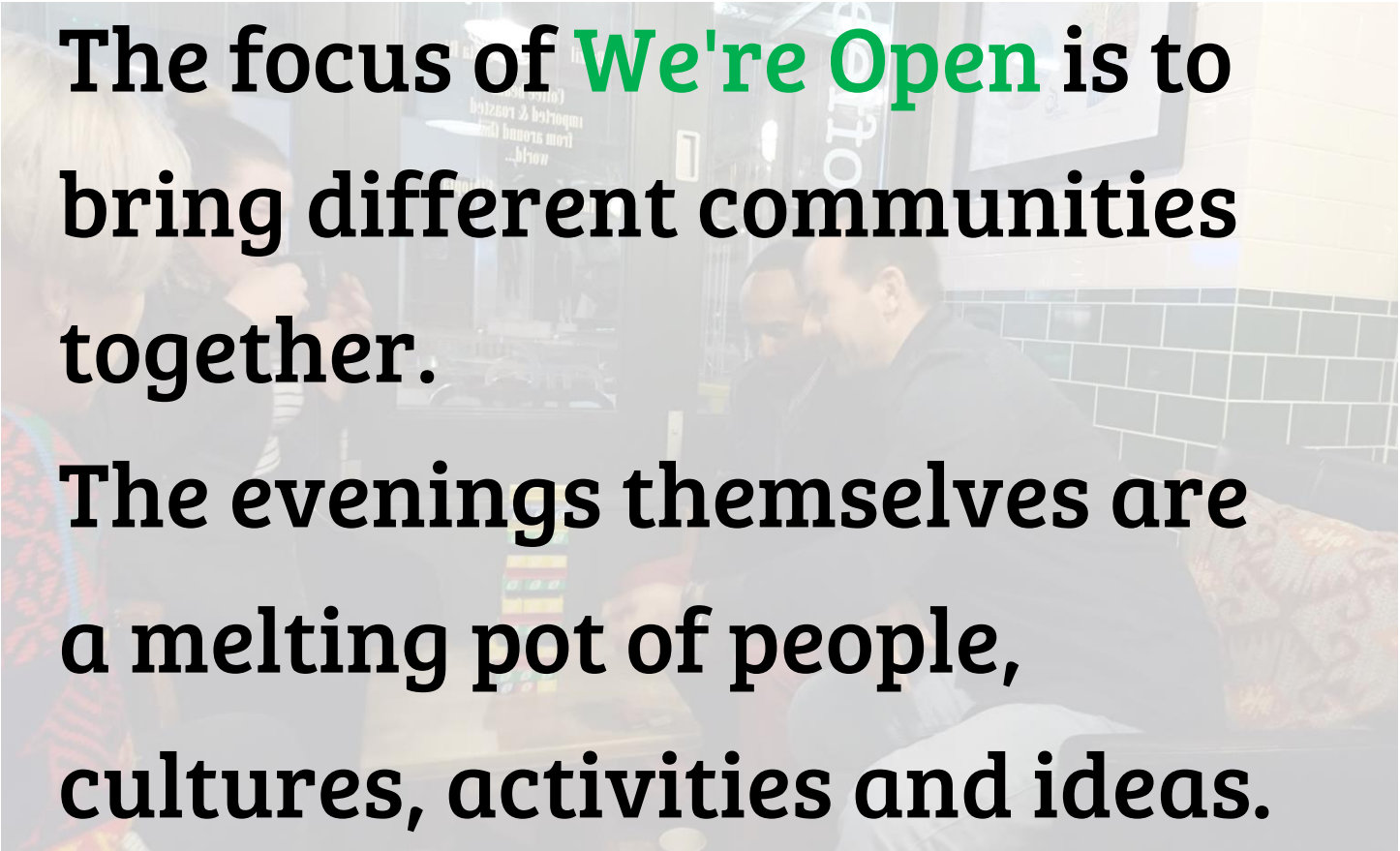


OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

With the interruption of Covid-19 and the suspension of the classes, maintaining contact with yoga class members and those who attended the 1:1 counselling sessions presented a huge challenge.

The additional uncertainties, facing us all in the wake of the pandemic, mean the future for our **Well-being Project** is precarious. However, we are optimistic that our plans remain surmountable and sustainable:

- To set up remote learning sessions for yoga – but this relies on access to appropriate IT. Home Office accommodation has no WiFi provision and the cost of mobile phone data is prohibitive to people in receipt of Asylum Support
- For 2020-2021, in a post-Covid-19 context, we plan to continue with, and expand, the yoga classes – from fortnightly to weekly – and increase the provision of the 1:1 counselling sessions
- We will recruit another volunteer yoga teacher
- As the numbers increase, we aim to source a bigger space in which to hold the classes, and a separate smaller space for counselling.



The focus of **We're Open is to bring different communities together.**

The evenings themselves are a melting pot of people, cultures, activities and ideas.

Our Impact: We're Open

Having a place where worries about issues relating to asylum claims can be left behind, and where people can meet in a friendly and inclusive environment, is crucial.

We're Open in numbers:

- 393 guests welcomed
- 150 volunteer sessions
- 205 drinks served

OUR PROJECT

This year was the third, and most successful, for our fantastic, inspirational project, **We're Open**. Our unique weekly café evenings, funded by donations and a grant from **Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**, continued to thrive.



We're Open – Christmas Special 2019

"We're Open, brings a taste of socialising in a new culture for newcomers to Swindon. It's an exciting environment: music, board games and the chance to learn new things."

A regular weekly visitor at *We're Open*

We're Open is our innovative approach to reducing social isolation for people seeking sanctuary. It is a friendly and welcoming hub of social inclusion for people from across our town: people seeking sanctuary; Swindon-born residents; people who have come to live in Swindon from other villages, towns, cities and countries; and people visiting for a short stay. All are brought together to share coffee, conversation, board games and music from around the world.



This inspirational initiative meets two of our **Charitable Objects**:

- *To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.*
- *The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds*

We're Open, run solely by volunteers, began in 2018. Testament to its success is the continued commitment of all volunteers.

"All our volunteers get as much out of being there as the guests whom they meet, greet and befriend every week."

Lead volunteer at **We're Open**

We're Open, valued by so many in our local community, from individuals to organisations working with the many new arrivals in Swindon, is a place where people seeking sanctuary can temporarily leave behind the worries about issues relating to their asylum claim and meet other people in a friendly and inclusive environment – a perfect setting for developing understanding of other cultures and nurturing the common things shared by humanity. Where people were born, what languages they speak or faiths they follow can often be things that divide people; at **We're Open**, they are a strong uniting force.

Sadly, by February 2020, numbers of café regulars had started to decline as news of the approaching Covid-19 pandemic began to have an impact. In March, when the government announced a nationwide Lockdown, our project, along with public social events across the country, had to be put 'on hold'.

OUR SUCCESSES

We're Open reflects the **Culture and Values** of **Swindon City of Sanctuary** in the following ways: **INCLUSIVE, OBJECTIVE, INFORMED, INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED**. Its positive impact cannot be over-stated.

