



## HAY, BRECON & TALGARTH SANCTUARY FOR REFUGEES

### GROUP MEETING

**Wednesday 24 February 2016 18:30. Llangorse Village Hall, Llangorse.**

1. Minutes from Last meeting approved. Matters Arising: To be covered in the agenda
2. Youth and Schools:
  - (a) Report from Jeff – the headteacher from Gwernyfed School had planned to join the meeting tonight with some of his students but a meeting about possible school closure supervened. The head of Christ College Brecon is keen to be involved. She thinks that there are a variety of options including morning chapel service, the PSE Programme, Philosophy and Ethics at A' Level, the Scholar Groups. They would like to host a refugee day in September and would need confirmation by June in order to book it in (issue of not having more than one away day per month in order to not overload Swansea volunteers). The question arose of whether Christ Coll could help with transport with their minibus? There may be a variety of opportunities for the refugees to visit the schools for small group opportunities. Sean will discuss with Wayne what might be suitable.
  - (b) Barbara has contacted Brecon High School. They are also interested to be involved but similarly otherwise occupied at the moment.
3. Lobbying
  - (a) Letter Writing; a pro-forma letter has been sent out for people to edit and send to local MP about acceptance of unaccompanied refugee children. A few people have done this, and there was a reminder to everyone else to do it.
  - (b) Andrew has spoken to Brecon and Radnor Labour Group who have said they are supportive and would be happy to be called on for help with specific issues.
  - (c) Tim Farron, the leader of the Liberal Democrats is going to be in Brecon on Feb 25th if anyone wants to lobby him personally. However we know that the Liberal Democrats are very supportive.
  - (d) Stalls; Rachel has asked whether we would like to be involved with her 'Africa Market Day' on 29th May. Cost of a stall £12. Emma to follow up with Rachel.
  - (e) David Meredith, the Mayor of Brecon, has offered the use of the Guildhall for a fundraiser – maybe a coffee morning / stall.
  - (f) We will continue to have a stall to provide information and possibly sign petitions and for fundraising in Hay and Brecon when the weather improves.
4. Publicity
  - (a) This is going well. We have 138 followers on Twitter and 188 on Facebook. Stories are being shared on our Facebook page. We have had some good publicity via the B&R. Our Website is well maintained and up to date and has a link to Twitter as well.

- (b) We have been asked to go onto the Powys Council website / Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/powyscc/?fref=n/f> and add some positive comments regarding refugees, to counterbalance some of the negative postings they have received. We should not take Powys CC's commitment on refugee settlement for granted. We should maintain pressure on councilors and specific requests re people seeking refuge.
- (c) Posters have been produced by Neil and Cate and were shared for people to put up wherever possible. We should encourage people to display our car stickers

#### 5. Respite Days

- (a) Report from Jonathan, Llanfihangel Talyllyn; the day went very well with about 40 people seeking refuge attending as well as about 6 volunteers from Swansea. Transport was the most contentious issue as on the day there were far more people waiting to come than had been allocated places and some of the people who were booked were unable to travel as others took their places. The day went very well and was much appreciated by refugees, volunteers and hosts– in particular going for a walk by the lake. Very positive feedback and a growing demand for more of these days. Note – for the day a list was produced of the different things that the refugees were interested in doing.

Discussion re the transport issue and how we can ensure in future that those people who booked are able to attend– We do not want to create more work for Wayne or Maria. Family groups were picked up from their home and this may also work for other booked people. Sean is talking to Swansea Community Transport to see if they could help.

Also discussion of the fact that at the moment it is not realistic to schedule more than 1 respite day per month because of the additional workload that this will create for Wayne and the Swansea organisers. Becky is helping Wayne with possible sources of funding for Unity in Diversity. Officially there are 200 refugees in Swansea but Wayne thinks that there may actually be quite a lot more.

