

Herts Welcomes Refugees

England & Wales · Charity number 1172687

Details

Other names	HERTS WELCOMES SYRIAN FAMILIES
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2017-04-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Activities

Objects: The Objects of the CIO are:1. The relief of refugees and asylum seekers, by operating as a coordination and action network which will:(a) encourage local councils and the County Council to continue to accept refugees under any Government Resettlement scheme;(b) work with local councils, the County Council and relevant organisations to ensure that refugees arriving under any Government Resettlement scheme and other refugees and asylum seekers have access to and are provided with the appropriate services;(c) welcome refugees and asylum seekers to Hertfordshire and offer ongoing practical support;(d) connect organisations and individuals who wish to support refugees and asylum seekers in order to enable their integration into the local community through the creation of a supportive and enabling environment.2. To advance the education of the public in all aspects of the refugee situation.Nothing in this constitution shall authorise an application of the property of the CIO for the purposes which are not charitable.

Activities: Herts Welcomes Refugees is set up to welcome, provide support and help for refugees and asylum seekers in Hertfordshire.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Hertfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£162,035	£122,427	-	-
2023-12-31	£70,679	£96,612	-	-
2022-12-31	£106,188	£96,310	-	-
2021-12-31	£87,476	£64,002	-	-
2020-12-31	£63,340	£46,657	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Adrian Peter James Ball Mr		2022-01-01
Amani Esmail Al-Shami		2024-06-10
Andy Gregg		2023-06-05
Havva Birim Esener Karakas		2025-12-30
Heather Jayne Alcock		2025-08-10
IRENE CHRISANTHI AUSTIN		2017-01-25
JOHN Borton		2018-09-25
Julian Manfred Rowland		2025-08-16
Kathleen Scott		2019-11-07

Accounts



“Welcoming and Supporting Refugees in Hertfordshire”

<https://www.hertswelcomes.org.uk/>

Patron: Robert Voss CBE CSTJ HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

Herts Welcomes Refugees

Trustee Report and Accounts

January - December 2024



**The Hilden
Charitable
Fund**



mind
Hertfordshire
Network

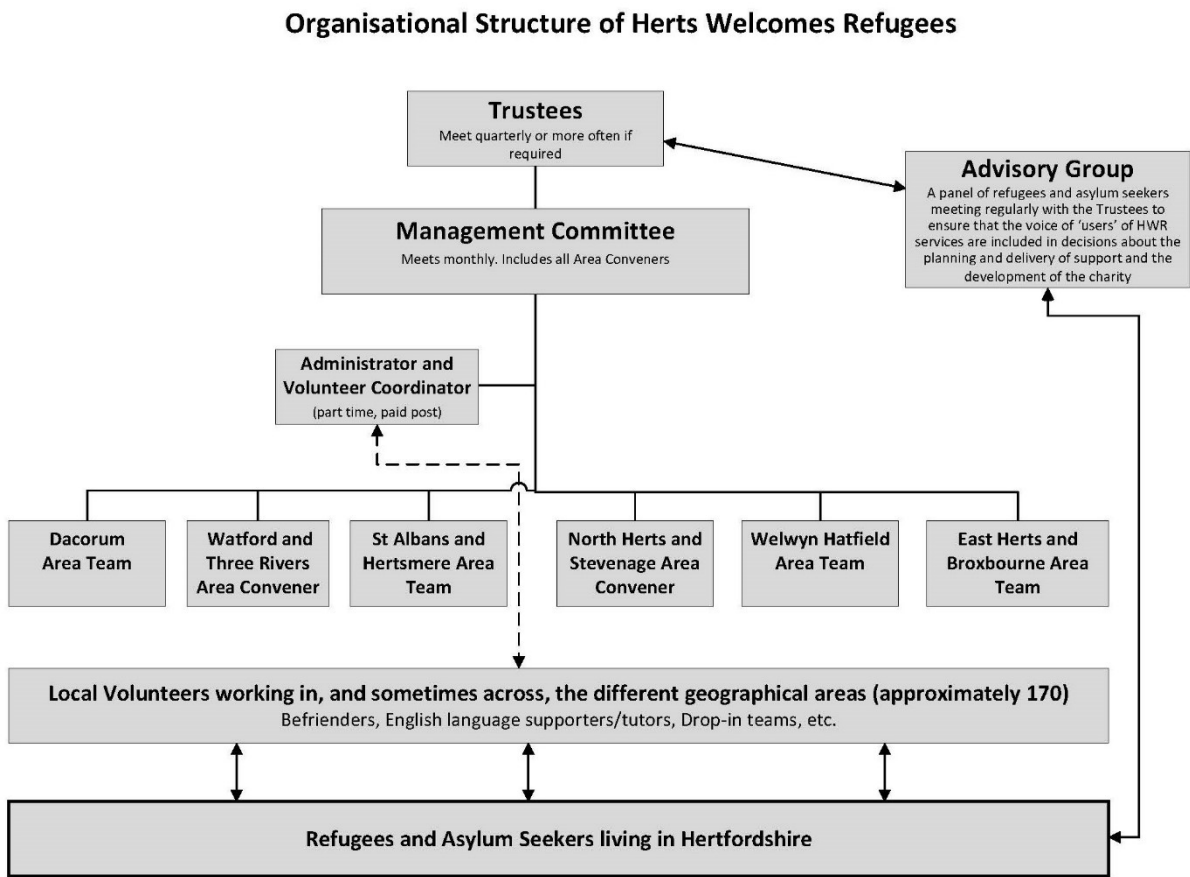


Herts Welcomes Refugees - A Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Registered charity No 1172687
Registered Address: 3 Newmarket Court, Goldsmith Way, St Albans, AL3 5LN

2024 was another extremely busy year for Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) as we have responded to an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers we support and consequent increase in demand for our services, and fresh challenges presented by the significant and welcome increase in the rate of asylum seekers being granted leave to remain. The Trustees hope that this report will provide an insight into the work of HWR over the last year and inform you about our priorities and the challenges we envisage for 2025.

TRUSTEES

The Trustees met formally eight times in the year. We are pleased to have recruited a new Trustee, Amani Al Sharaf, who brings invaluable insight as someone with a professional background in the humanitarian sector who successfully applied for asylum in the UK and is now settling in the county. The other Trustees are Irene Austin (Chair), Adrian Ball (Treasurer), John Borton, Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott and Andy Gregg.



Veronica Raymond will stand down as a Trustee at the 2025 AGM. Veronica has been a trustee since 2019 and we are very grateful for her support to the charity in this role. She will continue as the Area Convenor for North Herts and Stevenage. Samah Alrahabi has moved away from Hertfordshire and is no longer a Trustee.

In accordance with our constitution at the AGM we will ask you to endorse Amani Al Sharaf as a Trustee. John Borton and Adrian Ball will stand down but have offered themselves for re- election.

At Trustees' meetings, we consider matters of policy in line with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, receive financial reports and take decisions regarding the strategic direction of the

Charity according to the constitution, objectives for the year and the need to adapt as new challenges arise. Given the rapid development of the Charity in the last three years, the Trustees have decided to undertake a period of reflection on how we have developed so far and to consider the direction and sustainability of the Charity. To assist with that, we applied to Lloyds Bank Foundation Operational Development Programme. We are pleased to have been given a place on the Programme and started the process in January 2025.

We are aiming to recruit new Trustees during 2025.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee is made up of Area Convenor team members and key role holders (comms, evaluations, Volunteer Coordinator). Please see the above structure chart. They meet monthly to discuss and be updated on finances, safeguarding, training and developments as they arise.

We are pleased to announce that in December, we recruited a new Safeguarding Lead, Chichi Ezeh, following the resignation of Lucile Bertolaso as Lead. We thank Lucile for her contribution as Lead and for remaining part of the safeguarding team. Chichi brings experience and expertise from her professional role in Social Services and we are already seeing the benefit of her joining us.

Our Volunteer Coordinator gave in her resignation in December and left the charity in January 2025. We are considering how the administrative team might be restructured to meet the charity's needs.

The Management Committee and the Trustees have been on a steep learning curve over the last few years, much of it has been knowledge acquired to meet challenges as they arise. We have benefited from formal training such as that delivered by Right to Remain which gave us a better overview of the asylum system and made us aware of the valuable resources that are available to us through them. We have also benefited from media training by IMIX and taken advantage of other training opportunities.

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN OPERATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS DURING 2024

The context in which the Charity operates, and the needs of the refugees and asylum seekers it seeks to support, are constantly changing and evolving. Compared to previous years there were five significant developments during 2024 that are highlighted here and described in greater detail in later sections.

Increase in the number of Afghan families arriving under resettlement schemes: 2024 saw the arrival of another 22 Afghan families made up of 95 individuals under the two resettlement schemes for Afghan nationals. We are now supporting 58 resettled Afghan families (287 individuals) in total. This group have full entitlement to benefits, to work and further education on arrival. They move into furnished accommodation. The primary caseworkers for this group in most areas of the county are the Refugee Council and, in Dacorum, the Humanitarian team at Dacorum Borough Council, with HWR volunteers providing befriending support to arriving families across the county.

Accelerated processing of asylum claims leading to greater “churn” in the system: the charity is providing support in six of the nine contingency asylum sites (mostly hotels) in the county and to some asylum seekers living in dispersed (self-catering) accommodation. Asylum seekers receive minimal subsistence and little practical support, have no right to benefits or to work and can only access government-funded ESOL and other types of further education after six months. There has always been some turnover or “churn” in asylum seekers living in contingency accommodation as

people were moved, often at short notice, to dispersed accommodation or other sites in the Home Office contracted estate. The welcome increase in positive decisions during the year has significantly increased the churn as this group (referred to as 'positive move-ons' by local and national authorities) move out of asylum accommodation and into the community, creating space for new arrivals. Any vacancies in the contingency asylum sites are quickly filled by new arrivals to the country, or by people transferred from other sites that have been closed as part of efforts to reduce the number of sites and overall expenditure. In some contingency sites, the Charity has seen a churn rate of more than 80%.

An increase in the number of asylum seekers being housed in dispersed accommodation: 2024 also saw an increase in the numbers of dispersed asylum seekers in the county. This change has several implications for HWR and its volunteers. Communicating with asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation is difficult because HWR is rarely informed about where they are located, when they arrive or leave, and we are not able to communicate with them to offer support until they find their way to us.

Changes in the demographic makeup of asylum seekers being supported: whereas previously the residents in the hotels supported by HWR volunteers were, for the most part, families, 2024 saw the arrival of significant numbers of single men as a result of the closure of hotels housing single males in other areas of the country. This has created challenges for HWR and its volunteers as the needs of single men are significantly different from those of families with children. Volunteers who may have joined the charity to support homework clubs, have found it challenging to adjust to the changed pattern of needs and the altered dynamics in the communal spaces in the hotels.

These changes, especially the increased churn within the system, make it challenging to put a figure on the number of asylum seekers supported by HWR during 2024. We consider that 1900 is a conservative view of the number of asylum seekers to whom HWR provided some form of support during 2024.

A significant increase in the number of 'positive move-ons' requiring support after leaving contingency accommodation: the faster processing of asylum claims has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers given Leave to Remain and having to leave the contingency accommodation and establish themselves in the community. During 2024 HWR significantly developed the support provided to this group. These people have several essential tasks to deal with (including finding accommodation, claiming benefits, searching for work) within a short time frame. Apart from their legal obligation to prevent homelessness among families with children under 18 and those with health issues, county and district authorities owe no duties to this group in addition to those owed to other people facing homelessness, nor is there any tailored support to help them to settle in their communities. Part of the national increase in number of homeless and rough-sleepers has been attributed to the increase in the numbers being granted Leave to Remain.

Varying approaches have been adopted by district authorities in Hertfordshire to provide support to this group. Dacorum Borough Council has had to cope with a high number of positive move-on cases and its staff have worked hard to avoid homelessness and rough-sleeping by working creatively with private landlords and collaborating closely with the HWR Dacorum team which provides information about positive decisions and eviction dates, liaises with the Dacorum Borough Council team and those with positive decisions with the aim of making what is often a very difficult transitional stage easier to understand. The HWR team also provides practical support through the provision of donated and purchased household items.

We are also supporting refugees who have been placed in housing in the county by local authorities from outside the county, and some Ukrainian refugees, who find us by word of mouth, through our website or by referral from other organisations.

Overall, the increase in numbers and the addition of the new positive move on group of people have required significant additional resources in terms of volunteer time, diversification of support and funding. We have coped well with addressing increased and changing needs but we envisage that we need to adapt further, particularly with regard to collaborating with other organisations to develop more drop ins rather than providing support in contingency accommodation so that we can continue to support those who have received leave to remain and provide more accessible support to dispersed asylum seekers and refugees from other communities.

ADVISORY GROUP

HWR's Advisory Group is made up of 15 refugees and asylum seekers of 7 different nationalities living in different areas of Hertfordshire. Advisory Group members meet regularly with Trustees to discuss issues and ensure that the voice of 'users' of HWR services are included in decisions about the planning and delivery of support, and in the development of the Charity.

2024 was the Advisory Group's first full year of operation following its establishment in October 2023. As part of the Advisory Group's development and refinement, Terms of Reference were approved in April 2024 and the two-way flow of information established between its meetings and the monthly Management Committee. To encourage exchange and discussion by members between their meetings with trustees, a 'members-only' WhatsApp group was set up in October 2024.

Five Advisory Group meetings were held during 2024 – four on Zoom and one face-to-face. The physical meeting took place in April, immediately prior to the AGM. This was the first occasion on which members had met each other in-person and it was a happy, positive occasion. As part of the AGM, a panel of Advisory Group members spoke about themselves and the challenges they face. Advisory Group members also participated in the social event for volunteers in December 2024 and so were able to meet HWR volunteers from other areas as well as those they already knew from their own areas.

Issues raised by Advisory Group members led directly to a range of actions and follow-up by the Charity, some of which are summarised below.

An October 2023 request by an Advisory Group member for help in finding legal aid-funded immigration and asylum lawyers prompted analysis by HWR that revealed the absence of any such providers in the whole of Hertfordshire. HWR then identified legal aid-funded lawyers with capacity for new clients in Luton. Starting in November 2023 HWR began introducing, and in many cases taking, clients to Luton. In this way 50 asylum-seeking clients from Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield were provided with legal support between November 2023 and December 2024. The results of the October 2023 analysis were shared with Herts County Council (HCC) and contributed to their contracting Citizens Advice Stevenage to provide immigration and asylum advice in Hertfordshire starting in mid-2024.

Coping with the 'cost of living crisis' and the need to support refugees to find employment were recurring themes in the Advisory Group meetings and led to actions including:

- Circulation of the 'Signposting for Support' guidance developed by HCF to refugees and volunteers
- Referrals of individuals to the Refugee Employment Programme (REP) and Employability for Overseas Nationals (EON) programmes managed by the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership.
- Use of HWR's network of volunteers to identify openings and links with potential employers – which resulted in one member (an Architecture graduate) starting her first job with a London-based practice in January 2024.
- Requests by refugee members for help in moving from Biometric Residence Permits (BRP) cards to the new eVisa system led, in November 2024, to HWR developing its own guidance for use by refugees and by HWR volunteers supporting refugees locally, and to link the practical, in-person support offered by Migrant Help to local needs in Dacorum.
- Advisory Group members also raised their concern at the exceptionally high costs faced by refugees applying for UK citizenship (£1630 per adult). This issue was raised by HWR in its correspondence and meetings with new MP's following the General Election.

The churn in asylum seekers also has an impact on the Advisory Group, with some being transferred at short notice to accommodation in other parts of the country and others being granted Leave to Remain (LTR) and so crossing to the 'refugee member' category. Consequently, it is necessary to regularly recruit new members to 'refresh' the asylum-seeking members. During the year we were delighted that two members received their LTR. Unfortunately, one (who had been moved to west London after the Advisory Group was established) has been rough sleeping in London since October 2024 whilst working shifts as a barista. HWR continues its efforts to link him to other charities and housing groups and continues to provide limited support during this period of hardship.

The Trustees are very grateful to the members of the Advisory Group for their contribution.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We continue to be very definitely a volunteer-led organisation. The Trustees do not envisage that changing. We now have more than 160 volunteers. There is of course a turnover of volunteers as some leave the area and circumstances change for others, but we are encouraged that many of our volunteers have been with us for several years and we were able to recruit 51 new volunteers in 2024. We are constantly amazed by our volunteers' commitment, enthusiasm and compassion. The wider use of Monday.com helps the Trustees to evidence and celebrate this.

Notwithstanding the strength of our volunteer force, we cannot offer the same level of support across the county and the need for support is growing. We are supporting more refugees and asylum seekers. We are diversifying the support we offer as we adapt to support those who have received Leave To Remain and are settling in the county. We need to recruit more volunteers, if we are to provide a comparable range of support across the county.

The Trustees are conscious that some of the support we provide places an emotional strain on our volunteers and that some volunteers, particularly those who are Area Convenor Team members, are contributing amounts of time to the charity which, coupled with the challenges of trying to meet complex and increasing needs, is placing them under an unsustainable burden. The Trustees are actively trying to address these issues by providing more training opportunities, clarifying our expectations of our volunteers, explaining the boundaries within which volunteers must work, providing more opportunities for volunteers to share experiences and raise concerns through

informal “Table Talk” sessions and training. The Trustees are confident that the work they are undertaking with the Lloyds Bank Development Programme will contribute to this process.

We were delighted that our Trustee and Area Convenor Veronica Raymond won the Caring category of the North Herts Local Hero award in March. The short film made by North Herts Council was an opportunity to showcase the role of volunteers generally and featured a Syrian refugee who is on our Advisory Board.

We are proud to report that the Refugee Council has nominated us for the King’s Award for Voluntary Service. We hope that we will be successful in recognition of all the amazing work our volunteers do.

DIRECT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY OUR VOLUNTEERS

The support we provide aims to address the needs of different groups and reflects the context in which we provide support and the availability of resources. Our website and social media record many of the activities and events organised by the Charity.

Resettled refugees

We continue to offer befriending support to refugees who arrive under the resettlement schemes, supplementing the support they receive from their caseworkers. This support ranges from language support, to help with sourcing additional household goods, school related support, providing opportunities for people to get together and to meet people from their wider communities. Most befriending support is provided in refugees’ homes, but this year has seen the development of drop in sessions hosted by the Refugee Council and, in the case of Dacorum Borough Council, a women’s group. Our volunteers provide support to these initiatives.