- **INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** In March 2019, due to changes beyond our control, **We're Open** moved from centrally located, popular independent café, **Darkroom Espresso**, to another popular café, **Coffee#1**. With the positive local community ethos of **Coffee #1**, and the company's commitment to charity support, we were warmly welcomed. Situated right in the heart of Swindon's Brunel shopping area, **Coffee#1** was a perfect location. With tables and chairs outside and an open shop front we were more visible to passers-by. This meant we could invite more people in to meet us, find out about us and about what was happening, and join us for our weekly social evening.
- **INCLUSIVE:** This year, **We're Open** continued to provide an opportunity to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds, and continued to focus on encouraging participation and reducing social isolation through:
 - Conversation and networking
 - Playing games and activities
 - Watching, listening to and participating in musical performances

- **INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Nearly 400 guests visited **We're Open** during the year. Some only once, others became café regulars returning every week.
- **INCLUSIVE:** The larger floor space in **Coffee#1** meant there was more space for small groups to form to play games, or just to sit and chat. The extra space also allowed us to showcase local musicians and the musical talent of our sanctuary seeking café regulars. On one occasion, a curious Bristol musician passing by, seeing and hearing what was happening in **Coffee#1**, came in for a drink. He returned several times with his guitar to perform.
- **INCLUSIVE:** Playing card games, board games and table-top games is serious business at **We're Open** and a true leveler for encouraging participation and conversation. Many of our café regulars outclassed all comers at games like Dominoes. Months spent traveling across the world to reach the UK had taught them to observe the spots and know when and how to play!
- **OBJECTIVE, INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Our convivial weekly sessions welcomed guests throughout the year, including local decision-makers, who, having the chance to meet café regulars and hear their stories, were impressed by the immense social and emotional value of a meeting for just two hours every week on a Thursday evening. The Police Commissioner for Wiltshire, Angus Macpherson, the Bishop of Swindon, members of local political parties, as well as regulars from the Harbour Project (Swindon's local charity providing direct support to people seeking sanctuary), were welcomed as warmly as all the café regulars.
- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INSPIRATIONAL:** Conversation enabled supporters, volunteers and people seeking sanctuary to connect and network with each other providing a warm, robust welcome. Over the weeks, through their conversations, many of the regulars were able to break down barriers based on misconceptions of each other.
- **INCLUSIVE, INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, OBJECTIVE:** Perhaps the greatest achievement of **We're Open** is summed up in this comment from one of our café regulars:

*In terms of change, even the small things can change someone's life hugely. At **We're Open**, we have more closeness to each other and become part of the community. Some volunteers even invite us to their homes for Christmas. That's the change.*

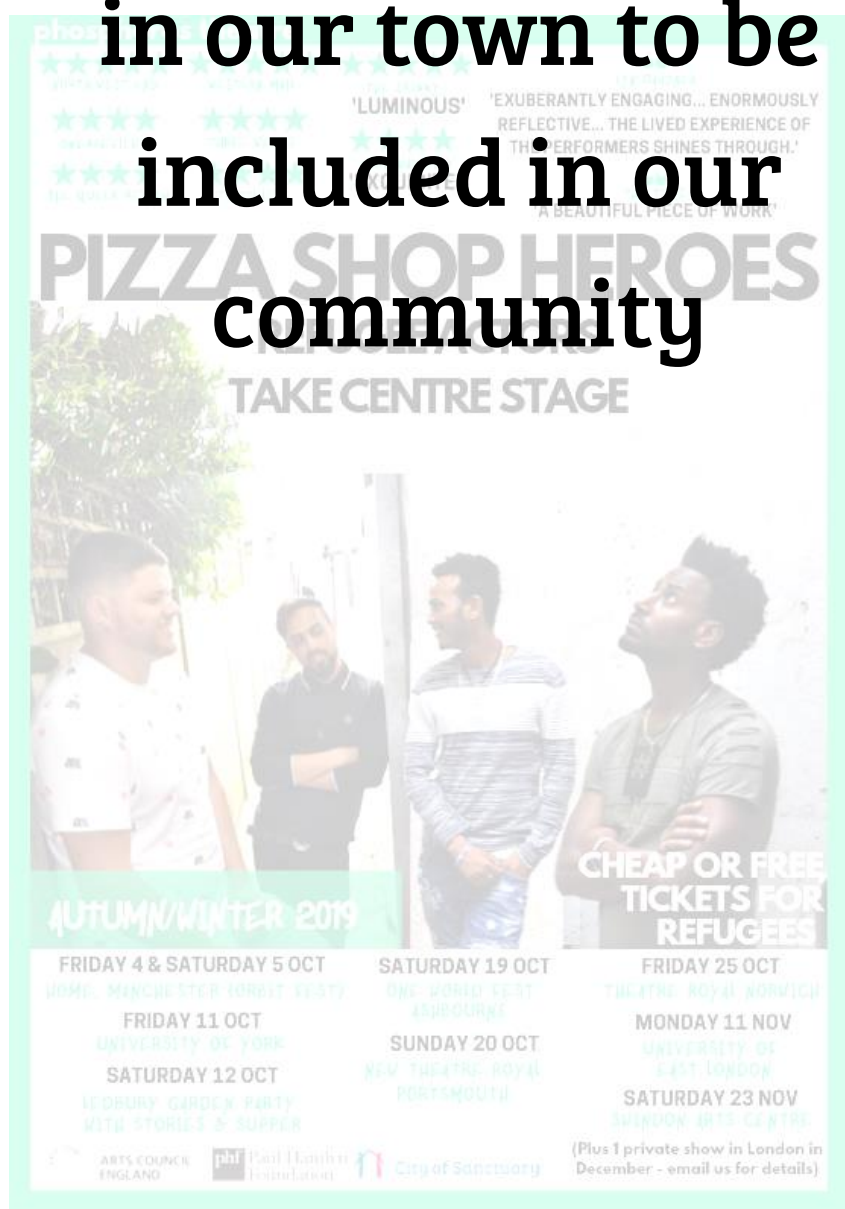
OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Covid-19 and the associated Lockdowns 'closed' **We're Open**
- Running some form of socially inclusive digital gathering, **We're Virtually Open**, will be challenging: getting the news out to regular café guests will present a challenge as official lists of names and contact numbers of people who attend are not required
- Were it possible to contact people, another anticipated challenge would be the issue of access to appropriate IT for participating in a virtual gathering
- Post-Covid-19, we anticipate rebuilding this important project.





**We want people
seeking sanctuary
in our town to be
included in our
community**



Our Impact: Refugee Week Events

Event 1: FOOTBALL WELCOMES A Celebration of Cultural Diversity through Sport

One fantastic community event during Refugee Week 2019, took place on the astroturf at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy. This event, to enhance community cohesion, was **Football Welcomes**.

Football Welcomes in numbers:

- **70+** participants
- **10** lived experience players
- **6** local community football teams
- **1** crowd of supporters
- **1** dedicated team of students and staff behind the scenes
- **1** inspirational coordinator



In line with the **Culture and Values** of **Swindon City of Sanctuary**, this event was:

- **INCLUSIVE** in engaging, enabling and involving people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary to participate equitably in community activities
- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED** in bringing together diverse groups within our community
- **INSPIRATIONAL** with a lead volunteer coordinator bringing people together to make connections

ABOUT THE EVENT

Football Welcomes was organised and hosted by tireless Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Teaching Assistant, Theresa Bickell – an inspirational and passionate sportsperson with an irrepressible commitment to community cohesion. [Don't miss opportunity to take on a former international goalkeeper at RWB Academy next week | Swindon Advertiser](#) This was an exciting knockout football tournament with six participating local football teams, including the formidable Harbour Project team, **Swindon United**, whose players are all

people seeking sanctuary. Although they were behind the winners of the day, they did receive the Fair Play Award at the end of the tournament.

OUR SUCCESS

- **INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INSPIRATIONAL: Football Welcomes** was a huge success, despite being held on the wettest June day for years!
The event: *"...raised awareness of LGBTQ issues, with teams wearing rainbow laces; challenged myths and misconceptions about diversity, refugees and stereotypes; and enabled all to remember those who were lost in genocide and human rights abuses, or those forced to flee. Bosnian survivor Safet Vukalic joined the spectators and presented the trophies. The event was supported by so many students, staff and local community members who all played their part to stand together against hate and indifference, to offer welcome, and foster respect, empathy and inclusion."* Extracts from RWBA Summer 2019 Newsletter [summer-2019-newsletter.pdf \(rwba.org.uk\)](https://www.rwba.org.uk/newsletter.pdf)

Event 2: PHOSPHOROS THEATRE An Extended Celebration of Refugee Week 2019

'If this production could be required viewing for the entire government... perhaps the nation could find some of its long-lost humanity.' (Review from **The Play's the Thing**)

Phosphoros Theatre event in numbers:

- 500+ engagements on social media, email, general marketing
- 200+ audience, including 25 people who are currently seeking sanctuary
- 25 students and 3 teaching staff attended school workshop
- 3 charitable organisations engaged with the event

ABOUT THE EVENT

Phosphoros Theatre *Pizza Shop Heroes*



You, Me and Those Who Came Before was the theme for Refugee Week 2019 and an invitation to explore the lives of refugees – and those who have welcomed them – throughout the generations.

