



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES REFLECTING ON THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021**

I wish to start by thanking the organisations, groups and individuals that sponsored, gifted, or donated to Hostage International during the year. Without your thoughtfulness and kindness, we would not have been able to maintain our support to existing beneficiaries and respond to others seeking help during the year.

People thrown into the nightmare of a loved one being kidnapped suddenly find themselves disorientated. They experience a state of shock and a sense of helplessness. And for hostages who have been released, the experience of adjusting to life after captivity can be overwhelming. We aim to be there for them, to offer practical and emotional support.

It is fair to say that the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was a challenging year. In early 2020, in response to the pandemic, we saw countries across the globe being locked down with local and international restrictions on travel. As a small - yet international - charity, with limited resources to adapt immediately, we experienced an adverse impact on one of our key income sources; our international in-person training and educational courses in family support.

Sadly, as a consequence, this meant that staffing levels had to be reduced. I wish to thank our former employees for their hard work and commitment to their work in the months and years preceding these unprecedented times.

Our trustee numbers increased during the year, with the addition of two former business leaders with charity expertise appointed to offer guidance on our fundraising planning and strategy. This took our trustee numbers to 13 in total to support the charity through the uncertain times.

We are proud of the work carried out by our CEO, staff, and volunteer case workers in an extraordinarily difficult year. They continued to deliver the highest level of support to our beneficiaries, while adapting working practices to ensure the future stability of the charity. Thank you to all our volunteers, friends, advisors, and pro Bono supporters.

We are grateful to our co-founder and President, Terry Waite CBE, for delivering messages to people around the world with tips around how to cope with Covid-19 lockdowns and feelings of isolation.

We also want to highlight our utmost gratitude to Carlo Laurenzi CBE who co-founded the charity with Terry in 2004 and, who after years of being instrumental in steering the charity from strength to strength, has stepped down as a trustee. We are delighted that he will continue to support the charity in his new role as Vice President.

I wish to send my sincere thanks to the members of our Board of Trustees, for their commitment, dedication, and on-going support. I believe, like me, their motivation comes from seeing how Hostage International makes a difference to its beneficiaries and those affected by kidnap.

Phil Bigley  
**Chair (formerly Vice Chair)**  
**Hostage International**  
**December 2021**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE REFLECTING ON THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021**

### **OVERVIEW**

The year 2020-21 saw the first full year of the Covid-19 pandemic and consequently involved significant adjustments to our way of working and our ability to raise funds. Nonetheless, we rallied better than anticipated, largely through cautious internal management and external support.

Within weeks of the global pandemic being declared we furloughed two of our staff members, and I remained in post to continue running the charity working with our team of volunteers to ensure an uninterrupted service to our existing and potential beneficiaries. Furloughed staff returned part-time in August, but we took the difficult decision to make the role of Operations Manager redundant as we streamlined our services to accommodate the new demands and constraints presented by the ongoing pandemic.

While we ultimately had to cancel our key fundraising event at the Old Bailey (it was postponed twice given ongoing Covid restrictions), we were able to hold four online talks in a closed forum environment, which helped both to raise our profile and bring in donations. And so, like many, we adapted to regular remote engagement.

Despite the inability to deliver any in person training for the entire year (which had a significant impact on our training income stream), we were fortunate to receive funding from two corporate partners for training to be delivered in person after restrictions were lifted. We also piloted an online remote training programme in best practice in family support for the Government of Canada, which we have subsequently been able to develop and tailor for other organisations and governments. We benefited from ongoing support from both the UK

and Australian governments for which we are very grateful. Finally, with fundraising being particularly difficult in the first pandemic year, we were honoured to be selected for a three-year grant by the Sigrid Rausing Trust.

Looking back on the financial year 2020-21, we navigated the difficulties astutely and ended the year with healthier finances than we anticipated at the start. Our success in this respect should be credited to the support and contributions of our board, our partners, and our donors, but also to the hard work of our volunteers and staff.

## **FAMILY AND HOSTAGE SUPPORT SERVICES**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic had a limited impact on our service provision, given our service model has always been based on remote support. We were therefore well placed to continue supporting families of hostages and former hostages without any visible change, despite the various lockdowns in place throughout the year. In the financial year 2020-21 we were contacted for support by 15 families or former hostages, though we continued to assist at least eight other families or hostages from previous years on a consistent basis.

The context of the pandemic appeared to result in a shift in our caseload. Historically more families than former hostages had contacted us for support, but from April 2020 we saw an increase in the number of former hostages reaching out, so that they constituted 60% of our new beneficiaries. Several of them had been held some time ago but reached out for help when triggered by the circumstances of lockdown.

Another evident shift was in the number of cases related to arbitrary state detentions as opposed to criminal or terrorist kidnapping. Of the new cases, just over half were related to state detentions whereas in previous years the figure had been between 10 and 20%. In these cases, the families and hostages experience very similar emotional and practical problems to those suffered by families and hostages in kidnap cases, and the families also face the same isolation and lack of information. Our expertise in supporting individuals affected by kidnapping therefore lends itself to providing critical support also to those affected by arbitrary state-sponsored detentions.