Many of the Syrian families whom we have supported are thriving and no longer need any, or the same level of, support from HWR. We are pleased to report that significant numbers of them have obtained British citizenship. We continue to support some families and volunteers remain in contact in many cases. Our primary focus now is on supporting Afghan resettled families.

Several members of the Advisory Group are drawn from the resettled Syrian families that HWR has supported and we are pleased that they want to contribute to the development of the Charity.

Asylum seekers

The range of support provided by HWR to asylum seekers in contingency accommodation varies according to the availability of local volunteers and the willingness of the accommodation managers to engage with the Charity. We offer at some but not all locations:

- English classes – open to all, with different classes to address different levels where possible
- childcare so that parents with young children, who are unable to attend college because of this, can attend classes
- opportunities to cook – most asylum seekers do not have the facilities to cook for themselves
- free shops for clothes sourced from donations from supporters, Goods for Good and One Impossible Thing

- art and craft sessions
- education support: liaising with Herts County Council Admissions team, colleges and schools, accompanying families to inductions, sourcing school uniform, shoes and equipment
- a testimony project which gives asylum seekers the opportunity to record their story so that they can make best use of their time when they get to see a solicitor or have to pursue their claim without legal advice
- introductions to Legal Aid immigration solicitors: Hertfordshire is a legal aid immigration advice desert but we have identified some firms outside the county who are prepared to take on asylum seekers whom we refer to them
- homework clubs
- play groups
- outings to local places of interest
- SIM cards provided by Vodafone – essential for connecting with Migrant Help, solicitors and friends and family and for accessing eVisas
- clothing vouchers for new arrivals and for school uniform provided by the Church of Latter-day Saints and in part by HCC Housing Support Fund
- listening and advice: this may take the form of helping people to contact Migrant Help, school or college or simply passing the time of day with someone who feels isolated

Positive move-ons

In some locations we operate through drop ins rather than in the asylum accommodation. In those locations, positive move ons can continue to access the same support as asylum seekers. The increase in the numbers of positive move-ons, most of whom cannot access HWR support once they leave the contingency accommodation is causing us to consider how to develop the drop in model elsewhere, working in partnership with other organisations.

This group face significant challenges regarding housing and adjusting to all the practicalities of integrating into their communities. In some cases, people move into unfurnished or partially furnished accommodation and do not have the financial resources to buy essentials such as beds and white goods, or find the bureaucracy associated with being a tenant difficult to understand. HWR is adapting to try to address this group's needs. This requires more funding and more effort on the part of our volunteers. In 2024 we helped in the region of 150 people move into accommodation – sourcing and organising white goods, household items and furniture, making and supporting applications to grant making bodies for individuals/families, helping to navigate the benefits system, obtain eVisas, open bank accounts, deal with Council Tax, utilities, school and college changes.

Collaborative working

HWR collaborates with other organisations that can support refugees and asylum seekers to ensure that they are aware of their needs, and where support is offered, acts as a bridge between providers and those who would benefit from that support, by virtue of our first-hand relationships. Here are some examples of collaborative working:

- We hosted an Education Fair which was attended by over 50 people of 22 nationalities, with a 60%/40% split between asylum seekers and refugees. Seven organisations took part: West Herts College; Community Action Dacorum; South Hill Centre, Steps2Skills; Herts Services for

Young People; the Employability for Overseas Nationals Programme and the DENS employment team. The Fair enabled local providers to explain what they offer to refugees and asylum seekers and gave them access to people they sometimes struggle to engage with. Among the follow up actions was a course provided by Hart Learning and Development, which led to a recognised qualification in Work Skills.

- We worked with Emmaus who offered us furniture as part of their solidarity programme which was distributed to 10 households.
- We hosted, with Hertfordshire Asian Women's Association, a picnic so that resettled Syrian refugees and newly arrived Afghan refugees could get together.
- In June we were pleased to showcase the words and art from over 100 refugees and asylum seekers who contributed to the Visions of Home display as part of Refugee Week. The St Albans Museum and Gallery hosted a workshop for asylum seeker children from Welwyn and Hatfield hotels, and they created bunting, which was on display inside the building, along with a slideshow. Outside there were panels on the railings which was a good way for passers-by to see the artwork and think about the situation of asylum seekers. There were visits by the Mayor and St Albans MP Daisy Cooper, as well as a piece in the BBC Beds Herts and Bucks website as well as the Herts Advertiser and Mix FM Radio Four refugee artists' work was on display at the St Albans Art Society Summer Exhibition.
- In August, the weekend after the riots and working with the Masorti Synagogue, we organised a picnic fun day for Hatfield asylum seekers in a local park. We debated whether to go ahead given that the riots had started elsewhere the weekend before, but it was a joyous occasion for the 35 adults and 15 children from at least 14 countries who joined in, some of whom had not been out for days.
- In October, Halloween gifts distributed in conjunction with Herts Community Foundation.
- In December there was a whole range of festive parties and gifts for asylum seekers sourced from Goods For Good and several local churches and community groups.

The year saw many examples of refugees and asylum seekers helping each other and supporting the Charity:

- Members of the Advisory Group contributing their time and views to help the Charity identify priorities
- Barbering at the Welwyn hotel from the brother of a refugee on our Advisory Group.
- At Ramadan local refugees took Iftar meals to one of the hotels and gifts were distributed at Eid.
- Learners helping each other at ESOL classes.
- People acting as informal translators to help us understand needs and communicate how we can help.
- Shared meals for resettled Afghan refugees at Refugee Council sessions.
- Refugee artists donating their work to Dontsendmeacard.

A list of the organisations we work with is provided at the end of this report.

Bike scheme

In 2024 we received, repaired and delivered over 100 bikes across Hertfordshire as well as repairing countless others. We always give out a helmet, USB rechargeable lights and a lock with each bike. Over 50 of these bikes went to asylum seekers in hotels, some hotels are in remote locations and asylum seekers cannot access public transport. With regret, we decided part way through the year to stop providing bikes to asylum seekers in hotels. The churn in asylum seekers makes it too difficult to meet demand so we now focus on providing bikes to those with refugee status.

Providing bikes has a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing, makes getting to school and work easier, and opens up access to local amenities.

INDIRECT SUPPORT

Some volunteers, primarily the Trustees and Management Committee, work behind the scenes for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers. This takes a variety of forms, some of which are explained below.

Advocacy

We see it as a fundamental part of our role to advocate for refugees and asylum seekers. To that end, Trustees and members of the Management Committee attend meetings at local, county and regional level with the purpose of bringing the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers to their attention.

We have also established relationships that allow us to provide feedback to the Home Office and Clearsprings, the contracted providers of asylum accommodation and other limited support in Hertfordshire. By way of example, the introduction of eVisas in place of Biometric Residence Permits as the primary means for those with refugee status has been problematic, particularly for those in the positive move on process because it impacts on their ability to open bank accounts, claim benefits, prove right to rent and to employment. We see these issues first hand as people come to us asking for support, often with issues relating to the instability of the eVisa system or lack of follow through with other government departments, errors in the generation of eVisas or lack of familiarity with the changes on the part of other services such as Department of Work and Pensions and banks. HWR is well placed to flag these issues.

We consider that the Charity's standing with other organisations which is built on our practical interactions with refugees and asylum seekers is particularly important: those who are making decisions about these groups are often remote from them and do not have the hands-on involvement and understanding that we have. We were pleased to be invited by Herts County Council to take part in their conference focusing on refugees and asylum seekers. One of our volunteers facilitated a discussion with a panel of people who have been granted Leave To Remain. They shared their experiences of the challenges they faced as asylum seekers and are facing as they settle in their communities.

Our Area Convenor teams wrote to all 12 Hertfordshire MPs asking them to sign up to the Fair Begins Here Parliamentary Promise and this resulted in some extra meetings, to complement those that had already been initiated. David Taylor MP for Dacorum, Kevin Bonavia MP for Stevenage and Daisy Cooper MP for St Albans are engaging directly with the charity.

In November we published the report **Forced to Flee**: testimonies of young refugees in Hertfordshire. This was the result of interviews conducted by Dr Marianne Coleman with 35 young male asylum seekers about how they came to the UK. The report dispels the myth that young men arriving on our shores are just economic migrants, our report has found that young male asylum seekers arriving in Hertfordshire fled their homeland because of ill treatment and fear of persecution. The report attracted positive attention, was featured in a news clip on regional Heart Radio and there was a full length interview on Mix FM.

Gathering information and evaluating our work

Over the last year we have continued to strengthen the methods we use to evaluate the difference the Charity is making. We have now rolled out across the Charity the use of a database called Monday.com, as a tool to measure how much work the volunteers are doing each and every day. This data also demonstrates what the focus of our work is. The results are staggering: for example, during January and February 2025, our volunteers gave 2684 hours of their time (direct work 2110 hours, indirect work 574 hours). 31% of the time was spent in providing ESOL/language support. Generally, this strand of support takes up a third of our volunteers' time each month. There are various contributory factors to this figure. Asylum seekers cannot access college for the first six months after they arrive. Many ESOL courses have a once a year start date in September. Colleges only offer between two and a half and five hours a week ESOL and many asylum seekers continue to attend our classes even when studying at college. 10% of volunteer time was spent on sourcing and providing goods. 8% was spent on supporting those with positive decisions to move into accommodation and 10% was spent on listening and advice, which includes advice given to those granted leave to remain relating to transitional arrangements.

Recording volunteer activity is invaluable in several ways. It gives the Trustees a clear picture of the amount and range of support provided; it allows us to acknowledge and celebrate that support; and it gives us information that is useful when we apply for funding or other forms of recognition.

We undertook our first volunteer survey in September. Over one third of our volunteers responded and provided really useful feedback. 93% of volunteers who responded told us that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their experience of volunteering with HWR. 85% said they were very likely to continue to volunteer with HWR. The volunteer survey showed that, overall, volunteers are satisfied with the charity and their role in it. A small group has been established to review the findings and ensure the feedback was considered and acted on where appropriate. As a result, we have revitalised our training programme and are sending monthly updates to volunteers to advertise new volunteer opportunities and provide more information about what is happening across the county.

We have been piloting an ESOL survey with some of our ESOL teachers and their students to find out how they feel about the classes. The aim for the forthcoming year is to roll this survey out across the whole of the County.

We continue to collate case studies from those we support which provide powerful testimonies to the difference the work of our volunteers makes to people's lives.

Communications

The Comms team aims to raise awareness of our work and the situation of asylum seekers and refugees, to encourage donations and recruit more volunteers. 2024 has seen developments that

have made our external facing presence more accessible and effective and our internal processes more robust.

Here are some highlights:

- Our website is now more readily accessible to users and has new pages on partnership working and help for new arrivals. The website attracted 9,000 unique visits and nearly 22,000 page views in 2024
- Over 300 enquiries to our website, an increase of over 100 from the previous year, from potential volunteers, refugees and asylum seekers asking for support and other organisation looking for support for refugees and asylum seekers or offering their support
- Increased presence and traffic on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (now X). We are gradually moving from X to BlueSky and we have set up a Threads account
- the supporters' newsletters are receiving positive feedback

PRIORITIES

The priorities set for 2024 were:

- To work to increase the sustainability of the Charity. We have secured funding from a number of different sources. Our volunteer numbers have increased and area teams strengthened. However, circumstances are constantly changing and we need to continue to review and adapt the support the Charity offers
- Work to increase diversity and inclusion throughout the Charity. We have a new trustee and have widened the Advisory Board. We are attracting volunteers from a range of different ethnicities and some of the people we support are contributing to the Charity in a voluntary capacity. We will continue to do this next year
- Continue to support refugees and asylum seekers whilst responding to changing circumstances, working with our partners. We have described throughout this report how we have done this and will continue to do this. We are thankful for the donations and grants that have enabled us to do this
- Develop our volunteer workforce. We have described how we have done this in our report and this area is one of our priorities for 2025
- Establish robust measures to evaluate the impact of the Charity. As noted in the report, we have made considerable progress with this and work is ongoing

Our priorities for 2025 are:

- To create a Volunteering Development Programme
- To explore the scope for strategic engagement and practical collaboration with at least one partner organisation, in order to deliver better services for refugees and asylum seekers
- To recruit three new trustees, at least one with lived experience, and review the Board's performance twice annually
- To explore how HWR, through its volunteers, can better support and add value to wider efforts to improve employability
- To increase the sustainability of the Charity by streamlining our management structure to be more effective, including the potential for paid for management support (funding dependent)
- To review the way we work with our Advisory Group to ensure that their views are heard and acted upon both within HWR and in the wider community

- To strengthen our advocacy work, making greater use of the experiences and voices of the refugees and asylum seekers whom we support
- To ensure that we continue to explore and implement methods to better monitor and evaluate our work.
- The Trustees are working with the Lloyds Bank Development Foundation to review our mission and purpose and to consider the robustness of our systems. This will help us to define and achieve our priorities over the coming year.

WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We continue to work with many organisations in Hertfordshire and some outside

- the East of England Local Government Association on resettlement and asylum seeker related issues
- the Refugee Council who are the contracted caseworkers for many of the Afghan evacuees and some of the original Syrian resettled families
- the Humanitarian team at Dacorum Borough Council who are the caseworkers for some of the resettled Afghan evacuees and are stepping up to support former asylum seekers to make a positive move on to permanent accommodation once leave to remain is granted
- the Humanitarian team and others at Herts County Council
- the Red Cross
- Migrant Help
- Flourish who fund cookery and art activities and to whom we have referred those in need of mental health support
- the Hertfordshire New Migration Partnership which we Co-Chair
- The South Hill Centre and Alexandra Road Congregational Church, both in Hemel Hempstead, who provide the venues for our drop ins and a range of other support
- Goods for Good who have generously provided clothing, toiletries and SIM cards
- Alternatives who provide baby boxes
- One Impossible Thing who provide trainers
- Community Action Dacorum and West Herts College with whom we have collaborated on various ESOL related projects
- Beauty Banks for toiletries
- The Vineyard Verso Church St Albans
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Communities 1st
- GoVolHerts
- Hertfordshire Asian Women's Association
- Herts Help
- Hertfordshire Services for Young People
- Herts Young Homeless
- Herts Sports Partnership
- Emmaus
- The churches of St Mary Magdalene and Peartree Christchurch in Welwyn Garden City with whom we work on the asylum seekers' cooking project and St John's Church in Hatfield

- The Hospice of St Francis for wellbeing walks
- Islamic Relief
- Sebby's Corner in Barnet
- Hertford Pantry
- DENS
- Stevenage World Forum
- Stevenage Borough Council
- North Herts Council
- St Albans District Council
- Broxbourne Muslim Community
- Churches Together Broxbourne

TREASURER'S REPORT

2024 was a record year for HWR in terms of both receipts and payments. The year saw a significant increase in our activity in support of asylum seekers, and in support of those receiving leave to remain and setting up their new homes. These programmes are reflected in our large charitable payments for the year for clothing, household goods and financial support. Our overall payments for the year were £122,427 (2023: £96,612), with charitable payments of £86,908 (2023: £61,678) and core salary and related costs of £33,445 (2023: £31,295.)

Our receipts for the year were £162,035, a very significant increase by comparison with £70,679 in 2023. The restricted receipts included new grants of £52,231 to meet core costs over both 2024 and 2025, with almost half of that total being carried forward at the end of the year. We received restricted grants of £62,749 to fund charitable payments and used almost all of these funds over the year. Our unrestricted receipts from local authorities were significantly higher than in 2023, and included reimbursement of previous charitable payments by Hertfordshire County Council under the Household Support Fund, and funding from Dacorum Borough Council for our furniture storage costs and for the premises for one of the weekly drop-in centres.

Much of our volunteer activity does not involve charitable payments and is not reflected in our financial results except by the increase in the cost of volunteer coordination and administration. We rely on the time, effort and expertise given so generously by our volunteers, including the management group. This generosity is fundamental to the Charity's character and operations, and we do not believe it is appropriate to assign a monetary value to it for the purposes of the accounts.

Support from the broader community is also fundamental to HWR, both from our members and registered supporters and from the general public. This includes significant financial support, and we would particularly like to thank all those who have contributed to our appeals and donated so generously in 2024. We receive many direct individual donations as well as donations from congregations and members of community organisations and contributions through fundraising events. This generosity has helped us to finish the year with increased unrestricted reserves: excluding the unrestricted grant received for salary costs, unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £39,489 (2023: £27,148.)

2024 Payments

a) Charitable payments (71% of total payments)

We are very grateful to all the organisations and individual donors who have provided funds for 2024 to support our charitable payments:

- A grant in three instalments from the Church of Latter-Day Saints which allowed us to carry out a large programme of essential support for asylum seekers and refugee families, providing emergency hardship support, vouchers and clothing for children starting school. These grants also supported our bike scheme which continued very successfully through the year.
- A grant from Hertfordshire County Council using the Household Support Fund, to provide household goods and hardship support principally to asylum seekers and those with new leave to remain.
- Grants from Brookman's Park and Hatfield Rotary clubs to fund the laptops we provide to families and individuals particularly for educational purposes.
- A grant from DF Foundation which will be used to help families with the greatest needs.
- The last instalment of a grant from Mind Hertfordshire from 2023 to fund a cooking project and arts and craft activities for asylum seekers.
- A grant from HCC for a winter celebration event in Dacorum.

b) Payments for volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs (27% of total payments)

These core costs were funded in 2024 principally from five grants, and we are grateful to these institutions for their support:

- A new grant from the Postcode Places Trust to fund our salaries, and the balance of the similar grant received in 2022 for our administrative support post.
- A grant from Hertfordshire County Council to support the expansion of HWR's provision of services.
- A grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation for our Volunteer Coordinator post.
- The two-year unrestricted grant to support our salaries from the Hilden Charitable Fund.

The volunteer coordinator and administrator are employed through Community Development Agency Hertfordshire, and we maintain a reserve with CDA for this purpose.

c) General administration (2% of total payments)

General administration and governance costs were £2,074 in 2023 (2022: £3,639). These include the cost of the AGM which we were again able to hold as a live meeting with a strong social element. We are very grateful for the time and effort given so generously by the unpaid volunteers in our management group.

Reserves Policy

Our policy is to have a minimum level of available reserves equal to three months' operating costs for the Charity.

The Annual Accounts for 2024 and the Examiner's letter are attached. We are very grateful to Sean Good, our examiner who has succeeded Geoff Harper, for his support and professional expertise.

On behalf of all the Trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees we would like to thank you all for your continued support.