- (b) Discussion of the possibility of arranging farm visits for small groups of refugees. Barbara suggested two farms local to her and said that she would talk to them. Several farms in other parts of our area have offered to host days.
- (c) **March** – there is currently no day planned. HOT PRESS Llangenny have offered to host a day on March 20th – this will be for about 15 people and comprise families.
- (d) **April** – Craig y Nos – we have no more information about this. Ailsa will chase.
- (e) **April** – Brecon, Penny; the date has been confirmed as April 17th. Trevor has been getting quotes. They plan to raise money to cover the transport costs. They are having a meeting on March 22nd to discuss details. They are very encouraged by the many positive responses that they have had so far.
- (f) **May** – Elan Valley, Andrew; this will be hosted by Welsh Water. They are paying for food and arranging the programme. We are happy to provide assistance as and when it is needed.
- (g) **August** – Brilley, Carrie; this will probably not be in May due to clashes with other days. Possibly August 21st. Venue = Jo's house.
- (h) Comment – when people are arranging days they need to consider how to provide spaces where mothers can feed their babies, small children can sleep and people can pray.
- (i) **June** – Llangorse, Melrose; this will be held in Llangorse Village Hall. The focus will be on sports and outdoor activities. Possibly also a BBNP day in June.
- (j) **July** – Talgarth; there was discussion about the possibility of this being a two day event although concern was raised about the logistics of accommodation. They are planning on using the rugby club and linking up with the sports event that is already taking place in the

town – with many different sports activities being offered. The Talgarth walking group have said that they would be happy to lead a walk.

- (k) Message from Trevor and Julia from Trallong that they are keen to host an away day in the summer. Again – the issue of workload for Wayne. There was a suggestion that they might hold a small event e.g. for three families.
- (l) **August** – Brilley
- (m) **September** – Bronllys
- (n) There are women's groups in Swansea that Ceri and Louise are working with – they are planning to go to Swansea and work with felting. They will also draft information for International Women's day
- (o) The respite days are involving more people in each community than just those who are members of HBTSR. This should have a positive impact and is a model that could be picked up across the country.
- (p) Other comments – there is a new magazine being produced in Hay that may be interested in covering these stories – Antonia will approach them. Andrew said that the theatre in Brecon are also keen to get involved eg running workshops.

#### 6. Finance Report

- Agreed: we will continue to offer money to cover the expenses of people who offer to drive to collect refugees (none accepted any last time)
- Noted – we need to mention to people who offer to drive that they may not have the appropriate insurance.
- Agreed: HBTSR will cover the cost of bus hire if necessary, although each Respite Day should aim to be self-financing
- Query – what else should we be spending the money on? The people seeking refuge are keen on toiletries and food that they cannot afford. Agreed: we will provide a budget to Sally/Carrie to buy goods where required and particularly for away days (and where we cannot get them donated).

#### 7. Fundraising

- (a) Ben Rawlence has just published 'City of Thorns'. He would be happy to do a fundraiser and this is being followed up by Virginia.
- (b) Hay Festival – gave us over £500 from the winter festival. Emma to contact Peter to see if there is any way we can link with the main festival. Ailsa and Lawrence have coordinated the charitable collections at the festival for the last 2 years and may be able to assist.

#### 8. Goods – Sally

- (a) Collection Points – The Lib Dems office and St Marys Church Hay (please can people store things at the back of the gallery and avoid the organ box) have been very helpful. We have not used the Guildhall recently but we are very grateful to them for their help.
- (b) Storage:
  - We are using a room at Ty Mawr unit on Brecon Industrial Estate, to store packed household goods and clothing not needed for Calais.
  - We aim to vacate the room at Hay Castle soon as they may require it for rental.
  - We have the space provided at Frwdgrech in Brecon by BBNP. Good for storage but it is full awaiting transfer of items to Swansea to Rachel who will oversee distribution of household packs and to SHARP.
- (c) We have LOTS of kitchen equipment which we are told are always popular in Swansea but we can only take down small amounts at a time as there is no storage facility in Swansea. Surplus goods could perhaps be sold for funds or donated to homeless charities.

