



Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees

Annual report 2019. Registered charity 1173570

This list of activities would not be possible without the enormous support of the population of our area and our supporters in particular. Thanks seems too small a word to acknowledge the generous contribution of so many people.

Overview of Activities

Welcome Days out in Breconshire	12 in 2019		
Small groups	3 visits to Alder Carr, Llangattock woodland	Hay Literary Festival: 7 Volunteer stewards stayed. Visits of others	Trips for bike maintenance, pizza oven and to drop-ins with goods
Holiday cottage stays	Multiple stays, involving approx 30 adults and 38 children		
Others	Newport County football match	Project Get Together	Skirrid walk for Lift the Ban
Campaigning	For individuals such as Otis	For Lift the Ban campaign amongst others	Asking political representatives to assist with individual needs and campaigns.

Welcome Days for people seeking sanctuary¹

At these days we usually provide a 53-person coach from Swansea and we have also on some occasions extended a welcome to people on the VPRS (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme) based in Ystradgynlais, Newtown, Hereford and Abergavenny and to people who are able to make their own way to the venue. Newport Sanctuary have an

¹ Throughout this report we use the term 'people seeking sanctuary' to describe people seeking refuge/ asylum/ safety

open invitation and have joined us several times this year. Attendance varies between 40 and 80+ at any day and often the numbers of local people attending exceeds this considerably.

12 Welcome Days were held this year. Many benefit from these days out – not only people seeking sanctuary but also local people and the host communities. There are benefits in working together for a common goal and providing activities that local people including children can access. Community cohesion and intergenerational working are immediate benefits that areas hosting have noted.

All days are written about with photos, quotes and thanks on our website and press releases sent to the local press.

This year days were held at Hay on Wye CP School, Llangorse/Llanfihangel, Llangynidr, Treberfydd, Llwyn Celyn, Penpont [x2] Craig Y Nos, Ysgol Trefonnen Llandrindod, Talgarth, Brecon and Bronllys.

Football : Football is a constant feature at any welcome day where there is space and people willing to play. This year a new team, Kush Stars from Swansea, played against Talgarth FC and won their match.

Gareth Davies, Senior Coach/Educator for the Football Association of Wales had put us in touch with Newport County football club last year. This year, the club kindly made 50 free tickets available to us for a match in April. Sanctuary In Newport agreed to be the base for the afternoon/evening and a group from Swansea joined us. Coincidentally again the match date fell during the Amnesty International's 'Football Welcomes' campaign, which highlights the importance of football in people's lives. Season tickets provided last year meant that people seeking sanctuary in Newport were able to watch many matches and have integrated even better into their community.

Organisation: each Welcome Day requires careful planning in close partnership with the drop-in centres and support organisations in the cities, in particular Swansea Asylum Seekers Support (SASS). We rely in particular upon those individuals and support workers familiar with their local communities of people seeking sanctuary: Wayne and Maria in Swansea (with help from Thanu, Mark and Saba), Sarah and Mark in Newport, and Megan, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Project officer, together with Caroline and Fatima in Ystradgynlais and Hamed in Llandrindod and Newtown.

The uncertain lives of those seeking sanctuary, their dispersion around an urban area and lack of transport, makes gathering the group to take the coach a difficult process and the effort involved is not to be underestimated.

We rely also on reliable transport and have been fortunate to have close links with Bluebird Coaches who not only submitted the cheapest tenders initially, but have also been very accommodating and friendly.

In our own communities, we rely on a large group of people prepared to host, arrange and provide activities and food and gifts. Melrose and Ailsa will visit and help with planning and Melrose frequently helps to coordinate food donations and assist with documented and detailed risk assessments that are now carried out before any event. All the wonderful hosts and their teams have been thanked by our group and the visitors.

There is a 'manned' welcome/information desk with a signing-in book at each Welcome Day, and is coordinated by Philip. HBTSR lanyards are given out to regular volunteers and name badges to others. Safeguarding training is available and the safeguarding policies have been updated – thanks to Aideen.

Virginia, Penny, Andrew, Janet and others have coordinated donations of short-dated goods from supermarkets prior to welcome days.

No untoward incidents have been reported, but after one visit a volunteer from Swansea was stressed when the distribution of gift bags became disorganised with people grabbing what they could. Since then we have arranged for all gifts to be taken back to Swansea for more seemly and coordinated distribution via the drop-in centres.

Future plans We hope to continue a programme of days out and have provisional dates arranged until the autumn of 2020. We will try to arrange another football outing – possibly to coincide with Amnesty's 'Football Welcomes' campaign.