Irene Austin
Chair

Adrian Ball
Treasurer



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Herts Welcomes Refugees		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	Charity no (if any)	1172687
Set out on pages	1 to 3 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

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 trustees of the Trust, 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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 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 (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn 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: Sean Good Date: 18/03/2025

Name: Sean Good

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Retired chartered Accountant

Address:

22 Stanhope Road

St Albans

Herts AL1 5BL

Section B

Disclosure

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

Herts Welcomes Refugees

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2024

		£			
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
Receipts					
	Private donations	27,633		27,633	29,837
	Charitable trusts and other organisations	7,287	81,702	88,989	36,328
	Local authority and other	12,135	33,278	45,413	4,514
	Total receipts	<u>47,055</u>	<u>114,980</u>	<u>162,035</u>	<u>70,679</u>
Payments					
Note 1	Charitable payments	24,556	62,352	86,908	61,678
Note 2	Volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs	3,331	30,114	33,445	31,295
Note 3	General administration	2,074		2,074	3,639
	Total payments	<u>29,961</u>	<u>92,466</u>	<u>122,427</u>	<u>96,612</u>
Cash funds					
	Net receipts/ (payments)	17,095	22,514	39,609	(25,933)
	Transfers between funds	(6)	6		
	Cash funds at 1 January	29,400	9,876	39,276	65,209
Note 4	Cash funds at 31 December	<u>46,489</u>	<u>32,396</u>	<u>78,885</u>	<u>39,276</u>

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

		£			
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
Cash funds					
	Cash at bank	46,489	30,753	77,242	37,633
	Balance at CDA		1,643	1,643	1,643
	Total cash funds	<u>46,489</u>	<u>32,396</u>	<u>78,885</u>	<u>39,276</u>
Other monetary assets					
	Gift aid due	95			128

Signed:

Irene Austin
Chair

Adrian Ball
Treasurer

18th March 2025

Note 1 Charitable payments from all funds by category

		£
Category	2024	2023
Clothing	36,772	5,578
Household goods and furniture	17,600	2,973
Bike scheme	8,080	10,507
Activities	5,630	6,398
Financial support	4,745	11,978
Storage	4,016	
TV and licences	2,561	4,903
Computers	1,768	1,373
Phones	1,649	3,588
Support for asylum seeker applications	1,197	908
Transport	1,050	1,693
Arabic school	700	3,257
Educational support	577	214
Volunteer mileage	463	549
Driving lessons	100	100
Festival gifts		7,270
Sports		289
Other		100
Total	<u>86,908</u>	<u>61,678</u>

Note 2 Volunteer coordination and administration

Payments for volunteer coordinator, administrator and related activities

		£
Category	2024	2023
Payments to CDA for salaries and related costs	31,353	28,700
DBS costs	1,116	885
Travel	401	577
Training	290	624
Utilities	233	373
Office equipment and supplies	52	137
Total	<u>33,445</u>	<u>21,884</u>

Note 3 General administration

General administration costs from Unrestricted funds

		£
Category	2024	2023
Insurance	755	707
Website and publications	461	457
Website and publications prior years		747
Other	315	444
Subscriptions and courses	312	270
Safeguarding membership	145	145
Office equipment and supplies	86	369
Professional fees		500
Total	<u>2,074</u>	<u>3,639</u>

Note 4 Table of Restricted funds, Designated unrestricted funds and CDA reserve

	Opening balance	Receipts	£ Payments	Net	Transfer	Closing balance
Restricted funds for core costs						
HCF Salary		8,672	8,672			
HCC Expansion grant		20,000	12,986	7,014		7,014
Postcode Lottery 2022 grant	3,422		3,422			
Postcode Lottery 2024 grant		23,559	5,400	18,159		18,159
Total restricted funds for core costs	3,422	52,231	30,480	25,173		25,173
Restricted funds for charitable payments						
Church of Latter Day Saints		45,575	44,646	929		929
HCC Household support grant		12,778	12,778			
Rotary Laptops		1,646	918	728		728
Herts Mind project	1,601	1,250	1,891	961		961
DF Foundation		1,000		1,000		1,000
HCC Winter Event		500	175	325		325
HWR Ukraine appeal	1,397		179	1,218		1,218
Arabic School COSARAF	738		738			
HCC locality bike scheme	450		456	(6)	6	
Library	517		98	419		419
Redmill Solutions Education Fund	108		108			
Total restricted funds for charitable payments	4,811	62,749	61,986	5,574	6	5,580
Total all restricted funds	8,233	114,980	92,466	30,747	6	30,753

	Opening balance	Receipts	£ Payments	Net	Closing balance
Designated unrestricted funds					
Hilden Charitable Fund grant 2023	2,253		2,253		
Hilden Charitable Fund grant 2024		7,000		7,000	7,000
HWR Warm Welcome appeal	2,210	1,135	2,309	1,036	1,036
Dacorum Christmas appeal	130	165	295		
HWR Bike scheme	651	258	514	395	395
Total designated unrestricted funds	5,244	8,558	5,370	8,431	8,431

Designated unrestricted funds are included in the total Unrestricted funds at 31 December of £46,489

CDA reserve: the balance held with CDA for payroll management at 31 December 2024 was £1,643 (2023: £1,643)

Accounts



“Welcoming and Supporting Refugees in Hertfordshire”

<https://www.hertswelcomes.org.uk/>

Patron: Robert Voss CBE CStJ HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

Herts Welcomes Refugees Trustee Report January to December 23

Executive summary

This has been a year of change and development for Herts Welcomes Refugees as we responded to the challenge of supporting increasing numbers of asylum seekers of many different nationalities and with a wide range of needs, whilst continuing to welcome and support refugees who have settled in the county.

We have spent time considering how we can most effectively organise ourselves and how we can ensure the growth and sustainability of the charity, reviewing our objectives, the support we are offering, our means of communication and methods of measuring our impact.

This activity was prompted by:

- the need to continue to develop our support for asylum seekers, who come from a wide range of nationalities, have different needs to, and do not have access to the services offered to, refugees
- the increase in numbers of people we support, both asylum seekers and refugees
- the need to demonstrate the impact of our services to potential and actual funders
- the need to capture the voice of those we support in order to ensure that our resources are most effectively used and that we address actual rather than perceived needs
- the need to ensure that the charity is sustainable: we will remain volunteer led but the increased scope of our offering requires more paid support if we are to continue to operate effectively

This report gives an overview of our work during the year. The Trustees have reviewed last year's objectives against this year's achievements and, while further work is needed in some areas, we are encouraged by our progress.

Here are some of the key points for 2023:

- advisory group made up of refugees and asylum seekers established
- 47 new volunteers recruited to bring us to a total of 130 active volunteers at the end of year
- asylum accommodation facilities supported increased from 3 to 8
- more than 100 Afghan evacuees welcomed as permanent Hertfordshire residents
- support for Afghan evacuees in the Dacorum hotel continued until the hotel closed in August
- review of our structure and objectives
- development of systems and processes to record volunteer contribution, improvement of our website, social media and communications
- successful bids for grants from the Hilden Charitable Fund, Herts Community Foundation, Cosaraf and HCC locality funds

- 140 bikes, locks and helmets provided
- nine training and discussion sessions for volunteers
- strengthened relationships with existing partners and development of new relationships in response to emerging needs
- established an advisory group made up of refugees and asylum seekers to ensure that our offering is relevant

Please read on for further information.

Trustees

The Trustees meet on a regular basis and most of us attend the monthly management meetings. At Trustees' meetings, we consider matters of policy in line with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, receive financial reports and take decisions regarding the strategic direction of the charity according to the constitution, objectives for the year and the need to adapt as new challenges arise. We will bring to the AGM a resolution to amend the Objectives of the charity to reflect that our primary focus is no longer Syrian refugees but refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities.

Catherine Henderson resigned as a trustee at the end of December and Vicky Woodcraft will resign at the AGM. Catherine and Vicky were founder members of the charity and we will miss their wise contribution.

Andy Gregg joined us as a trustee in May. Andy brings a wealth of experience as he has worked with, and still has links with, other charities concerned with refugees and asylum seekers. He is also a trustee of the Hertfordshire Equalities Advisory Board.

An objective for this year was to recruit a trustee with lived experience and we have started our search for a suitable candidate. Our current Trustees are Irene Austin (Chair), Adrian Ball (Treasurer), Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott, Samah Alrahabi, John Borton, Andy Gregg and Vicky Woodcraft.

According to our constitution, Andy Gregg who was appointed as a trustee during the year will have his appointment formally endorsed at the AGM. Kate Scott and Samah Alrahabi will stand down and have offered themselves for reelection at the AGM.

The Management Team

This team continues to meet on a monthly basis. There have been a number of changes during the year: some retirements but also new members and redeployment of existing members to address emerging needs.

Karen Cleaver has moved from being a St Albans and Hertsmere Area Convenor to lead on support for asylum seekers in a Hatfield hotel and is now part of the Welwyn Hatfield team. Birim Karakas has taken

over supporting the London Colney families as well as those in Hertsmere. In East Herts, Catherine Henderson resigned at the end of the year as both Area Convenor and Trustee but we were very pleased to welcome Carolyn Breheny to that team, working with Denise Beardshaw on supporting asylum seekers in a large hotel and in the community. Some areas still do not have strong enough teams to support local demand and recruiting more volunteers in those areas is a priority.

In terms of paid support, we were very sorry to see Caroline Herring retire in February as Volunteer Coordinator but were pleased to welcome Ruhena Akhtar to that role from the end of March. Ruhena is a registered counsellor and psychotherapist and brings a wealth of experience to her role. Annabel Kirk continues to work as our Administrator and covered for the Volunteer Coordinator post whilst we were recruiting.

We are very pleased to welcome Lucile Bertolaso-Scarlett as our Safeguarding Lead, succeeding Vicky Woodcraft who has led on safeguarding for many years. We thank Vicky for all her help.

Advisory Group

The Trustees are aware that the charity needs not only to have a means of receiving feedback on the support we provide but also to involve those we support to ensure we are effective. We have therefore invited representatives from the communities we support to join an Advisory Group.

Andy Gregg chairs this group and John Borton has taken administrative responsibility. The first meeting took place in October when we shared information about how the charity works and asked the members to identify their key concerns. After this meeting a WhatsApp group was set up for participants. Concerns emerging from the group are the difficulties of finding suitable employment for those able to work, lack of legal aid lawyers for asylum seekers and the cost of living. One success story is that after the first meeting one of the members who was having difficulty finding work was able to gain employment through our volunteer network contacts.

Our volunteer network

We are a volunteer led organisation and volunteers deliver the great majority of the support we provide. Our volunteer network is the heart of our organisation and has grown significantly during the year. It remains a strong network, strengthened further by the recruitment of 47 new volunteers, giving us a total of 130 active volunteers. We are so grateful to all our volunteers for the time and commitment they give to the charity. We are constantly amazed by their enthusiasm, flexibility and compassion.

However we still need more volunteers to address local needs, particularly in Stevenage and North Herts and in Watford and Three Rivers.

Our new Volunteer Coordinator has introduced 'Table Talk' sessions to give volunteers a chance to meet each other (mostly on Zoom) and discuss their activities. These sessions – of which we had four in 2023 - have proved very popular. Topics included health and wellbeing and cultural differences. In November and December we arranged two face to face meetings, one in Stevenage and one in St Albans which were really well attended and gave our volunteers a chance to share their experiences and learn about activities in other areas of the county. There will be more face to face meetings in 2024.

We have developed our volunteer training this year, starting with a face to face meeting looking at language awareness and resources. We also signposted new volunteers to an online course to help with language support.

Judy Kirsh, our ESOL specialist, ran face-to-face and Zoom training sessions in February, April, May, June, July and September but we recognise that this area requires further development. Judy is available to answer individual queries, to recommend resources and training opportunities and to signpost to other sources of support. We have created an ESOL resources area, including self-access resources, on our website so that our volunteers can find suitable materials to support ESOL teaching and learning more easily.

Our work during the year

Refugees

Many of the Syrian refugee families do not need our support in the same way as they did a few years ago. We continue to support those who do. We are pleased to report that more of them now have British Citizenship.

We continue to provide opportunities for refugees to meet in lunch clubs, women's groups and other gatherings, in addition to providing befriender and language support. Now that we are working with a wider range of people, we are keen to open up these sessions to all the groups we support in the interests of integration and sharing experiences.

Afghan evacuees

The bridging hotels for Afghan evacuees all closed during the year. Most of the people from the hotel in Dacorum that we supported have settled in the county and have been joined by others from hotels elsewhere.

The number of Afghan evacuees supported in the community has risen by more than 100.

The needs of these families and individuals vary and, while they have the benefit of having been in the UK for up to two years before leaving the hotels, moving into the wider community presents its own challenges. We are working closely with their caseworkers at the Refugee Council and Dacorum Borough Council to support them and we know that Christ First Watford has maintained contact with those who were housed in the hotel in Borehamwood who have settled locally. We are still able to offer welcome packages tailored to needs and some welcome events. Where possible, we continue to offer these families and individuals the range of support we offered those who settled in Hertfordshire earlier.

We have also supported Ukrainian refugees by providing financial help and donated goods and by welcoming them to language classes at our drop in sessions.

Supporting asylum seekers

At the start of 2023 we were supporting asylum seekers living in three facilities (two hotels and self-catering accommodation). By the end of the year we were providing support in eight locations as well as more “dispersed” asylum seekers i.e. those living in accommodation in the community. Other charities and faith groups lead on support at most of the other hotels.

There were 13 asylum facilities in Hertfordshire in 2023. One closed in January 2024 and other closures are planned in accordance with government policy to reduce the number of hotels and house asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation. This change will present fresh challenges to Herts Welcomes Refugees.

We can only support people who are willing to engage with us: we do not claim to have reached all asylum seekers living in the locations we support but we consider that we have had a significant impact on many of those who have engaged with us. It should also be remembered that we are not dealing with a static population as the Home Office can move people at very short notice. This brings its own challenges and makes it difficult to record how many people we have supported.

We acknowledge and regret that we cannot provide the same level of support across all eight facilities because we do not have enough volunteers. We need quite a large group of volunteers to provide a range of support to asylum seekers with complex needs and ideally a team of people to coordinate their activities.

After a long period when a minimal number of asylum seekers were receiving decisions on their claims, the government has introduced a fast track process for asylum seekers of specific nationalities and we are now seeing a significant increase in decisions, mostly positive for those on this process. This has taken the charity in yet another direction as the euphoria of achieving refugee status is quickly overtaken by concerns about housing, the complexities of opening bank accounts and claiming Universal Credit and the prospect of being evicted from Home Office accommodation at short notice. This group do not have the support of caseworkers to guide them through the moving on process and so our volunteers are doing what we can to help.

In terms of the scope of support provided, we offer at some but not all locations:

- English classes – open to all, with different classes to address different levels where possible
- childcare so that mums with young children, who are unable to attend college because of this, can attend classes
- opportunities to cook – most asylum seekers don’t have the facilities to cook for themselves
- free shops for clothes sourced from donations from supporters, Goods for Good and One Impossible Thing
- art and craft sessions
- education support: liaising with Herts County Council Admissions team, colleges and schools, accompanying families to inductions, sourcing school uniform, shoes and equipment
- a testimony project which gives asylum seekers the opportunity to record their story so that they can make best use of their time when they get to see a solicitor

- introductions to Legal Aid immigration solicitors: Hertfordshire is a legal aid immigration advice desert but we have identified some firms outside the county who are prepared to take on asylum seekers whom we refer to them
- homework clubs
- outings to local places of interest
- SIM cards provided by Vodafone – essential for connecting with Migrant Help, solicitors and friends and family
- clothing vouchers for new arrivals and for school uniform provided by the Church of Latter-Day Saints and in part by HCC Hardship Fund
- listening and advice: this may take the form of helping people to contact Migrant Help, school or college or simply passing the time of day with someone who feels isolated

In most of the eight locations we operate, we engage with asylum seekers inside the hotels using communal areas. In Dacorum we operate from drop ins made available to us by the Alexandra Road Congregational Church and the South Hill Centre – a new departure for us which has opened up new opportunities for collaborating with other organisations. We may have to introduce more drop ins to address the needs of dispersed asylum seekers.

These activities help the asylum seekers who take part to improve their English, to meet others in a safe environment, get a better understanding of British culture, reduce their isolation and help integration by demonstrating that there are people who welcome them and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their talents.

Notwithstanding the challenges we are encouraged by the appreciation shown by those we support and by seeing the impact our work is having. Here is an example:

‘Sometimes a little help means life for those who have been disappointed in the estrangement and harshness of life’

Supporting asylum seekers has caused us to change and expand the support we provide and made us seek out new organisations to work with. Here are some examples:

The cooking project

This started in Dacorum with the aim of giving those who did not have facilities to cook the chance to do so. The project is funded by Mind Hertfordshire - Flourish. In Dacorum the Sunnyside Rural Trust welcomes us to their kitchen facilities. The project revealed that we had several talented chefs in our midst – four of whom cooked Iranian Ash Reshteh soup for more than 70 guests at a Sunnyside celebratory event. The cooking project is now up and running in Welwyn and Hatfield and we are grateful to Christchurch Baptist church for the use of their kitchen facilities. This project has achieved its aim of improving wellbeing and has also given participants opportunities to meet members of the wider community, to get an idea of the cost of living as they shop for ingredients and the chance to share their culture and that of others through food. Our volunteers have also commented on how enjoyable they find taking part.

Thanks to the support of Daler Rowney, Cass Art and Artscape Harpenden, who have supplied materials, we have been able to run art and craft sessions for both adults and children in the Welwyn Hatfield hotels. This has really helped with wellbeing, especially for the adults, and has given the children enjoyable recreational time. We have some very talented artists and Ghazal, who now has refugee status, has kindly come back and helped with some sessions. We used the pictures from these sessions on 'Donotsendmeacard' in December.

Summer School for Young Asylum Seekers in Dacorum

The arrival of a large group of asylum seekers into new Home Office accommodation in Dacorum at the end of 2022 created many challenges for all local services. HWR identified that there was one cohort at particular risk of isolation and exclusion: around 20 young people aged 15-19 who would be unable to start college until September 2023. For many of this group, this would mean a whole year out of education.

HWR created and organised a Summer School for this cohort, convening meetings with local partners to create a broad programme of activities to support the academic and emotional needs of the young people.

