



## HAY, BRECON & TALGARTH SANCTUARY FOR REFUGEES

### GROUP MEETING

**Wednesday 27 April 2016 18:30. Gwernyfed Rugby club in Talgarth.**

1. **Minutes and matters arising** from group meeting on March 23rd 2016 - minutes approved and Report received.
  
2. **Youth / schools**  
 Jeff sent his apologies but reported that he planned to meet with Emma Taylor at Christ College shortly to progress the September Away Day. He had a successful meeting with the Head teacher of Crickhowell and had thought she might attend our meeting. She would be very welcome. **Action** - Jeff to follow up  
**Gwernyfed and Brecon high schools:** No further progress  
 2b **Hereford refugee resettlement:** No further info  
 2c. **Art & life stories.** Wayne was consulted about artists among the refugees in Swansea but this was not something he knew about. This information may be collected in the future.
  
3. **Lobbying - letter writing**  
 People have written to Chris Davies about unaccompanied children and had similar responses. Andrew met him as planned and felt he was more responsive and warmer than previously reported – he had been to see a refugee centre in Cardiff. We noted that he had failed to vote on the immigration bill in Parliament on Monday [Jo had Tweeted him about this]. It was explained that he had had a family bereavement.  
**Action** - continue to press Chris Davies about refugee issues and invite him to an away day. Also send our condolences.  
 Sean, Andrew and Mike agreed to write to the B&R to highlight our concern about the delays in Resettlement. **Action** - Letter  
  
**Sean reported** his written discussion with the leader of the council about our concerns about the delay in resettlement and the response from the leader about difficulty in finding housing and delays imposed by government due to the need to work regionally. It was felt this response was not adequate given the problems faced by people in refugee camps and we should continue to urge the council to hurry, to expedite resettlement in Newtown and possibly offer to take more refugees. Report from two councillors who had been approached were shared and both had asked for action from Simon Inkson. One had suggested that more could be done to expedite resettlement and pointed to empty accommodation in our area. **Action** - Mike and Andrew agreed to speak with Rosemarie Harris about our concerns as she is the council cabinet member for Housing.  
  
**Maggie** reported that she wrote to the BBC and their response was that they thought carefully about their words but that they were not always clear as to whether people were

asylum seekers, refugees or migrants so they used a collective term. They said that they would pass on her concerns to news editors.

**Agreed:**

- To continue to promote signatures on relevant petitions.
- Members to continue to contact their Powys County Councillors to urge them to act upon the Syrian resettlement programme and consider posting favourable comments about refugee resettlement upon the council Facebook page.

**Stalls:** Covered under fundraising; Action - Mike agreed to assist in production of a short leaflet about the group and our activities that can be distributed on stalls

**4. Publicity Twitter, website, Facebook, press**

We now have 206 members on Facebook, 175 on Twitter and 252 on our mailing list with some overlap between these groups. Jo continues to maintain the website with regular news items, regularly tweets and the Facebook page has regular updates supplied by Sean and others.

An article appeared today in B&R about the Brecon away day and FYI Brecon had a number of good photos of the day on their site.

**Agreed:**

- Continue to seek press coverage of our activities
- Ask if we can have link buttons and/or feeds for Facebook as well as Twitter on our Website as a number of members have difficulties accessing Facebook.

**5. Respite days**

Date	Place	Numbers	Detail
April 5	Craig y Nos Country Park	About 45	Ailsa: BBNP organizing activities. HBTSR paying for coach (£190 for 53-seater). Nikki, Sally, Maggie, Muriel, Khalfan Mike & Jonny helped with food preparation. A very pleasant and successful day.
April 17	Brecon	About 45	Penny: Two venues (Muse & Scout Hut). 20+ in organizing group. Day was fully funded and some surplus. Tremendous generosity from local businesses, supermarkets, food bank, Llanfrynach group. Activities much appreciated and great to have some spontaneous involvement of locals.
May 15	Elan Valley	49	Andrew: Welsh Water hosting + Elan Valley Trust. Fully funded by Welsh Water and Elan Valley trust. Andrew due to meet to find out details and how much HBTSR can be involved.
June 5 <sup>th</sup>	Tregoyd PGL		PGL have offered to host a day with multiple activities and provide food. Details are awaited but hope to involve some local children as well. Coach booked.