- (d) We have donated 3 computers and a couple of lap tops to Unity in Diversity. Wayne aims to set up an internet café as well as use the lap tops for English learners
- (e) Please tell Sally when anyone is going down to Swansea or Cardiff with space in their car so they can take some more goods down. Note: Swansea only has limited opening times: Tuesday/Thursday 4-8 Friday 6-8 and Saturday Afternoons.

#### 9. Sports Kit - Barbara

Barbara is planning to take down a load of sports kit and she is happy to take more. A football match has been arranged between some football fans from Cardiff and the Swansea refugees on March 6th at 2.30 at Swansea University Fields.

#### 10. Calais

Two HBTSR volunteers went to Calais last week – they took tents and sleeping bags and clothing. A short report for the website was requested.

#### 11. Arts – Antonia

Trip to Swansea with an arts focus. Eugene is going to draw people and Antonia is taking a variety of arts materials. They want to get an understanding of what else people might want to do in the future. They will be joined there by Muriel.

#### 12. Links with Swansea and Cities of Sanctuary

- (a) The links with Swansea are very good. They are a 'city' of sanctuary and they have over 100 associations supporting refugees, some more active than others.
- (b) Cities of Sanctuary want Wales to become a Nation of Sanctuary. There was a recent meeting – minutes are available if anyone wants to see them.

#### 13. Ystradgynlais and Syrian Refugees

- (a) Maggie went to a meeting (mainly of agencies) organized by PAVO ( Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations). There will be 5 families accommodated (2 initially and 3 later on). The families will be selected to ensure that there are school places and all the children will go to the same school. There will be English lessons for the parents if needed. They will live in furnished private rented accommodation with everything they need to live but no 'luxuries' eg TV / computer. They will be given £200 per person clothing allowance, also expected to need baby clothes. Some charity shops are putting aside clothing. There will be a fortnight gap between them arriving and their benefits starting, although Powys will likely cover this. They get fixed funding from the Home Office (comes from the foreign aid budget). They will have immediate leave to remain and the right to work.
- (b) A national charity is offering anti race hate training locally – please get in touch if you would like further information.
- (c) Mike was asked to attend another meeting that had been organized by Ystradgynlais Labour Party for local residents and they are considering whether to form their own organization to focus on the refugees that will be living in their community.
- (d) Powys is going to appoint a co-ordinator (this has been put out to tender – it is a paid role). There is an assumption that the paid co-ordinator will take care of everything. Mike pointed out that they will probably still need some sort of support organization which is community based – not NGO.
- (e) Should we reach out to Newtown, which was going to be Powys' second town to receive refugees? There are groups in Knighton and Llanidloes who may wish to assist. Barbara will investigate.
- (f) The Co-op was contacted about providing out of date food but they will not do this due to health and safety restrictions.

14. Pizzoferato twinning with Talgarth

There is an associated project with EU funding (including a 'race hate' element). They have asked HBTSR to be one of the supporting / co-operating groups. We probably do NOT meet their requirements.

15. Border Film Festival in Hay on Wye

We have been asked to do the refreshments and we have enough volunteers to do this. We get 10% of the profits and can use the occasion to both fundraise for ourselves and recruit more supporters.

16. AOB

- (a) Christina– they would like to put on a concert at St Marys but it is now going to be at The Globe because they already have all the necessary sound systems etc. It will be on Friday June 17th. All money to go to HBTSR. Neil and Kate will do a poster.
- (b) Christina – thought it might be good to try and hold a drumming event. Lynn Kay who is based in Hay could run a day: [www.beatitpercussions.co.uk](http://www.beatitpercussions.co.uk)
- (c) Hilary is co-ordinating a counselling / therapeutic group. She is pulling together a list of skills and potential offerings.
- (d) Mac and Erica offered to coordinate an English Teaching group but no feedback on this so far

**Next Meeting**

23rd March 6.30 - probably at Gwernyfed Rugby club.

Melrose was thanked for opening the village hall and providing refreshments