Many thanks to the following partners for supporting this Summer School initiative:

- **Community Action Dacorum** provided intensive ESOL lessons
- **West Herts College** provided ESOL lessons and bespoke sign-up support for courses starting in September 2023
- **Dacorum Services for Young People** ran sessions on personal resilience, cooking and music studio mixing; and hosted an end-of-programme party at the request of the young people
- **The Boxmoor Trust** ran outdoor sessions focused on understanding the environment – pond dipping and nature walks
- **The Waterways Experience** provided a canal boat trip
- **The Nuffield Trust** organised a fitness session
- **HWR volunteers:** individual volunteers provided science lessons, art lessons and support for further education opportunities

Many of the external organisations involved in the Summer School, and the HWR volunteers who supported every activity, commented very positively on the attitude and approach of the group. They changed the hearts and minds of everyone they met.

The HWR area team is proud of what was achieved for a very vulnerable cohort. The qualitative and quantitative evaluation feedback was positive and every young person who participated is now in Further Education at local colleges.

Bike scheme

Thanks to funding from Herts Community Foundation, we were able to deliver 140 bikes, locks and helmets to refugees and asylum seekers. A real achievement. Our bike coordinator, Andy Brocklehurst, saw this project through until it ended in November and has since retired. Our thanks to Andy for this. We have recruited a new volunteer who is undertaking training so that he can service bikes. The Herts

Disability Sports Foundation has also worked with us in servicing and delivering bikes. We are grateful to Annabel Kirk who took over the administration and some of the coordination for this project and to a group of Welwyn Hatfield County Councillors who funded bike stands and locks through their locality budgets.

Working with other organisations

Herts Welcomes Refugees works collaboratively with many organisations to provide support to refugees and asylum seekers. As our offering develops, so do relationships with others.

We are recognised as an effective force for supporting refugees and asylum seekers. This is demonstrated by our participation in a number of groups and meetings at local, county and regional level. We find that we are increasingly consulted by others on the development of support they are trying to provide.

In terms of established relationships, we continue to work closely with:

- the East of England Local Government Association on resettlement and asylum seeker related issues
- the Refugee Council who are the contracted caseworkers for many of the Afghan evacuees and some of the original Syrian resettled families
- the Humanitarian team at Dacorum Borough Council who are the caseworkers for some of the resettled Afghan evacuees and are stepping up to support former asylum seekers to make a positive move on to permanent accommodation once leave to remain is granted
- the Humanitarian team and others at Herts County Council: initially our relationship was focused on Afghan evacuees in bridging hotels but is increasingly asylum seeker focused.
- the Red Cross
- Migrant Help
- Flourish who have funded our cookery project and to whom we have referred those in need of mental health support
- the Hertfordshire New Migration Partnership which we Co-Chair
- The South Hill Centre and Alexandra Road Congregational Church, both in Hemel Hempstead, who provide the venues for our drop ins and a range of other support
- Goods for Good who have generously provided clothing, toiletries and SIM cards
- Alternatives who provide baby boxes
- One Impossible Thing who provide trainers
- Community Action Dacorum and West Herts College with whom we have collaborated on various ESOL related projects
- Beauty Banks for toiletries
- The Vineyard Verso Church St Albans
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Communities 1st
- GoVolHerts
- Hertfordshire Asian Women's Association

- Herts Help
- Hertfordshire Services for Young People
- Herts Young Homeless
- Herts Sports Partnership

Our new partners include:

- The Sunnyside Rural Trust in Dacorum and the churches of St Mary Magdalene and Peartree Christchurch in Welwyn Garden City with whom we work on the asylum seekers' cooking project and St John's Church in Hatfield
- the Box Moor Trust, Waterways Experience, the Nuffield Trust who supported young asylum seekers on the summer school
- The Hospice of St Francis for wellbeing walks

Funding

We are extremely grateful to the churches, organisations and individuals who have donated funds to us this past year. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions to our Warm Welcome appeal.

It was a year of hardship and we were able to do a lot to help refugees and asylum seekers thanks to the HCC Financial Hardship fund which we received through Herts Community Foundation. Through this we were able to help over 500 individuals, both refugees and particularly the children living in the asylum hotels with shoes and school clothes. Most recently we have received short term funding for our volunteer coordinator post to start in January 2024. We continued to receive invaluable support from the humanitarian arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints towards school uniforms and we are most grateful for their contribution. Redmill Solutions nominated us as their charity of the year and jointly with them we were able to distribute Eid gifts to families with children. We worked with several Rotary Clubs across the county to support newly resettled families. Thanks to Sue Johnson who wrote bids for us last year and with her help, we were successful with a grant from the Hilden Charitable Fund and Herts Community Foundation towards our administrative costs.

We were able to continue with the Arabic school thanks to a further grant from Cosaraf who also provided us with dates for families during Ramadan.

Evaluating our work and showing the impact

We are very grateful to Stephanie Cash who has been working with us for the past year to look at the best way of evaluating the services we offer.

We introduced a range of methods to gather this data. These include using qualitative methods through the gathering of case studies from those we support and our volunteers, which provides rich evidence of the impact of the charity on individuals. We also introduced some quantitative tools to gather numerical data on the performance of the learners in their English classes and through their 1-1 English sessions. All this data was included in the final report to the Lottery Fund. [Click here](#) to read the report.

The rapid increase in people needing our support during 2023 meant that the charity had to look for a more robust way of collecting, managing, analysing and reporting data on what we do and who we support. This will help us to demonstrate our impact to funders, to share best practice across the county and to celebrate all the amazing work that volunteers do every day.

In September, Dacorum piloted the use of Monday.com to capture support provided by volunteers. Volunteers add information about activities via a simple web form which is collected centrally in a secure database. By the end of 2023, the system was being used by volunteers in Dacorum and by volunteers supporting a hotel in Welwyn Garden City. The plan is to roll out across the County by summer 2024.

Grateful thanks to Marcus Karia for researching software options and developing the HWR system, and the Dacorum Area Convenor Team for championing this initiative.

Here is a snapshot of volunteer support in Dacorum during December:

Name	Type of Support Offered	Volunteer Hours
Childcare to support parents in ESOL classes	Childrens' wellbeing	2
Care and play for children of asylum seekers while parents attend ESOL classes	Childrens' wellbeing	3
Shopping, transport and facilitation of cooking session	Cooking	20
Drop-in session	ESOL/Language Support	18
ESOL children's lesson	ESOL/Language Support	2
ESOL lesson on making appointments	ESOL/Language Support	3
Befriending arrangements	ESOL/Language Support	1
Ordering and collecting goods from Goods For Good	Goods - Sourcing and Providing	3
Organising storage unit	Goods - Sourcing and Providing	3

Management Meeting	HWR - Internal Meetings	26
Volunteer lunch	HWR - Internal Meetings	7
Testimony project	Legal	5
Drop-in session	Listening and Advice	2
Advice and support	Listening and Advice	5
Drop in session	Listening and Advice	2.5
School admissions support	Schools Support	1
Meeting with HCC/DBC re Positive Move On Planning	Working with Other Agencies	7
Refugee Council Meeting	Working with Other Agencies	5
Support for Afghan women's group	Working with Other Agencies	5
SMSG meeting	Working with Other Agencies	1
	Totals	121.5 hours

Safeguarding

We take safeguarding of both those we support and our volunteers very seriously. We are still part of Thirtyone:eight. One of our objectives for this year relates to safeguarding. We are making good progress with the review of our policies and procedures and will then move onto increasing awareness amongst our volunteers. Our new Safeguarding Lead, Lucile Bartolaso-Scarlett will be ensuring we adhere to best practices.

Communications

We recognise the need to raise the profile of Herts Welcomes Refugees in order to raise awareness of the situation of asylum seekers and refugees, to encourage donations and to recruit more volunteers.

Helen Singer took over social media from Lauren Frankel in January. Lauren was a hard act to follow but gave a very helpful handover to Helen who has also been mentored by Naomi Mellor.

We are extremely grateful to Helen, who has transformed our social media platform by her posts on the charity's weekly activities and her work is certainly bringing HWR to life on social media. Our website now has a link to our Instagram account so that visitors to our site can see the broad range of work our volunteers undertake.

Our Facebook page followers grew from 200 to 360, Twitter from 300 to 430 and we have also set up a Threads account. Our Instagram account has over 240 followers.

The Twitter post with the most engagement - and over 6.8 thousand impressions - related to colouring books distributed to asylum seekers in North Hertfordshire. This was designed by cartoonists in response to the demand from the then Immigration Minister that cartoons in an immigration facility should be painted over.

Website and enquiries

We have changed our website address to www.hertswelcomes.org.uk to better reflect our work. We are very grateful to Adam Ahmed-Keyte for making the transition happen. We will be changing our email addresses to reflect our new domain.

During 2023 the HWR website had just over ten thousand unique visits and over twenty five thousand page views, slightly up from the same period in 2022.

Moving feedback from refugees and asylum seekers has been added to a new page on the website, along with more volunteer and refugee stories particularly for Refugee Week and Volunteer Week.

The website has a new fundraising page for the Warm Welcome Fundraising Appeal which has raised over £3,000 of unrestricted funding. Thanks to Helen Singer, Kate Scott and Jane Collis for their help with this.

Our contact line received 200 enquiries over the last year. Over three quarters of these were in relation to asylum seekers, many of them contacting us directly, but we also received referrals from a broad range of partner organisations including the NHS, Herts County Council, local schools and other charities.

Newsletter

Mark Kendall continues to manage our Mailchimp list of members and supporters who receive our newsletter.

We are very grateful to have a comms professional, Anna Cotton, to write the newsletter and contribute to the work of the team. Anna has made the newsletters really engaging and visual and they have had a good response.

Raising the profile of Herts Welcomes Refugees has been helped by volunteers getting letters in the local and national press. In addition Joyce Farnsworth gave an inspiring interview on BBC 3CR about the art club run at one of the hotels. The art work has also been donated so that it can be used to create charity greetings cards at <https://www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/herts-welcomes-refugees>

Have we met our objectives for the year?

Our objectives for 2023 were:

- to strengthen the Area Convenor teams and our volunteer base and to work with other charities and groups to support the increasing needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the county
- to increase the diversity of our trustee body to include one trustee who can provide independent oversight of the charity and one with lived experience of being a refugee / asylum seeker and/or links with other support agencies
- to continue to support our refugee partners as their circumstances change whilst responding, according to local needs and our capacity, to the significant increase throughout the county, in numbers of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels and dispersed accommodation
- to continue to work with organisations such as the Refugee Council and to explore closer working relationships with other organisations to support the growing number of asylum seekers as well as refugees who do not arrive via government schemes
- to continue to help with access into employment by support and signposting
- to continue to work with and encourage local councils to accept more families under government resettlement and other schemes
- to continue to develop our support for children's education and integration
- to obtain feedback on our work and opinions on possible future activities via focus groups and an online survey with refugee partners, asylum seekers and our volunteers
- to revise the structure of our Safeguarding team and raise awareness among our refugee partners of safeguarding issues and ways of reporting concerns
- to improve our reporting procedures to better capture the organisation's impact

How did we do? We have described in this report how we have worked toward achieving our objectives. In summary:

- in some areas we have managed to strengthen our teams but we still need more volunteers in the other areas
- we are working to recruit a trustee with lived experience, but we have appointed a new trustee with a great deal of expertise in working with refugees and asylum seekers
- the Advisory Group will also help us involve refugees and asylum seekers in guiding the work of our charity
- we have widened the organisations we work with and have strengthened existing relationships.
- we continue to support and signpost refugees and asylum seekers to volunteering and employment but this is an area our Advisory Group have asked us to work on by finding

appropriate work placements. We were very grateful to Redmill Solutions for providing a placement for an Afghan postgraduate student.

- our homework clubs have helped refugee and asylum seeker children and we try as far as possible to respond to all requests for 1:1 tuition.
- our Table Talk sessions with our volunteers have given us helpful feedback on what we have done and what else needs doing and our surveys of refugees and asylum seekers have helped us gather further feedback, as will our Advisory group. We now have a new Safeguarding Lead, are revising our policy and making safeguarding a topic for our Table Talk sessions.
- thanks to the work of Stephanie Cash and Marcus Karia, our methods of capturing information and measuring impact are improving

Given the growth of our work over the year, we have also been exploring what changes are needed in terms of posts to make the charity sustainable. We will be looking to apply to the Community Lottery and other organisations to increase our paid posts.

Our priorities for 2024

1. Work to increase the sustainability of the Charity including:

- strengthening the volunteer workforce teams, based on changing and increasing needs in local areas
- recognising the differing needs of those we support and ensuring that we offer the best fit for each group
- securing future long term funding based on our projected work programme, to meet the local growing needs of all those we support, alongside our partners
- identifying the gaps in local provision and working with partners to provide the best multi-agency response within the resources available

2. Work to increase Diversity and Inclusion throughout the Charity including:

- recruiting at least one Trustee with lived experience
- ensuring that the Advisory Board activity informs the work of the Charity in a demonstrable manner
- ensuring that the voices of service users and partners inform the work of the Charity in a demonstrable manner
- supporting some refugees or asylum seekers to become volunteers

3. To continue to support refugees and asylum seekers, whilst responding to changing circumstances, working with our partners including:

- delivering support as appropriate through one to one tuition, group sessions or drop ins
- providing goods and signposting support as appropriate
- embedding the use of Monday.com to record confidential data on individuals/ families in order to make the work with individual families more effective

4. To develop our volunteer workforce including:

- increasing the number of volunteers to match the increasing demands in targeted areas of the County
- delivering high quality training to our volunteers, including English language support, safeguarding awareness and any specific training as identified by the needs of those we support
- implementing and embedding the use of Monday.com for both the onboarding of new volunteers and to record consistent data on our volunteers to allow the Charity to hold accurate records

5. To establish robust methods to evaluate the impact of the Charity including:

- implementing and embedding the use of Monday.com for recording qualitative data on "what" and "how much" is delivered by the Charity
- developing and implementing tools to gather evidence of impact
- developing and implementing tools to gather the impact of any refugee or asylum seekers' involvement in the Charity.

On behalf of Herts Welcomes Refugees we would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers and others who have supported the charity during 2023.

Treasurer's Report

In 2023 HWR saw two significant changes in its financial activity. Our payments in support of asylum seekers in temporary accommodation grew considerably as a proportion of our total charitable payments, to the same level as our support for families, and our salary costs increased as for the first time we had two part-time posts for the full year. Our overall payments for the year were £96,612 (2022: £96,310), with charitable payments of £61,678 (2022: £72,529) and core salary and related costs of £31,295 (2022: £21,884.)

Our receipts for the year were £70,679, down from £106,188 in 2022. In the restricted funds, we used up the significant balance carried forward from 2022, supplemented by £27,578 in new restricted grants. The balance of restricted funds remaining at year-end was significantly lower than in 2022, at £9,875 (2022: £40,415.) However, in 2023 we saw a significant increase in unrestricted donations and grants to £41,087 (2022: £24,724.)

The year saw a further increase in volunteer activity, particularly in support of asylum seekers, much of which does not involve charitable payments and is not reflected in our financial results except by the increase in the cost of volunteer coordination and administration. We rely on the time, effort and expertise given so generously by our volunteers, including the management group. This generosity is fundamental to the charity's character and operations, and we don't believe it is appropriate to assign a monetary value to it for the purposes of the accounts.

Support from the broader community is also fundamental to HWR, both from our members and registered supporters and from the general public. This includes significant financial support, and we would particularly like to thank all those who have contributed to our appeals and donated so generously in 2023. We receive many direct individual donations as well as donations from congregations and members of community organisations and contributions through fundraising events. This generosity has allowed us to finish the year with slightly increased unrestricted reserves: excluding the unrestricted grant received for salary costs, unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £27,148 (2022; £24,794.)

2023 Payments

c) Charitable payments (64% of total payments)

We are very grateful to all the organisations and individual donors who have provided funds for 2023 to support our charitable payments:

- A grant from the Hertfordshire County Council household support fund, provided through Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF), grants from the Church of Latter-day Saints and our own Uniform appeal enabled us to provide hardship support, food vouchers and clothing to both refugee families and asylum seekers. This activity accounted for almost a third of our charitable payments in this difficult year. We are grateful also for the strong response to our Warm Welcome appeal later in the year.
- A grant from Mind Hertfordshire which continues into 2024 funded a very successful cooking project for asylum seekers in hotels in Welwyn and Dacorum.
- A further grant from COSARAF allowed us to continue the Arabic school through 2023.
- We continued the expansion of our bike scheme begun in 2022, funded by a grant from the HCF Life Chances fund, and with additional grants received in 2023 from HCC councillors for asylum seeker hotels in their areas.
- A donation from Redmill Solutions with some of our own funds allowed us to provide an Eid gift this year for refugee families with children.

b) Payments for volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs (32% of total payments)

These core costs were funded in 2023 principally from three grants, and we are grateful to these institutions for their support:

- The volunteer coordinator position, associated costs and volunteer support were funded for the first half of the year under the two-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.
- The administrator position was funded by the grant from the Postcode Lottery received in 2022 to cover the full term of the contract.
- We received the first instalment of a two-year unrestricted grant from the Hilden Charitable Fund to help meet salaries and related costs.

The volunteer coordinator and administrator are employed through Community Development Agency Hertfordshire, and we maintain a reserve with CDA for this purpose.

c) General administration (4% of total payments)

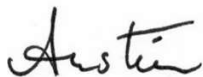
General administration and governance costs were £3,639 in 2023 (2022: £1,897). The increase reflects higher direct costs as a result of our growth as well as some website charges from prior years. It also includes the cost of the AGM which we were able to hold as a live meeting with a strong social element after the virtual meetings during the pandemic. We are very grateful for the time and effort given so generously by the unpaid volunteers in our management group.

Reserves Policy

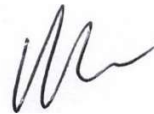
Our policy is to have a minimum level of available reserves equal to three months' operating costs for the charity.

The Annual Accounts for 2023 and the Examiner's letter are attached. We are grateful as ever to Geoff Harper, our examiner, for all his support and professional expertise.

On behalf of all the trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees we would like to thank you all for your continued support.