July 10th	Llangors	53	The group has met and have plans, similar to Llanfihangel day but the trip will start at Ty Mawr and the bird hide with possible walk around lake. Later start and finish envisaged. Coach booked.
July 30	Talgarth	53	Virginia. It will be on the Saturday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> day of the Talgarth sports festival. Plans progressing well. Rugby club will be main venue. Envisage some walks around town as well as sports.
August 21 is correct date not 23!	Brilley	25 or possibly less	Carrie & Jo. Aimed at families (as with Llangenny). Inc. visit to farm. Details awaited.
September	Christ's College		Jeffrey liaising about date and details we would plan to be involved
October	Bronllys	25	Sue: likely to be a day for families, focusing on the theme of harvest
New offers: ???	* Landmark Trust (Llanthony Valley) * Coleg Trefecca * Farm near Crai		Details to be confirmed

**Work placements** - *The view was expressed that we must continue to have at least most of our days as local welcome days involving local people in the event. We are grateful for the opportunity to have funding and support but want to maintain our links. There are people keen to hold further events but we should aim for 1 per month.*

Recognising the issue about asylum seekers being unable to work and not wishing to exploit people... Hay Festival: we have been offered the opportunity for asylum seekers/ refugees to act as stewards at Hay Festival. This is unpaid but should be enjoyable. Accommodation has been offered and we continue to seek transport

**Agreed** to email request about transport when days and details clear. Food provided at Festival site.

**Cardiff:** It was agreed in principle last time to offer away days to refugee groups in Cardiff. Swansea are happy with this.

It was reported that a friend of one of our members who is a refugee living elsewhere attended the Brecon away day and was delighted with the experience. He had especially enjoyed making clay animals which he gave to some of the children who attended.

**Report from Ailsa** [in role as Listener for the April away days] Minor safeguarding issue discussed with Aideen from Craig y Nos:- a young boy ran away from family 3 times which caused concern to public and volunteers as he was then alone by a river. He came to no harm and Aideen confirmed that he was the responsibility of his parents and unless we felt his parents were neglectful [they weren't] there was no issue. Actually the same boy attended Brecon and had 1 to 1 with a volunteer as well as with his family which worked well.

**Photography** at Away days will be controlled so it is only done for brief periods possibly at the end, when people are relaxed, and so as not to disrupt activities. Individual visitors may of course use their own cameras but we should not take photos without written permission.

**Safeguarding policies, code of conduct and Guidelines** are still being worked upon and will be brought to the next meeting for discussion and adoption. The policy and code of conduct seem ready to be adopted and will be shared with the group before the next meeting. Work still to be done on brief guidance for volunteers. **Action** - Mike, Stuart and others to complete. **Ask** Aideen if we can borrow the level one child protection DVD she has offered and try to have as many volunteers see this as possible but at least ensure all organisers/ coordinators have accessed this training.

6. **Finance and expenditure.** Lawrence reported that we have a balance of £1,674. Bank account is now open! We spent only £80 on a laser printer [and spare toner cartridges] for Unity in Diversity and this was very gratefully received. See website and Facebook.

**Agreed:**

- **£250** to help a women's group in Swansea with essential expenses such as bus fares for participants.
- **Underwrite the travel costs by bus** for the next 3 away days whilst hoping that additional funds might be raised to make this unnecessary. Ailsa had quotes from 8 coach firms in Swansea area for 2 trips and 1 firm is consistently considerably lower than the rest. It was agreed that we would try to use this firm [Bluebird coaches] while they maintain the low price.
- **£250** to a volunteer teacher in the Jungle in Calais. This lady is known to Lynne and Philip and needs some very basic teaching aids to assist in teaching 16 month to 12 year olds.
- **Donations** to other groups/ people conditional on provision of proper receipt and a report of how funds are used (ideally so that we can post on website/Facebook).
- **Reserve:** keep enough funds for 2 away days in our account at all times
- **English teaching:** consider further the request from Cardiff Oasis group for support for Accreditation of their English teaching. This would mean provide students with a recognized certificate to help them to progress more quickly into work. Currently waiting lists of over a year for accredited courses with colleges. **Mac** to find out more details so we can make a decision based upon better information.

7. **Fundraising**

- **Two Choirs** [Talgarth Male voice choir and the Monday Choir] are holding a concert at St Mary's Church 27th May - all proceeds will come to us. **Action:** Posters to be put around Hay and Talgarth. Pete and Tref have been thanked by Sean for their kind offers.
- **Concert at the Globe** on 17th June will also have raffles and donation boxes. Action - Prizes are requested and posters to be put up.
- **Catering** at the film festival - Amount raised still awaited but it did raise our profile.
- **Brecon Guildhall** - Nikki had suggested that we see if there was an opportunity to involve the south Powys Youth Orchestra in a concert possibly with any refugee musicians who might be persuaded to perform. Ailsa spoke to David Meredith who thought that the new Mayor would look favourably upon this. Wayne did not know of musicians but may be able to find out. **Action** - Ailsa to check with Nikki on progress
- **Hay festival** - Have been very generous.

