

Minutes from HBTSR Meeting of 14th October 2015

All present introduced themselves and their areas of interest which will be noted on our contacts list and skills database. Noted that we need skills but energy and enthusiasm are as important and that we are becoming a strong and committed group.

Minutes & Matters Arising

Approved with no amendments.

Email glitches may mean some of our emails are not getting through... A meeting is planned with Nick to try to resolve.

Getting the group established (address, bank account, banners, committee & group meetings)

The bank account is in the process of being opened and some monies are available. L D office in Hay will be our official mailing address.

3 banners will be available shortly and the Blakes were thanked for funding one of these.

We have a Facebook group and a Twitter account.

The petitions were discussed and the fact that our elected representatives had read them. The petitions had shown that local people do care about the current refugee situation and want action. HBTSR will hold Committee meetings, of the officers and those with specific responsibilities, and possibly monthly Group meetings to which all on the mailing list will be invited to which the Committee will report. Officer posts will be subject to re-election at an AGM.

Lists of suggested roles and working groups were circulated. Subgroups include communications, volunteers, liaison with City of Sanctuary, fundraising, counselling and teaching. Everyone was encouraged to volunteer for particular roles and/or to join working groups.

Open Meeting Oct 29 at the Guildhall Brecon (venue, publicity, invitations)

The Guildhall confirmed as the venue thanks to Brecon Town Mayor. There will be speakers from City of Sanctuary, the refugee speakers' team, Brecon town mayor and Kirsty Williams. There will be an opportunity for discussion and questions.

The purpose of the meeting is to demonstrate to the invited elected representatives and the public that there is a strong group of local people who care about the plight of people who are seeking refuge, to discuss what we can do to help and to detail our plans for Respite Sanctuary.

Local councillors, AMs, our MP, Churches representatives and possibly head teachers will be invited.

We will prepare some flyers to give out at table stalls and to post around town.

Our press officer will be asked to notify the B&R.

All on our mailing list will be invited and we will post details of the meeting on Twitter and Facebook.

Our Aims + new Brochure

The following aims were approved

HBTSR Aims:

- To make our elected representatives aware that there is strong support in our communities for welcoming refugees.
- To campaign for the UK government:
 - to accept a fair and generous quota of refugees in partnership with the other countries of Europe;
 - To provide more funding and assistance to those countries where the refugees arrive.
- To campaign for the Welsh Government, Powys County Council and our towns and communities to offer to resettle refugee families and to secure adequate funding and support from the UK government.
- To provide information to our own communities about the plight of refugees and help to co-ordinate the efforts of all who wish to assist them.
- To establish a programme to provide short-term respite and sanctuary for refugees in the peaceful countryside in and around the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Agreed that these aims may need to change as time goes on and if we seek charitable status. The benefits of charitable status (giving access to grants, gift aid, etc.) were discussed, but it would involve other complexities and it was agreed to defer consideration for the present.

The new draft Pledge Brochure for use on stalls, in mailings and at public events was discussed (based on one from City of Sanctuary and Swansea). The draft was agreed subject to a new logo.

Cate and Neil agreed to work on design of the logo.

A fact-sheet debunking some of the myths about Refugees- agreed to work on design and some revisions to wording. The relative merits of the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' were discussed. A strong plea was made for stressing the humanity (rather than the legal status) of all those seeking refuge and asylum. Suggested we might use the slogan 'refugees are people too'. Or 'refugees and asylum seekers are people first'.

City of Sanctuary & Respite Sanctuary

The concept of City Of Sanctuary and our own respite sanctuary concept were discussed and agreed.

We will aim to align ourselves with City Of Sanctuary and meanwhile explore opportunities for members of our group to volunteer in the Sanctuary cities (Swansea, Cardiff, possibly Newport) to help, gain experience, and form links.

Confirmed that we will offer one or more Respite Days initially, probably to refugees already in one of the cities. We will supply transport, food, recreation, entertainment. We will expand and build upon the Respite plans as needed. Previous trips organized by Brecknock Peace & Justice Group had led to reciprocal action from refugees who wanted to welcome us to their area, offer entertainment or cooking to demonstrate their culture. Agreed that we should provide opportunities for reciprocity.

Next stalls in towns & RefuTeas

Agreed to hold stalls in Brecon on Oct 24 and Hay on Oct 22 for awareness raising and fund raising.

Existing or a new petition plus the Pledge Brochure to be used and the Open Meeting on Oct 24 publicised...

The Refugee Council's 'RefuTeas' fund-raising project was discussed. Agreed to distribute details when the kits arrived. RefuTeas useful for awareness raising as well as fund-raising.

Going to see our elected representatives (following petition & open meeting).

Agreed that to consider sending a delegation to meet our MP and to lobby the County Council, after the Open Meeting.

AOB

S mentioned a concert at the Globe by Joe Gooch of Ten Years After to be held on 29th October with profits going to HBTSR. People were encouraged to attend. Further details will be emailed.

E F is selling a beautiful book and profits will be shared with the group.

H mentioned a CD that can also be sold to raise funds for us.

We should seek opportunities to meet with anyone who has visited or has experience of the areas producing refugees

Next meeting at Gwernyfed Rugby Club on 11th November at 6.30pm

L was asked to thank the Chairman of the rugby club for allowing us to use the clubhouse