



# Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees

Registered charity no 1173570

## Annual report 2020

### Overview from a year greatly affected by the Pandemic.

#### Welcome Days

Welcome days in our area		2
Small groups	Otis visited Hay and Fairfield schools in January	
Holiday cottage stays	3 families stayed before lockdown and since 23rd March a destitute asylum seeker from Swansea has been staying in Brecon. Over the summer he was able to stay at another house for 2 months before returning to Rowland.	

#### Attendance at welcome days by people seeking sanctuary \*

It almost seems like a different world in which we were able to invite people seeking sanctuary in Swansea to board a 53 seater coach and visit Hay on Wye school in January and Llangorse community Centre in early March. Both of these well attended events allowed people to meet up, chat, have fun together and to take home some gifts and donations to share with others in Swansea. In particular large amounts of food donations from Hay Deli including pasta, rice, couscous and spices were very welcome gifts coming just before lockdown.

Many people benefit from these days out – not only people seeking sanctuary but also 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 that have hosted have noted as well as new friendships.

And then Lockdown intervened and the carefully arranged programme of events was cancelled for the foreseeable future.

*'How wonderful to feel safe and wanted and welcomed, when for many, this is not what we experience in everyday life.'*

*'I do hope there are more people like yourselves out there bucking the trend of extremism and misunderstanding and using simple goodwill and friendship to make a difference.'*

\* throughout this document we have used the term 'people seeking sanctuary' to describe people seeking refuge/ asylum/ safety. We try to avoid depersonalising terms such as 'Asylum seeker' or 'Refugee'.

#### Hardship fund

This was established soon after the start of the group in order to meet urgent or one off needs and has been in great demand throughout this year. Requests are now coming from a number of groups who support people seeking asylum and on most occasions

they have a favourable response within 24 hours. An application form is on our website but we do respond to any request that is sent via a recognised support group and seek any necessary additional supportive information.

We have had requests from groups such as Swansea Asylum Seekers Support, The Gap Sanctuary, Swansea Asylum Seeking Women's group, Welcome to Swansea group, Eyst Covid Response Project and Sharetaewe.

In addition, we have a separate fund for Nappies and Feminine Hygiene products and male toiletries administered by Maria Nicholas, a volunteer in Swansea.

### Hardship fund payments

January	Payments for 2 destitute people for food and essentials for several weeks, a vacuum cleaner, replacement spectacles and transport for disabled boy to attend school
February	Bus fares for teenagers attending school with long journey, help with clothing and items for family with No Recourse to Public funding, Shoes and money for a destitute men.
March	Weekly support for elderly couple who had support withdrawn and then reinstated. Contribution towards tuition fees for man to kickstart career in IT after granted status. Help with transport to tribunal for family members, and money towards laptops for Syrian Families in Ystradgynlais
April	Shoes for 7 children,
May	Court fine for alleged spitting . Digital tablet for child not in school. Medication for person with no income and need for non prescription items. Groceries for household with no money.
June	Printer cartridges, lap tops x2 help with legal fees for a citizenship application.
July and August	Mobiles, tablets, clothing grants, Laptops [£1050] level 3 Beauty equipment,
September	Bus passes x7. Immediate help for domestic abuse sufferer,
October	Bus travel payments for a month. Course kit x2 and books for course X1
November	Laptop x1
December	Help with moving

### Other Monies used

Donations for bike maintenance *-bikes report below*

Donations for Phone top ups *-report below*

Donation to Safe passage and Help Refugees after fire at Moria

Donation via County of Sanctuary Pembrokeshire for Penally Camp and some money for immediate needs to The Heart a group set up to provide clothing and toiletries to Penally.

Donation to Hopetowns.

## Membership and Support

As at 31st December 2020

Email newsletter subscribers	475
Facebook followers	769
Twitter followers	926
Instagram	

### Fundraising/ Awareness raising activities

Almost all of the fundraising activities planned for the year had to be cancelled but our generous supporters have ensured that we have still been able to support people in need both in south Wales and those seeking refuge abroad .

We have sold handmade, washable **face masks** made by Rachel, Janet, Gaynor and Kumari and raised over £2000.

A stall on Hay Market in November raised over £270 and gave useful publicity.

We were successful in obtaining a grant of £4000 from Community Foundation Wales Covid Resilience fund that allowed us to pay for Phone top ups for many people seeking asylum so they could continue with studies, and also buy 10 laptops, 2 digital tablets, 2 phones, essential parts for bikes , gardening equipment and hand sanitiser, soap and masks.

WE have had our information display boards in Hay School and Library, Llangorse Community Centre and Brecon Cathedral.

Our collection bucket in Drovers and the Mill gave us some income for which many thanks.

