

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales · Charity number 1173758

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-07-11

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

Contact

Address c/o Burns & Co. Accountants
2A Bank Street
Tonbridge
TN9 1BL

Phone 07801889819

Email info@tonbridgewelcomesrefugees.co.uk

Website www.tonbridgewelcomesrefugees.co.uk

Activities

Objects: THE CHARITY'S OBJECTS ARE:1) FOR THE RELIEF OF THOSE GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, OR THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM (TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY) IN KENT:• THE RELIEF OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP;• THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH;• THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING SO AS TO ADVANCE THEM IN LIFE AND ASSIST THEM TO ADAPT WITHIN A NEW COMMUNITY.2) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ABOUT THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.

Activities: We support refugees and their dependents, or those seeking asylum, in Kent, by the relief of financial hardship, befriending, assisting with English language learning, and generally helping them to adapt within a new community. We also aim to advance the education of the public about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers through outreach work.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Disability, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Kent

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£29,802	£23,774	-	-
2024-03-31	£22,427	£23,054	-	-
2023-03-31	£32,008	£35,396	-	-
2022-03-31	£31,154	£8,464	-	-
2021-03-31	£19,520	£14,725	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
FIONA O'BRIEN		2016-04-08
Kefaia Alfahsi		2024-12-02
Lee Robert Mead		2020-09-03
RUTH Connelly HAYFA		2016-04-08
Sarah Veronica Pratten		2022-07-13

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1173758

Accounts



Trustees' Annual Report for the Financial Year from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

1. Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependents, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent:
 - The relief of financial hardship;
 - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
 - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

2. Activities during the year

2.1 Object 1: To provide relief for refugees.

Most of the refugees supported by the charity have reached the UK under one of the Government's Resettlement Schemes, namely the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its replacement UK Resettlement Scheme 2021 (UKRS); the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy 2021 (ARAP); and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

In 2024/25 we also supported a family from El Salvador who were granted asylum and moved to Maidstone; they have since been repatriated, under a voluntary return process (see 3.5).

To be eligible for support, beneficiaries should have refugee or asylum seeker status; have been in the UK less than five years; live in Tonbridge and Malling; and not yet have UK citizenship. At trustees' discretion, we can also extend support beyond five years, particularly where assistance is needed to secure educational activities for children or skills training for adults. We have also historically supported some families in the Maidstone area, whom we know through our interactions with the refugee teams

at Kent County Council. This continued in 2024/25, though in future we anticipate our Maidstone programme is likely to come to an end due to fewer families arriving and a reduction in the number of volunteers.

Support provided in 2024/25 included English teaching (for adults and children); funding for holiday clubs and after school activities; befriending and resettlement support for refugee families; purchase of essential equipment for school, work or the home; financial support for family days out; and funding for professional training courses. We also helped to collect and redistribute good quality second hand goods, through a volunteer-run WhatsApp group.

There has been no significant influx of refugees into Tonbridge and Malling in the past two years, and our support has therefore adapted accordingly. In 2024/25 our volunteers were less frequently engaged in befriending/resettlement support, while requests for funding for activities and education continued apace.

In the 2024/25 year, through our main programmes we supported approximately 40 children with funding for after school and holiday activities; 10 families with befriending and resettlement support; and around 30 adults and children with English teaching. Volunteers also responded to one-off requests from individuals and families throughout the year.

2.2 Object 2: To advance the education of the public about the position and needs of refugees and asylum seekers

TWR took part in several public events in 2024/25, fielding stalls to engage the public and raise awareness of the needs of refugees. We also sent out a newsletter and maintained a social media presence (see 3.7).

3. Achievements and Performance

3.1 Teaching for adults

We renewed our licence for Tonbridge School's Manor Grove Hut, and at the time of writing were running four classes a week, mostly for students at intermediate level. Numbers of students have reduced over time and currently sit at around 10-15, reflecting the fact that many former students have now acquired a good level of English and/or moved off to find employment. The number of classes therefore remains under review.

We also have a number of volunteer teachers who teach in the home where it is not possible for people to come to classes, as well as some who act as conversation buddies.

