



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

April 2023 To March 2024

**Birmingham Community Hosting Network
Also known as BIRCH Network**

Address; 204 Scott House, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Deritend,
Birmingham, B9 4AA

Charity registration number: 1151763

Trustees:

Chris Benfield

Katherine Green

Kamilla Khalid

Emma Hawthorne

Nicole Lewis (from 26th July 2023, resigned Oct 2024)

Isobel Knowles (from 26th July 2023)

Fatima Batool (from 26th July 2023)

David Newsome (from 1st March 2024)

Andrew Jolly (from 22nd November 2024)

Independent Examiner:

Matt Gardner

Trustees Report:

Objectives and Activities

Objectives as set out in the constitution:

The relief of financial hardship amongst those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom or who are refugees, and who reside in the West Midlands.

To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of those awaiting and those granted refugee status and their dependents.

Activities:

- Community hosting network for destitute refugees and migrants
- Befriending and advocacy support for separated young refugees
- Sessional activities and support for newly arrived asylum seeking families
- Outreach support to newly arrived asylum seekers living in hotel accommodation

Trustee's Responsibilities in Relation to the Financial Statements.

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Summary of main achievements

This year was a very busy year and saw staff supporting more sanctuary seekers than the previous 12 months. Despite there being many changes to the asylum and huge problems with delays, backlogs, policy and legal changes, our staff have remained flexible and responsive in their support. As an organisation we have achieved some fantastic outcomes for our beneficiaries and have increased our advocacy work significantly to fill the gaps left by closures of other services or changing need.

Our hosting project was quieter than normal, but we were able to support four destitute asylum seekers, providing 126 nights of accommodation. We also provided invaluable information to a range of other agencies which enabled them to take action to avoid destitution for their service users.

Our family befriending and advocacy project has been extremely busy, supporting over 65 separated young refugees, and our coordinator has been engaged in a lot more one to one

advocacy and support. We have seen a big increase in age assessment cases and have worked with more under 18-year-olds than the previous few years. We have increased our wellbeing day trips and support and have continued to link in the most vulnerable separated young refugees with volunteer befrienders.

Our family support project evolved a lot over the course of the year, from stay and play sessions, to after school clubs and a big increase in advocacy work. This has mostly involved helping asylum seeking children find school places and supporting them with school uniforms, orienting them to the new school and sorting out bus tickets. We have also run more wellbeing trips and sessions. This project has supported over 60 families over the course of the year.

Our newer refugee outreach project which started in May 2022 has been very successful, with our practitioner supporting over 200 sanctuary seekers across four hotels in Birmingham. The support has included English Conversation classes, one-to-one advocacy support, group outings and activities. Our practitioner has made links with a wide range of agencies for effective cross-referral pathways and joint working, they have also run some very successful Welcome events as new hotels have opened.

The Development Worker continues to support staff to develop their projects and explore new funding opportunities. Our worker has drawn in funds from a wide range of funders over the course of the financial year as well as raising awareness of our work, which has resulted in a strong amount raised from community donations. We are in a good financial position going into the next financial year and hope to continue to develop our projects and maintain our reserves.

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted on 5th Feb 2013.

Financial Review

Birmingham Community Hosting (BIRCH) Network has a generous pool of local and regional charitable trusts and funders, as well as support from the National Lottery and good support from individual, and community funders. BIRCH raised **£67,747** from charitable trusts and foundations, **£26,775** from Council/Government funding and **£13,507** from community donations; we raised **£708** in sales from our shop sales. **£77,087** was allocated as restricted funding for specific projects, **£21,451** was received as 'core/unrestricted running costs' funding which was designated to specific projects. **£10,199** was unrestricted community donations, most of which went into our reserves. We also received **£9,456** in income for specific items for individuals or for bus tickets for asylum seeking children to attend school. This is separated from other income as this is not spent on staff or project costs.

At the end of the financial year, we had total funds of **£83,861**. Out of these funds **£27,860** (unrestricted funds) was designated to reserves (accounting for four months of operating costs), **£28,327** (restricted funds) was carried forward and designated to the projects that the funding was restricted to and **£27,674** (unrestricted/core funding) was designated to specific future project funding.

Reserves policy

Our reserves policy states that we should hold three months operating costs.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signatures		
Full name	Christopher Benfield	Emma Hawthorne
Position	Treasurer	Chair
Date	09/12/2024	09/12/2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Birmingham Community Hosting Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Birmingham Community Hosting Network (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024 .

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the *Charities Act 2011* ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under s. 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under s. 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or (2) The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Name: Matt Gardner

Address: 3 Lilburne Close, Worcester WR5 1TH

Date: 7 December 2024

Receipts and payments account

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
RECEIPTS				
	£	£	£	£
Funds received	31,650	86,543	118,193	68,680
Total Receipts	31,650	86,543	118,193	68,680
PAYMENTS				
Charitable Activities	-	70,629	70,629	65,492
Payments to individuals/bus tickets	-	9,491	9,491	3,768
Total Payments	-	80,120	80,120	69,260
Net of Receipts/(payments)	31,650	6,423	38,073	(580)
Cash funds last year end	23,884	21,904	45,788	46,368
Cash funds this year end	55,534	28,327	83,861	45,788

Statement of assets and liabilities

As at 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
	£	£	£	£
Cash funds	55,534	28,327	83,861	45,788
Other monetary assets	-	971	971	1,401
Liabilities	-	880	880	1,139

Notes to the accounts

Analysis of expenditure

Project	Total 2023/24	Total 2022/23
	£	£
Family Fun Sessions	30,354	19,601
Family Befriending	20,708	22,645
Hosting	4,982	8,013
Refugee Outreach Project	15,678	12,496
Development Work	8,399	6,505
Total	80,120	69,260

Analysis of income 2023/24

Description	Amount £	sub-total £
Restricted Funding		
Anchor Church	750	
Baron Davenport Charity	750	
Bham City Council - Sanctuary Grants	22,805	
Birmingham and Black Country Fund	2,000	
Bring it on Brum - Streetgames UK	3,970	
CAF Keystone Fund	7,100	
CB&HH Taylor 1984 Trust	2,000	
Celebrating Sanctuary Birmingham	600	
Eveson Trust	3,000	
George Fentham Charity	2,500	
Grantham Yorke Trust	5,000	
Gowling WLG (UK) Charitable Trust	500	
Groundwork UK - Comic Relief	8,797	
GJW Turner Trust	2,000	
Hilden Charitable Fund	5,000	
IM Properties Fund	2,500	
Kings Heath Action for Refugees	1,580	
No 11 Arts Selly Oak Forum	91	
Outdoor Places Ltd	144	
Patrick trust	1,000	
W F Southall Trust	5,000	
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>77,087</i>

Designated Funds (mainly core funding)		
Albert Hunt Trust	4,000	
Anchor Church	750	
Anonymous Foundation	5,500	
Foyle Foundation	6,000	
Harry Payne Trust	2,000	
Mbili Charitable Trust	2,000	
Rowheath Pavilion Church	303	
St Michael's Church Boldmere	398	
W.E.D. Charitable Trust	500	
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>21,451</i>
Unrestricted Funding		
Amazon online fundraising	20	
Bham Uni - Amnesty International Group	402	
Bham Uni - Infinity Theatre Group	2,624	
Community Donations - Individuals	6,301	
Easyfundraising	39	
Selly Oak Quakers	105	
Shop sales	708	
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>10,199</i>
Specific Restricted		
B-HAM CITY COUNCIL inv 04	9,127	
Moseley Exchange	200	
Go Fund Me	129	
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>9,456</i>