

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales · Charity number 1169329

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2016-09-23

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address The Firs
Post Office Road
Inkpen
Hungerford
RG17 9PU

Phone 07717644991

Email admin@westberksrefugees.org

Website <https://westberksrefugees.org/>

Activities

Objects: 1. TO PROVIDE RELIEF FOR REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND DESTITUTE MIGRANTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OVERSEAS WHO ARE IN CONDITIONS OF NEED, HARDSHIP, SICKNESS OR DISTRESS, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF AID, PHYSICAL GOODS, SUPPORT AND ADVICE. 2. TO RELIEVE POVERTY AND HARDSHIP AMONG HOMELESS PEOPLE IN WEST BERKSHIRE, IN PARTICULAR BY PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO CHARITIES OR OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKING TO RELIEVE POVERTY AND HARDSHIP AMONG SUCH PEOPLE.

Activities: Supporting refugees and asylum seekers and others who are destitute in West Berkshire, The support includes working in partnership with the local authority and other charities and agencies who are working locally. We also signpost to other organisations who can provide appropriate information, advice and support.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- West Berkshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-09-22	£31,646	£6,776	-	-
2023-09-22	£5,658	£10,284	-	-
2022-09-22	£18,390	£8,384	-	-
2021-09-22	£5	£1,355	-	-
2020-09-22	£0	£1,420	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Fiona Claire Coulam	Chair	2022-05-23
Claire Rachel McCorquodale		2018-08-14
MOYRA BLAKE		2016-09-23
Nigel Coopey		2026-01-20
Patricia Jeffery		2025-08-20

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1169329

Accounts

Charity annual report prepared by Claire McCorquodale 5th March 2025

Including Treasurers Report and Independent Examiner's Report

objectives and activities: To support refugees and asylum seekers in West Berkshire. This has involved providing English classes and support sessions for asylum seekers and for refugees in the community.

achievements and performance: From September to December 2023 WBAR organised support for asylum seekers at a hotel in Thatcham. The hotel housing asylum seekers closed in December 2023, WBAR continued to work in West Berkshire with refugees (both individuals and families) who received leave to remain, asylum seeker families who are housed in dispersal accommodation locally, and other refugees who have arrived independently in West Berkshire.

Supporting the asylum seekers in the hotel required a large numbers of volunteers; specific volunteers to support the dbs process and the production of id cards were in place to ensure that these processes ran smoothly.

Refugees and asylum seekers are initially offered English classes organised by WBAR and then encouraged to enrol for classes at Newbury College once they are eligible. A class for women only is run to encourage those who are unable to attend college classes to improve their English.

WBAR volunteers have encouraged and facilitated refugees and asylum seekers in gaining useful skills to support their search for employment when they receive leave to remain. As Asylum seekers gained Leave to remain volunteers supported finding employment, accommodation and all the other necessary paperwork in settling into the UK.

The charity has established a role as an informed partner working with other local agencies to support refugees and asylum seekers locally.

financial review; The bank account remains healthy; the bank balance on 22nd September 2024 was £38,250.33. The charity had secured funding of £22,209.72 to employ a part-time case worker and as at September 2024 the Trustees are actively recruiting. This funding will be carried forward to the new financial year when it is anticipated that recruitment will take place.

Smaller grants totalling £7,215.50 and donations of £1,620.65 were secured to support the refugees and asylum seekers. Much of this was spent on practical items such as winter coats, underwear, socks and sports shoes, and notebooks, pens, backpacks and water bottles for college. In addition, the Global kitchen project involved purchasing food and equipment food for cooking sessions, and the low cost transport project involved bicycle locks for the many donated bikes. At September 2024 the charity allocated reserves (excluding the £22,209.72 funds for the caseworker) are £8,730.79 and the charity unallocated reserves at September 2024 are £7,309.82. The Trustees are confident that there are funds to continue to support our work in the coming year. Although fundraising for the caseworker for a further 12 months will be a priority.

structure, governance and management; West Berkshire Action for refugees was registered as a charity in 2016. The committee remains small but there are plans to actively seek more Trustees in the coming year. Decision making is by consensus using electronic means with timely meetings for major decisions requiring more detailed input.

