



## HAY, BRECON & TALGARTH SANCTUARY FOR REFUGEES

### GROUP MEETING AND AGM

**11th January 2017 at 6.30 at Gwernyfed Rugby Club**

The meeting was chaired by Margaret Blake in the absence of Sean and Mike and at request of Vice Chair.

A minute silence to honour the Memory of Mohammed Abdulrezek was observed after a brief tribute from the chair.

#### **AGM**

- Minutes from last AGM were approved.
- Annual Report - Accepted with addition of short term farming placements for respite, and agreement for a group to discuss Press Policy (Philip Oliver, William Powell, Katy Butland, Ailsa Dunn and Lawrence Duffy) it was agreed this would be drawn up with knowledge about UID and COS press policies and checked with a press officer before coming to a monthly meeting for discussion/agreement.
- Financial Report- was tabled and discussed. We will keep a list of donors on the website and with a correction about source of a large donation the Annual Report was accepted. Basically since starting in September 2015 we have had an income of £14,798 and spent £9,814 so have £4,984.
- Nomination, Election or Confirmation of Officers –
  - It was reported that our current chair (Sean) is away for 3 months and was happy to stand down if anyone was prepared to stand and it was felt that in the best interests of the group we should have a chair available.
  - All current post holders were thanked and the suggestion was made that Sean and Mike be known as Emeritus Chairs.
  - All elections were by show of hands and unanimous.
  - Chair, Margaret Blake proposed by Penny and seconded by Lynne
  - Vice Chair Sally Mc Coll proposed by Lynne and seconded by Lawrence
  - Secretary, Ailsa Dunn proposed by Margaret and seconded by Katy
  - Treasurer, Lawrence Duffy proposed by Philip and seconded by Andrew
  - Webmaster Jo - agreed by all
  - Store Manager - Sue Richards with store users group as before. Confirmed by all.
  - Hardship Fund Executive - confirmed to be Lawrence Duffy, Mike Gatehouse and Lynne Rogers.
  - Press officer to be considered further when we have a policy.
  - Liaison with Refugees Welcome - Sally Mc Coll and Katy Butland agreed to work on this with Jo

- Graphic design - Neil Jones and Cate Peters will kindly continue - approved by all. Neil made the point that they are very happy to do flyers, posters, tickets as needed and will do them rapidly!
- IT advisor - Cerriane Ralph agreed to help if needed.
- Fundraising organiser - Agreed to seek nominations.
- Facebook page admin currently Sean, Ailsa and Jo coordinate this. In the absence of Sean and Jo, Steve agreed to consider helping.
- Twitter - Jo

Close of AGM

## MEETING ON 11/1/2017

Apologies and Attendance as for AGM except that William Powell had to leave.

1. **Meeting on 16/11/2016** – minutes confirmed. Matters arising - Penny had agreed to check with Brecon Twin Town in France Gouesnou if they had any people seeking asylum there - they don't.
2. **Youth /Schools**
  - Ailsa gave a talk at Cradoc primary school and Sue and Lynne at Gwernyfed High school about Refugee/Asylum issues and away days.
  - Need to think about our local schools becoming registered as Schools of Sanctuary as this would help the Wales City of Sanctuary group in achieving recognition of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary. Detail from City of Sanctuary website: *A School of Sanctuary is a school that helps its students, staff and wider community understand what it means to be seeking sanctuary and to extend a welcome to everyone as equal, valued members of the school community. It is a school that is proud to be a place of safety and inclusion for all. There are three simple principles to being a School of Sanctuary: (1) Learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary. (2) Take positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within your school and the wider community. (3) Share your vision and achievements – be proud!*  
**Agreed** That Katy would share this with Cradoc School where she is a governor. Carriane agreed to discuss this at Gwernyfed High School. It was suggested that we seek David Meredith's views as he is Chair of Governors in Brecon High School and we would share the information with Christ College. Otherwise we would allow this to develop by word of mouth. Talgarth and Bronllys schools are amalgamating and Sue would show the information to the Head as appropriate. We noted that the Governors of schools needed to be aware of this.
3. **Lobbying**
  - Several people wrote to Chris Davies about the displaced children from Calais. Margaret, Hilary and Ailsa met with him on 16th December to discuss our concerns and had an hour of his time.
  - We wrote to Amber Rudd and had an automatic response but no other reply.
  - Sean, Ailsa and Lawrence attended Sanctuary in Parliament (please see website for report and briefing) and presented briefly about Away Days as a way of showing welcome and allowing locals to meet and dispel myths about people seeking asylum. The major campaigning issues presented were:

- i. Expanding existing safe and legal routes to safety in the UK by widening refugee family reunion eligibility, as well as making better use of existing transfer responsibilities under Dublin III and the Dubs amendment:
  - ii. Provide Sanctuary to Unaccompanied Refugee Children - Europe has a shared responsibility to ensure these refugee children are able to find safe routes to sanctuary.
  - iii. Securing Sanctuary: A Fair and Just Asylum Process - People seeking refugee protection should not have to endure poverty, homelessness and the threat of detention as they state their case for protection from persecution.
  - iv. Alternatives to Detention: Detaining people indefinitely and without charge is an affront to our judicial system. Additionally, detention doesn't work; there has been a continuing decline since 2011 in the proportion of detainees being removed from the UK following their detention.
  - v. Building a Culture of Welcome: Integration and Settlement - Integration is a two-way process. We must ensure that we create a welcoming environment for new refugees to rebuild their lives here and thrive as part of our communities. Welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into the UK is the first step towards successful integration from day one: consider a policy like the Scottish one.
  - vi. Expand English Language Provision: Refugee Actions campaign 'Let Refugees Learn' and 'Equal Access to Education'. Need to consider an ESOL strategy which is funded and not just for the resettled Syrians.
- Sanctuary in the Senedd –
    - i. Sean, Lawrence, William, Penny, Phil, Lynne, Melrose and Ailsa attended and again we gave a short presentation about our away days.
    - ii. School children from Wrexham shared their successful campaign to encourage their peers to help support diversity and to understand more about why people need to seek refuge and how to support them. The main campaigning points remain access to English tuition and to try to alter the housing provider selected by the Home office.
    - iii. The suggestion was made that when people seeking asylum have problems with accommodation they could ask Shelter Cymru to help.

#### 4. Stalls

- Participation in the Christmas tree festival gave us publicity and helped raise awareness. Paper angels were written on to give messages of support to go with our reverse advent calendars.
- Stall in Hay Fair Trade Winter Market raised money, provided an opportunity to raise awareness and to wrap Christmas presents for the Christmas parties in Swansea. A great way to involve the general public.
- Talgarth Tree of Light also had a light bulb sponsored in our name.
- **Agreed** that we would seek to do all of these next year

#### 5. Publicity, Twitter, Facebook, Website

- B&R had articles about the Christmas trees and the Cheque presentation. Also published details about our AGM date and a thank you letter. An article about Mohammed's death was also in B&R.
- We held a vigil attended by over 25 people for the displaced children of Calais and all people seeking refuge. This had helpful publicity before and after.
- Sad news about the murder of an Asylum seeker from Swansea has attracted a lot of press and media attention. William Powell kindly acted as our Spokesperson (Sean

was away and William was approached by a journalist in South Wales who knew him). In the light of this experience as many people were approached by the media it was agreed that a Press policy would be useful and perhaps have a policy of no comment on contentious matters other than via a spokesperson. Group as noted in AGM would discuss.

- Now have 333 people on mailing and 298 Twitter, 308 Facebook (NB our Facebook page is open to the public to see)
- Swansea and Brecon Diocesan publicity officer has joined our Group and Margaret agreed to seek his advice on how we continue to promote our group in the most positive way.
- It was agreed that we would prepare and distribute a thank you poster to go to our drop off points and around our towns to thank people for their generosity in donating over 200 Christmas presents and over 70 Reverse Advent calendars. Paul agreed to help distribute to smaller villages

## 6. Away Days

- 2 successful days were held at Caerphilly Castle with over 120 people seeking asylum or refuge in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea benefiting from seeing a digital art exhibition and the second largest castle in the UK. All thanks to the Lumen Prize, Arts Council and CADW for helping to make this possible.
- A visit of 6 people seeking asylum and some volunteers from Swansea to Hay Winter festival provided an opportunity to eat together and chat as well as seeing an interesting talk.
- UID Christmas Party was funded by us and presents were given to both this party and SBASSG party together with vast amounts of food and goods.
- Also several large donations of Food from Morrisons have been taken to UID and the reverse Advent calendars were distributed just after Christmas and others are awaiting distribution.