- **Refugee writers:** The inclusion officer at Hay festival Penny is making free tickets available to refugees and their volunteers. This is enabling a group of refugee writers to visit from Swansea, Cardiff and Newport to attend talks, meet with local writers for mentoring and discussions and to meet with PEN Cymru.
  - **Bucket collections** on Saturday 28th after 1pm talk, Sunday after 1pm talk and Monday after 10 am talk. *Volunteer bucket collectors needed please*
  - **Ticket returns:** Also some money may be made available to us from the sales of ticket returns
  - **African Market & Refugee Day.** We will also participate in the African stall at the Parish hall in Hay on 29th May and Rachel and Virginia are planning a refugee day on the 30th. Rachel explained that she has booked the hall and will run 3 children's craft workshops and have food such as cake and tea and coffee available and also the Falafel seller has agreed to be there and to let us have a share of his profits. We will have books from the Swansea refugee writers available to sell. **Action** PLEASE see if you have things we could sell, crafts, bric a brac or cakes on the stalls. Also we will need volunteers to man the stalls and hold buckets [We've had some offers but need more]
8. **Goods** collection points remain at St Mary's Church in Hay and the Lib Dems office in Brecon. [Lib Dems have mentioned that if they lose the assembly seat they will have to leave the office so we will need to find somewhere else in that event]

We have now moved from our store in Hay Castle. We still have 2 storage areas in Brecon thanks to Ty Mawr Lime and the National Parks. Ailsa has a stock list of items that are in the store.

At Brecon away day we distributed clothing, toys and kitchenware and Trevor kindly took a large amount of surplus clothing to Unity in Diversity. UID are now set up to be able to make money from surplus clothing not needed by Refugees so are not concerned if the clothing is too big or unsuitable.

We also had generous donations from the food bank and Aldi to give out at the Brecon away day. Aldi are happy to give food that is past its best on the Saturday night before an away day.

**Laptops:** Paul Funnell, IT manager at BBNP, negotiated for 7 old Laptops to be donated to UID and so far 4 have been received in Swansea. We [and UID] are very grateful. 2 other laptops were also donated and Ailsa and Lawrence took down some kitchenware and the laptops last week. In addition we took our first welcome boxes down to a man who had just been granted refugee status and had moved into a flat with 2 other friends. They had nothing so it was good to be able to donate some much needed items.

**Food & toiletries** - ongoing need for away days and to send to Swansea

**Laptops** - If further are available then Wayne hopes to have some to loan to people in need.

9. **Links with Swansea**

Continue to develop. It was pleasing to hear that UID and SBASSG are working very closely together, which has possibly been enhanced by our away days. The writers' meeting at Hay seems a very positive step.

## 10. Arrival of Syrian families/ Ystradgynlais

Sean attended a PAVO meeting this week to work on community cohesion which he felt was aimed at employees of agencies rather than the community. EYST will work with the community and have been successful in Swansea. No further news upon whether Ystradgynlais wish to merge with us or form their own group. Jonny mentioned that he had met some people from Ystrad at Craig y Nos who had been interested but we have heard no more. **Action:** Ailsa to check with Maggie if she has heard any more.

## 11. Groups

- **Therapies** - Hilary reported upon the great range of skills and experience available and Philip has agreed to help coordinate an initial meeting to discuss how best to use the expertise available.
- **English** - Mac has agreed to liaise with Oasis about Accreditation. Also is happy to consider skype courses or conversation if this would help.
- **Arts** will continue to be involved in Away days.

## 12. Any other business

- Sean attended a meeting in Abergavenny about planning to form a welcoming group for refugees there and they hope to work with Cardiff.
- **Agreed** we will explore becoming affiliated to Refugees welcome.
- **Agreed** that we will explore community sponsorship and write to Assembly candidates about this
- **Agreed** we will check upon the outcome of the meeting that Hiraeth Hope had with the Home office about community Sponsorship.

### **Date of next meeting: Thursday 9th June 6.30 at Rugby club**

[to help people attend who can't make Wednesdays. Sadly quite a few of the usual attendees can't make Thursday but once the rugby club start training again we will have to revert to Wednesday anyway]