Irene Austin Chair



Adrian Ball, Treasurer

25th March 2024





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Herts Welcomes Refugees

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1172687

Set out on pages

1 to 3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date:

19/03/2024

Name:

Geoffrey Harper

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Retired Chartered Accountant

Address:

14 Church Street

Guilden Morden

Herts. SG8 0JD

Section B

Disclosure

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

Herts Welcomes Refugees

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2023

		£		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023
				Total 2022
Receipts				
	Private donations	26,089	3,748	29,837
	Charitable trusts and other organisations	14,998	21,330	36,328
	Contract and other	2,014	2,500	4,514
	Total receipts	<u>43,101</u>	<u>27,578</u>	<u>70,679</u>
Payments				
Note 1	Charitable payments	23,800	37,878	61,678
Note 2	Volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs	9,088	22,207	31,295
Note 3	General administration	3,639		3,639
	Total payments	<u>36,527</u>	<u>60,085</u>	<u>96,612</u>
Cash funds				
	Net receipts/ (payments)	6,574	(32,507)	(25,933)
	Transfers between funds	(1,967)	1,967	
	Payments from CDA			(877)
	Cash funds at 1 Jan 2023	24,794	40,415	65,209
Note 4	Cash funds at 31 December 2023	<u>29,401</u>	<u>9,875</u>	<u>39,276</u>

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

		£		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023
				Total 2022
Cash funds				
	Cash at bank	29,401	8,232	37,633
	Balance at CDA		1,643	1,643
	Total cash funds	<u>29,401</u>	<u>9,875</u>	<u>39,276</u>
Other monetary assets				
	Gift aid due	128		

Signed:



Irene Austin
Chair

25/03/2024



Adrian Ball
Treasurer

Note 1 Charitable payments from all funds by category

	£	
Category	2023	2022
Financial support	11,978	7,631
Bike scheme	10,507	2,271
Festival gifts	7,270	8,329
Activities	6,398	6,393
Clothing	5,578	8,230
TV and licences	4,903	8,042
Phones	3,588	7,016
Arabic school	3,257	2,100
Household goods and furniture	2,973	6,738
Transport	1,693	3,052
Computers	1,373	5,925
Support for asylum seeker applications	908	
Volunteer mileage	549	1,646
Sports	289	2,023
Educational support	214	793
Driving lessons	100	1,300
Other	100	1,040
Total	<u>61,678</u>	<u>72,529</u>

Note 2 Volunteer coordination and administration**Payments for volunteer coordinator, administrator and related activities**

	£	
Category	2023	2022
Payments to CDA for salaries and related costs	28,700	18,750
DBS costs	885	920
Training	624	1,344
Travel	577	162
Utilities	373	317
Office equipment and supplies	136	391
Total	<u>31,295</u>	<u>21,884</u>

Note 3 General administration**General administration costs from Unrestricted funds**

	£	
Category	2023	2022
Website and publications	457	95
Website and publications	747	
Insurance	707	490
Professional fees	500	480
Other	444	20
Office equipment and supplies	369	474
Subscriptions and courses	270	146
Safeguarding membership	145	129
Cost of goods for sale		63
Total	<u>3,639</u>	<u>1,897</u>

Note 4

Table of restricted funds, designated unrestricted funds and CDA reserve

			£			
	Opening balance	Receipts	Payments	Net	Transfer	Closing balance
Restricted funds for core costs						
Postcode Lottery Fund	16,757		(13,336)	3,421		3,421
National Lottery Community Fund	8,470		(8,731)	(261)	261	-
Volunteer Coordinator Legacy	140		(140)			-
Total restricted funds for core costs	25,367		(22,207)	3,161	261	3,421
Restricted funds for charitable payments						
Cosaraf Arabic school	164	3,831	(3,258)	737		737
Herts Mind project		3,750	(2,148)	1,602		1,602
HCC locality bike scheme		2,500	(2,050)	450		450
HWR Ukraine appeal	1,622	270	(495)	1,397		1,397
Library	517			517		517
Redmill Solutions Education Fund	64			64	44	108
HCF Hardship Support		10,000	(10,068)	(68)	68	-
HCF Life Chances Bike scheme	8,003		(8,028)	(25)	25	-
Redmill Solutions Eid Festival gifts		3,900	(5,440)	(1,540)	1,540	-
Church of Latter Day Saints	1,707	2,544	(4,277)	(26)	26	-
HWR Asylum seeker appeal	1,018	60	(1,085)	(7)	7	-
HWR uniforms appeal		723	(727)	(4)	4	-
National Lottery Community Fund	238		(238)			-
Redmill Xmas 2022	52		(44)	8	(8)	-
Volunteer Coordinator Legacy	20		(20)			-
Total restricted funds for charitable payments	13,405	27,578	(37,878)	3,105	1,706	4,811
Total all restricted funds	38,772	27,578	(60,085)	6,266	1,967	8,232
Designated unrestricted funds						
Hilden Charitable Fund		7,000	(4,747)	2,253		2,253
HWR Warm Welcome appeal		2,770	(560)	2,210		2,210
Total designated unrestricted funds		9,770	(5,307)	4,463		4,463

Designated unrestricted funds are included in the total Unrestricted funds at 31 December of £29,401

CDA reserve: the balance held with CDA for payroll management at 31 December 2023 was £1,643 (2022: £1,643)

Accounts



Welcoming, Supporting and Helping with Integration

www.hwsf.org.uk



Tweet



Patron: Robert Voss CBE CStJ HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

Herts Welcomes Refugees Trustees Report January - December 2022.

“You are such a successful organisation” we were told very recently and, judging by the number of volunteers we continue to attract, the increasing impact we are able to have on people’s lives and the fact that statutory bodies, including Herts County Council and local councils, are turning to us for help, we are ‘successful’. And yet we are conscious that there is always so much more to be done; also that the focus of our work has shifted quite dramatically in the past couple of years.

Whilst we continue to support refugee families arriving in the county, an increasing proportion of our time is spent on supporting asylum seekers in hotels and in dispersed accommodation.

The Management Team

This has expanded in the past year, reflecting our increased involvement with asylum seekers. Alison Wilkinson took on the role of Asylum Coordinator to lead the work in Dacorum and we welcomed Karen Cleaver (St Albans district), Birim Karakas (Hertsmer), Denise Beardshaw (East Herts) and Jane Collis (Dacorum) as part of their local Area Convenor team. Pippa Pearson joined us, with special responsibility for Educational funding and Andy Brocklehurst took over the Bike Scheme. Adrian Ball, whom we welcomed as our incoming Treasurer at our last AGM, took over the role on January 1st. The full list of Area Convenors can be found on our website.

The Management team meets once a month on Zoom, with occasional face to face meetings in between, and are in constant communication via various WhatsApp groups.

In February we held a Strategy Away Day with an external facilitator in order to consider our priorities and the future direction of the organization.

Thanks to a grant from the Postcode Lottery we were able to appoint a part time Administrator, Annabel Kirk, to work mainly with our Chair and our Volunteer Coordinator as well as other members of the team. Annabel is proving an immense asset to the organization - enthusiastic, efficient and extremely hard working. We are also grateful to Sue Johnson for her hard work and expertise in helping the charity to identify grant-givers and for applying on our behalf for grants from various funders.

Trustees

The Trustees of the charity are Irene Austin (Chair), Samah Alrahabi, Adrian Ball (from April 2022), John Borton, Catherine Henderson, Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott and Vicky Woodcraft. Mala Mulholland also served as a Trustee until March 2022. The Trustees met formally four times during the year, to consider matters of policy in the light of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, receive financial reports and take decisions regarding the strategic direction of the charity according to the constitution and the objectives for the year. All eight Trustees are also members of the Management Team, which meets monthly, and all attended the Strategy Day in February so they have very detailed knowledge of the charity and its operation.

According to our Constitution two Trustees, John Borton and Veronica Raymond, will stand down at this year's AGM. Both are willing to stand for re-election.

We aim to strengthen the Trustee body in 2023 by recruiting an additional two members, See **Objectives for 2023**.

HWR's Work during the Year

Refugee Families

Many of our original families had now been here for more than five years, the children settled in school, college and even Higher Education where in 2022 students were studying a variety of subjects such as Interior Design, Architecture, Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences with one young Syrian studying, on a scholarship, for his Masters degree.

Many more of the adults entered employment and some increased in confidence to the stage where they were happy to help each other in times of trouble, to make newcomers welcome to their areas and to arrange their own activities. For example during the summer the Syrian families in North Herts organised their own picnics and trips to the seaside.

Many of the women were studying various courses in college, some helped at the Arabic School and the majority of the young people at college also had part time jobs. Several babies were born and HWR helped with clothing and baby equipment.

A number of gatherings, mostly outdoor picnics with children's games, took place during the year and we are very grateful to the churches and other groups who donated the use of their premises for indoor parties, and for their help with food and a variety of activities for both parents and children. Local donors also provided gifts of dates and other foodstuffs for Eid ul Fitr, after Ramadan. A small number of families applied for – and gained – British Citizenship with others in the process of applying.

However a few families who had been here for some time still needed significant support and during the year our Area Convenors or a family's befriender have had to help with journeys to hospital and other appointments, support during medical crises, benefits claims, eviction notices, house-swaps, safeguarding concerns and financial issues. Several of the older adults continued to have health problems and there was still a significant need for support with English Language.

During the year we were also delighted to welcome new families from Iran, Syria and Turkey, who were given our usual welcome package and support.

Afghan refugees

We welcomed a further 16 families from Afghanistan to permanent homes in Hertfordshire during the year. Welcome parties and other gatherings were arranged for them, extra furnishings from supporters' donations were provided for their new homes and they were introduced to HWR group sessions and events and helped to navigate their new surroundings.

However, many who were brought here after the fall of Kabul remained in hotels and during the year 230 hotel residents in Dacorum were supported by a team of around 35 volunteers.

This support included one to one or small group language sessions, a homework club for primary school children, driving theory classes, sourcing and distributing clothing, including school uniforms and shoes as well as introductions to the local area and the services available.

In addition our team organized a number of activities to help the refugees to cope with the challenges of living long-term in a hotel, with an uncertain future and concerns about the upheaval of moving to another new area.

Events included trips to Whipsnade Zoo, Waddesdon Manor and Ashridge, a children's magic show, art and craft sessions and participation in the Fly with Me festival which involved a picnic and kite-flying trip to Dunstable Downs, following 3 kite-making sessions. We are especially grateful to Kate Scott, Jane Collis and their team for their energy and commitment in this area.

Ukrainian Refugees

In the months following the Russian invasion, many Ukrainian families arrived in the county through the Homes for Ukraine and the Friends and Families schemes. Because they were staying in the homes of their sponsors and the Homes For Ukraine group were receiving financial and other support from Herts County Council, HWR's role in supporting Ukrainian families and their hosts was varied and focused on particular gaps and local needs. One of our trustees worked hard to identify all the Facebook groups of hosts across the county and make HCC and others aware of them - including new hosts who approached HWR for advice and support. The list of groups can be found on our website. Several Ukrainians looking for UK sponsors contacted HWR via the website and were directed to the local groups. HWR's lead in Bishops Stortford, Mione Goldspink, led the establishment of a group there and in other areas HWR volunteers supported local groups in running or supporting venues for newly arrived Ukrainians to meet up and establish their networks. As families and individuals move into their own accommodation, we are aware that we will be asked for more help and have some restricted funding that will be used. We also responded to requests for Language Support particularly for some of the young people and will be looking for volunteers to support more of these in the future.

Asylum Seekers

The number of asylum seekers in Home Office-contracted accommodation in the county rose dramatically during the year from just over 200 in three facilities at the start of the year to over 1,100 in nine facilities at the end of the year. Sometimes facilities were established without warning. During the year HWR took responsibility for supporting residents in three of the facilities and helped with several others. This has required a significant additional number of volunteers and the development of new ways of working alongside our usual support to resettled refugee families.

In Dacorum John Borton and Alison Wilkinson developed a team of volunteers that has been providing a wide range of support for those living at two facilities. Alison has now taken on the role of Asylum Coordinator. In Welwyn Hatfield a team led by Joyce Farnsworth, Caroline Herring and Annabel Kirk was developed to provide regular support at a contingency hotel. Support provided at the three facilities included provision of clothing and shoes – including vouchers for basic items such as underwear – as well as mobile phones and SIM cards, desperately needed so that newly arrived asylum seekers could contact aid organizations such as Migrant Help, look for legal advice and connect with family and friends. HWR volunteers ran free ESOL lessons for residents, homework clubs for the children and liaised with County Council teams on schooling for children and free school meals and with local councils on holiday schemes and sporting activities. Our volunteers linked with church and other groups to find venues for ESOL classes, Cooking Mornings and our very popular Free Clothes Shops, as well as helping with GP and college registrations.

During the year volunteer drivers have undertaken many tasks, driving residents to hospital appointments, bringing mothers with newborn babies back to their hotels, taking young people to football or other training. The list is almost endless...

It is easy to focus on the practical support provided but emotional support is equally important for people who have been through such traumatic experiences and, in the case of the two hotels in Dacorum, have no communal space to meet with others. Adults need to relax or talk about issues affecting them, children need to play and have some semblance of a normal life and the support given by our volunteers in helping them to feel valued and cared for has been - and continues to be - vitally important.

Communications

Lauren Frankel has managed our website, Facebook page and Twitter account for several years now, placing informative and eye-catching posts and tweets and increasing our social media presence. During 2022 the HWR website had almost ten thousand unique visits and nearly twenty-five thousand page views. We received about five hundred messages through the website's contact page. These included requests for - and offers of - help and referrals from other agencies.

The website was updated visually during the year, resources for Ukrainian arrivals and their hosts were added, a new page featured stories of refugees and asylum seekers and a page was created about HWR's volunteers, with their photos and quotes about their volunteering experiences.

Our Facebook group grew to almost fifteen hundred people and had well over two hundred followers and our Twitter account grew from two hundred to over three hundred followers with the most popular tweets making over a thousand impressions.

One social media success followed a feature on an asylum-seeking artist who was invited to collaborate with the Wellcome Collection and was given canvases by a supporter, who went on to become an HWR volunteer.

We are so grateful to Lauren for her time, her enthusiasm and her impressive writing skills.

Mark Kendal continued to circulate our regular Mailchimp newsletters to supporters - the November edition, which described our work with asylum seekers, helped to raise more than fifteen hundred pounds in donations. Mark also manages our email account and data storage system and is a valuable member of the team, especially in helping other members with IT difficulties.

Befriender volunteer network

During 2022 a hundred and four volunteers supported more than a hundred refugee partners, including 18 children, in one to one sessions or small groups. The number of volunteers increased during the year as did the number of refugees being helped and the number of asylum seekers and others accommodated in hotels.

Training sessions, face to face or via Zoom, have been held for all new volunteers, in addition to the regular Zoom meetings where all volunteers share good practice and discuss issues. These sessions cover such subjects as Mental Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding as well as feedback from courses and conferences and have included presentations from HWR colleagues on such subjects as 'Answering Tricky Questions about Asylum Seekers and Refugees' and 'Life in an Asylum-Seeker Hotel.' Towards the end of the year volunteers were encouraged to take part in a Global English TEFL course for volunteers. Eighteen of them completed this and continue to meet to consolidate their learning.

An updated version of the Volunteer Handbook was completed during the year by a team led by the Volunteer Coordinator and every volunteer was given a hard copy for reference, in addition to the online version.

During the year volunteers had the welcome opportunity, after so many Zoom sessions, to meet up socially at three tea parties and lunches.

Most activities with refugee partners were able to return to face to face meeting during the year but Zoom sessions have still proved very effective, allowing us to match volunteers with partners according to need rather than locality, for example enabling tutoring sessions in specific subjects where a volunteer might not live close to the student.

An active WhatsApp group allowed volunteers to regularly and easily communicate and share information while the HWR Marketplace WhatsApp advertised appeals for specific goods and offers of donations – with

photos! In addition each area of the county and each of the contingency hotels now has its own WhatsApp group for volunteers and/or refugees

Before Christmas volunteers took part in checking and distributing about four hundred Christmas Gift boxes for Adult and Child Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Many were donated by our own supporters with others passed on by Church and other groups.

Volunteering with HWR can be emotionally – and sometimes physically – exhausting but can also be a stimulating and rewarding experience, offering the chance to meet people from a range of countries, to hear their stories and offer them help and friendship. It is also an opportunity to learn new skills, or use those you already possess, and to meet others who share your values. We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who give the organisation so much support. We could not function without this commitment.

Group Sessions run by HWR volunteers during the year included:-

- Tuesday afternoon Drop in session - activities and conversation for asylum seekers - Dacorum.
- Friday afternoon ESOL classes for asylum seekers -Dacorum.
- Tuesday morning ESOL classes for women, Letchworth.
- Fortnightly/monthly Men's group, Letchworth.
- Alternate Wednesday mornings, Women's ESOL, Stevenage
- 2nd and 4th Monday in the month, shared lunch, Ware.
- Tuesday and Wednesday Mornings, ESOL sessions for Asylum seekers, Welwyn Garden City.

We are so grateful to our Volunteer Coordinator, Caroline Herring, for her hard work and enthusiasm in recruiting, inducting and training our volunteers and for supporting so many of these initiatives. At the end of the year she announced that she would be retiring and we started to advertise for her replacement.

Comments from Volunteers

"I started volunteering with HWR about five years ago and I just love it! My main role is helping with the development of English language skills on a 1 to 1 basis, in person and online. It's so rewarding every time my refugee partner tells me they've passed the exam we've been preparing for together. It's more than that too as real friendship develops from these times spent together, including sharing meals, chatting over a coffee and sharing stories. I've even learnt to make falafels!"

"For many years now I have been working with ESOL for the Syrian refugees who came in the Vulnerable Persons scheme. I struggled initially but soon began to understand the difficulties they faced with language learning. Being with the families has helped me develop compassion and a more direct understanding of what it is like to be a refugee in a strange country with a completely different culture and language. The experience over many years has helped me and the families grow to understand and care deeply for each other."

"Every time I visit the family I befriend I'm welcomed with hugs from the children, the baby is lifted into my arms 'to be held by her English Grandmother' and we share delicious snacks – not why I go but they are lovely! It has been a joy and a privilege to be their friend."

Messages from members of refugee families we have helped to support...

“You have done great things for us that are indescribable and you brought great joy to our lives. I will never forget your help and kindness.”

“We feel like we are family for you all, always willing to help. You’ll always be blessed for all your good work.”

“Thank you for treating us with love and supporting us as part of your family.”

And from some asylum seekers...

“We learned more and when you come here we feel better psychologically.”

“All the teachers are very kind and lovely. Our teacher is xxxx. He’s genius and has a good heart. Every time he prepare important lesson for us to learn quickly. He tried very hard for us. The best teachers educate with their heart, not just their mind.”

“We were very grateful to the charity for the help they provide. We really appreciate weekly English classes with xxx. Thanks to them we are more confident in everyday life. We are also grateful to xxx for the help in other issues. All volunteers are absolutely friendly and always ready to help. We are grateful for the 3 bikes for the family. Now we can go shopping and take interesting bike rides. Many thanks to all the volunteers for their time and selfless work.”

Working with Partners

We continued to work closely with the Refugee Council to support families coming through resettlement routes, holding monthly meetings throughout the year.