We have issued press releases about the two welcome days and an update about our activities during lockdown, an article about the Bicycles project with Drovers and Newport Sanctuary and an article about the Sewing machine collaboration with Tools for Self Reliance and Newport Sanctuary and our Christmas activities with Swansea and Penally.

### Schools of Sanctuary

No new awards this year although Hay School hosted a day and Llangorse school made donations to the welcome day in Llangorse.

### Festival of Sanctuary

Hay Festival was recommended to be recognised as a Festival of Sanctuary in January with plans for a celebration at the festival in May. The pandemic meant that there was no celebration but we are delighted that the support that the Festival gives to so many people seeking sanctuary has been recognised.

### Other Activities

#### Holiday Cottage

For a number of years Rowland Jepson has allowed his holiday cottage to be used for short stays by people seeking asylum when it was not otherwise booked. At the start of Lockdown, Sharetawe asked if we could accommodate a man who would otherwise be homeless or placed in a hostel/ dormitory. Rowland agreed to this use and we have been able to befriend and help with subsistence. Ruth Gibbs kindly gave our gentleman the use of her house during the summer when Rowland had some pre arranged bookings.

During the time that this man has been in Brecon he has been assisted by the Food bank as well as by HBTSR and by Pepperberry Kitchen [run by supporters] who have delivered twice weekly meals.

### **Bicycles**

Drovers Cycles , Sean, Vanessa, John, Miv and Lawrence have continued to collect bicycles which have been shared with Re-cycle in Swansea and the Gap Sanctuary Project in Newport. We are very grateful to everyone who has donated bicycles, given storage and transport which has allowed so many people freedom to travel. We have assisted with purchase of bike parts, helmet, lights and locks.

Over 60 bikes have been donated this year to Newport Sanctuary or Re-Cycle Swansea.

Newport has a regular bike maintenance session that was able in part to continue during the year. They credit our support for helping to start and maintain this popular session. Penally Camp in Pembrokeshire has used money that we gave them to help to set up a bike bank to allow the men housed there to travel. Newport Sanctuary volunteers and Mark attended Penally to help service bikes.

### **English Language Tuition**

Mac regularly visited Unity in Diversity[UID] to teach an IELTS course and to take donated goods from our store. This was stopped by the pandemic but he continues with some informal online support.

### **Courts support group**

People seeking sanctuary are understandably very anxious about attending hearings and we have been able to offer moral support by attending with individuals. Requests for this had increased but ceased during the pandemic. We have a leaflet on the website explaining our role. We also hold some money that was donated to help with legal cases.

### **Friendships and support**

Many of our group have kept in touch with individuals throughout the pandemic and we have maintained contact with support groups. We have been told that this is greatly appreciated.

### **Phone top ups**

Kelly Wearing in Swansea agreed to help buy phone top ups for people seeking asylum who needed these to help them to continue with studies or other urgent needs. This started in May and has been well utilised. We have had many thank you emails saying how much this has helped.

An example

*'My name is X, I live in Swansea as a asylum i want to send an email to you and say thank you very much for your help. As i told you, your help was very helpful for me because unfortunately my baby is ill and doctors said she may not survive for a long time very difficult situation.'*

### **Sewing Machines**

Newport Gap Sanctuary asked for our help in finding some sewing machines and materials to start a sewing group. Tools for Self Reliance were kindly able to let us have machines that were not suitable to be sent to Africa and other kind people also donated machines. In September, Janet and Gaynor visited to refresh people's knowledge of how to use a sewing machine and by November there were 3 separate groups visiting the centre to use the machines. Additional machines were also provided to Unity in Diversity

[UID] for individuals. A further 6 machines were given to Newport in early December and 3 to UID.

### **Knitting group**

Due to the Pandemic this group has been unable meet. There are some items ready to go when feasible.

### **Goods**

Until the start of lockdown we continued to be given large amounts of clothing, bedding, toys, household and kitchen items that were of use to people seeking sanctuary both here and abroad. Drop off points the Liberal Democrats office in Brecon, St Marys Church in Hay and Hay Vets in Talgarth took in our donations for which we were extremely grateful.

Since lockdown, we mostly stopped collecting goods as none of the support groups were open and so we had nowhere to send items.

In November we were able to send donated games, warm mens clothing and toiletries to Penally with Sylvia and Hilary and also Mens clothing, blankets and similar items via Ellen to go to Calais. Individuals sent toiletries to Moria camp via a Freepost option organised by Attika Humankind Support. *And please see Christmas giving below.*

Ty Mawr Lime continue to provide us with a warm, secure storage area where we have been able to keep things and gradually disperse them as lockdown restrictions eased.

Several house clearances over lockdown gave us useful furniture and household items that has been stored in a garage awaiting dispersal. We were able to send some of these household items to UID and Newport in the autumn.