The volunteers are led by an experienced team leader who ensures that information provided is accurate and support is offered fairly to all who require our services.

reference and administrative details:

The charity's registered name in West Berkshire Action for Refugees. Charity number 1169329. The registered address is The Firs, Post Office Rd, Inkpen, Hungerford, RG17 9PU.

The Charity Trustees are: Moyra Blake, Fiona Coulam and Claire McCorquodale. Waheeda Soomro was named as a Trustee on the charity website, she resigned in Spring 2025. Her name will be removed from the charity information at the Charity Commission.

exemptions from disclosure; There are no known exemptions from disclosure

funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others: There are no funds held as a custodian trustee or on behalf of others.

West Berkshire Action for Refugees Treasurer's Report

Income and Expense Report for September 2023-2024

		Income	Expense
Income			
	Donations	1,620.65	
	Grants	30,025.22	
	Total	31,645.87	
Expense			
	Celebrations and Outings		734.99
	Direct Support		1173.21
	Skills and Learning for refugees		3,337.74
	Charity Running Coss		1046.99
	Volunteer Expenses		487.04
			6775.97

Assets and Liabilities report for September 2023-2024

Assets at Bank at 23 Sept 2024			38,250.33
Comprising			
	Restricted Reserves including Grant Funds	30,941.01	
	Unrestricted Funds including donations	7,309.82	
Liabilities	There are no outstanding liabilities		

Grants of £21,209.72 for the case worker were received in 2023-24 and a case worker was successfully recruited in November 2024.

We would like to record our thanks to the following organisations who supported us with grants, donations and fundraising opportunities.

Greenham Parish Council
Albert Hunt Trust
Newbury Town Council
Thatcham Town Council
Peter Baker Trust
Greenham Trust Community Grants

Incantata Choir
St Nics Church, Newbury
Thatcham Rotary Club
Plus several individual donors

C McCorquodale

5th March 2025



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

On accounts for the year ended 22 SEPT 2024 Charity no (if any) 1169329

Set out on pages Charity annual report & Treasurer's Report 2023-2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity's trustees, 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 section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. Delete [] if not applicable.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: [Signature] Date: 5th March 2025

Name: S SHIPDON

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body [checkmark]

(if any):

Address: 7 THE WAYS
TITHERTON S. GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GL12 8US

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1169329

Accounts

WBAR Income and Expenditure for 23rd September 2022 to 22nd September 2023

Opening Balance		18,011.08
Income		
Donations	3,627.80	
Grants received	2,030.00	5,657.80
Expenses		
Direct Support		
Activities	361.75	
Backpacks & Water Bottles	174.89	
Clothing & Hygiene	1,006.01	
Family Support	161.20	
Mobiles, Laptops tc	258.03	
School Equipment	249.75	
Sports, Games & Boots	1,637.75	3,849.38
Skills and Learning		
Activities	1,033.61	
Low cost Transport	1,463.35	
Rural Transport	994.50	
Teaching Materials	379.60	3,871.06
Celebrations and Outings		
Events	147.06	
Gifts	314.79	
Outings	601.94	1,063.79
HQ		
Training, Admin & support	73.25	
Events	30.00	
ICO	35.00	
Insurance	448.80	587.05
Volunteers		
DBS Checks	320.00	
volunteers expenses including travel	592.97	912.97

Social audit report September 2022- September 2023

The English classes at Calcot and the Riverside Community Centre ran during term me from September 2022 until Summer 2023 when they closed; many of the women who attended had improved their English and were able to take part better in their local community.

During 2023 we built a support network for the Asylum seekers in the Regency Park hotel. The support volunteers ran English classes, games nights and exercise classes. The team leader and lead volunteers helped to resolve issues that the Asylum Seekers encountered in day to day life including accessing healthcare, registering with local colleges and finding volunteering opportunities. From spring 202 to September 2023 we set up and ran the Global Kitchen at Northcroft – an opportunity to learn a practical skill and supported the mental health of the 38 Asylum Seekers who took part and gained a food hygiene qualification. Thanks to all who contributed funds to this project and in particular the Incantata choir who raised funds for us. And thanks to Loose Ends for the support of their kitchen team and Northcroft Cricket Club for their support in providing the premises.