As an exciting extension of **Refugee Week 2019**, which this year was celebrated with our local schools' cluster, **Swindon City of Sanctuary** hosted a visit from the wonderful **Phosphoros Theatre** Company and their exhilarating production of *Pizza Shop Heroes*. The performance was held at the **Swindon Arts Centre**, on Saturday 23rd November 2019.

This was a remarkable and truthful production in that four of the actors in the company were people who had lived experience of seeking sanctuary. Phosphoros are now officially recognised as a **Theatre of Sanctuary** and are Associate Artists at **The Unicorn Theatre** in London, as well as touring *Pizza Shop Heroes* around the UK, including the **Edinburgh Fringe**, until the end of 2019.

"Set in a pizza shop, four young men reclaimed the stories they told repeatedly to social workers and courts, travelling across time and continents to show how extraordinary they were. From leaving their homelands of Eritrea, Albania and Afghanistan on their own as children, they explored how they arrived in the UK, where they were going and what they had learnt along the way. It was an autobiographical story of male, cultural identity, of migration stories shaped by Europe's colonial past, and of family and fatherhood. Using the company's trademark warmth and wit, these lived-experience actors shared the stage with a refugee caseworker to perform a lyrical collage of memories, hopes, dreams and imagined realities. From prisons in Libya and Greece to conversations with absent Mothers to raising the next generation of sons. Powerful, celebratory, resistant, revealing; this is theatre that puts refugees centre-stage."

Phosphoros Theatre

Our very energetic and welcome full-house audience at Swindon Arts Centre included several volunteers from the Swindon **Harbour Project** along with twenty-five people seeking sanctuary, members of **Swindon Amnesty**, students and staff from local schools, and the general public. The atmosphere was warm and full of humour.

Sanctuary seeking members of the audience were especially invited by Phosphoros for a pre-show chat which was a valuable opportunity for them to engage with performers. This enhanced their understanding of the performance enabling a shared focus for both performers and people currently seeking sanctuary. Clearly, this was a theatre experience that provided a true sense of belonging and recognition. This gesture also

presented an opportunity for people seeking sanctuary to feel welcome and know that their voices were being heard. At the end of the show, the company extended an invitation to the audience to go on stage to meet them. Breaking the boundaries of theatre protocol in this way was a thoughtful and necessary gesture which we welcomed wholeheartedly!

Phosphoros Theatre then returned to Swindon, on Tuesday 26th November 2019, to hold a students' workshop based on the issues raised in the show. Royal Wootton Bassett Academy hosted the event. The twenty-five participating students, who had all attended the performance the previous Saturday, gained a powerful insight into the experience of seeking asylum through the eyes of a fictional character – a young, thirteen-year-old boy called Mohammed.



Mohammed - Each sticky note held details of the fictional 13-year-old created by the students during the workshop.

Phosphoros Theatre on their workshops for schools:

"We believe that in order to foster a welcoming society for refugees and asylum seekers, we must develop empathy and understanding. Our creative workshops for schools are aimed at young people with little knowledge of, or friendships with, refugee communities (or schools with increasing numbers of refugees).

We explore issues of forced migration and debunk myths in a fun and sensitive way.

Distressing news coverage can become overwhelming, so our workshops introduce students to the real people behind the headlines. We think our workshops are a great way to encourage children to think about the world around them."

OUR SUCCESSES

We found that the experience gained from the presence of **Phosphoros Theatre**, has been profound, profitable and reflective of **Swindon City of Sanctuary** values in the following ways:

- **INCLUSIVE and OBJECTIVE:** There was an opportunity for local people seeking sanctuary to take centre-stage and to offer them a clear, powerful and reassuring voice:
"I remember before that night my mood was low. I being there was the happiest night. The chat afterwards was nice. I saw old friends and made many new friends and I integrated." (The words of a local member of the audience who is currently seeking sanctuary)
- **INSPIRATIONAL:** It demonstrated how theatre has the potential to be a vehicle for positive change.

- **TRUST and INFORMATIVE:** Enabled school students to relate safely to the experience of a young person seeking asylum. Some were able to recall the stories of parents, grandparents who 'came before' from other parts of the world, thus demonstrating the intrinsic message of this year's Refugee Week theme, *You, Me and Those Who Came Before*.
- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Successful marketing of the event, in collaboration with **Wyvern Theatre** Marketing Team, which created awareness and interest from the general public, as well as a full house!



OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- To work on inclusion as a key objective for our future work with schools
- To find ways in which to encourage arts, media and sports organisations and groups in Swindon to connect annually with **Refugee Week** so that it can become a more integral part of our town's overall cultural calendar
- Our overall objective is to encourage others in the community to devise and organise events and projects based around future **Refugee Week** themes

“Schools are at the heart of communities.

Involving them as key elements in a sanctuary network, essentially engages not just the children, but their extended families and the wider community too.”

(Schools of Sanctuary Volunteer Lead, 2018)

Our Impact: Schools of Sanctuary

“Welcome refuses borders...it is sunlight...it is a promise...”

(From *Twenty Welcomes* – a poem composed by young people in Swindon, 2018)

A School of Sanctuary, “...is a place that fosters a culture of welcome and safety for people seeking sanctuary, including asylum seeking and refugee families.”

<https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/about>

Schools of Sanctuary in numbers

- **2,500** young people
- **100** teaching staff
- **17** schools
- **7** Experts by Experience
- **3** Innovative New Projects
- **2** Creative Collaborations
- **1** *Celebration of Welcomes* event



OUR PROJECT

A School of Sanctuary, “educates the whole school community about the human right to sanctuary...” <https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/about>

Our schools’ work meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- *To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.*

Strongly reflected in all our schools’ work are the **Culture and Values** of **Swindon City of Sanctuary** in the following ways:

- **INCLUSIVE** in engaging, enabling and empowering people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in the process of educating our community: through embedding their advice and guidance as Experts by Experience members of our Schools’ Advisory Group; through our sensitivity in understanding their different levels of involvement
- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED** in bringing our school communities together to learn and break down stereotypes; supporting teaching staff with curriculum and whole school ethos developments
- **INSPIRATIONAL** in the way we connected with school communities

Sadly, the arrival of Covid-19 in March 2020, brought an abrupt halt to all of the developments and collaborations planned for the Spring and Summer Terms 2020. However, from March 2020, different directions were shaped and created by the remarkable teaching staff in our schools and by our dedicated **Schools of Sanctuary** volunteer team. At time of writing, these are currently progressing well.

OUR SUCCESSES

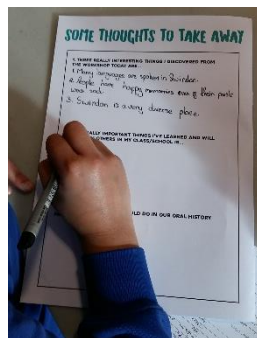
A School of Sanctuary, "... builds empathy and intercultural awareness through promoting the voices and contributions of people seeking sanctuary, encouraging an understanding of the experiences of displaced people and helping to combat stereotypes."

<https://schols.cityofsanctuary.org/about>

From the start of 2019, the year promised to be valuable and fulfilling as we continued successfully building on the significant legacy we had established since the launch of our Swindon **Schools of Sanctuary** Network in January 2018.

Bringing our total to seventeen, we engaged and involved another six schools in our network:

- Through participation in specially designed projects in collaboration with other agencies and organisations
- By creating networks between schools
- By enabling and supporting individual schools to look at and explore their own curriculum and ethos



- **INCLUSIVE:** Our Experts by Experience volunteers became more directly involved in our Schools' Advisory Group as advisers and as co-presenters of workshops for staff and students. This was a vital inclusive development which reinforced the value of the voices of people with lived experience in educating all in our community. The voices of the two new members who joined the Schools' Advisory Group in September 2019, helped us shape our programme of staff CPD in a broader developmental direction focusing greater attention on a more reflective and critical thinking approach. By considering the impact of the experience of the asylum system and exploring ways of taking action to address the attitudes and behaviour of a host population that might be overwhelmingly hostile, staff attending the workshops were more able to appreciate the significance of this empathetic approach.