During the year we also forged links with a growing number of other organizations in support of Afghan and other refugees and asylum seekers across the county. These included the British Red Cross, Goods for Good, Steps2Skills, Citizens Advice, Community Development Agency, Community Action Dacorum, Volunteer Centre Dacorum, Herts Sports Partnership, Flourish, Care for Calais, Hertfordshire Asian Women’s Association, One Impossible Thing, Alternatives Pregnancy Crisis and Support Centre, Help Children Now, StAR, JCore, Welcome Churches Watford and many other churches.

In relation to our work in one of the hotels housing Afghan refugees we worked closely with Herts County Council, and attended meetings set up by the council to discuss support for different refugee groups, including Ukrainians.

Bike Scheme

Our popular bike scheme continued to strengthen under our new Scheme Coordinator, Andy Brocklehurst, who worked so hard throughout the year.

This year 94 bikes, plus safety equipment, were delivered to refugees and asylum seekers across Hertfordshire and we continued to support both groups with repairs and ongoing maintenance. The majority of recipients were from Syria and Afghanistan but others came from an increasingly diverse range of countries, including Ukraine, Russia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Success in obtaining a grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation allowed us to continue this important work enabling vulnerable people with very little money to meet people, get to school, college or the shops and to get valuable exercise.

Safeguarding

All volunteers with HWR are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked and given initial training on safeguarding. The Safeguarding Officer gave two update sessions during the year and received four reports of possible concerns, which were all followed up. In most cases the police and social services were also involved. Both the Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Trustee attended training sessions with ThirtyOne:Eight, the safeguarding organization with which we are registered.

Our Objectives

Our Priorities for 2022 were:-

- To review the structure of the organization as we respond to growing and changing demands in ways that are sustainable.
- To increase the diversity of our trustee body.
- To recruit one trustee who can provide independent oversight of the running of the charity.
- To explore how we work with other organizations to support refugees not coming through the government schemes and with asylum seekers.
- To continue to support our refugee partners, in response to changing needs.
- To continue to help with access into employment.
- To continue to encourage local councils to accept more families under government resettlement schemes.
- To continue to develop our support for children's education and integration.
- To consider how to revitalize the advisory group given the changing partner demographic.

How Did We Do?

In February 2022 we held a Strategy Day, led by an external facilitator, to review and evaluate our work. Key outcomes of this day were to recruit an administrator, as the load for our existing Volunteer coordinator and team was not sustainable, and to strengthen our Area Teams. An Administrator was duly recruited, an Area Team is in place in East Herts and the teams in Dacorum and St Albans and Hertsmere have been strengthened. We now need to develop teams in Watford and Three Rivers and Stevenage and North Herts. We also agreed that we will only offer help in the increasing number of asylum hotels if we have sufficient capacity to do this effectively

We have not yet formally reached out for new trustees. This is a revised objective for 2023.

We worked with three local councils to help source additional housing,

We substantially increased the number of organisations that we worked with during the year - see **Working with Partners** above. We continue to work with other charities, church groups and local councils and this remains a priority for next year.

We have, as described in our treasurer's report, continued to support our refugee partners (including asylum seekers) through financial support, activities, gifts and vouchers.

Revitalizing the Advisory Group was difficult because of the size of the County and the diverse needs of our refugee partners. Our revised objective for 2023 is to capture their opinions via an online survey and focus groups. The Refugee Council are considering setting up an advisory group and we will hope to partner them in this enterprise.

Objectives for 2023

- To strengthen the Area teams and our volunteer base and to work with other charities and groups to support the increasing needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the county.
- To increase the diversity of our trustee body to include one trustee who can provide independent oversight of the charity and one who has lived experience of being a refugee / asylum seeker and/or links with other support agencies.
- To continue to support our refugee partners as their circumstances change whilst responding, according to local needs and our capacity, to the significant increase throughout the county, in numbers of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels and dispersed accommodation.
- To continue to work with organizations such as the Refugee Council and to explore closer working relationships with other organizations to support the growing number of asylum seekers as well as refugees who do not arrive via government schemes.
- To continue to help with access into employment by support and signposting.
- To continue to work with and encourage local councils to accept more families under government resettlement and other schemes.
- To continue to develop our support for children's education and integration.
- To obtain feedback on our work and opinions on possible future activities via focus groups and an online survey with refugee partners, asylum seekers and our volunteers.
- To revise the structure of our Safeguarding team and raise awareness among our refugee partners of safeguarding issues and ways of reporting concerns.
- To improve our reporting procedures to better capture the organisation's impact.

Thanks

No-one volunteers with Herts Welcomes Refugees in order to be thanked but the Trustees are aware of - and incredibly grateful for - the time, energy, commitment and sheer hard work which has been given by so many. Our Area Convenor teams, our Management team, Asylum Seeker teams, our Treasurer, all our Befrienders and ESOL teachers and everyone who has donated money, transported goods, visited homes or hotels or helped in any of the hundreds of ways we have tried to cover in this report all deserve our heartfelt thanks. Without you, our members, and our hundreds of supporters, Herts Welcomes Refugees could not continue to exist and we are so grateful to you all.

Treasurer's report

2022 was a record year in financial terms for HWR, reflecting our increased activity with families and our new support for asylum seekers in temporary accommodation. Our total receipts for the year were £106,188, up by 21% by comparison with 2021, which was already an exceptional year. However, our recorded receipts in both years are affected by the timing of significant grants, and the increase in our total payments is a better measure of growth. Our total payments in 2022 of £96,310 were up by 50% by comparison with 2021. Approximately half of this increase reflects charitable payments in support of asylum seekers. Around 40% of our charitable payments during the year were made in support of Afghan families, particularly the new arrivals.

The financial results of course only reflect one part of our activity: HWR relies on the time, effort and expertise given so generously by our volunteers, including the management group. This generosity is fundamental to the charity's character and operation, and we don't believe it is appropriate to assign a monetary value to it for the purposes of the accounts.

Support from the broader community is also fundamental to HWR, both from our members and registered supporters and from the general public. This includes significant financial support, and we would like to thank all those who have donated so generously to HWR in 2022, both for our general needs and in response to our specific appeals for asylum seekers and for Ukrainian refugees. We receive many direct individual donations as well as donations from congregations and members of community organizations, and significant contributions through individual and school fundraising events. Direct individual and fundraising donations in 2022 were just over £22,000, and with unrestricted donations from local churches and community organizations the total was over £29,000. As a result our unrestricted reserves at the end of this record year were only slightly lower at £24,794 (2021: £27,650)

2022 Payments

a) Charitable payments (75% of total payments)

Our charitable payments are largely made from restricted funds, supplemented as necessary from our unrestricted general fund. We are very grateful to all the organisations who have provided restricted funds for 2022 to support these payments:

- Very generous grants from Redmill Solutions supported the two Festival gifts which we were able to make in 2022, to families for Eid in the spring and to children at Christmas. These two festival gifts together were our largest category of charitable payment.
- Our support for Afghan families was funded by a grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) received in December 2021, which included support for welcome events and activities as well as household goods, by a grant from the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, and from the balance of HWR's own Afghan appeal as well as from our unrestricted reserves.

- Our work with asylum seekers in temporary accommodation has been supported most generously by grants from the Church of Latter-Day Saints, and from the proceeds of our own asylum-seeker appeal in November and December. We have also used funds from our unrestricted reserve in particular to provide basic mobile phones to asylum seekers.
- We received external funding for the first time for the bike scheme under a grant from HCF.
- Our Arabic school was again supported by COSARAF in the second year of its grant from 2021.

Part of our support for Afghan families in temporary accommodation came under a service level agreement and associated reimbursement arrangements with Hertfordshire County Council. These reimbursements are included in the accounts under Contract receipts.

b) Payments for volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs (23% of total payments)

These costs were funded in 2022 from two restricted grants, and we are very grateful to both organisations for their support:

- The volunteer coordinator part-time position, associated costs and volunteer support were funded in 2022 under the two-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund covering the period July 2021 to June 2023.
- The new part-time position for the administrator is for a fixed term from September 2022 to February 2024, and is funded by a grant from the Postcode Lottery for the full term.

The volunteer coordinator and administrator are employed through Community Development Agency, and we maintain a reserve with CDA for this purpose.

c) General administration (2% of total payments)

General administration and governance costs were £1,897 in 2022 (2021: £2,051). This reflects the charity's reliance on the time and effort given so generously by the unpaid volunteers in our management group.

Timing of Receipts in 2022 and 2021.

Our Receipts and Payments accounts record receipts when the funds are received without reference to when they are available or due to be used. However, Receipts in 2022 include some significant grants which are intended to fund payments falling due in 2023 and 2024:-

- The grant of £21,379 from the Postcode Lottery to fund the new part-time paid administrator position: £16,757 of this grant relates to payments due in 2023 and 2024.
- The grant of £10,000 from Hertfordshire Community Foundation to support the bike scheme: the fund runs to August 2023 and there was a balance of £8,003 at the year-end.

- The National Lottery Community Fund grant for the Volunteer Coordinator part-time position and related costs: the final instalment of £8,500 was received in December 2022 but will fund costs from January to June 2023.

As noted above, HWR's Receipts in 2021 included the grant in December of £10,000 from HCF to help fund the welcome for Afghan families as they arrived in 2022.

Reserves Policy

Our policy is to have a minimum level of available reserves equal to three months' operating costs for the charity.

The Annual Accounts for 2022 and the Examiner's letter are attached. We are very grateful, as ever, to Geoff Harper, our Examiner, for all his support and professional expertise.

On behalf of all the trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees we would like to thank you all for your continued support.



Irene Austin, Chair



Adrian Ball, Treasurer

28th February 2023



Herts Welcomes Refugees

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2022

		£		Total 2022	Total 2021
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds		
			Note 4		
Receipts					
	Private donations	17,139	4,945	22,084	33,788
	Charitable trusts and other organisations	7,585	67,484	75,069	53,688
	Contract	8,212	823	9,035	
	Total receipts	32,936	73,252	106,188	87,476
Payments					
Note 1	Charitable payments	28,561	43,968	72,529	48,180
Note 2	Volunteer coordination and administrative support, including salaries and related costs		21,884	21,884	13,771
Note 3	General administration	1,897		1,897	2,051
	Total payments	30,458	65,852	96,310	64,002
Cash funds					
	Net receipts/ (payments)	2,478	7,400	9,878	23,474
	Transfers between funds	(4,684)	4,684		
	Redundancy provision to CDA	(650)	650		
	Payments from CDA		(877)	(877)	
	Cash funds at 1 Jan 2022	27,650	28,558	56,208	32,734
	Cash funds at 31 December	24,794	40,415	65,209	56,208

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

		£			
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Cash funds					
	Cash at bank	24,794	38,772	63,566	54,338
	Balance at CDA		1,643	1,643	1,870
	Total cash funds	24,794	40,415	65,209	56,208
Other monetary assets					
	Gift aid due	173			
	HCC contract payments due	195			

Signed:



Adrian Ball
Treasurer

28th February 2023

Note 1 Charitable payments from all funds by category

Category	£ Total 2022 *
Festival gifts	8,329
Clothing	8,230
TV and licences	8,042
Financial support	7,631
Phones	7,016
Household goods and furniture	6,738
Activities	6,393
Computers	5,925
Transport	3,052
Bike scheme	2,271
Arabic school	2,100
Sports	2,023
Volunteer mileage	1,646
Driving lessons	1,300
Educational support	793
Other	1,040
	72,529

* No comparable table of charitable payments from all funds by category is available for 2021

Note 2 Volunteer coordination and administration

Payments from National Lottery Community and Postcode Lottery Restricted funds for volunteer coordinator, administrator and related activities

Category	£ Total 2022	£ Total 2021
Payments to CDA for salaries and related costs	18,750	12,971
DBS costs	920	319 *
Training	1,344	
Utilities	317	246
Office equipment and supplies	391	
Travel	162	235
Total	21,884	13,771

*Total DBS costs in 2021 were £1,071 including payments from unrestricted funds: see Note 3

Note 3 General administration

General administration costs from Unrestricted funds

Category	£ Total 2022	£ Total 2021
Insurance	490	412
Professional fees	480	
Office equipment and supplies	474	
Subscriptions and courses	146	315
Safeguarding membership	129	226
Website and publications	95	163
Cost of goods for sale	63	
DBS costs		752
Other	20	183
Total	1,897	2,051

Note 4

Table of all restricted funds and CDA reserve

£

Fund	Opening balance	Receipts	Payments	Net	Transfer	Closing balance
National Lottery Community Fund	9,496	17,000	17,788	(788)		8,708
Postcode Lottery		21,379	4,622	16,757		16,757
VC Legacy	160					160
Total	9,656	38,379	22,410	15,969		25,625
Ocado hardship	407	40	447	(407)		-
Church of Latter Day Saints		8,500	6,793	1,707		1,707
University of Hertfordshire Sports Inequalities	1,177		1,177	(1,177)		-
Redmill Solutions Festival gifts		6,230	7,825	(1,595)	1,648	52
HCF Life Chances Bike scheme		10,000	1,997	8,003		8,003
HWR Afghan appeal	2,527	1,264	3,813	(2,549)	21	-
HCF Afghan fund	10,000		13,000	(13,000)	3,000	-
HWR Asylum seeker appeal		2,842	1,824	1,018		1,018
JCore Afghan fund		1,875	1,890	(15)	15	-
Laptop and chromebook fund	1,292		1,292	(1,292)		-
Cosaraf Arabic school	(236)	2,500	2,100	400		164
Redmill Solutions Education Fund	1,348		1,284	(1,284)		64
HWR Ukraine appeal		1,622		1,622		1,622
Library	517					517
Total	17,032	34,873	43,442	(8,569)	4,684	13,147
Total all restricted funds	26,688	73,252	65,852	7,400	4,684	38,772
CDA reserve (balance held with CDA for payroll management)	1,870	18,750	(19,627)	(877)	650	1,643



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Herts Welcomes Refugees

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1172687

Set out on pages

1 to 3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 00 / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date:

28/02/2023

Name:

Geoffrey Harper

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Retired Chartered Accountant

Address:

14 Church Street

Guilden Morden

Herts. SG8 0JD

Section B

Disclosure

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

Accounts



“Welcoming, Supporting and Helping with Integration”

(Registered charity No 1172687) www.hwsf.org.uk



Patron: Robert Voss CBE CStJ HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

Herts Welcomes Refugees Trustees Report January 2021 – December 2021

Firstly the trustees would like to thank our members, volunteers and supporters for all you have done over the past year. You are the heart of our organisation and we would not be able to function without you.

Trustees met three times during the year – in February, May and August – for an overview of our policies, strategy and finances. All trustees are members of the management committee which meets regularly, are involved in the day to day running of the charity and therefore aware of current issues and activities. However one of our priorities for 2022 is to strengthen oversight by recruiting at least one trustee who will have a more independent viewpoint.

2021 has been an exceptionally busy year in which we have had to respond to some major changes. At the start of the year all our activities had to take place online but as we began to come out of lockdown we had to consider carefully how we could safeguard our volunteers and our refugee and asylum seeking partners and some activities remained online. In August, following the terrible events in Afghanistan and the mass evacuations of refugees, we offered our services to Herts County Council and started to provide some support in one of the hotels accommodating Afghan refugees. We also increased our work with asylum seekers living in hotels – all in addition to welcoming families moving into Hertfordshire.

Management changes and activities

There have been several changes over the year.

- Mala Mulholland has now handed over the role of treasurer after some excellent work updating our financial procedures and policies and enabling most of our transactions to the families we support to take place online.
- Mala will also be standing down as trustee but we are pleased that she will continue to be involved with the HWR library.
- We are pleased to welcome Adrian Ball as our new treasurer from the 1st January 2022 and at our AGM we will be asking our members to endorse him as a trustee.
- Michael Hayter, who remained as a trustee to support Mala and the management committee, has now stood down and we would like to thank him for the very valuable work he has done for the charity from its beginning.

- We now have one vacancy on our trustee board and are considering how we should best fill this.
- The management committee (MC) has been very active throughout the year. The committee continued to meet on Zoom every three to four weeks and has a very active WhatsApp group. MC members have worked tirelessly responding to the needs of families and individuals.
- Kate Wentworth has joined the MC as joint area convenor in East Herts and Mione Goldspink has also joined the East Herts team as HWR's lead in Bishops Stortford. Kathie Martins is now part of the North Herts team supporting in Stevenage.
- All other area convenors remain the same and their details are on our website.
- Our enquiries line has been increasingly busy with around 500 enquiries over the year. The increase was partly due to an increased awareness of HWR's services among other organisations as well as the tragic events in Afghanistan.

Afghan support, resettlement programme and work with asylum seekers

- During 2021 there was an increase in the number of families we support with 7 new families arriving in Hertfordshire as part of the various resettlement schemes. 5 of these came from Afghanistan – 1 settling in Three Rivers, 2 in Dacorum and 2 in Stevenage. The other 2 families came from Syria and are related to families already settled here. We also supported another Afghan family who arrived early and families from other countries who were referred to us by other agencies.
- We have also been working to support Afghan refugee and evacuee families and individuals housed in bridging hotels in the county, focusing our efforts on one hotel, where our work started in August, since when 21 volunteers, including 3 of our trustees, have been providing a reliable, friendly presence 4 days a week, providing language support, helping with the distribution of clothing and other goods and with activities for the children. We are so grateful to them for all their work, especially Kate Scott and John Borton who, as well as spending so much time at the hotel, planned and coordinated the work and liaised with Herts County Council and other volunteer groups. Kate Scott has also helped HCC Education Service in getting children into local schools and equipping them with uniforms and shoes. We would like to thank Goods for Good for all the items they have donated. These bridging hotels are temporary hotel accommodation while people are awaiting the offer of permanent accommodation anywhere in the UK and in a handful of cases in Hertfordshire. Initially it was only intended that residents would be there for a couple of months but this has now been extended and some families will be there much longer.
- In December, we were inundated with offers of gifts for the hotel residents and asylum seekers and were able to give out large bags to all the families. We

worked closely with Community Action Dacorum on this but we were very grateful to the team of volunteers who put these gifts together.

- We would also like to thank our supporters who responded so well to our appeal for mobile phones. We are now purchasing reconditioned phones, a system which seems to be working more effectively. We were very grateful to Bamboo Distributions who donated a large number of mobile phones to give to both refugees and asylum seekers.
- John Borton and another volunteer have also been working closely in support of asylum seekers in a hostel. In November, thanks to a local church offering their premises and support, we were able to start weekly sessions offering coats, vouchers, mobile phones and other vital items to the residents, many of whom had no warm clothes or ability to communicate with supporting organisations and authorities. The donation of more than 50 Primark vouchers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was particularly valuable. The weekly sessions are continuing and now include an English conversation group.
- All in all we have supported over 400 people during 2021. This has been a challenge for our charity and has led us to review how we operate.