The support network of volunteers has assisted in opening bank accounts, registering with DWP and accessing other services in the area. This support includes navigating the DWP & Homeless support from West Berkshire Council as they attempt to find jobs and accommodation. The process of finding employment has proved challenging and this is an area that may need additional support in the coming months.

The support for longer established refugee families in the area has been scaled back as they have integrated into local life. Although some of have been assisting newly arrived families to start their journey of settling in the area.

The challenge for 2023-24 is to fundraise for the recruitment of a refugee case worker.

Thanks to the significant funds raised last year 2021-22 there has been a reduced need to fundraise for the support of refugees and Asylum Seekers in this financial year. Funds were raised for the Northcroft Global Kitchen project via the Good Exchange and were spent in the year they were received.

An agm was held in June 2024 to meet with key supporters and Trustees, Regular meetings with volunteers offers an opportunity for feedback.

The company has consulted with volunteers who support the work of the company. During the time that we were supporting the Asylum Seekers in the hotel in Thatcham we would ask residents who came to our sessions if there were other activities that they would like to see, The Asylum Seeker families were asked what services they felt would be useful in one to one sessions.

Many thanks to all of our volunteers for their continued support in the many and varied roles that they fulfil.

CH McGonigle
Treasurer

13/7/24

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1169329

Accounts

Chair report Sept 21 to Sept 22

The Afghans arrived at the end of August. WBAR started working with them from November 2021. Initially there was a WBAR appeal for backpacks with paper and pens for the children.

In order to set up classes and befrienders for these arrivals the WBAR committee ran a recruitment drive for additional volunteers. Training was initially in person, and then moved online as COVID was an issue once again.

Marion Burke agreed to undertake the admin of the DBS check process for the new influx of volunteers. Marion's excellent skills in running this process have been vital in enabling the charity to grow the number of volunteers.

With the support of the new volunteers, language classes were started for the families in the hotels.

Thanks to funding from the Greenham Trust Afghan appeal we were able to buy a long list of essential items for the families in the hotels: including handbags and hairbrushes for the women, and dictionaries and language learning resources for each family. Donations of children's books enabled every child to receive an English reading book appropriate for their age. Thanks to the Community Furniture Project who provided pushchairs and car seats to the families and much more.

Resettled Afghan families joined the Syrian families for a Christmas Party in December and then attended regular sessions at the Riverside. The resettled Afghan families have needed support in settling in to the local area; there is still work to be in matching some families with regular befrienders.

In January we became aware of the Asylum Seekers in a local hotel. A further round of recruitment brought in new volunteers including a new team leader for the Asylum Seekers.

After the appointment of a team leader for the Asylum Seeker support at the hotel 3 regular sessions a week were established, including activities and English classes. Football and yoga were added to the activities in the next month. The language and craft classes were awarded support by generous private donors and the Greenham Trust in late April. Further support for activities at the hotel is being looked into.

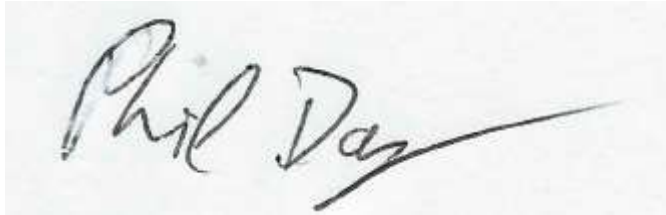
For 6 weeks in March and April (thanks to Greenham Trust) a pop-up shop in Newbury collected donations of clothes, toiletries, sports equipment, musical instruments and paper and pens. Thanks to the generosity of local support there was a distribution of essentials to over 100 asylum seekers. Clothes, shoes and essential items continued to be distributed throughout the year.

A further generous grant of funds from Greenham Trust Appeal for the Afghans in March 22 enabled WBAR to continue to support the Afghan families accommodated in temporary accommodation and permanently resettled in Newbury.

By September 2022, we have over 40 volunteers working to provide the support for refugees and asylum seekers in the area.