Of the 15 new beneficiaries in 2020-21, six were in the UK, three in Canada, three in the Middle East, one in Australia and one on the European continent. However, including our ongoing cases from previous years, the numbers being supported in the UK, Canada and Australia all increased. Of the 15 new beneficiaries, 66% were from a Black, Asian, Arabic or a minority ethnic background.

Overseeing and training our team of volunteer caseworkers remained a key priority. For the first time, and prompted by the need to adapt to working conditions under Covid restrictions, we trained and onboarded two new caseworkers online. To help embed them with the rest of the volunteer team, they were then given the task of leading the review of our Caseworker PlayBook, the new version of which was launched in January.

While Covid made quarterly in-person caseworker meetings impossible, adapting to online caseworker meetings had the real advantage of allowing us to schedule more frequent sessions which more caseworkers were able to attend wherever they were based. This in turn allowed us to contemplate expanding our team of non-UK based volunteers. Over the course of the year, we delivered a variety of training sessions with a particular focus on mental health and psychosocial support provision.

With the shift towards more former hostages in our beneficiary base, we witnessed an increase in need for professional mental health support and trauma therapy. We extended our network of partner trauma therapists in Canada which will mean more efficient and timely referrals for our Canadian-based beneficiaries, and we began exploring pro bono mental health partnerships in the UK. One positive effect of the world becoming accustomed to online interaction has meant that it has become the norm to deliver therapy and counselling online and this has meant that we have been better able to facilitate the delivery of mental health support to beneficiaries regardless of their geographic location across the globe.

Throughout the year, our pro bono legal partners Hogan Lovells and Morgan Lewis, and MacMillan in Canada, continued to provide essential legal services and advice to our beneficiaries and to the charity alike.

## **BEYOND THE YEAR END**

As we reached the end of the financial year 2020-21, it became clear that the support of our volunteers, partners and donors had been critical to our survival through difficult times. It also became clear that we had robust structures in place to allow us to continue delivering our charitable objectives. We started the next financial year (2021-22) with committed funds already agreed and with realistic plans to continue to internationalise and develop our beneficiary services. With the lifting of lockdowns and the resumption of travel by April 2021, kidnappings and detentions also started to return to pre-Covid levels and the need for our services, which in practice remained constant, was once again highlighted. We are learning to operate in the context of an ongoing pandemic, being flexible and ready to adapt when required.

I would like to thank our board of trustees, volunteers, partners, donors and staff for their ongoing support and commitment.

Lara Symons  
**Chief Executive**  
**Hostage International**  
**December 2021**

## MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER REFLECTING ON THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

### 2020-21 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Receipts and Payments Accounts for the financial period 2020-21 are included in the AGM and Board pack. They have been reviewed by our independent examiners and will be signed off by them following approval by the Board at this meeting.

There are no material issues or judgements to draw to your attention, but the following points are for noting:

- **Income/ receipts** in the period increased over the prior year (£214,022.93 compared with £158,236.66 in 2019-20). Whilst income from education training fell away as a result of the covid-19 pandemic Hostage International received significant funding from a number of government, corporate and personal donors as well as the first year's instalment of a significant three year grant. The charity also received £16,346.44 under the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for two staff members who were furloughed for a period of time.
- **Expenditure** in the period is slightly lower than last year (£176,543.38 compared with £179,045.52 in 2019-20). This includes a one off payment in April 2020 of £15,000 which have been held as restricted funds since March 2016 having been given to the charity to fund the provision of a personal assistant to the President of the charity. This amount was transferred to another entity in accordance with the terms of the original donation and with the consent of the donor.

Hostage International carefully managed its costs during the year. The charity's year on year comparative costs for FY2020-21 were £161,543.38 which reflect the tight controls which were put in place by the trustees. Discretionary spend was kept to the absolute minimum to ensure that funds were preserved and could continue to be directed to our beneficiaries.

- The charity's **net assets** increased in the period from £153,838.83 to £191,318. These assets are primarily the charity's cash balances with HSBC although a small balance is also retained with PayPal. At the year-end the charity held £5,000 from a donor relating to a proposed fundraising event originally scheduled in March 2020. The £5,000 donation was carried forward, with the donor's consent, to be expended when the event occurred. The donor removed the restrictions in May 2021 when the event had to be cancelled. This will be reflected in next year's financial statements.

### Reserves Policy

Hostage International's reserves policy was established to ensure the stability and the ongoing operations of the organisation. The policy requires that the charity retains a fund of not less than three months predicted running costs to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income or unexpected expenses. The charity continued to comply with its Reserves Policy throughout the financial year.

## Conclusion

For the majority of the FY 2020-21 the UK was in lockdowns of varying degrees of severity. Whilst the net asset position at the beginning of the year was positive the trustees considered carefully the funding which they felt would be needed to sustain the charity's activities over the next one to two years. Additional sources of funds were identified and difficult decisions were made to ensure the charity's future survival including making one member of staff redundant.