At the end of the CPD workshops, each participant noted some challenges for development: *“Getting children to empathise with people who are seeking asylum and really understand what it must be like to arrive in a new country... getting children to understand what they see and hear in the media ... how to combat deeply embedded beliefs and prejudices brought in by children from things they hear at home.”* These challenges show the importance of our **Schools of Sanctuary** work in enabling teaching staff to inform their planning. More importantly, the involvement of Experts by Experience in shaping our CPD workshops influenced these enlightened staff responses.

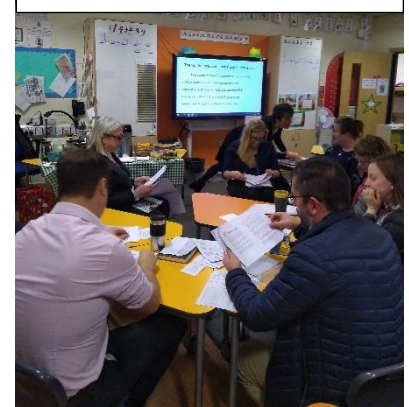
- **POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** More schools requested staff CPD
 - In April 2019, senior leaders from two primary schools requested whole staff introductory workshops.

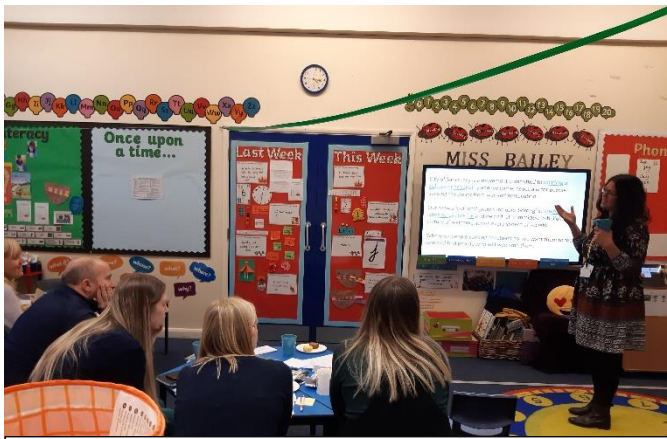
“Thank you for the training. It was really useful, insightful and has helped us to move forwards in planning ...” Deputy Headteacher of a primary school, after whole staff CPD Workshop
 - In November 2019, teaching staff from six primary schools and two secondary schools booked places on our specially designed sessions for working towards the School of Sanctuary Award. We were encouraged by the take-up of places at these workshops and by the responses from all attendees expressing their increased confidence and understanding about the process.

“What our school would like to gain from today’s workshop is understanding and vision of how this can fit in with our school’s context.” Teacher attending School of Sanctuary Award Workshop, November 2019

“At the start of the workshop, I was not confident about what was needed for our school to gain a School of Sanctuary Award; at the end of the workshop, I now feel much more informed, and am confident about sharing our teaching and learning with other schools in the Network.” Teacher attending School of Sanctuary Award Workshop, November 2019

Teachers working together at School of Sanctuary Award Workshop, East Wichel Primary School, Swindon, November 2019



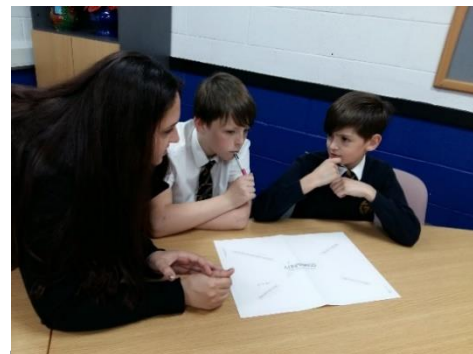


Nicola Wood, Swindon City of Sanctuary Executive Officer, opening the School of Sanctuary Award Workshop at Drove Primary School, Swindon, November 2019

"Following today's workshop... we will evaluate and adapt (our) action plan; ...we will make links with other schools; ...we will check what we are doing already and where we need to go." Extracts from participants at School of Sanctuary Award Workshop, November 2019

With the disruption brought by Covid-19, all schools that participated in these School of Sanctuary Award sessions, were unable to prioritise evidence gathering for continuing with the award process. The work will be resumed during 2020-2021.

- INCLUSIVE and INSPIRATIONAL:** More schools requested our engagement with young people through after-school clubs. In May 2019, a small group of Year 7 Community Ambassadors from Swindon's **Lydiard Park Academy** engaged in a short series of three workshops: *Community and Belonging*. One of our Experts by Experience volunteers co-planned and co-presented these workshops which focused on the meaning of community and the importance of welcome and inclusion. Opportunities like this enable and empower people with lived experience of the asylum process to use their skills and qualities in an equitable context.
- INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INCLUSIVE:** We engaged more schools in our collaboration with **Create Studios'** *See Me Too* project; some began work on embedding their own community's migration stories' projects into their curriculums following a special follow-up CPD staff workshop led by the **Create Studios'** team in May 2019. The schools' work that has been generated from *See Me Too* has been fantastic; it has offered so many different and imaginative directions for curriculum and broader learning developments from which each school has built something sustainable. One primary school chose to build their own project around the 50th Anniversary celebrations of their school in a changing community; another chose to build in this important oral history as part of their Scheme of Work on WW2 in their



Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Advisory Group Expert by Experience talking with Year 7 Community Ambassadors in after-school club workshop at Lydiard Park Academy, Swindon, May 2019

community; another invited Grandparents in to talk to Year 5 and Year 6 children about their experiences of moving to England.

Year 10 SEND students in one secondary school focused a Speaking and Listening project around interviews with some members of their local community sports' club.



Year 10 students from Royal Wootton Bassett Academy collecting migration stories, March 2019

*"Thank you for Swindon City of Sanctuary's fantastic contribution to **See Me Too** – it was a pleasure to be working with you again and really wonderful to see we made a real impact on young people and schools."* Shahina Johnson MBE, CEO and Artistic Director, Create Studios, Swindon.

Later in the Summer Term, some schools shared their work with others at our **Schools of Sanctuary** Network event *A Celebration of Welcomes*, held at **Lawn Manor Academy** at the end of **Refugee Week 2019**.

- **INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Another exciting collaboration, set to launch early in 2020, saw ten schools in our network sign up to a new and inspiring cross-curricular initiative for 2020-2021, *I Am the Future*, from international charity **Save the Children**. This valuable learning experience centred around young people in primary and secondary schools engaging with and learning about the process and impact of real campaigns that can affect change for young people around the world. Each school's work would lead to an award for staff and young people to recognise their outstanding commitment to working for justice for children throughout the world. This would also contribute towards each participating school's School of Sanctuary Award.

- **INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INCLUSIVE:**

Refugee Week 2019 was a time to create and raise awareness of the challenges and difficulties faced by all who seek sanctuary, and a time to celebrate the richness of our culture as a result of migration. As always, our schools' work continued beyond that one week.

At the end of the week, the *Celebration of Welcomes* event was a fabulous showcase for young people to share their learning about welcome, inclusion, empathy, myth-busting and challenging negative stereotypes about seeking sanctuary.



Year 10 student, Lawn Manor Academy, meeting and greeting guests at the *Celebration of Welcomes* event, June 2019

Art, music, dance, drama, film and wall displays were presented by some schools at this event.

For others, unable to participate in this event, they gave the 2019 Refugee Week theme a high profile in their school settings.

Inspirational literacy work at **East Wichel Primary School** engaged and involved families in sharing their own migration stories.



Also high on this school's agenda was a remarkable art project, which ran across the whole school with each year group reading a different story to which they responded with deeply symbolic and thought-provoking art collages.



- **INCLUSIVE, INSPIRATIONAL:** In November 2019, **Phosphoros Theatre** ran a successful schools' workshop for 25 young people from two secondary schools. The event was hosted by **Royal Wootton Bassett Academy** and linked to the theatre performance at **Swindon Arts Centre** the previous weekend. Two actors helped the young people build a story about a thirteen-year-old boy from Afghanistan seeking sanctuary in the UK. The students' responses to the issues faced by anyone seeking sanctuary were positive and some were really well-informed. One of the many valuable outcomes was young people's surprise learning that the percentage of people arriving in the UK seeking sanctuary is much lower than they had thought.



Phosphoros Theatre Company actors with two of the break-out groups working on their scenarios of 'welcome' for meeting the thirteen year-old-boy they had imagined.