West Berkshire Action for Refugees Financial Report September 2021 to September 2022			from bank account	
	Opening Balance 22/9/21		8004,69	8004,69
Income				
	Grants received	15554,72		
	Donations via Good Exchange	1416,00		
	Direct donations	1420,00		
	Other Income			
	Total income		18390,72	18390,72
	Total Income and in bank			26395,41
Expenditure				
	Direct Support			
	Clothing, footwear, hygiene & other essentials	1182,06		
	School Equip, language books for families/teens	1036,12		
	Sports and games including football boots	1058,27		
	Holiday activities	166,76		
	Mobiles, laptops and printing	174,67		
	Backpacks & water bottles for hotel based	160,00		
			3777,88	
	Skills and Learning			
	Teaching & Activity Groups	1257,37		
	Coffee and chat Groups	292,41		
	Refreshments	55,59		
	Transport to/from groups	260,60		
	Bike Scheme	340,45		
			2206,42	
	Celebrations and Outings			
	Events and outings	709,89		
			709,89	
	Volunteer Expenses			
	Volunteer Admin, training & support	448,25		
	Volunteer travel & refreshments	85,48		
	DBS checking	740,00		
			1273,73	
	Charity running costs			
	Insurance	316,72		
	Registration fee for Information Commission	35,00		
	Webhosting and email service	47,82		
	Other Costs (printing, bank charges)	18,87		
	Balancing Journal	-2		
			416,41	
	Less Total Expenditure		8384,33	8384,33
	Bank balance at 22/9/22		18011,08	18011,08

I have examined the West Berks Action for Refugees accounts and bank statements for the period 23 September 2021 to 23 September 2022 and confirm that they are a true and accurate record of income and expenditure.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Day". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phil Day

The Firs Cottage, Inkpen, Hungerford, Berks RG17 9PU

13th May 2023

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1169329

Accounts

Chair's report

Sept 2020 to Sept 2021

For the new term in September 2020 the classes restarted at the Riverside Centre. Initially all of the group was meeting at the Riverside Centre. As the COVID guidelines changed in the autumn so the format of sessions changed: moving online when needed and then to a blend of online and in person meetings where this was possible.

Unfortunately, a Christmas Party was not possible but our volunteers delivered presents to every family in good time for the big day.

The new term in January started with more blended learning. For spring half term activity packs were delivered for the children to provide entertainment over the spring school holidays.

At Easter a gardening project saw vine plants and garden tools delivered to the families to encourage outdoor activities for the spring and summer.

In person classes restarted after Easter. It was lovely to see everyone back at the Riverside.

Volunteers and resettled families came together at two summer swim parties. The committee thanks Joyce Zealey for hosting.

On the admin side the handover between external agencies at end of the 5 year leave to remain threw up problems for one family. Other families will be more closely managed at this time.

At the end of the summer 2021 the crisis in Afghanistan unfolded leading to an anticipation that there would be more new arrivals in the coming year.

The Committee would like to thank all of our volunteers who rose to the challenges of this difficult time and continued to provide support online as well as in person.

West Berkshire Action for Refugees 2020-21

Description	Supplier	OUT	IN	
Opening Balance				9354.55 ✓
28/10/2020 Language class expenses	JZ	101.66		
28/10/2020 Language class expenses	JZ	69.38		
28/10/2020 PPE 1	CM	41.87		
28/10/2020 PPE 2	CM	19.00		
07/01/2021 Information registration	Info Comm	40.00		
12/01/2021 Christmas expenses	FC	96.95		
	MB	124.51		
	JZ	37.42		
	TW	38.99		
	CM	96.93		
	NH	39.16		
01/03/2021 Half term craft	FC	151.74		
22/06/2021 Donation	anon		5.00	
Easter gardeeing project	JZ	135.53		
online learning during COVID	FC	45.00		
03/08/2021 PL insurance	Access Ins	316.72		
	TOTALS	1354.86	5.00	8004.69 ✓

Reviewed by LISA HILL 2/5/22
 And found to be a true &
 fair record of accounts.

Liz Hill FCMA.