Hardship fund

This was established to meet emergency or one-off needs and has been well used this year and we have been able to respond to most requests within a day. Application forms are on our Website but we do respond to any form of request and seek additional information as needed. Amounts given vary from around £30 to 300.

We have had requests from individuals and from Groups such as Swansea Asylum Seekers Support, Newport Sanctuary and Sharetawe (a charity that helps destitute asylum seekers). Marilyn of Sharetawe, Wayne and Maria of Swansea Asylum Seekers Support, Jeni (Swansea Asylum seeking Women's group) and Sarah (The Sanctuary) have been very helpful in ensuring money reaches the people in need. In addition we have made some donations to the hardship fund administered by EYST (Ethnic Youth Support Team based in Swansea). Eyst give small amounts of money for immediate needs.

In addition, we have continued to support a separate fund for Nappies, Feminine Hygiene products and male toiletries administered by Maria Nicholas, a volunteer in Swansea. She has up to £50 a month to spend in this way, but can request more if necessary.

Some examples of hardship fund payments include:

- Fares to collect information needed for an asylum claim, to attend national embassy or to accompany family or friends travelling to lodge claims, attend Tribunals etc.
- Cash to replace stolen clothing
- Cost of medical alternative therapy and for counselling
- Interpreter's fees (twice)
- Child's school trip costs
- New shoes x2 for destitute people
- Cash for a number of people with NRPF (no recourse to public funds) or when admin errors had led to no benefits.
- Cost of a secondhand 3 part pram for a baby [needed urgently]
- 3 months' internet connection for several families on VPRS in Ystradgynlais.
- Help to pay a fine
- Bus fares to attend school when ineligible for statutory support.
- Fees for residency application
- Phone card costs for someone trying to find mother via International Red Cross
- Bus passes to allow attendance at college (11 awards). [New criteria and application form written]
- Equipment needed for college courses, including laptop computers, (3 awards)
- Vacuum cleaners
- School uniform when not available via statutory means
- Fee for injunction to prevent deportation
- Replacement cost for lost spectacles

Other donations

Non-urgent donations were given to assist Safe Passage, Help Refugees, Swansea Asylum Seekers Support, transport for Newport Sanctuary (to attend a walk), tickets to attend a Football match in Wembley, bike locks for Swansea Recycle, Swansea Women's Group and a replacement bike trailer.

Future plans – Both the Hardship Fund and our non-urgent support for other organisations are important, and we plan to continue them.

Membership and Support As at 31st December 2019

Email newsletter subscribers	462
	40 mailings sent this year
Facebook followers	602
Twitter followers	841
Instagram	

Fundraising/ Awareness-raising activities

Collections	Hay Literary festival and Refugee week talks. Open evening in Brecon. Collection bucket at The Mill Talgarth. Christmas markets in Hay and Brecon Theatre
Donations	Many from individuals. Some regular direct debits and many donations in kind. Still very regular donations of clothing and household goods and bicycles.
Events	Concert as part of Brecon Jazz organised by John Anderson Patti Promfest , The Big Skill and Hay FairTrade

Open evening 15th November- was attended by about 40 people who heard inspiring talks from Otis about his experience of being an asylum seeker, Kirsty Williams updating us on Wales Nation of Sanctuary progress and Margaret detailing our progress through the year. It was a good opportunity to publicly thank some of the very many people who make all our activities possible.

Display boards have been placed in Brecon Cathedral, Brecon St Mary's church, Brecon and Hay Libraries , Llangorse Community Hall and Llangynidr School as well as at our many events .

Future plans: arrange another open evening next year . Aim to keep our display boards in public places

Schools of Sanctuary

No new awards this year although Hay on Wye CP School and Ysgol Trefonnen hosted Welcome days , Llangynidr school choir attended and sang at the April Welcome Day and collected toiletries. Ysgol Mynydd Ddu and Archdeacon Griffiths participated in collecting goods for Welcome Days.

Other schools, including Crickhowell High School have also enquired about participating in future Welcome Days.

Future plans try to encourage and assist schools to apply for School of Sanctuary status

Other Activities

Holiday Cottages,

Although we were initially offered a number of holiday cottages we opted to use only the one based in Brecon which is near to the bus stop and close to carefully selected volunteers who can check that the stay progresses well, that the visitors have fun, leave the cottage tidy and can catch the transport home. We are very grateful to Rowland Jepson who has allowed us to use his cottage when it is not otherwise booked. Lynne Rogers liaises with Rowland, Thanu, Maria and Wayne about availability, suitability, need and arrangements and arranges for support from a small group of volunteers. HBTSR pays bus fares and provides a small grant for food/subsistence during the stay on an agreed formula taking into account the numbers visiting and the duration. We also try to assist with the changeover tidy-up. Others involved in organisation:- Melrose, Philip, Marian, Penny, Trish, Liz, Margaret, Carola, Trevor, Julia, Mac, Erica, Ailsa and Pauline.