Befriender network

- During 2021 85 volunteers have supported over 100 refugee partners, including 22 children, in one to one sessions or small groups. This is an increase from the previous year, particularly in the number of children needing help during and following lockdown.
- Training sessions have been held for new volunteers as well as Zoom meetings held every 2/3 weeks for all volunteers to share good practice and discuss issues. These sessions cover topics such as Padlet training, trauma-informed ESOL, wellbeing and safeguarding and have included presentations from the Refugee Council manager and feedback from relevant conferences.
- There is also a very active WhatsApp group for volunteers.
- Some activities with refugee partners are now face to face but Zoom sessions have been very effective and have meant that we can match volunteers with partners according to need rather than locality.
- In August we received a huge response from potential volunteers keen to help the newly-arrived Afghans – in one week we received over 100 emails! We have not been able to use all these volunteers but Caroline Herring, our volunteer coordinator, has been working hard to match them appropriately.

Group activities

- The 'Hertswomen' group has been meeting regularly on Zoom. There is not always a large attendance but there are always 2/3 attendees, which means maximum participation is possible. Activities include yoga, cookery club, conversation and reading.
- A volunteer runs a weekly class for Letchworth women on zoom.
- A group of male volunteers and refugee partners In North Herts meet fortnightly for coffee and conversation.
- A group for women, run by two volunteers, runs every week in Stevenage.
- In Welwyn Hatfield a men's group, consisting of volunteers and partners, meets once a month for coffee and chat.
- The Ware women's group resumed its fortnightly meetings at St Mary's Church for a shared lunch, conversation or other activities.

We have been careful in all these activities to adhere to Covid regulations in order to protect both our volunteers and our refugee partners. We are so grateful to the volunteers who have run these different sessions and groups.

Caroline Herring has done an excellent job in quite challenging circumstances in recruiting, inducting and supporting our volunteers, organising meetings and training sessions and feeding back to trustees and the management committee. Her role is central to our refugee support project and in August we were delighted to secure two year's funding for her post from the Community Lottery Fund.

Some comments from our volunteers.

"I've been working with L for about 18 months and her confidence and English ability has soared. She's so much more able to self-correct and she just seems at ease with the language. She enjoys sharing stories about her culture and her life and so do I. We've struck up a lovely bond. Working with her isn't just about English. It's so much more, as I've tried to help her in a small way when she's needed a little bit of extra help navigating life in the UK and she's helped me to understand Syrian culture."

"My refugee partners and I really look forward to our weekly meetings. We go over the lessons and homework for the English classes they take at college, and some other English exercise. Their ability to speak and understand English and their confidence has increased noticeably in the last four months - and I've learnt some Arabic!"

Other activities

- Although lockdown eased in the summer we took the decision not to hold any indoor events but arranged a number of outdoor activities. These included summer picnics in different parts of the county, when the families really enjoyed

meeting up and having fun together. One popular event in St Albans was arranged with in conjunction two other organisations, HAWA (Herts Asian Women's Association) and Active Lifestyles, and involved sharing different types of food and learning about each others' lives and cultures.

- Our first indoor event for 2021 was held towards the end of the year in a church in Stevenage. This was attended by over 100 people from Stevenage, North Herts, Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts who enjoyed food, games and a variety of activities, including a talk from a member of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
- Every Tuesday in June and July, courtesy of a very generous café proprietor in Ware, three refugee partners, supported by local volunteers, cooked and served lunches to the public who gave donations to HWR in lieu of payment. It was hard work but, after deducting the cost of fuel and ingredients, around £500 was donated to HWR and our refugee partners gained valuable experience. We are very grateful to the café proprietor for this opportunity.

Arabic School

Thanks to funding from COSARAF we were able to continue with the Arabic school, which resumed in September. There are now 35 children attending and 20 on a waiting list. The children have enjoyed coming together to learn the language and about their culture and the school provides excellent experience for the Syrian women who have acted as support teachers.

"Working as a volunteer in the Arabic school gave me such a wide range of experience and developed my skills in different aspects."

"I am working as volunteer teacher at the Arabic school and I have really improved my skills and I am looking forward to becoming a full Arabic teacher. We are really looking forward to developing and extending the school."

Bike Scheme

- Since February this year our coordinator, Adrian Ball, has delivered and repaired 75 bikes for various refugee families (including 10 for newly-arrived Afghan families) and delivered 36 to young asylum seekers under the care of the County Council, as well as 7 for adult asylum seekers.
- This has enabled people with very little money to get to the shops or college and to get exercise, and is invaluable to them. As the scheme has evolved and become larger than we can comfortably to manage, Adrian has arranged for Herts County Council to take responsibility for the bikes for young asylum seekers through their partnership Herts Disability Sports Foundation, (DSF), a charity which has qualified bike mechanics. We will also work with DSF to source bikes and have donated bikes repaired, which will make the work of the bike coordinator more manageable.

We are very grateful to Adrian for all his work and are pleased to report that, since he gave up this role on becoming treasurer, we have found a well-qualified, new coordinator, Andy Brocklehurst, who took up the role in February 2022.

Library, author sessions and Tesco Book Club.

- Last year Mala Mulholland arranged online sessions with children's authors Sue Hampton, Jane Porter and Tim Pearce, but later sessions were discontinued as audience numbers dwindled and the emerging Afghan situation required more time.
- We applied for and received a grant of £1,000 from Tesco, for our children's book club and 115 books, signed by the authors, were purchased, wrapped and distributed to children aged 5 – 16. 125 book club leaflets were printed as well as 1,000 book marks designed by four children from refugee families.

Many thanks to Mala and her daughter for leading on this project and to the volunteers who helped with distribution. We are pleased that Mala will continue with this work.

Education fund

- Thanks to the generous support of Redmill Solutions and the publisher Harper Collins we have been able to supply GCSE and A-level revision books to support our network of volunteer teachers as well as stationery and other equipment for students starting secondary school. We have also made contributions towards sports club fees and equipment and towards the cost of a revision course for a potential medical student.
- Pippa Pearson has taken on the role of coordinator for this fund which is likely to be well used in future years.

Communications, Website, newsletters and Facebook

- We would like to thank Lauren Frankel, who manages our website, encouraging us to write stories and updates, and also our Twitter account. She also helps monitor our enquiries.
- The website is very popular – its busiest day being 23rd August when we had 274 unique visits and 782 page views because of our news updates on the Afghan arrivals. Our Facebook group has more than 1,200 members and our Twitter account has 201 followers.
- We would also like to thank Mark Kendall who circulates our newsletters and updates our statistics. He now also manages our Zoho account and will be working on our storage system, Box, in the next year.

In 2021 Herts Welcomes Refugees had 351 members and 197 supporters – a significant increase on the previous year.

Safeguarding

HWR takes the issue of safeguarding extremely seriously as we work with so many children and adults at risk.

- Vicky Woodcraft remains our Safeguarding Officer and has done three presentations on safeguarding to our volunteers. She will continue to do these regularly.
- In 2021 we joined the safeguarding organisation Thirtyone:eight, who process DBS checks on all volunteers as part of their induction with Caroline Herring. We also have access to their training and twenty-four hour helpline.
- Our trustee with responsibility for safeguarding is John Borton, who has attended two training sessions with Thirtyone:eight.

Vaccination Roll Out

We promoted the vaccination process through all our group sessions and via our volunteers. Area convenors held sessions on Zoom and our Syrian trustee held a session with a doctor to talk to those who were concerned.

We produced leaflets for volunteers to use with their refugee partners.

Some volunteers went to vaccination centres with partners who were nervous to go on their own.

“F was very reluctant to take up the vaccination and really didn’t want to go on her own. I said I would go with her and we went together for both her first two jabs. She was very pleased in the end and had no bad reactions.”

Fundraising

Annabel Kirk liaised with the Sports Partnership and successfully bid for funding for swimming lessons for children. 9 children in Welwyn Hatfield started lessons, with a further 3 planned for January, and several children are on the waiting list for lessons in North Herts when there are vacancies. The children were all delighted with these lessons and have continued.

Another volunteer with expertise in fundraising bids helped us with our bid to Herts Community Foundation for Afghan Support and is willing to do further bids for us. We are very grateful to both and to everyone who has raised money for us in this year.

Our Priorities

We have met many of our priorities for 2021 and those for 2022 will be similar, although the increase in numbers of refugees and asylum seekers and in our own activities means that we cannot continue with the same structure.

In 2021 we continued to support both refugees and asylum seekers.

We held far fewer face to face events because of the Covid pandemic but have managed to enable groups to get together and held many activities on Zoom.

We have continued to give out IT equipment – especially phones – during this year, in order to enable people to connect with each other and to access online learning, meetings and other activities.

We have increased our work with both asylum seekers and Afghan nationals, actively supporting asylum seekers in a local hostel since November as well as working with some dispersed in the community.

The number of children we support has increased and the support is targeted to individual needs.

We have continued to support employment through informal discussions about work and referrals to the Wellbeing and Work Refugee Integration Project.

We have had two meetings of an advisory group, aimed at involving our refugee partners more closely in the the organisation. The first was very well attended, bringing out, among other issues, a real need to support children's education. Fewer people attended the second meeting and, because of the Afghan situation, we did not have the time or capacity to arrange a third session. We will be rethinking how we organise these in the next year.

As regards fundraising with other partners, one outcome of the Afghan situation has been our developing relationship with Herts County Council in terms of both bidding for money and raising our profile.

Our Priorities for 2022

1. To review the structure of the organisation as we respond to growing and changing demands in ways that are sustainable.
2. To increase the diversity of our trustee body.
3. To recruit one trustee who can provide independent oversight of the running of the charity.
4. To explore how we work with other organisations to support refugees not coming through the government schemes and with asylum seekers.
5. To continue to support our refugee partners, in response to changing needs.
6. To continue to help with access into employment.
7. To continue to encourage local councils to accept more families under government resettlement schemes.
8. To continue to develop our support for children's education and integration.
9. To consider how to revitalise the advisory group given the changing partner demographic.

Treasurer's report

Demand for HWR's support was already growing in the first 8 months by comparison with 2020, then the arrival of Afghan refugees at short notice meant urgent need for funding, strong response from private donors and from charitable institutions. We received £8687 into the Afghan Fund and spent £6160.

Although our incoming funds have grown rapidly, an important part of this increase is the end-December grant from HCF £10,000 which of course is for 2022 not 2021.

Despite the growth we have kept our governance costs relatively the same £2051 (£1847 in 2020). The Volunteer Coordinator costs have risen compared to 2020 to give Caroline a steady 16 hours per week hours. The Volunteer Coordinator activity is our greatest cost but critical part of our volunteer work. We got 2 year funding of £34,000 from July 2021 thanks to the National Lottery which secures this position at a critical time with Afghan families being settled and large numbers of volunteers joining.

Individual cost headings are all in the accounts but highlighting the following from our General Fund which reflects during covid support and the shift back to school; (2020 in brackets);

- . £1,994 (£920) -for the provision of televisions and licences.

- . £2,832 (£1,302) -for bikes & safety equipment.

- .

- . £1,814 (£1,236) -Taxis & Fares

- .£3,350 of which £2,295 on school uniform for Afghan children in hotels of which payment made in 2022 by Herts County Council. (£257) -for other education related costs

- .£223 (£0) -for Medicines

- .£516 (£172) -Clothes & Groceries

- .£840 -standing order to refugee partner helping university costs

- .£5,380 and helped in addition with Morrison vouchers to 8 families (5,509) -for Christmas gifts

We benefitted from several donations and fund raising events. As such we were able to give out vital financial support to our refugee partners; 49 families (with children) @ £50 each totalling £2450 for Food Gift at Easter helped by £1,000 Locality Budget Grant Stevenage and monies left over from Christmas 2020 Appeal. Also 76 partners given £50 totalling £3,800 at Eid Al-Adha in July helped by donation of £3,750 from

Redmill Solutions. Total of £6,250 alongside Christmas as set out above. This has helped give some financial security when needed for our partners.

There are many restricted funds which support various areas of the charity. Spends include;

.£1,995 for 10 chromebooks from National Lottery Fund

.£1,100 in our Hardship Fund supported by Ocado in 2020

.£739 on 3 chromebooks from Laptop Fund

.£3991 on Arabic / Syrian School supported by COSARAF and led by Samah Alrahabi Area Convenor/Trustee which is making such a difference to the children and parents helping as Teachers.

. £1,115 Educational Fund of which £1,000 donated from Redmill Solutions for Education related costs.

.£123 on Library Fund

.£1,052 on BookClub 2021 of which £1,000 given by Tesco. This enabled us to distribute 115 new books to children of all ages, print 1000 bookmarks and 125 leaflets.

.£1,560 Asylum Seeker Fund of which £1,000 given by East of England Local Government Association.

We also received at year end for spend in 2022;

£10,000 from Herts Community Foundation for Afghans

.£1,500 from Redmill Solutions for Education Fund

.£1,000 from an individual donor for Hardship Fund

.£2,789 from St Albans High School for Girls from their Harvest Festival appeal

Virgin Money Giving is now closed but donations can be given via direct bank account transfers, paypal or CAF. Please contact Adrian for more information.

We received £610 in Gift Aid refund (£1,130 in 2020) and 2021 amount due of £755 is payable in 2022 which evidences what a difference Gift Aid makes. If you are a tax payer please consider giving this way and contact Adrian for more information.

We thank those who give regularly month on month as they are the backbone to the Charity without whom daily operations can't be guaranteed. Those that also gave via; individuals, Schools, Faith Groups, Companies etc as every penny was appreciated.

Despite the challenges in store in 2022 HWR's financial position remains st

On behalf of all the trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees we would like to thank you all for your continued support.

Irene Austin, Samah Alrahabi, John Borton, Catherine Henderson, Mick Hayter, Mala Mulholland, Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott Vicky Woodcraft,



Herts Welcomes Refugees

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021

Receipts	Unrestricted funds (Note 1)	Restricted funds (Note 2)	Other Restricted funds (Note 3)	Total
Private donations	26,546		7,242	33,788
Charitable trusts and others	11,072	17,000	25,616	53,688
Total receipts	37,618	17,000	32,858	87,476

Payments

Charitable payments	22,059		26,121	48,180
Volunteer coordination		13,771		13,771
Administration	2,051			2,051
Total payments	24,110	13,771	26,121	64,002

Cash funds

Net receipts/(payments)	13,508	3,229	6,737	23,474
Transfers between funds	(2,175)		2,175	-
Cash funds at 1 Jan 2021	16,317	8,297	8,120	32,734
Cash funds at 31 Dec 2021	27,650	11,526	17,032	56,208

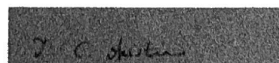
	2020 Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds for Volunteer Coordinator	Other Restricted funds	Total
Receipts	22,871	10,582	29,887	63,340
Payments	16,697	10,582	19,378	46,657

Signed by Mala Muholland 14/03/2022

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Signed by Irene Austin 14/03/2022



Herts Welcomes Refugees

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

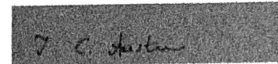
Cash funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds VC	Other Restricted	Total	Total 2020
Cash at bank	27,650	9,656	17,032	54,338	27,119
Balance at CDA		1,870		1,870	5,615
Total cash funds	27,650	11,526	17,032	56,208	32,734
Other monetary assets					
Gift aid due	755			755	
HCC Contract payme	2,295			2,295	

Signed by Mala Muholland 14/03/2022

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Signed by Irene Austin 14/03/2022



Note 1: Analysis of Unrestricted Fund receipts and payments

UNRESTRICTED FUND

		2021	2020
	Note	£	£
RECEIPTS			
Donations			
Individuals		25,936	9,812
Gift Aid Reclaim		610	1,130
Churches & Faith Groups		6,275	1,140
Charitable Trusts		834	1,000
Groups & Companies		3,496	-
Christmas Appeal		-	6,803
		<u>37,151</u>	<u>19,885</u>
Other Receipts			
Events		300	2,471
Sale of Face Masks		167	515
TOTAL RECEIPTS		<u>£37,618</u>	<u>£22,871</u>

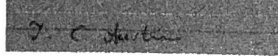
PAYMENTS

Support for Refugees			
Televisions & Radios		1,202	299
Television Licences		792	621
IT Equipment		193	608
Bike Expenses		2,832	1,302
Household Goods & Furniture		2,392	2,394
Books & Art Materials		11	102
Driving Lessons		1,600	2,200
Housing Costs		87	150
Taxis		1,813	1,236
Clothes & Groceries		5,961	172
Educational Support		3,352	257
Financial Support		840	-
Party & Welcome Meal Expenses		714	-
Medicines		229	-
Other		41	-
Christmas Appeal		-	5,509
		<u>22,059</u>	<u>14,850</u>
Administration Costs			
DBS Costs		752	351
Insurance		412	392
Subscriptions & Courses		315	558
Safeguarding Membership		226	-
Website		163	113
Miscellaneous		183	433
		<u>2,051</u>	<u>1,847</u>
TOTAL PAYMENTS		<u>£24,110</u>	<u>£16,697</u>
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS		<u>£13,508</u>	<u>£6,174</u>

Signed by Mala Muholland 14/03/2022

Signed by Irene Austin 14/03/2022

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Note 2: analysis of Restricted Funds financing the volunteer coordinator activity

	2021	2020
Receipts	£	
National Lottery Community Fund 2021	17,000	
Total receipts	£17,000	
Payments		
Volunteer Coordinator Salary & Management Fee	12,971	10,106
Travel	235	264
Telephone and Zoom	246	80
DBS	319	80
Other		52
Total payments	£13,771	£10,582
SURPLUS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	£3,229	

Cash funds at start of year:

National Lottery Community Fund 2020	1,389
HCF Fund	1,000
Other	293
Balance at CDA	5,615
Total cash funds at start of year	£8,297

Cash funds at end of year:

National Lottery Community Fund 2021	9,496
Balance at CDA	1,870
Other	160
Total cash funds at end of year	£11,526

Signed by Mala Muholland 14/03/2022**Signed by Irene Austin 14/03/2022**

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Note 3: analysis of Other Restricted Funds

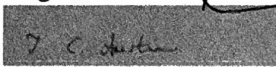
		£				Balance	Balance
		Receipts	Payments	set receipt	Transfers	01/01/2021	31/12/2021
			(payments)				
Other Restricted Funds							
Hardship Fund	Ocado 2020		1,099	(1,099)		1,506	407
Swimming Fund	Uni of Hertfordshire	2,041	864	1,177			1,177
	Sports Inequalities						
Laptop Fund	IT fund 2020		739	(739)		2,031	1,292
Library Fund	Children's Library	300	71	229	(52)	340	517
HWR Afghan Fund	Afghan Appeal 2021	8,687	6,160	2,527			2,527
Arabic School Fund	COSARAF 2020	2,580	3,991	(1,411)		1,175	(236)
HCF 2022 Afghan	HCF 2021	10,000		10,000			10,000
Educational 2021	Redmill Solutions		1,115	(1,115)	115	1,000	
Educational 2022	Redmill Solutions	1,500	152	1,348			1,348
NL Community Fund	IT fund 2020		2,068	(2,068)		2,068	
Easter	HWR appeal 2020	3,750	5,050	(1,300)	1,300		
& Eid 2021 Fund	& Redmill Solutions						
Tesco Bookclub	Tesco Grant	1,000	1,052	(52)	52		
Easter and Eid fund	Locality budget HCC	1,000	1,200	(200)	200		
Asylum Seeker Fund	EELGA	2,000	2,560	(560)	560		
Totals		£32,858	£26,121	£6,737	£2,175	£8,120	£17,032

Signed by Mala Muholland 14/03/2022

Signed by Irene Austin 14/03/2022

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CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

On accounts for the year
ended

31st DECEMBER 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1172687

Set out on pages

1 TO 5

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 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 (~~other than that disclosed below~~*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn 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:

Date:

15/03/2022

Name:

GEOFFREY HARBER

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

—

Address:

14 CHURCH STREET

GUILDEN MORDEN

HERTS. SG8 0SD

Accounts



Herts Welcomes Refugees.