3.2 Teaching for children

Six volunteer teachers continued going into primary and secondary schools to support children, particularly with English. At the time of writing, 16 children between the ages of 6-17 were receiving support. Support takes place in schools, at home and via Zoom, depending on individual circumstances.

A particular focus this year has been GCSE English support, given the challenging nature of this exam for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners: at the end of the period under review, we were supporting eight children with preparation for this exam. This is a need which is likely to continue, as younger beneficiaries move through the school system.

3.3 Professional training

We have provided funding to a Ukrainian beneficiary to cover advanced accountancy training and the associated exams and registration, in order to improve her job prospects. TWR also bought the beneficiary a laptop needed for the course.

3.4 Holiday and after school activities

We have supported around 35 children with subsidies for after-school activities and holiday courses this year. Activities include Scouts, football, dance classes, tutoring, climbing, gym membership, kickboxing and summer camps. There was less take-up for holiday clubs than in previous years, reflecting a Ukrainian cohort that is more settled and less dependent on support. Demand does continue though, and beneficiaries regularly tell us how valuable it is for their children's physical and mental well-being.

We also ran a successful swimming programme, supporting 30 children with swimming lessons during the 2024/25 year including three of preschool age. By the end of the period, there were 23 children still enrolled in classes. Feedback from parents has been very positive, with children making good progress and clear benefits too for their general well-being. TWR continued to manage the administration of payments and enrolment, and will do so until the end of the school year 2025. From September 2025, parents will need to apply for funds and book classes themselves, in line with our other holiday and after-school activities.

Our partnership with Tonbridge School also led to one beneficiary getting academic support in DT and Maths, as part of the school's community engagement programme.

3.5 Family support

The changing nature of our beneficiary base has led to a gradual change in the type of family support we offer. While TWR previously had many family teams working directly with refugee families from Syria, Afghanistan and Sudan to help them adapt to life in the UK, almost all of those families have now been in the UK five years or more. Formal support for most of these families is therefore gradually tapering to a close, though the nature of relationships built over years means volunteers are likely to stay in touch and maintain friendships going forward.

Where need remains evident, support can continue beyond five years, though the focus is on gradually moving towards self-sufficiency.

In the 2024/25 financial year, family teams continued to support around 10 families and several individuals from Afghanistan, Syria and Sudan. Many other families, particularly from Ukraine, accessed financial or other support on an ad hoc basis.

In the 2024/25 year, family support included:

> A family in Maidstone required significant support following the death of a family member and subsequent medical negligence claim. Formal support from Clarion, the

KCC-appointed resettlement support provider, was withdrawn around this time, leading to a huge burden on TWR volunteers, who did an incredible job in extremely difficult circumstances, at considerable personal cost. Support was also required with a Universal Credit application.

> A family from El Salvador required considerable support after arriving on an emergency basis in Maidstone, to an unfurnished house. Volunteers were subsequently involved in all aspects of settlement, including finding school places. Due to mishandling of their case by the Home Office, the family was left with no option but to apply for voluntary return, a process which was then subject to further mishandling. The family team were extremely proactive and supportive of the family throughout the process and, with the help of legal advice funded by TWR and liaison with the local MP, were eventually able to secure their safe return to El Salvador.

> TWR funded driving lessons for the father of a family in Hildenborough, who has since successfully passed his test - a big step on the road to independence.

> Volunteers continue to support a family in Tonbridge with complex health needs.

> A family team has supported a family with young children in Tonbridge, which has often required emergency support. Volunteers have spent a great deal of time coordinating with KCC's safeguarding lead, health visitors, police and KCC-appointed support workers Clarion to try and help this family resettle and to secure the kind of support both adults and children need.

3.6 Other activities

TWR runs a community group on WhatsApp to help collect and redistribute good quality second-hand goods. Fewer items have been offered than in previous years, and there has also been less take-up, reflecting that as families settle there is a reduced need for household goods and furniture. However, the group did receive and distribute a number of items, including a large quantity of art and craft materials which went to six families. Second hand electrical items such as vacuum cleaners, Smart TVs, iPads, and mobile phones in good working order continue to be in demand.

