

## **Report of the Acting Treasurer for the year 2023**

This report marks a year of extreme difficulty for our friends seeking asylum who have been caught up in political controversy as government seeks to resolve what is perceived as the 'problem' of immigration. Many have relied on our support for a number of years because their asylum applications are caught up in a seemingly intractable backlog of cases.

### **General accompanying notes:**

Requests for help were received from refugees from the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, St. Lucia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Whilst the majority of clients are single males, we also help many women, although the ratio is about 4:1. We are helping a number of families who have an entitlement to support under the asylum rules, but this does not cover material needs such as clothing and the cost of travel in order comply with Home Office terms of temporary admission.

### **Income:**

By the end of December 2023, we were receiving a regular monthly income of £1,384 in Direct Debits which was supplemented by one-off donations, grants etc.

We have benefited from the fundraising efforts of others and over the last year our Chair has given talks for which we received specific donations from Stockton Soroptimists, Social Work Students and Rotary. In addition, we received donations from various faith groups who, in recognising the plight of our friends seeking asylum, have maintained their support despite their own difficult financial situations.

We have been able to include regular accessible payments to Hartlepool, Darlington and Redcar clients thanks to the willingness of our Vice-Chair to administer this through her outreach Caseworker role for Justice First.

We began the year with each client receiving £60 per month plus food, but close monitoring of our financial situation and forward budgeting means that payments can vary.

We express our gratitude for the continuing support grant from the Jill and Norman Franklin Trust which has provided stability, and enabled us to maintain payments (calculated on a weekly basis, but paid monthly) and also helped us to meet the additional needs of clients, for example the cost of school uniforms. Other significant support has come from the Teesside Charity and K Home International.

A previous successful bid to the National Lottery 'Awards for All' yielded a grant of £1,400 to assist with developing a website and updating an information leaflet. Although this has actually taken many months to progress, we finally launched the new-look website at the end of the year.

We have responded to various additional pressures (cost of living, drop in donations) which have impacted particularly harshly upon our clients.

**Expenditure:**

In addition to the regular hardship payments made on a monthly basis which have helped around 70 destitute people registered as having no recourse to public funds, we have spent £3,890 on food and toiletries. This is an increase of approximately £1,000 on the previous year, attributable mainly to the increase in the cost of living. Other items were donated from local business, community supporters and a regular significant donation of shopping vouchers from one individual supporter. There is also a scheme whereby local customers buy fairly traded rice through a local Fairtrade agent, and donate it for our clients. It is mainly our Middlesbrough clients who benefit from this spend as the 'Melting Pot' volunteers who run the Stockton Drop-in receive food donations from St Nicholas Church in Durham.

We pride ourselves that every penny raised goes to help our vulnerable clients, but although Trustees are generous with their time and commitment to our work, we don't think it acceptable that they should be substantially out of pocket, so around £300.00 was spent on administrative costs – printing ink and postage. We do not have any paid staff, and only recently were asked to contribute £650 towards the use of council premises which had previously been free to use .

We could not manage without our wonderful volunteers. Sadly, we cannot reward them financially, but they do receive reimbursement for any costs they incur when volunteering, plus entitlement to a destitution payment where appropriate.

We were able to liaise with other organisations including receiving referrals from Red Cross, the local authorities and local charity, Purple Rose who provided what amounted to hundreds of hot meals on several occasions for which MTF paid per head and felt was good value for money. This 'taste of home' was much welcomed and enjoyed by clients.

Trustees considered approximately 68 applications for assistance for needs including: School Uniforms, Education & Training, essential clothing, household goods, medical needs, help with household arrears, 'phone top-ups, travel to appointments, translation of documents to assist asylum claims, photographs for Home Office documents and additional needs for children (trips etc).

**Mary Thompson Fund Jan – Dec 2023**

**Statement of Accounts 2023 for account number 20103929**

MTF financial record for 2023				
Month	Start Balance	Payments in	withdrawals	Finish Balance
January	£13,298.53	4837.80	4885.72	£13,250.61
February	£13,250.61	3538.00	3190.00	£13,598.61
March	£13,598.61	3929.94	4173.31	£13,355.24
April	£13,355.24	6856.00	4235.56	£15,975.68
May	£15,975.68	3748.00	5537.46	£14,186.22
June	£14,186.22	2618.50	2348.00	£14,456.72
July	£14,456.72	7461.00	4498.11	£17,419.61
August	£17,419.61	4311.00	3756.78	£17,973.83
September	£17,973.83	2721.00	3640.95	£17,053.88
October	£17,053.88	17031.00	3096.87	£30,988.01
November	£30,988.01	3011.00	7378.14	£26,620.87
December	£26,620.87	2036.00	5507.70	£23,149.17

Opening balance: 13,298.53

Total credits: 62,099.24

total debits: 52,24860

Closing balance: 23,149.17