Rowland was recognised by Swansea City of Sanctuary with an award of Holiday Home of Sanctuary

In addition, Rhiannon and Nick have loaned their beautiful holiday home for volunteers from Swansea to stay for a weekend.

Liz and Pip have also offered cottages that are being carefully considered. They are described as beautiful but quite isolated and might require much more volunteer input to make a stay successful.

Future plans Continue as possible. Devise an application form to help with equitable sharing and administration of this activity.

Short breaks for small groups

Hay Festival was again a source of great activity, written up in a blog on the website. 7 volunteer stewards assisted by Jonathan enjoyed the experience and 3 men (two coming for a second year) were accommodated by Sarah and Chris] and 4 women by Adil and Mary. A number of small groups came up from Swansea to attend events with complimentary tickets provided by Hay Festival box office.

Friendships are now well established between a number of people who may visit the area to stay with friends.

We facilitated a walk up the Skirrid with Newport Sanctuary and Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary to mark the 'Lift the Ban Campaign' (a campaign asking for people seeking asylum to be allowed to work) and to mark a year since Mustafa Dawood died running from Immigration police who raided a car wash where he was working.

Several day-visits to woodland in Llangattock have been enjoyed.

Future plans The small-group day visits to different parts of our area are something we hope to continue to facilitate. And we certainly hope to continue our successful links to Hay Festival who continue to provide enormous support to one of the men, Otis, who volunteered and was later detained at Christmas 2018.

Bicycles

Drovers Cycles in Hay have hosted bike maintenance days for people seeking sanctuary and continue to provide a supply of bikes to go to Newport, Swansea and Cardiff. Newport now have a weekly maintenance session for people seeking sanctuary and also help at repair cafés in Newport. Thanks also to individual donors and to people who have provided storage and transport, in particular Vanessa, Miv, Sean, Lawrence, Kev and Stuart.

Future plans: Bikes provide a free way to travel, a source of exercise and independence. We hope to continue to support this.

English Language Tuition

Mac has resumed visiting Unity in Diversity (UID) to teach an IELTS course and to take donated goods from our store that are useful to people seeking Sanctuary. Several of his pupils have recently been able to achieve the grades they need to make progress with professional careers. Whilst Mac was unable to visit Jonnie and Ailsa took goods down monthly.

Courts/ Home Office Support group

People seeking sanctuary are understandably very anxious about attending hearings and whilst friends and Swansea based volunteers can often accompany them, a group of HBTSR volunteers have agreed to be available when asked. This does feel like a very worthwhile exercise and it is appreciated by the person seeking sanctuary. It also appears that the barristers and judges take note when people are supported in this way.

Future plans: Continue as requested but possibly encourage more referrals and maybe find additional volunteers .

Friendships and support

Individual HBTSR supporters have befriended individual people seeking sanctuary and offer support, time out and in one case acted as a birthing partner. HBTSR often writes letters of support and helped to raise money via 'chuffed.org' to help with a Citizenship application. We have also experience of running Change.org campaigns

Project Get Together

HBTSR were given a grant of over £9,000 by the National Lottery to run a project to bring together up to 80 young people from the three South Wales cities (both those who had lived in the UK all their lives and those seeking asylum/refuge) for a residential weekend of out-door activities designed to build team working and leadership qualities. The weekend is run by PGL (one of the UK leading activity holiday providers and where Steve, one of our supporters, works). We booked accommodation for female participants at Cadarn /Tregoyd riding as PGL did not have sufficient beds available. This took place on 5-7 July.

The aim of the weekend was to enable people to come together, join in interesting and enjoyable activities, and:
*Feel welcome
*Find opportunities for friendship and solidarity
*Learn to appreciate partnership and team working
*Celebrate the contribution of people from other communities, cultures and countries

The groups represented were The Sanctuary Newport, TGP Cymru, Llanishen High School (School of Sanctuary), City of Sanctuary Swansea and HBTSR. During the weekend the groups met with Kirsty Williams AM. Again this was a very positive experience.

Future plans: we will look at alternative activities next year and consider if this is something that we wish to continue.

Goods

Supermarkets: Aldi have continued to donate surplus, end of date, perishable foods for away days. The Coop have given foods for specific days as part of their charitable activity. Virginia continues to coordinate these links.