Sean took a large collection of baby clothes to a new Clothes bank for baby clothes.

In November Christina W arranged for a market stall on Hay Market to sell some of the donated clothes and some face masks which raised just over £270.

### *Stores Group*

Sue, Erica, Carola, Brenda, Virginia, Lawrence and Ailsa collected goods from the drop off points and sorted, checked and packaged it. Lawrence, Ailsa, Trevor, Jonnie, Tina, Sylvia, Hilary, Mac, Miv, Sean, Tim, Val and Sally have transported items.

Sue has continued to visit the store to check that items are in date and sort any suitable items to be transported. Sue and Others wrapped presents that had been gathered early in the year.

### **Christmas presents.**

Despite periods of lockdown, it was decided to see if anyone wanted to give gifts for Christmas. Hay on Wye Primary school, Llangynidr Primary School and Llangorse community donated a large amount of gifts of chocolates, biscuits, toiletries and children's presents. Llangorse CP Church in Wales School pupils made handmade cards and Crickhowell High School donated money from their Welsh Bacc Charity fund. Money was given to both Newport Sanctuary and UID Swansea to buy gifts, food or to give money to people for Christmas and the gifts and cards were split between Uid and Penally Camp. Santa [delivery] was played by Jonnie, Mac, Sean and Adil.

### **Lobbying, Awareness raising and Education.**

Throughout the year we have continued to highlight important petitions and causes. We have been helped in this by the fortnightly briefing of Asylum Matters and the weekly

updates for Lift The Ban Coalition. We have regular correspondence with our MP and MS and have met both this year.

### **Website and social media**

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

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

Twitter is run by Maria and continues as an active campaigning force.

Instagram 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 to buy items including food, bus passes, laptops and phone top ups and have made donations to other charities that help people seeking sanctuary such as those helping at Penally camp, and also some national groups helping in Greece and Calais.

An example of how helping other charities can benefit people we are concerned about in south Wales -

*In December 2019 we gave a £200 donation to Hopetown a London support group for people seeking sanctuary who had been particularly affected by spending time in Calais. This was set up by a man who spent some time in Swansea before he had his Leave to Remain. In July a very traumatised man who had been in Swansea was moved to London. Friends were very concerned about him. We were able to link him up with Hopetown who made immediate contact and involved him in their now limited activities. Subsequently friends reported that he felt much happier and as if he had a future.*

Last year we gave money to Swansea Asylum Seekers Women's Group and we heard that the organiser Jeni has been able to set up a project called 'Open Doors'- a range of short on line courses that give women a taster of a subject and may lead on to further study or help into work when this is permitted.

### **Administration.**

All policies are on our website and are reviewed annually by the Chair and trustees. . Our Safeguarding policies were tested earlier this year and found to work . We have added a Covid Policy recently.

We have nearly 500 people on our mailing list who receive a regular mailing with details of activities, updates, petitions and details of meetings. All are welcome to attend our meetings .

We have met monthly since June via Zoom 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 have met once this year but have kept in touch regularly. Please do let us know if you'd like to take on any of the roles listed below.

<b>Post Holders as of December 2020</b>	<b>Holder</b>
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Blake
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Sally McColl
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lawrence Duffy
<b>Secretary</b>	Ailsa Dunn
<b>Trustees</b>	Margaret Blake* Lawrence Duffy* Ailsa Dunn* Melrose East appointed 12/2017 Sally McColl appointed 12/2017 *appointed 06/2017 when the Charity was registered
<b>Safeguarding Lead</b>	Dr Aideen Naughton
<b>Hardship fund group</b>	Mike Gatehouse, Lynne Rogers and Lawrence Duffy. Appointed annually
<b>Fundraising coordinators</b>	Rachel Giaccone and Jane Dodds
<b>Welcomer/ information officer and group</b>	Philip Oliver and 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.
<b>Supermarket liaison</b>	Virginia Brown
<b>Store user group</b>	Sue Richards, Carola Tipton, Erica McCarthy, Brenda Charlwood, Ailsa Dunn
<b>Webmaster</b>	Paul Funnell
<b>Facebook administrator</b>	Steve Buzza
<b>Twitter lead</b>	Maria Duggan
<b>Instagram Lead</b>	Alex Benfield
<b>Schools Liaison/ educator</b>	Sue Richards,
<b>Holiday stays coordinators</b>	Lynne Rogers, Thanu Hettiarchchi, Rowland Jepson
<b>Risk Management</b>	Melrose East
<b>Courts Support Group</b>	Claire Armstrong, Margaret Blake, Pauline Paterson, Sarah Andrews, Sue Richards, Rowland Jepson, 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, Angharad Kuck, John Anderson, Kirsty Morgan, Virginia Brown
<b>Policies</b>	Mike Gatehouse