Reg Charity 1172687 www.hwsf.org.uk Twitter: @HertsWelcomes



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Hertswelcomes>



Patron: Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Robert Voss CBE CStJ

Welcoming, Supporting, Integrating

Trustees' Report 1st Jan2020 – 31st December 2020

2020 has been an extremely challenging year for us all due to Covid19 and the restrictions we have all been under. In the first two months of the year, events took place as normal but since March, we have had to work in a totally different way.

The change to working through virtual networks was not an easy one, but we have achieved far more than we thought possible. Indeed, we have found that this has opened up opportunities and caused us to take a fresh view of some of our activities. Your generous support for the laptop appeal certainly contributed to us being able to do this. The importance of communication with our refugee families and individuals was also paramount especially in order to help them understand the changing government restrictions. For them it was also a very traumatic period, having come from areas where they were restricted because of war, they were now restricted because of Covid.

Management Changes

In line with our constitution two Trustees will stand down and seek re-election at our AGM. This year these will be the Chair Irene Austin and Area Convenor Samah Alrahabi. We would like to welcome Mala Mulholland who has undertaken the role of Treasurer and Trustee and we will ask members to ratify her appointment at the AGM. We would also like to formally thank Mick Hayter for his commitment and dedication as our Treasurer since we started. We are very pleased that he will remain as Trustee for the immediate future.

We also have two new Area Convenors, Joyce Farnsworth who has replaced Vicky Woodcraft in Welwyn Hatfield and Sobia Razzaq who has replaced John Borton in Watford and Three Rivers. Vicky and John will remain as Trustees. Vicky will continue as our Secretary and is our Safeguarding Officer. John will support us in developing our structures and strategies.

When lockdown started last March, our Management Group met weekly on Zoom to ensure that we could continue to meet the needs of the refugees. We continue to meet regularly on Zoom.

Resettlement Programme

The government's original resettlement programme ran from 2015 to 2020. Due to the pandemic, resettlement was suspended, meaning that families who were due to be resettled under that programme have not been. We are still waiting for it to resume, although we have been told this will happen soon. During 2020 only one new family was resettled in Hertfordshire, arriving shortly before the first lockdown but other refugees both individuals and families have been referred to us.

A new government resettlement scheme is in place. We would like more Hertfordshire councils to sign up to this scheme.

Communications, Mailchimp, Website and Facebook

We would like to thank Mark Kendall who has taken over as administrator of our newsletter and email account and to Lauren Frankel who continues to manage the communication on our Website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. We now have 322 members and 195 supporters and 887 Facebook followers.

Visits to our website have also increased in the last year. Veronica Raymond continues as our Membership Secretary.

Support for Refugee Partners and others, Befriender Network and Activities

During 2020, we provided support to 330 refugees and asylum seekers. This support has included providing hardship payments Chromebooks, household goods, clothing, food parcels bikes, Christmas gifts, language support and subject support for children. We are grateful to Herts Community Foundation for helping to fund our Volunteer Coordinator Role and providing hardship funding. Also to COSARAF for continuing to support our Volunteer Coordinator Role.

There has been an increase in other agencies referring their clients to us for the support we can provide. We think this is partly due to Covid, but it also reflects that we are becoming better known as a source of support. We became aware during the summer that there were two hotels accommodating asylum seekers in Hertfordshire, more than 100 people in total. Working with local charities, People Not Borders and Herts for Refugees, and a local church, we provided a range of support to the residents of those hotels. One of them has closed but we will continue to support for as long as needed.

We have sustained our befriender network despite the difficulties of COVID and restrictions. Thanks to the success of our crowdfunding appeal, we distributed over 40 Chromebooks to our refugee partners who needed them. We also had the lockdown restrictions translated and distributed to families on a regular basis to help them keep up to date. Our volunteer network met weekly during the first lockdown and now meets fortnightly. We were not sure whether this would be successful but it has provided a valuable network for our volunteers to exchange ideas and an effective way for us to provide support and training. We have 79 volunteers, providing a range of support within Covid restrictions and would like to thank all those who have given so much time to support the charity, our refugee partners and others who we have supported this year.

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Caroline Herring has continued to recruit and induct new volunteers, particularly to provide language support and practice and subject support to children. Zoom has provided us with a new level of flexibility as we are not restricted to recruiting volunteers only to work in their home areas, allowing us to be more responsive to need. Our volunteers and Area Convenors have worked hard to maintain contact with our refugee partners during this difficult period. This pandemic has also highlighted the importance of electronic communication and last September we were successful in a bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for a project to develop videos and manuals to help those not confident with use of IT. This project involves some of our younger refugees and volunteers and will continue into March 2021.

More families have been requesting academic help for their children and we are pleased to help with this by providing subject specific volunteer tutors.

We are also grateful to Redmill Solutions who have provided us with money for an Educational Fund to be used to provide equipment and money for educational activities for young people and to Harper Collins for providing us with GCSE study guides for young people.

At the beginning of the year, until the lockdown in March, we were able to hold events such as New Year parties and meetings of Women and Men's groups but these had to stop and we moved to Zoom events. We are aware that not all our refugee partners have managed to access these events but there has been a good take up including the start of a Herts Women's group as well as local groups, some virtual events such as the afternoon tea shared with the St Albans Masorti synagogue(SAMS) and 1:1 virtual meetings. Zoom has provided more flexibility in enabling people from different areas to meet.

At the request of families, our Trustee Samah Alrahabi, applied for a grant from St Albans City Council to set up an Arabic school for Syrian children in St Albans and surrounding areas. Parents wanted their children to learn to read and write Arabic and the charity saw it as a development opportunity for some of the women to learn about running this type of school and working as teaching assistants. This involved undertaking a virtual training course. The school started in October but had to stop when

schools were closed. It will start again when restrictions allow. Three of the Syrian women have signed up with HWR as volunteers for the school.

Last November, we were asked to identify any women who might be interested in training as Doulas – to support other refugee women who are going through pregnancy and birth. Ten women have been referred and will start a Mother Tongue Pregnancy and Postnatal Peer Support training organised by Doulas without Borders and will be considered for doula training after the completion of this course.

Bike Scheme

We are very thankful to Chris Rigby for taking over and running the bike scheme last year when we had an increasing number of requests for bikes from unaccompanied young asylum seekers. Chris is moving away from Hertfordshire but we are very pleased that Adrian Ball supported by other volunteers has now taken over the scheme. .

Volunteer Fundraising

As our Treasurer has outlined we are very grateful to all our supporters who have fundraised for us in a very difficult year. We loved the coast to coast walk and the soup kitchen idea. We are all wearing masks designed and made by one of our Syrian partners who is a tailor. We still have funds from our Christmas appeal together with a successful appeal for Locality Budget which will add together to be given to families at Easter. We have set up a fundraising sub group to explore other ways of involving the community and individuals with fundraising activities. We have also signed up to Amazon Smile so if you shop with Amazon please buy your goods through Amazon Smile and name our charity Herts Welcomes Refugees as the beneficiary. Thank you to all.

Book group and Storytime

Last summer Mala Mulholland and her daughter Roma came up with an idea for a library for children. This idea took off and thanks to them, books were delivered to 124 children at Christmas. A new book was also purchased for each child by HWR as a Christmas gift.

Other activities developed with the use of Zoom, during the October half term break and Christmas holiday, Storytime took place for younger children and author sessions for the older ones.

The Storytime sessions are a lively mixture of stories, songs and activities based on a theme and using well known books and songs. We have been very fortunate to have had two enjoyable sessions with authors Onjali Q Rauf and Wafa Tarnowska. These are exciting new developments. Young people also took part in a competition to design bookmarks for HWR which will be produced during 2021.

Reserves Policy.

The Trustees have agreed a reserve to cover any unexpected reductions in income so expenditure to run operations, general expenditure and any future opportunities where needed. This figure is £6,000. This will be reviewed at least annually.

Our priorities for 2021

These remain roughly the same as 2020. We realise that in 2020, although we were able to provide continuing support we were not able to run as many activities as we would have liked. We hope this will change in 2021. We did not manage to set up an advisory forum as we were busy coping with Covid but feel now that with the use of Zoom, this will certainly happen in 2021. This year has certainly highlighted the need to connect people through the use of digital technology but we are also aware that we need to look at ways to support those who do not wish to engage through these means.

Our priorities are:

- To continue to support our Refugee Partners, other refugees and asylum seekers in response to Covid and other possible changing needs.
- To continue to run events that support wellbeing and integration into local communities in line with Covid restrictions.
- To develop our use of digital technology and level of support to connect people together.
- To be open to supporting asylum seekers and refugees not coming through the Government scheme.
- To encourage local councils to accept more families under the Government's new resettlement scheme.
- To develop our methods for supporting children's education and integration.
- To continue helping with access to employment.
- To develop an Advisory Forum to enable our refugee partners to contribute to the development of the charity.
- To explore other fundraising strategies sometimes in partnership with other organisations.

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

Treasurer's Report 2020

As this will be my last report as treasurer I would like to thank everyone for your wonderful support over the past five years. It's been a privilege to have served and been a part of an amazing response to the refugee crisis caused by conflicts in Syria and beyond. You have responded to requests for financial help, particularly in this difficult year, in really generous ways and far exceeded all our expectations. As a result I'll be able to pass on the accounts to Mala Malholland, our new treasurer, in a very healthy condition.

I would like to thank all those who give anonymously as gifts are always appreciated, however large or small. As a result we made a surplus of £6,174 (compared to a deficit of £2,724 in 2019) and now have Total Funds of £32,734.

During the year we benefitted from several fund raising events and we are very grateful to all those friends who organised and undertook these and, of course, those who supported them.

- The Christmas Appeal raised an amazing £6,803 (plus Gift Aid of £485 to be claimed in 2021) and which enabled us to give generously to every family.
- The Laptop Appeal raised £10,572 and we have purchased about 40 Laptops or Chromebooks so far.
- One of our clients, a tailor, decided to thank HWR for all the support he and his family had been given by making masks and, in so doing, has raised £515.
- Gill & Steve Lamberts raised £1,869 by walking 294 miles along the Pennine Way. Gill & Steve said "this took us 19 days in fantastic weather and was the best option in the Covid circumstances". Well done to both of them. Anyone else up for a challenge?

- During the year we were able establish a Hardship Fund principally using a donation of £5,626 from the staff at Ocado from their Annual Giving Fund. So far we have used £4,920 to alleviate particular hardship situations being experienced.

We received £1,130 in Gift Aid refund (£404 in 2019) and this shows how worthwhile this form of giving is. If you pay tax please consider giving this way and contact either me, or Mala, for more information.

We continue to employ a part-time Volunteer Coordinator (Caroline Herring) with the valuable help of Community Development Action *Herts* who host the post. She is coordinating volunteers in providing language support and events for the families across the whole of the county. We are very grateful to the Councils, COSARAF Charitable Foundation, Herts Community Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund for helping to fund this. We will need extra finances to enable this post to continue throughout 2021 and beyond.

9th February 2021

Contd/

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

Treasurer's Report 2020 (contd)

We now have 57 families and other refugees to support and their needs continue to change as they become more settled into their communities. Due to Covid-19 and lockdowns our volunteers were unable to provide transport. Consequently we have reimbursed part or all of the taxi or fare cost. Looking at the expenditure in more detail (2019 in brackets) our major expenses have been:

- . £920 (£2,941) for the provision of televisions and licences.
- . £1,302 (£1,941) for bikes & safety equipment.
- . £5,509 (Nil) Christmas gifts were paid for from the Appeal proceeds.
- . £1,236 (£1,650) Taxis & Fares.
- . £257 (£914) for education related costs.
- . £2,200 (£662) for driving lessons to help lead to independence & employment. .
- £2,394 (£2,294) for Household goods.

We still use Virgin Money Giving (VMG) for online donations and are grateful to everyone who supports us in this way particularly several friends who give a regular monthly donation – often from places a very long way from Hertfordshire! VMG also claim Gift Aid, where appropriate, on our behalf.

We continue to be registered with the Fundraising Regulator and complied with their guidelines in all our fund raising and in particular:

- Where possible our volunteers have overseen fund raising events.
- During the year we were not bound by any voluntary scheme for regulating fund-raising and no complaints were received about our fundraising activities.
- We do not contact anyone individually asking for donations although we do periodically ask our volunteers and supporters for donations for specific reasons and which are detailed in the appeal.

We couldn't operate as we do without our Volunteers who gladly give their time and expertise free of charge and this is very much appreciated.

Our thanks go, once again, to Geoff Harper, our Independent Financial Examiner, for examining our accounts, making many very helpful comments, and also to my fellow Committee members for their valuable help and support throughout the year.

I'm very glad that we're in a good financial position going into 2021

Mick Hayter

Treasurer until 31st December 2020 & Trustee.

Once again, to thank you all for your continued support and involvement as without this we could not and will not be able to do all of this.

Trustees:

Irene Austin Chair, Samah Alrahabi, John Borton, Mick Hayter Catherine Henderson, Mala Mulholland, Veronica Raymond, Kate Scott, Vicky Woodcraft,

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES				
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020				
INCOME		2020		2019
Donations		£		£
Individuals including PayPal Account		5,700		6,052
Gift Aid reclaim		1,130		404
Churches & Faith Groups		1,140		1,552
Groups & Companies		-		550
Charitable Trusts & Virgin Money Giving		5,112		3,131
Christmas Appeal		6,803		-
I T & Laptop Appeal		-		3,519
		19,885		15,208
Other Income				
Events (Walk, Coffee mornings & Sundry)		2,471		1,873
Christmas Card Sales (net of costs)		-		280
Masks (net of costs)		515		-
		22,871		17,361
EXPENDITURE				
Support provided to refugees				
TV'S & Radio's		299		2,073
TV Licences		621		868
I T & Laptops		608		5,030
Outings		-		1,559
Bike Expenses		1,302		1,941
Household goods & furniture		2,394		2,294
Books & Art Materials		102		248
Driving Lessons		2,200		662
Taxis & Fares		1,236		1,650
Christmas Appeal		5,509		-
Housing costs		150		319
Legal Fees		-		100
Education Related		257		914
Clothes & Groceries		172		802
		14,850		18,460
Administration Costs				
DBS costs		351		582
Public liability insurance & Trustee Indemnity		392		229
Subscriptions & Courses		558		211
Display Screen		-		149
AGM Expenses		-		136
Miscellaneous		433		192
Website Annual Fee		113		126
		16,697		20,085
SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		6,174		- 2,724
Signed				
 4/2/21	M J Hayter. Treasurer			
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HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES						
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020						
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FUND				2020	2019	
INCOME				£	£	
COSARAF Charitable Foundation				5,000	5,000	
The Funding Network				1,402	3,800	
Councils				300	300	
Donation				-	50	
Herts Community Foundation				1,750	-	
National Lottery Community Fund				875	-	
Prior year adjustment				1,120	-	
Deficit for the year				135	-	
				10,582	9,150	
EXPENDITURE						
Salary & Management Fee				10,106	6,931	
Travel				264	40	
Telephone				80	120	
Subscriptions				80	-	
Sundry				52	160	
Surplus for the year				-	1,899	
				10,582	9,150	
BALANCE SHEET as at 31 DECEMBER 2020						
CURRENT ASSETS						
Barclays Bank Community Account				27,119	16,186	
Payment in Advance				5,615	-	
				32,734	16,186	
Barclays Bank Standard Community Account				-	-	
				32,734	16,186	
ACCUMULATED FUNDS						
Balance at 1 January 2020				10,143	12,867	
Add: Surplus of Income over Expenditure				6,174	- 2,724	
Balance at 31st December 2020				16,317	10,143	
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FUND						
Balance at 1 January 2020				6,043	4,144	
Add: Excess of Expenditure over Income				- 135	1,899	
Balance at 31st December 2020				5,908	6,043	
"DESIGNATED & RESTRICTED FUNDS"						
				10,509	-	
TOTAL FUNDS				32,734	16,186	
DESIGNATED & RESTRICTED FUNDS		Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance	
Designated Funds						
Hardship Fund		-	6,426	4,920	1,506	
Restricted Funds						
Laptop Fund		-	10,572	8,541	2,031	
Herts Community Foundation		-	5,000	4,000	1,000	
Natl Lottery Community Fund		-	5,000	1,543	3,457	
Arabic School Fund		-	1,549	374	1,175	
Educational Fund		-	1,000	-	1,000	
Library Fund		-	340	-	340	
Total		0	29,887	19,378	10,509	
Signed  4/2/21						
M J Hayter. Treasurer						
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Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Herts Welcomes Refugees

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Herts Welcomes Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity 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 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

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 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: Geoffrey Harper

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Address: 14 Church Street. Guilden Morden. Hertfordshire. SG8 0JD

Date 5th February, 2021