WEST BERKS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1169329

Accounts

Activity Report – Sept 19 to Sept 20

The Families and language club

3 more families arrived in autumn 2019 bringing the total of families in West Berkshire to 9. An additional 2 families, with recently arrived members from overseas, are supported at the language club. Befrienders and language club supporters increased in number to offer support. By Christmas 2019 the language club had 5 volunteers supporting their work: Mary, Marion B, Joyce, Eleanor & Helen

Christmas 2019 was celebrated with our biggest party yet at the Riverside Centre, with over 35 present. One of the dads lead activities and games in the large hall. Traditional party games took place with the mums, girls and younger children in the smaller hall. Presents donated by Reading Refugee Support Group were handed out. A very busy meal was shared with everyone: helpers and families.

The New Year started well with old and new arrivals coming to the Riverside language classes. 2 additional volunteers joined to help with the language classes: Helen & Trish. The classes were switched to zoom sessions in March as COVID 19 arrived.

During the periods of Lockdown we made regular distributions to each family with younger children. In Spring we took bags of story books, and in early summer, bags of graded reading books, donated by a friend clearing her KS1 Library. We also took bunches of home-grown parsley and vine leaves for cooking. This enabled us to chat briefly on the doorsteps and maintain contact with families, including Thatcham family. The Theale family was included by asking relatives in Newbury to pass on the bags. Some permitted meetings in the Park took place with volunteers and their families.

Helpers were supported in their work with individual families via zoom meetings and, when groups of 6 were allowed in a garden, with a lunch at Joyce's home.

In September Fiona, an experienced teacher, joined the group and now shares leading with Joyce and Marion. Trish's sister Nita also became a volunteer over the summer.

The Riverside classes started again in September 2020. An emphasis was placed on getting those who were not comfortable with zoom up to speed so that communication could continue even if the classes stopped again. Following new risk assessments PPE, anti-virus spray and additional equipment of whiteboards and pens were bought to ensure that classes could continue safely and transport could be offered.

Homework support

Regular homework support has been offered during the year but it has been via Zoom and WhatsApp due to COVID19. As school classes moved online 2 laptops were bought to support the children in secondary schools as learning had moved on-line. Thanks to Trish the laptops were successfully handed over to the families.

Other family news

Youssef, family 4, who had been a cause for concern is reported to be studying English at Newbury College and is socialising well with one of the newer families. Marion B continues to support Amani and the children (family 4). Eleanor has been supporting Family 6. Trish with the help of Nita has been supporting family 9. Rachael, a local secondary school student, was supporting Shahed (F5)

until lockdown in March. Helen is supporting Family 8 and Mary is supporting Hazha (one of the additional families).

WBAR became aware in 2019 that an independent befriender (Marion G) was supporting Khiria and Shahed. Claire met with the befriender and offered support. Unfortunately contact between Khiria and the befriender ceased due to COVID 19 and despite Marion G's efforts this contact has not resumed. Shahed (F5) moved to Newbury College at the end of the summer and is studying health and social care. (post Sept 20 note: She seems to have settled in well and is very happy).

Admin

DBS checking continues to be offered by West Berkshire Council although the process is slow, in part due to COVID 19 and Council staff working from home.

Govt regs for meetings indoors led by volunteers, volunteers working and lift sharing were read along with the risk assessment from the Riverside Centre.

WBAR risk assessments for offering transport and meeting indoors were prepared based on govt regs and shared with volunteers. The risk assessments have been kept under review as Govt regs have changed.

WBAR registered with the Information Commission.

Other Groups

Joyce and Trish have liaised with Samera from Reading Refugee Support Group (RRSG) over support of the families during the year.

The Committee record their thanks to Joyce, Marion B and Fiona who have led the language club through this difficult time.

West Berkshire Action for Refugees

Treasurer's Report for Sept 23rd 2019 to Sept 22nd 2020

		Expenses	Income	Bank balance
23/9/19	Balance brought forward			10,774.74
09/11/2019	agm expenses	27.20		
27/01/2020	Language class expenses	64.32		
27/01/2020	Language class expenses	219.33		
06/04/2020	Language class expenses	66.87		
06/04/2020	Xmas party & gifts	121.08		
06/06/2020	2 x laptops and 2x mouse	585.99		
06/04/2020	Family exp	18.68		
22/08/2020	Insurance	316.72		
	Totals	1,420.19		
22/9/20	Balance carried forward			9,354.55