The charity reduced its outgoings to the absolute minimum and put on hold some of its future expansion plans whilst still ensuring the provision of support the charity's beneficiaries, many of whose needs have been heightened during the pandemic.

In parallel with the cost reductions the CEO and trustees worked hard to secure additional sources of funding and were successful in seeking income during the summer of 2020 which secures our continued operations at least to the end of 2022.

Like many charities the trustees believe that finding further income sources in 2022 will continue to be a challenge and so developing more predictable and sustainable sources of funding, whilst maintaining close control over our expenditure, continue to be our financial priorities.

**Libby Bassett**  
**Treasurer**  
**Hostage International**  
**2 December 2021**

**Receipts and Payments Accounts**  
**for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**  
**for**  
**Hostage International**  
**Charity Number 1161072**

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**

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# Hostage International

## Receipts and Payments Account for the

Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Year Ended 31st March 2021 Total funds		Year Ended 31st March 2020 Total funds	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Opening Balance as at 1 April 2020</b>	133,838.83	20,000.00	153,838.83	174,647.69
<b>Receipts</b>				
Trusts and Foundation	55,000.00	-	-	-
Government Grants	86,772.51	-	25,000.00	25,000.00
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	16,346.44	-	-	-
Donations	35,840.35	-	14,449.90	14,449.90
Events	-	-	8,589.05	13,589.05
Education Programme	20,000.00	-	104,917.41	104,917.41
Bank Interest Received	63.63	-	280.30	280.30
	214,022.93	-	153,236.66	158,236.66
<b>Payments</b>				
Staff	124,877.12	-	134,434.20	134,434.20
Grant Transfer (note 1)	-	15,000.00	12,619.81	12,619.81
Family & Hostage Support Programme	23,135.08	-	5,945.38	5,945.38
Education Programme	-	-	10,522.01	10,522.01
Fundraising and Communications	3,764.41	-	15,524.12	15,524.12
Administration	9,766.77	-	-	-
International Matters	-	(15,000.00)	(179,045.52)	(179,045.52)
	(161,543.38)	(15,000.00)	133,838.83	153,838.83
<b>Closing Balance as at 31 March 2021</b>	186,318.38	5,000.00	20,000.00	153,838.83
<b>Closing Balance made up as follows:</b>				
HSBC Current Account				10,963.84
HSBC Savings Account				139,596.55
HSBC Events Account				2,107.28
PayPal Account				1,171.16
				153,838.83

## Notes:

1. In the year ending 31 March 2020, Hostage International was asked to hold the sum of £15,000 on behalf of the charity's president; he received the sum as a donation towards the costs of his own personal assistant and the funds to be paid out upon his instruction. As at 31 March 2020, the funds were still being held for this purpose and are shown under restricted funds on the accounts and as a donation creditor on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. In April 2020 the funds were transferred, in their entirety, to reimburse the costs incurred in the provision of the personal assistant by another entity during this period. The transfer was made in accordance with the terms and restrictions of the original donation and with the consent of the donor.
2. During the previous financial year, Hostage received sponsorship funding of £5,000. This funding was provided towards a specific fundraising event which had to be postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The funds were carried forward under restrictions as Hostage International hoped to be able to reschedule the event during the financial year. The donor removed the restrictions in May-21, when the rescheduled event also had to be cancelled, this will be reflected in future accounts.

**Hostage International**

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

**Year Ended 31 March 2021**

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
Cash at bank	191,318	153,839
	<u>191,318</u>	<u>153,839</u>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Donation creditor	-	15,000
Invoices owed	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>15,000</u>

The trustees confirm, in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012, that at year end the CIO did not have any outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on assets of the CIO.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF  
HOSTAGE INTERNATIONAL**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on page 1.

**Respective responsibilities of members and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to our attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the Accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the Accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

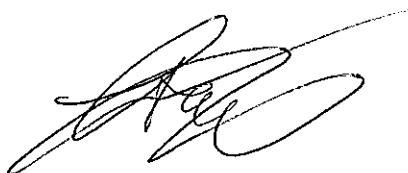
**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act: and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or.

(2) to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.



**Colin Airey FCCA  
George Hay Partnership LLP  
Chartered Accountants**

Brigham House  
High Street  
Biggleswade  
Bedfordshire

Dated: 14/12/2021

**Receipts and Payments Accounts**  
**for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**  
**for**  
**Hostage International**  
**Charity Number 1161072**

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# Hostage International

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**Hostage International**

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It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to our attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the Accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the Accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

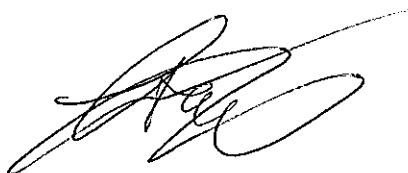
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(2) to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.



**Colin Airey FCCA  
George Hay Partnership LLP  
Chartered Accountants**

Brigham House  
High Street  
Biggleswade  
Bedfordshire

Dated: 14/12/2021