- **INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED, INSPIRATIONAL:** At the end of 2019, two secondary schools and three primary schools were already immersed in planning their work for participating in a local collaborative community project, with **Create Studios**, which would strengthen community cohesion and inclusion through commemorating:
 - The 80th anniversary of the arrival in Swindon of some children who had been evacuated from London in the early days of WW2
 - 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Holocaust Memorial Day 2020 theme, *Stand Together*
 - Bringing communities together to work towards a shared future using **Refugee Week 2020** theme, *Imagine*

This promised to be a great opportunity to engage and involve people seeking sanctuary, alongside longer-established people living in Swindon, in shaping and participating in a significant community event moving towards greater inter-cultural understanding.

Sadly, Covid-19 school closures in March 2020 meant the project had to be postponed. At time of writing, plans were being re-worked.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

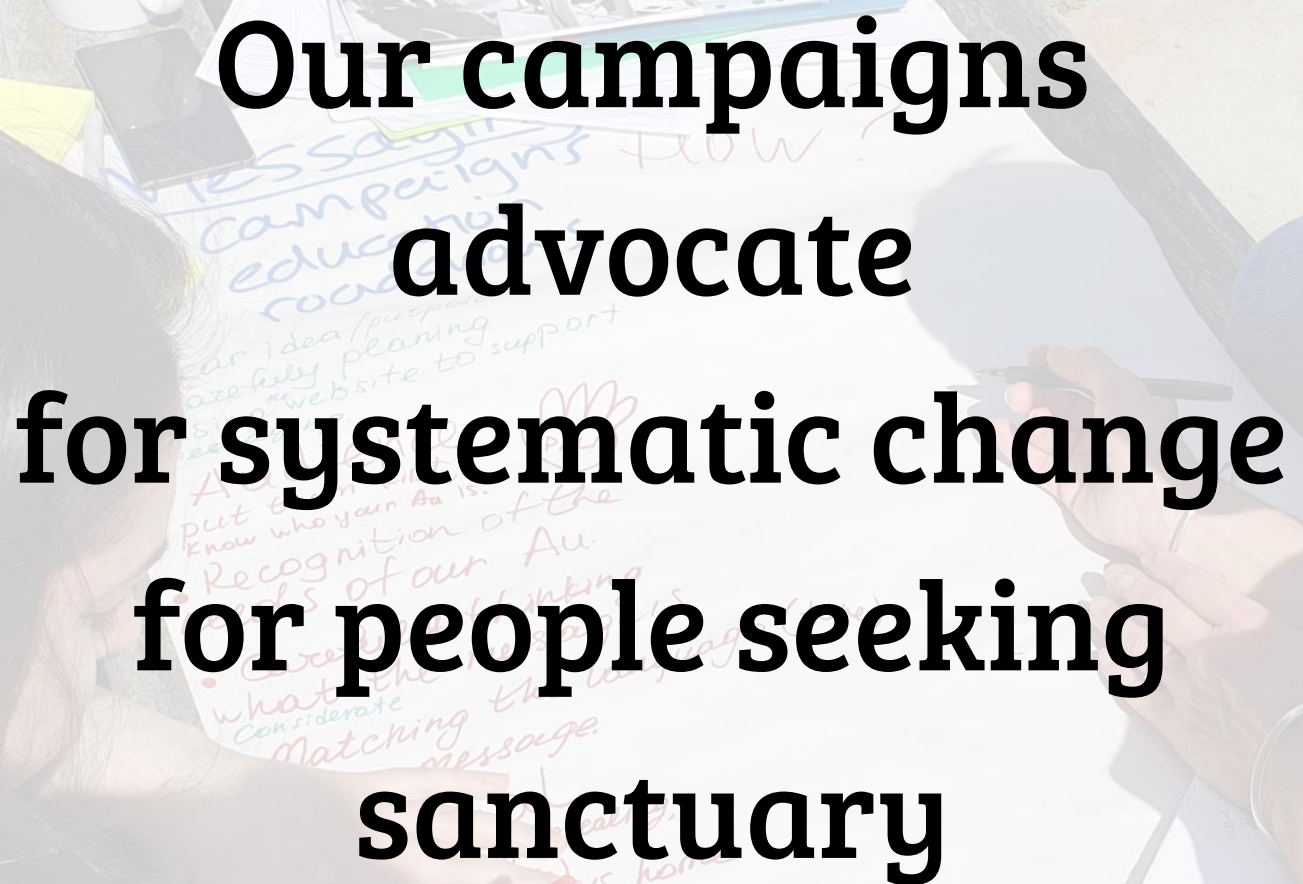
A School of Sanctuary, “identifies practical means for schools to demonstrate” their commitment to educating the whole school about the human right to sanctuary.

<https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/about>

- To extend our work around community cohesion and inclusion, we plan to reach out to all EAL (English as an Additional Language) teaching staff in our **Schools of Sanctuary** Network, to bring them together to learn and share ideas, expertise and resources within the context of EAL. This will enable all teaching staff in our Network schools to become familiar with, and gain confidence working with, young people (and their parents) who are multi-lingual learners and for whom English is an additional language.
- Continue to offer Staff CPD Workshops for schools in our Network – with active involvement of the Experts by Experience members of our **Schools of Sanctuary** Advisory Group.
- Continue to enable opportunities for schools within our Network to share curriculum developments in SMSC, Citizenship and PSHE around social justice and the human right to sanctuary.
- Further collaboration with **Save the Children**. Preparations were underway for the launch of a Citizenship / PSHE curriculum project for primary and secondary schools around the theme of campaigning called, *I Am the Future*. Ten schools and twenty-six staff were ready to attend the launch over afternoon tea at one of Swindon’s leading hotels. The week before the launch, Lockdown was announced. With adaptations and a focus on remote learning, the project will take on a new shape for next year.
- Another Covid-19 casualty was the preparation for School of Sanctuary Awards. In November 2019, we ran two workshops to help schools get ready for gathering evidence for the School of Sanctuary Award in June 2020. Sadly, we had to postpone plans to follow-up what we began. This work will resume in 2020-2021.
- A similar event for **Refugee Week 2020** as that for 2019 was planned, which celebrates and strengthens community cohesion and inclusion, understanding and a shared future. 2020 was to see greater involvement of more of the Schools’

Network and more people from within the wider school communities, including those with lived experience of seeking sanctuary. Sadly, by the end of March 2020, all plans came to a halt.

- Further collaboration with **Create Studios** (Swindon's Award-winning digital agency) and other arts agencies and individuals, to adapt another Covid-19 casualty project development originally planned for May and June 2020.
- Another focus on inclusion will see a collaboration with **Swindon Libraries** around family literacy. Given school closures and the emphasis on remote learning, we plan to support some schools in our Network with their approaches to parental engagement, enabling families seeking sanctuary to feel welcome and included in their children's schooling.



**Our campaigns
advocate
for systematic change
for people seeking
sanctuary**

Our Impact: Campaigning

“We work at local, regional and national level engaging with key partners to help bring about positive changes for people seeking asylum.”

Nicola Wood, **Swindon City of Sanctuary** Executive Officer



Campaigning in numbers:

- 3 key campaigns
- 3 people advocated for successfully

OUR PROJECT

A key aspect to being part of the national **City of Sanctuary** network is campaigning for change to the asylum process so that it is more just and equitable. As such, we work at local, regional and national level engaging with key partners to help bring about positive changes for people seeking asylum.

This initiative meets more than one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- *To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.*
- *The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.*

OUR SUCCESSES

Our main successes during 2019-2020 are reflected in our values:

- **INFORMED and OBJECTIVE:** Advocacy for individuals: we successfully advocated on behalf of others with positive outcomes.
- **INCLUSIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Helping to relocate a previous guest in our hosting scheme by moving them back from London to Swindon after a severe drop in their mental health resulting in risk to themselves. This enabled them to be back amongst all their support and to continue with their voluntary work. The voluntary work had proved to be a very positive influence on their well-being before they were relocated.
- **OBJECTIVE, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Instrumental in helping to support and move three people, who were housemates with a person in the asylum process who sadly took their own life. They were deeply affected by this sad loss. We took action by moving them into our hosting scheme for a few days until new Home Office accommodation was found for them. One individual said, "*We are finally safe in Cardiff, we are really thankful to Nicola (SCoS) for all the help.*" Another wrote saying, "*I was touched to know kind people still exist in this world.*"
- **INFORMED:** Cultivating a good relationship with different departments at the Home Office as a result of the incident above.