## Future Plans

- Cradoc 29th January - Katy reported upon early plans for a fun filled day.
- Penpont House - 5th March Offers of help please email Margaret.
- Football outing to Hereford - 25th March details to next meeting
- Llangorse - 2nd April (TBC).
- Talgarth walking festival - 28th April to 1st May agreed to pay for accommodation for about 6 people to be able to attend from Swansea.
- May - Hay Festival - to see if anyone wants to act as Stewards.
- Ramadan - 27th May to 25th June
- Penpont house - 2nd July
- Treberfydd House.
- BBNP Craig Y Nos.
- Talgarth Sports 29th July
- Gwernyfed School - 15th October
- Other possibilities
  - Riding offer near Builth Wells - no further info.
  - The Pales (A Quaker meeting house near Penybont) - Probably 16/17th July - possible weekend camping (and community cafe...) Jeff, Jan and Lynne will discuss further but it may be an opportunity to link with other Cities of Sanctuary and offer about 10 places to 3 of these.
  - Llwyn Celyn - May/September (intern Placements up to 6 people)

- Farming opportunity for short term placements near Hay being explored. The group agreed to support this and thanked Sarah for suggesting it.
- Trefecca -no news yet as building works.
- Other offers welcome.
- Sue mentioned that she felt that our days should be open to the public so that whilst we all had a good time, the general public could also see this and join in as they were able. This was agreed. It is also possible to promote our days by a thank you poster in public places.

## 7. Hardship Fund

- Expenditure details - Young man seeking asylum kitted out for cricket as is in Development squad - £103.42.

## 8. Finance and Expenditure –

- At next meeting discuss expenditure and sharing of funds with other groups who help asylum seekers.

## 9. Fundraising –

- Hay Winter Fair Trade Fair and concert at the Globe raised about £1,000
- Hay Winter Festival and Hay Castle donated nearly £250
- World Music Night Feb 4th at the MUSE with Brecon Volunteer Bureau
  - i. We need raffle prizes (Lynne agreed to help with this) and 2-3 to help set up at 4 pm for about 2 hours. 2-6 to be there at 7 to help in bar or on door or sell raffle tickets or help to clear up (Lynne and Philip, Sue and Gez, Penny and Andrew, Steve, Margaret and Pat, all agreed to help)
  - ii. Any requests for world music people can email (name and artist) - themagicgarden@hotmail.com by 20th Jan - must be danceable and not too long 3 -4 mins
- Other thoughts- Paul offered us ducks for a duck race- a good way to raise £1,000.

## 10. Goods

- We took all remaining clothes and toys to Swansea and we are aware that many of these went to the Red Cross and weren't needed by the people seeking refuge.
- We have had 5 further donations of goods from Morrisons ably collected by Virginia and distributed.
- We took down the Christmas presents to the UID party and passed on the SBASSG presents. We took down about 50 reverse Advent calendars on the 27th as well as further goods from Morrisons. We have about another 20 Advent calendars to take down.
- Steve reported that he has been promised 20 pairs of football boots by a football club in Ross on Wye.
- Agreed that we would provide goods for Cradoc away day. Foodbank may wish to help us too.
- Thank you Poster to be done for all the gifts and help.

## 11. Ystradgynlais

- We took presents from Bronllys and Talgarth schools which Maggie distributed. Thank you letter has gone to the schools from the families and from our Group. Maggie suggested that the families are settling in well and probably don't really need to be actively involved in our away days as they have each other and the local

community for support and are relatively better off than the people we help in Swansea.

**12. Groups**

- Artists - no report
- English teaching - Mac has been in discussion with Wayne about starting IELTS classes and delivered the first class last week!!
- Therapy - no Report

**13. Charitable Status** - application submitted

**14. Meetings Attended** - Sanctuary in Parliament, Sanctuary in Senedd, Meeting with MP

**15. Any Other Business –**

- Community sponsorship- Virginia briefed the group about this concept and will prepare a briefing paper for us to consider before the next meeting.

**16. Date of Next Meeting** - 15th February 2017.