3.7 Outreach

TWR took part in some public-facing events in 2024/25. The aim of these is to support Object 2, to help recruit and maintain volunteer numbers, and to contribute to fundraising efforts.

They included:

- The Tonbridge Dragon Boat Race, 1 September 2024. TWR had a boat on the river, and a very successful stall selling baked goods and offering games, including a much admired human fruit machine. The effort raised £2677.50 in sponsorship, and £574 on the stall.

TWR also sends a newsletter to a wide mailing list several times a year, containing news of our activities and any requests for support.

We also have an active social media channel on Facebook, which has steady follower numbers of around 1.2K.

3.8 Public meetings

TWR held open meetings, aimed at volunteers but open to anyone in the community interested in learning more.

These included:

- An AGM in June.
- A Christmas event for volunteers and supporters.

4. Management and day to day running of the charity

The Trustees meet monthly to approve new funding requests, and quarterly to deal with administrative matters and discuss matters arising. The trustees also set the Charity's strategic direction.

There are no employees: all the support given to beneficiaries and the administration of the charity is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers can reclaim expenses and a mileage allowance, but many volunteers simply carry those expenses themselves.

There were approximately 60 volunteers working with TWR as of March 2025. There are also many further supporters and donors of household items.

Any volunteer who has direct contact with refugee families through befriending or teaching follows a recruitment process involving an application form, an interview with two trustees and the taking up of two references. They must also have an enhanced DBS certificate to cover both vulnerable adults and children and agree to the confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding policies.

Volunteers are sometimes faced with situations which are emotionally extremely challenging - for example, discussion with families about the trauma they experienced in their home country, or complex medical problems and health emergencies. When appropriate, or if requested, TWR offers volunteers counselling to support them, though take-up has historically been very low.

We have three teaching coordinators, to manage teaching of adults, teaching of children, and teaching at home. These report back to the trustees on a regular basis.

Until late 2024, events were organised by one of the trustees, with support from volunteers. From early 2025, the event coordination role was taken over by a team of three volunteers, who are identifying opportunities for events and coordinating the TWR presence.

We have a volunteer coordinator who ensures DBS checks are up to date and that safeguarding training has been completed where appropriate.

We have a volunteer managing the TWR Facebook account.

5. TWR at 10: Looking ahead

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees will mark ten years of existence in September 2025, around eight of which have been as a registered charity. During that time, the nature of support required by beneficiaries has changed considerably. While significant influxes of refugees under the SVPRS, ARAP and the Homes for Ukraine scheme have at different times given rise to a significant and immediate need for direct support to families, the lack of refugee arrivals in the last two years means that there has gradually been less of an emphasis on direct family support/befriending and more focus on teaching ESOL and providing financial support for educational training and activities.

In addition, the departure of several trustees in the past year and the difficulty of finding volunteers willing to take on administrative tasks has led to a high and unsustainable burden on remaining trustees. The trustees have therefore had to re-evaluate the Charity's viability and reaffirm the need for ongoing services. Our needs assessment was as follows:

- Consultations with our volunteer base confirmed the vital importance of financial assistance to refugee families, both in terms of educational value and well-being.
- TWR's ESOL teaching programme, while supporting fewer students than in previous years, continues to be highly valued, and is staffed by a number of committed expert volunteers.
- Other refugee-facing assistance, led by our family teams, has been highly successful over the past nine years, the cornerstone of our efforts to help refugee families integrate into life in the borough. A large number of dedicated volunteers have made this possible, many of whom continue to maintain relationships of friendship with families they have supported in the past.

At the time of writing, however, there were only a handful of families still formally on the ARAP or SVPRS (or successor) schemes, with all others on those schemes having now been in the borough for more than five years. Families who arrived under the Homes For Ukraine scheme have not required direct family support, their first points of contact being their hosts; this remains the case.

- Family support is particularly time consuming, both for volunteers and in terms of the necessary administration required to maintain it (DBS checks, safeguarding training, volunteer recruitment, liaison with councils and support workers, coordination).