- **INFORMED and OBJECTIVE:** Participating in national campaigns (by adding our name to letters) to improve the lives of people seeking sanctuary in the UK:

End Indefinite Detention,

(calling for an end to

indefinite detention, a strict 28-day time limit, and the expansion of community-based alternatives)

Lift the Ban (to give those in the asylum system the right to work)

Families Together (asking to reverse the decision that currently denies child refugees the right to apply to bring their parents to the UK; and avoiding the plight of elderly parents who are left behind in war torn countries fending for themselves).



- **INSPIRATIONAL, POSITIVE and COMMITTED:** Attending and speaking at the local **Holocaust Memorial Ceremony** in January, in solidarity with all those who have suffered, and in hope that genocides and the horrific atrocities with which people have been afflicted, past and present, are remembered.
- **INCLUSIVE and INFORMED:** Contributing to the national **City of Sanctuary** and the **National Hosting Network, NACCOM** annual survey which helps to give a national picture and inform where policy changes are needed.
- **INFORMED, OBJECTIVE and INSPIRATIONAL:** Our Executive Officer attended a campaigning workshop led by the national campaigning organisation, **Asylum Matters**. Valuable insights were gained into how, at a local level, we can use our knowledge and insights to contribute to national campaigns to influence systematic change.



OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

Due to Brexit and the changes within political parties, certain plans were affected and delayed:

- Meetings with our local MPs. The emergence of Covid-19 and Lockdown, made it difficult to re-establish and maintain contact with local MPs
- Following up the positive meeting we had last year with our local MP for Swindon South, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland, about free English classes to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for people seeking asylum in England. However, both Robert Buckland, and Swindon North MP, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, Justin Tomlinson, engaged and assisted us with individual cases during this year.
- The annual **Sanctuary in Parliament** which gives people seeking sanctuary living in Swindon an opportunity to meet their local MPs and others in government. The **Sanctuary in Parliament** event, which helps to create systemic change by offering a voice to those within the asylum system.

Planning ahead, we are now:

- Back in contact with our MPs and engaging them on national campaigns as mentioned above; we hope to build on these relationships again, in the year ahead
- Envisaging an opportunity to engage and work more with our Local Authority and to better inform them of the work we do
- Planning to increase the involvement of people seeking sanctuary as Experts by Experience, especially within our awareness-raising and local campaigning work. It is only with the voices of people with lived experience at the forefront of our organisation (e.g. Trustees, Staff and Volunteers) that meaningful and long-lasting change will occur.
- Planning to build on knowledge gained from workshops, and to attend further training, to enable increasingly effective campaigning.

Organisational Development and Governance

This, our second year as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, has seen us strengthening our voice in the local community and within the national movement of **City of Sanctuary**, as that of an innovator and source of change for the benefit of those seeking sanctuary in Swindon.

The organisation now has a clear and efficient structure and, thanks to the immense dedication of our staff and volunteers, we have worked through very hard challenges facing beneficiaries. Each challenge we have faced has led us to develop, extend and improve what we offer for both our beneficiaries and parts of our local community.

Throughout 2019-2020, our Board of Trustees enjoyed a year of development and growth due to our focus on communication and shared values:

- Guided by an external facilitator, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers successfully developed and defined our Culture and Values – the roots of our organisation
- To confirm our successful organisational structure, Trustees took on specific roles to directly support staff and beneficiaries and ensure delivery of our projects. These roles included:
 - Support Group for our Executive Officer
 - Attending local and national conferences with Staff
 - Administration and organisation of **Events for Refugee Week**
 - **Schools of Sanctuary** coordination, organisation and delivery
 - **We're Open** coordination, organisation and realisation
 - **Well-being Project** organisation and advice
- Sub-committees, created in 2018 to inform Board meetings, met regularly and reported to Board meetings; this improved decision-making and helped to deliver our strategic aims more effectively
- Our Fundraising Sub-committee sought to create a Fundraising Strategy and Case for Support. In February 2020, we began the process and engaged a Fundraising Consultant who generously donated her time to help us create a SWOT Analysis. Unfortunately, the arrival of Covid-19 seriously delayed our plans.
- We sought to recruit new Trustees and Experts by Experience (EbE) to work within the whole structure of our organisation. This was deferred to 2020-2021 due to Lockdown constraints.

By the end of the year (February/March 2020), we were facing unanticipated challenges with the arrival of Covid-19 and a nationwide Lockdown. Foreseeing that two of our key projects, **We're Open** and **Room for All**, might be compromised, we began to anticipate solutions:

- Temporary suspension of **We're Open**, our weekly social evening in a local café
- Uncertain of the exact impact on hosts and guests, a reduction or even suspension of **Room for All**, our grassroots hosting initiative

We also anticipated further challenges emerging with other projects and initiatives which might have a lasting impact on our ability to meet all targets and goals for the end of our first three-year plan. This emphasised the importance of the need to sustain personal and social connections for beneficiaries. It also emphasised the need for us to adjust the strategies and projects most likely to be affected.

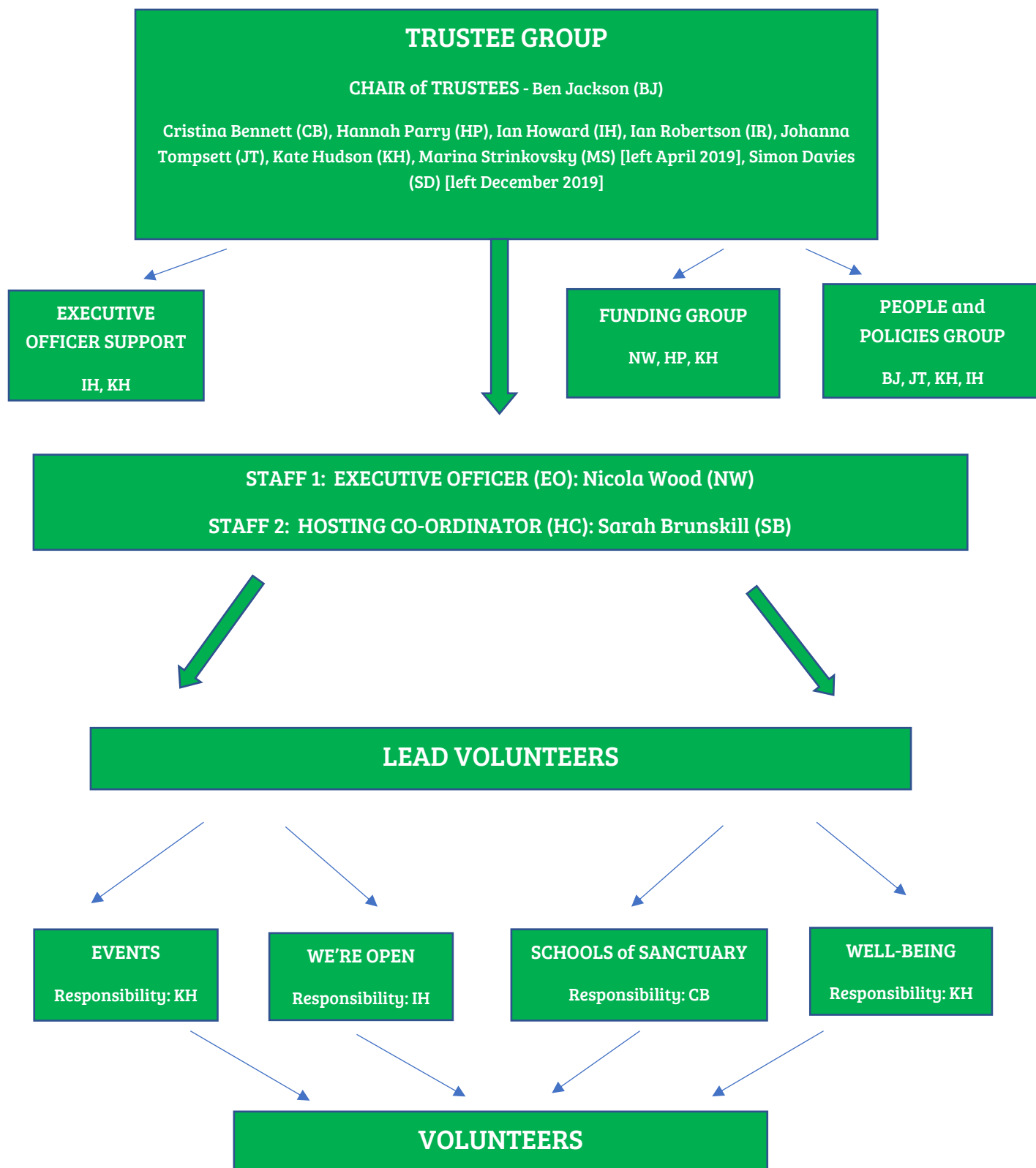
We move cautiously towards the next financial year by:

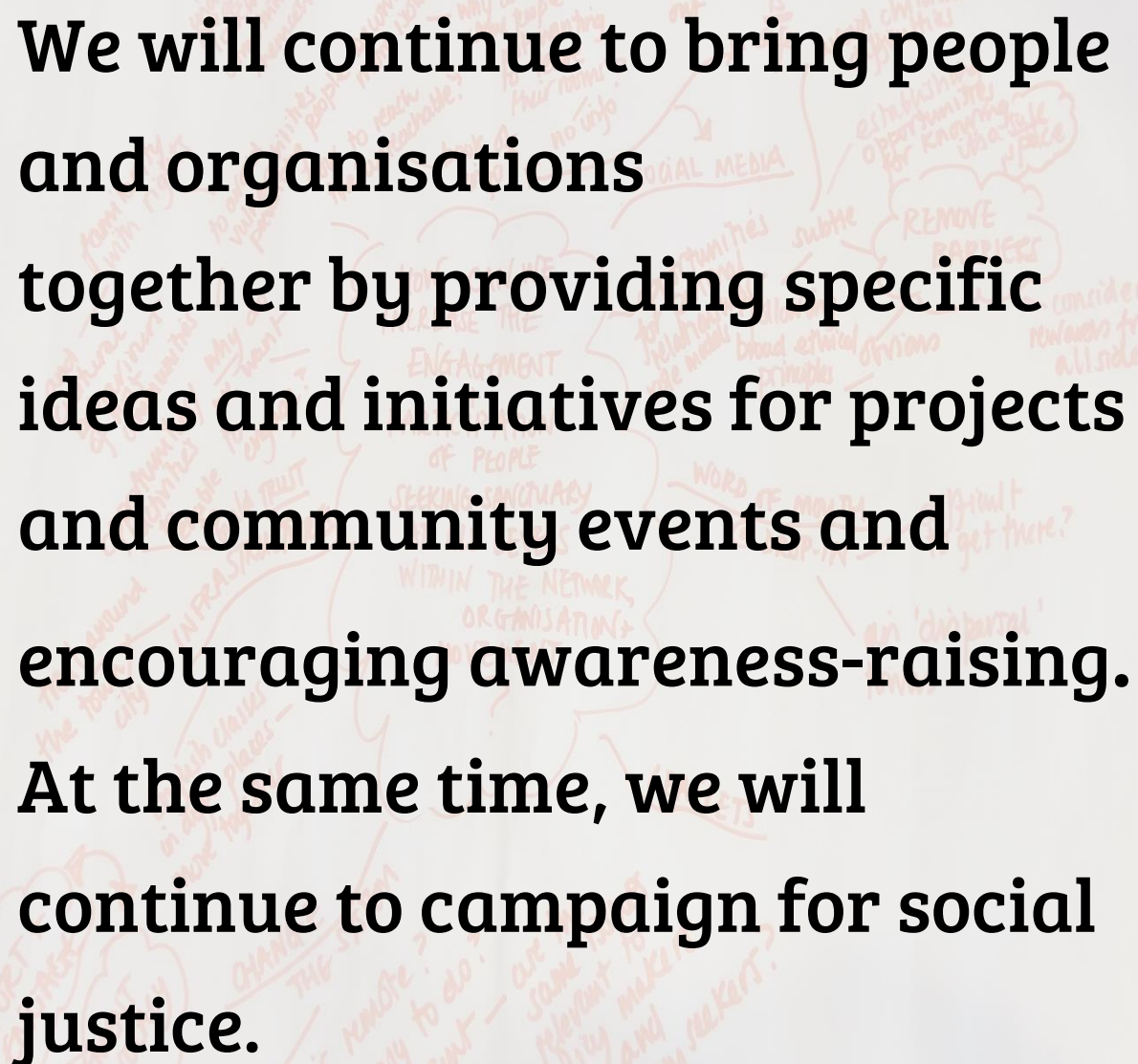
- Continuing to develop our three-year plan
- Focusing on funding and fundraising to secure the future of our core roles
- Aiming to complete a timely review of strategy and structure in readiness for a post Covid-19 landscape
- Aiming to remain financially lean and effective
- Continuing to create a sense of community and hospitality in our town, to include people seeking sanctuary and to raise awareness and appreciation of the contribution that they make to our town
- Continuing to influence national and global campaigns for social justice for people seeking sanctuary
- Disseminating our achievements to the national network in order to help drive change



Trustees, Staff and Volunteers with Sarah Drummond from *The Everyone Foundation* – June 2019

Trustees and Staff 2019-2020





We will continue to bring people and organisations together by providing specific ideas and initiatives for projects and community events and encouraging awareness-raising. At the same time, we will continue to campaign for social justice.

Ambitions and Long-Term Strategy

Once again, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all organisations and individuals for continuing to support our work through their generous funding:

- **The Joffe Trust** – this funding since 2017 has been fundamental to our success
- **The Wiltshire Community Foundation** (WCF)
- **Voluntary Action Swindon** (VAS)
- **Wiltshire Police & Crime Commissioner** (PCC)
- **No Accommodation network** (NACCOM)
- **The Cooperative Community Fund**
- **Swindon's Bus Company**
- **South Swindon Parish Council**
- All donors through **Local Giving**

Again, we have to reference Covid-19 here. The strategy outlined below is consistent where possible with our previous strategic direction, but we should make clear at this stage that after the first Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020, we had to make quick, tactical decisions to enable us to continue to support our beneficiaries despite the restrictions of Lockdown.

It's fair to say that our strategy for 2020-21 therefore evolved very quickly to look quite different from last year.

We will continue:

- To work with schools throughout the Swindon area to promote our Schools of Sanctuary initiative
- To work with the local community, press, local politicians and councillors to ensure that the difficulties faced by people seeking asylum in our community are highlighted, and where possible, we will aim to contribute to national policy regarding asylum seeking and the asylum process
- To explore more funding opportunities for developing current projects and expanding our capacity and reach across the community
- To support our small team of employees

We will review:

- Our operational model, in light of the impact of Covid-19, especially on **Room for All**
- How we manage and grow our volunteer community, to ensure that we maximise our impact while maintaining careful cost control
- How we invest our limited resources (financial and human) to best advantage
- Our diversification strategy – i.e. other routes that could be pursued in order to make **Swindon City of Sanctuary** truly sustainable, without relying solely on the generosity of grant funders

We will begin:

- A consultation with our beneficiaries to determine how we should evolve our operations in line with the post-Covid-19 world
- To implement our fundraising strategy to ensure that we can meet our financial obligations on a long-term, sustainable basis
- To create a financial surplus to enable us to run the charity for three months without any further funding
- To source a new Treasurer to build on the great work that our new accountant has achieved
- To seek funding for additional Schools of Sanctuary developments over the coming years, as we identify both need and opportunity
- To expand our Board of Trustees to include some people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary

The Year Ahead: 2020-2021

Room For All:

- To review the scheme in light of the impact of Covid-19

We're Open:

- Recruit more volunteers including a Lead Volunteer
- Re-start regular social evenings at a new long-term venue for **We're Open**
- Re-establish **We're Open** drop-in café when Lockdown restrictions allow

Schools of Sanctuary:

- Further involve the participation of the Experts by Experience members of our Schools' Advisory Group
- Seek funding to ensure that we can continue our work in a sustainable way without solely relying on the leadership of a Schools' Lead Volunteer
- See our first schools achieve the School of Sanctuary Award (the planned Awards' programme, for completion in June 2020, was postponed early in 2020 due to Covid-19)

Campaigning:

- Continue our work pressing for people seeking asylum to have access to free ESOL courses during their first six months in England
- At a local level, apply knowledge, gained from the **Asylum Matters** campaigning workshop, and attend further training to enable us to plan for greater impact in our campaigning strategy
- Maintain contact with our local MPs and continue engaging them with national campaigns
- Seek opportunities to engage and work with our Local Authority more effectively to better inform them about our work
- Increase involvement of people seeking sanctuary as Experts by Experience, especially within our awareness-raising and local campaigning work

Training:

- Implement training for our volunteers across our projects enabling them to gain a better understanding of our work, the asylum system and the issues faced by people we support
- Ensure that our employees have regular access to training and networking opportunities

Governance:

- **Continue to review all our strategies to ensure our sustainable future in a post-Covid-19 world**
- **Ensure that the voices of people who have lived experience of seeking sanctuary in the UK are fully represented on our Board of Trustees and in our volunteer population**
- **Source a new Treasurer**
- **Move to more regular Board meetings to help us through the Covid-19 crisis**

Addendum

Appendix 1

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177624

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2020
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2020

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Comparative Statement of Financial Activities	7
Balance Sheet	8
Notes to the Financial Statements	9-12
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	13

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Report of the Trustees

For year ended 30 April 2020

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2020.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page ten of the attached accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

B Jackson (Chair)
C Bennett
H Parry
I Howard
I Robertson
J Tompsett
K Hudson
M Lubanda [joined April 2020]
S Juul (Treasurer) [joined April 2020]
S Davies (Treasurer) [left Dec 2019]

Bankers

Metro	Coop Plc
One Southampton Row	PO Box 250
London	Skelmersdale
WC1B 5HA	WN8 6WT

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Report of the Trustees

For year ended 30 April 2020

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

- **Governance and management risk** looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.
- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Report of the Trustees

For year ended 30 April 2020

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities;
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.
- Public benefit;
- The charity promotes activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds in order to fulfil its public benefit obligations.

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the period was £36,369 (2019 £57,765). Expenditure amounted to £36,247 (2019 £43,822). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2020 there was a surplus of £121 (2019 surplus £25,015).

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Report of the Trustees

For year ended 30 April 2020

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



.....
Ben Jackson

Date:25/02/21.....

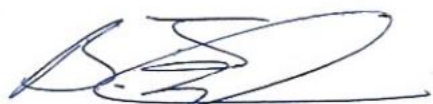
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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities
For year ended 30 April 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2020 Total Fund	2019 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		9,990	26,378	36,368	57,765
Total		<u>9,990</u>	<u>26,378</u>	<u>36,368</u>	<u>57,765</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities					
Support for Sanctuary seekers		6,406	29,841	36,247	43,822
NET INCOME		<u>3,584</u>	<u>(3,463)</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>13,943</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		<u>5,507</u>	<u>19,508</u>	<u>25,015</u>	<u>11,072</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>9,090</u>	<u>16,045</u>	<u>25,136</u>	<u>25,015</u>

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2020 Total Fund	2019 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		-	-	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		9,090	16,046	25,136	25,015
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		9,090	16,046	25,136	25,015
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		9,090	16,046	25,136	25,015
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		-	-	-	-
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				9,090	5,507
Restricted Funds				16,046	19,507
TOTAL FUNDS				25,136	25,015

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 03/02/2020 and were signed on its behalf by:



B Jackson (Chair)

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2020

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Notes to the Accounts

For year ended 30 April 2020

2. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2020	2019
	£	£
This is stated after charging:		
Other operating leases	-	2,013

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2020 nor for the year ended 31 January 2019.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2020 nor for the year ended 31 January 2019.

4. STAFF COSTS

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2020	2019
Administration	2	3

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

5. LOANS

	2020	2019
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	-	-
	-	-

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Swindon City of Sanctuary

Notes to the Accounts

For year ended 30 April 2020

6. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	5,507	9,990	(6,406)	9,091
	<u>5,507</u>	<u>9,990</u>	<u>(6,406)</u>	<u>9,091</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
Joffe + Bath spa	977	20,000	(17,444)	3,533
We're Open	3,508	5,001	(3,431)	5,078
Room for All	10,179	150	(7,465)	2,865
Refugee Week	2,486	0	(590)	1,896
Wiltshire Community Funding	0	1,091	(361)	729
Transport Fund	66	0	(66)	0
Schools of Sanctuary	192	137	(112)	217
Swindon Parish Council	2,100	0	(372)	1,728
	<u>19,508</u>	<u>26,379</u>	<u>(29,841)</u>	<u>16,045</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>25,015</u>	<u>36,368</u>	<u>(36,247)</u>	<u>25,136</u>

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2020

7. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **Joffe** - Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's main employee, the executive officer
- b) **Room for All** - Funds to provide resources to host sanctuary seekers in hosts' homes in Swindon
- c) **We're Open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social evening
- d) **Refugee Week** - Funds relating to a week of activities celebrating sanctuary seekers in Swindon
- e) **Transport** - Funding for bus passes for sanctuary seekers
- f) **Schools of Sanctuary** - Funds utilised for work in schools.
- g) **Swindon Parish Council** - Funds for publicity purposes only including short films

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	36,368	57,765
	<u>36,368</u>	<u>57,765</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	23,552	31,554
Other Operating Leases	-	2,013
Office Rent & Room Hire	3,729	-
Insurance	304	304
Telephone	608	643
Computers & software	921	
Postage and Stationery	162	446
Travelling	2,093	3,949
Sundry expenses	3,668	4,913
	<u>35,037</u>	<u>43,822</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	1,210	-
	<u>1,210</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>121</u>	<u>13,943</u>

To the Trustees of Swindon City of Sanctuary

Dear Trustees, I have been asked to conduct an independent review of the Trust's financial statements for the year ended 30 April 2020, which I am delighted to do.

I provide a few details about myself below, including my contact details and would be very happy to discuss any matters with you in relation to my report.

Please note that I have not conducted an audit in line with UK Auditing Standards, but I did undertake my review in order to identify any material misstatements or financial irregularities.

Ultimately, as noted on page six of the financial statements, it is part of the Trustees responsibilities to ensure the financial statements are presented fairly and to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud and other irregularities.

Before explaining the work that I have done, I would like to express my gratitude to Serena for the help she has provided to me throughout my review.

Work I have done

I have reviewed the trust deed and minutes of Trustee meetings to understand how the Sanctuary operates.

I have received copies of all the bank statements covering the year and reviewed these and selected certain items of income and expenditure for further investigation. I have also checked, on a sample basis, that transactions per the bank statements have been properly recorded in the accounting records. I have also checked to ensure the closing balances per the bank statements reconcile to the financial records and financial statements, which they do (they in fact agree – there are no reconciling items).

I have also reviewed the documents provided by donors so that I could check that 'restricted' donations have been properly treated and, as far as I am able, used for their stated purposes.

In respect of the items of expenditure, I have received an explanation from Serena as to why they were required and other relevant details. Serena explained that copies of receipts are kept in the office and, due to home working, she was not able to access these and I have not been able to review them. This seems a reasonable explanation, given the circumstances in which we are all working.

Finally, I have reviewed the draft accounts and shared my observations with Serena.

Conclusion

From the work I have carried out, I am satisfied that the financial statements are free from material error and properly reflect to financial position of the Trust.

I have not identified any fraud or other irregularity.

Andrew Wood

26 February 2021

My contact details are: ajwood25@btinternet.com (or 07831 6765660). I am a Chartered Accountant, qualifying in 1993. I am currently Chief of Staff at Jisc. I spent 16 years at Ernst & Young, eventually as a director in the audit department and I was subsequently a senior partner at RSM Bentley Jennison, chartered accountants.



Voluntary Action Swindon, 1 John Street, Swindon, SN1 1RT

Telephone: 07903 167 142

Registered Charity No. 1177624