Other goods: We continue to be given large amounts of clothing, bedding, toys, household and kitchen items that are of use to people seeking sanctuary both here and abroad. Brecon Rotary again offered appropriate surplus from their Caledonian Market to Swansea Humanitarian Aid Response Project (SHARP -a humanitarian aid project who send clothing, toiletries, medical equipment and bedding to refugee camps across Europe) and for people in drop-ins in our local cities.

Drop off points:- the Liberal Democrats office in Brecon and St Marys Church in Hay continue to take in our donations for which we are extremely grateful. And, just before Christmas, Hay Vets in Talgarth have offered to be a new drop off point!

Store: Ty Mawr Lime continue to provide us with a warm, secure storage area where we can sort out items to be sent to Unity in Diversity[UID], Newport Sanctuary, SHARP or Oranges and Lemons and most recently a group in Caldicot. We are very Grateful to Ty Mawr Lime, as without this store we could not undertake this activity.

Stores Group:Sue, Erica, Carola, Brenda, Lawrence and Ailsa collect goods from the drop off points and sort, check and package it. We have a number of people who help with transport of goods: Trish, Sarah, Carol, Val, Tim, Lawrence, Ailsa, Jonnie, Mac, Miv, Maureen and Sally. Tim and Val have also transported a pool table to Swansea and a table tennis table to Cardiff and Jonnie a table football table to Swansea.

Knitting Group. This continues to meet at Christina's house and has made a large number of knitted items that have been sent on to various groups. There are also a number of individual hand knitters who have donated large amounts of beautifully made items throughout the year.

Future plans: Continue all this activity

Christmas presents.

Again this year Sue, Carola and Erica sourced, bought and wrapped presents that were taken to SASS and UID in Swansea where they were gratefully received.

Fundraising

We again raised money at Hay Festival both on site and via stalls at the homes of supporters and via various stalls at other festivals. Our rescue teddies in need of homes seem to be a popular way to engage with children about seeking sanctuary.

The Mill in Talgarth have a collection box for us which is helpful. We helped with a Concert organised by John Anderson at Brecon Jazz that raised us some money as well as funds for Side By Side with Refugees (A charity helping with Refugees in France).

We have run an annual grand Raffle on three occasions with the one in 2018/19 raising over £3000 and culminating with a curry evening and quiz which raised our profile as well as additional money. We have one running currently due to be drawn on 31st January.

Future plans: Continue to run stalls and fundraise as it also helps to highlight the asylum system and issues.

Book

A book of drawings and writings by supporter Eugene Fisk (who sadly died before the book was published in February 2018) continues to bring in money. Books have been given to people featured in the book and to some hosts. The book is for sale in a number of bookshops (Addymans, Richard Booths, Brecon Bookshop, Bookish Crickhowell) and online via Green ink Publishing as well as from the group.

Lobbying, Awareness raising and Education.

This year has seen us become involved in campaigning for individuals as well as joining in with national campaigns. Penny and Andrew met with Chris Davies MP around Christmas time 2018 to discuss the Lift the Ban campaign and present a petition. Both as a group and individually we continued to write to him and involved him in the campaign to help a detained asylum seeker Otis who was taken into detention just before Christmas.

At the by-election we sent letters asking questions of all the candidates and had answers from the Lib Dem and Labour candidates. The MP Jane Dodds has experience of working for the Refugee council and helped with some individual concerns. At the National

elections in December the seat changed hands again. We hope to secure an appointment to meet with the new MP in January.

Kirsty Williams AM has been very supportive throughout this year with help campaigning for individuals who had been detained as well as helping with queries about school uniform and transport .

We have had a presence at some festivals e.g The Big Skill and Patti Prom Fest with information about the group. We have given talks about seeking sanctuary and HBTSR at several schools and to other groups.

Our open evening gave a further opportunity to learn more about aspects of seeking sanctuary whilst promoting the group.

HBTSR have been represented at Sanctuary in Sennedd. Ailsa was invited to a workshop on campaigning and advocacy facilitated by Lloyds Bank Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy. This was a good networking opportunity and confirmed that we are doing things reasonably well.

HBTSR was mentioned/ written about in a book about the sanctuary movement that was published this year - A Hundred Thousand Welcomes Available here <http://www.lulu.com/shop/tiffany-allen/a-hundred-thousand-welcomes/paperback/product-24080635.html>

Website and social media

The website is maintained by City of Sanctuary and Ailsa with help from Mike and Paul. The site contains all our newsletters, write- ups, policies and links to other groups.

Facebook remains a public group with posts approved by Steve and Ailsa.

Our Twitter account is run by Maria and really came into its own with the Campaign to free Otis.

Our Instagram account is run by Alex.

Neil and Cate continue to help with design of our leaflets and posters to ensure that we have a consistent, recognisable and effective visual presence.

Expenditure

Detail is provided in the Finance annual report. We have helped many individuals with items such as uniforms, bus passes, food and clothing as well as making donations to other charities helping people seeking sanctuary.

We pay for transport to Welcome Days and the associated costs of these days. Frequently we are able to negotiate favourable rates for halls, food and gifts are donated and we appreciate the generosity of so many people.

Training

Volunteer training sessions upon our safeguarding policy were held.

Administration

All policies are displayed on our website and are reviewed annually by the Chair and trustees. Our Safeguarding policies were revised this year by Aideen Naughton[Public Health Wales Consultant Paediatrician] for which we are extremely grateful. We started a risk assessment and rewrote various other policies during the year as our activities have gradually expanded. We altered our constitution to reduce the number for a meeting to be quorate from 15 to 10.

We have over 460 people on our mailing list who receive a regular mailing with details of activities and agenda and minutes of meetings. All are welcome to attend meetings and usually at least 12 people are in attendance. We meet most months and report upon activities, income, expenditure, any issues, plans and seek views and aim for consensus about future work.

Officers and Trustees are appointed at the AGM with Trustees able to co-opt additional Trustees between AGMs as needed. Trustees meet formally about twice a year or as needed.

Post Holders.	Holder
Chair	Margaret Blake
Vice Chair	Sally McColl
Treasurer	Lawrence Duffy- deputy Virginia Brown
Secretary	Ailsa Dunn
Trustees	Margaret Blake* Lawrence Duffy* Ailsa Dunn* Melrose East Sally McColl * appointed 06/2017 when Charity registered.
Policies	Mike Gatehouse

Hardship fund group	Mike Gatehouse, Lynne Rogers and Lawrence Duffy. Appointed annually
Fundraising coordinator	Rachel Giaccone
Respite day Welcomer/ information officer	Philip Oliver and group Lynne Rogers, Lawrence Duffy, Ailsa Dunn, Adil Gatrad, Margaret and Pat Blake, Sue and Gez Richards, Penny and Andrew Leonard, Sally and Colin McColl, Ellen McCombe, Mac McCarthy, Mike Gatehouse, Melrose East
Supermarket liaison	Virginia Brown
Store user group	Sue Richards, Carola Tipton, Erica McCarthy, Brenda Charwood, Ailsa Dunn
Risk Management	Melrose East

Webmaster	Paul Funnell
Facebook administrator	Steve Buzza
Twitter and campaigns lead	Maria Duggan
Instagram Lead	Alex Benfield
Schools Liaison/ educator	Sue Richards,
Holiday stays coordinators	Lynne Rogers, Thanu Hettiarchchi, Rowland Jepson and support group Mac and Erica McCarthy, Pauline Paterson, Trevor and Julia Lee, Carola Tipton, Margaret and Pat Blake, Trish Fretten, Liz Jenkins, Marian Lewis, Penny and Andrew Leonard, Philip Oliver, Ailsa Dunn and Melrose East
Courts Support Group	Claire Armstrong, Margaret Blake, Pauline Paterson, Sarah Andrews, Sue Richards, Jane Wazir, Barbara Price, Reg Price, Philip Oliver, Lynne Rogers, Melrose East, Lawrence Duffy, Ailsa Dunn, Lis Lifford, Corinne Harris, Clare Shirtcliff, Ellie Lonsdale, Hilary Bright, Ellen and Roger McCombe, Adil Gatrad, Rowland Jepson, Janet Bodily, Neil Stone, Maria Duggan, Jonnie and Tina Hill, Allie Exton, Virginia Brown, Gillian Hall, Maureen Douglas,

Glossary

Unity in Diversity - UID - a drop in support group meeting twice weekly in Swansea

Swansea Asylum seekers Support -SASS- a drop in support group meeting twice weekly

in Swansea

Swansea women's support groups. There are several groups who meet weekly or monthly with different committees

Swansea Humanitarian Aid Response Project -SHARP - a volunteer run group who collect, sort and arrange onward transport for goods to go to refugee camps.

ShareTawe - a service trying to find accommodation hosts for destitute asylum seekers in Swansea.

Oranges and Lemons Cymru - a group who collect household goods that are available for people in need.

Newport Sanctuary - sometimes known as The Gap- runs a daily drop in service and support with various additional projects such as an allotment and bicycle repair.

Oasis - a Cardiff group who provide a daily drop in service and support.