The trustees therefore decided that the Charity is still very much needed. However, and reflecting the changing reality on the ground, in order to remain viable TWR will need to focus on the following going forward:

- TWR will continue to fund holiday clubs and after-school activities for children, as previously. We will also support families in purchasing essential items needed for school, further education or well-being.
- TWR will continue where possible to fund professional training and equipment for adult refugees, including driving lessons where these are likely to lead to greater self-sufficiency.
- TWR will continue to teach ESOL to adults and children as long as the need persists and our volunteers can sustain it.
- TWR will continue to consider ad hoc requests for funding from refugee families.
- TWR will continue to participate in public-facing events where volunteer capacity allows. We envisage we will do less of these activities than previously, however.
- In the absence of significant new arrivals, TWR will phase out its direct support programme led by family teams entirely over the coming year to 18 months, to be replaced where needed by more ad hoc support to individuals.

The trustees will continue to evaluate the nature of assistance TWR is able to provide, based on need in the community, volunteer and trustee capacity, and the level of funding available.

6. Financial Review for the year ended 31 March 2025

Financial Review

The Accounts are attached and show income of £29,802. Of this, £17,120 was received in the form of donations from individuals and institutions. This figure includes donations received from fundraising events. £12,000 was received in the form of two grants. The Trustees have decided to dispense with the split of donations between regular and one-off donations for reporting purposes, owing to the difficulty of accurately ascertaining this split from the data provided by CAF Donate. An estimate of this split will continue to be produced for management purposes.

Total expenditure for the year was £23,774. The Charity's running costs amounted to £2,350. Insurance, safeguarding training and travel costs accounted for over three quarters of the Charity's running costs.

A total of £6,398 was paid direct to, or for the benefit of, refugees as resettlement costs. Other resettlement expenditure included payments for IT equipment, driving lessons, assistance for paying household bills, clothes, furniture, hardship payments.

£14,763 was paid for clubs and activities for school children and £263 for educational resources, as part of the English teaching programme.

Payments made from the bank account are usually input by the Treasurer, but can be input by one of three other Trustees appointed to this task. Once input, payments must then be authorised by one of the appointed Trustees other than the inputter.

Expenditure up to £50 can be pre-approved by one (or more) Trustee(s). Expenditure between £50 and £150 can be approved by two (or more) Trustee(s). Expenditure over £150 will be discussed and pre-approved by a majority of Trustees on WhatsApp, email or at a Trustees meeting. A “blanket” approval may be agreed for some categories of expenditure (e.g. holiday courses or swimming).

TWR does not have any outstanding guarantees to any other person or organisation. It does not have any debts secured by a charge on property. None of the Trustees or persons related to them receive remuneration in any form and there are no transactions with any trustee or related parties.

The reserving policy is to retain a reserve of six months’ committed expenditure in the bank. Committed expenditure means running costs plus any other expenditure to which we are committed. This policy was adhered to in the financial year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

£36,825 was held in the TWR’s bank accounts at the year end. £2,562 was held in the current account and £34,263 in the linked savings account. No other assets or investments are held by the charity.

7. Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

8. Appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity’s trustees, for a term of three years. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the Trustees have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

9. Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees
c/o Burns & Co
2a Bank Street
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

10. Trustees

Name	Term(s) of office
Ruth Connelly	July 2017–July 2020; July 2020–July 2023; July 2023–
Lee Mead (Treasurer)	August 2020 –August 2023; August 2023–
Fiona O'Brien	July 2017–July 2020; July 2020–July 2023; July 2023–
Sarah Pratten	July 2022–

Trustees stepping down during the year

Name	Term(s) of office
Jane Blessley	January 2019–January 2022; January 2022–January 2025.
Nicky McGregor	December 2018–December 2021; December 2021–December 2024.
Maggie Piazza	March 2024–May 2025

11. Independent reviewer of accounts: Matthew Sellen

12. Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



This Report was approved by the Trustees on 15 June 2025 and signed on their behalf by Fiona O'Brien



Report to the trustees/ members of	Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees		
On accounts for the year ended	31 st March 2025	Charity no (if any)	1173758
	Set out on pages 12 – 14		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2025.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent examiner's
statement**

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:

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

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


Signed:  **Date:** 17 June 2025

Name: Matthew Sellen

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Address:



 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Charity Name		No (if any)		CC16a
	TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES		1173758		
	Receipts and payments accounts				
	For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date	
	1/4/2024		31/3/2025		

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestrict ed funds	Restricted funds	Endowme nt funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations (inc fundraising)	17,120	-	-	17,120	13,868
Grants	5,000	7,000	-	12,000	8,500
Interest	682	-	-	682	59
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	22,802	7,000	-	29,802	22,427
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,802	7,000	-	29,802	22,427
A3 Payments					
Running costs	2,350	-	-	2,350	1,545
Refugee support	6,398	-	-	6,398	8,637
Acitivity fund	6,475	8,288	-	14,763	12,465
Teaching resources	263	-	-	263	407
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	15,486	8,288	-	23,774	23,054

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	15,486	8,288	-	23,774	23,054
Net of receipts/(payments)	7,316	- 1,288	-	6,028	- 627
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	29,509	1,288	-	30,797	31,424
Cash funds this year end	36,825	-	-	36,825	30,797

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestrict ed funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	36,825	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	36,825	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestrict ed funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	L. R. Mead	Lee Mead	10/6/2025	

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1173758

Accounts



TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report
for the Financial Year
1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024



TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report for the Financial Year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees
c/o Burns & Co
2a Bank Street
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

Trustees:

Jane Blessley (Chair)

Ruth Connelly

Nicky McGregor

Lee Mead (Treasurer)

Fiona O'Brien

Sarah Pratten

Maggie Piazza

Term(s) of office:

January 2019 -January 2022 and
January 2022 -

July 2017- July 2020, July 2020 – July
2023, July 2023 -

December 2018 – December 2021 and
January 2022 -

August 2020 – August 2023, August
2023 -

July 2017 – July 2020, July 2020 – July
2023, July 2023 -

July 2022 –

March 2024 -

Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

Appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity's trustees, for a term of three years. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the Trustees have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

In February 2024, Jan Lloyd resigned as a trustee. In March 2024, Maggie Piazza was appointed a trustee.

There are currently seven trustees.

Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependants, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent.
 - The relief of financial hardship;
 - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
 - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Overview – TWR's objective 1 to provide relief for refugees.

Most of the refugees supported by the charity have reached the UK under one of the Government's Resettlement Schemes. At 31st March 2024, Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was supporting:

- six families living in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone who had arrived under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its replacement, the UK Resettlement Scheme 2021 (UKRS). Five families were from Syria and a further one from Sudan. The charity also supported two Syrian families who had claimed asylum and a further four Syrian families who had reached the end of the five-year period under the SVPRS and had indefinite leave to remain.
- five Afghan families who arrived in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone who had been evacuated from Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy 2021 (ARAP).
- A family from El Salvador who were granted asylum and moved into temporary accommodation in the area. They have since become permanently located in Maidstone
- Homes for Ukraine Scheme, under this Scheme the charity supports approximately 200 individuals. Because of the role of hosts, the model of support differs for Ukrainian refugees and they are dealt with separately below.

The total number of individuals supported on 31st March 2024 is approximately 280.

TWR works with Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and staff from KCC's appointed social care provider, Clarion, to support refugees resettled under the SVPRS, the UKRS and the ARAP in our area of Kent. As Maidstone does not have a Welcomes Refugees Group, we have a group of volunteers working to support families within the Maidstone Borough Council area. Our Maidstone volunteers also work with some of our SVPRS families in TMBC, as sometimes their location is closer to Maidstone. The Maidstone team of volunteers complete their DBS with us. TWR also liaises with sister charities, Tunbridge Wells Welcomes Refugees (TWWR) and Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees (SWR).

- **Befriending.** Each refugee family arriving under the Resettlement Schemes or ARAP has normally been assigned a small team of volunteers to assist them on arrival. Whilst the Clarion Support Officers manage applications to schools, to GP registers, to the Home Office and to the DWP for benefits and deal with housing matters, the volunteer teams make welcoming and befriending visits. The support is tailor-made to the family, but often includes such matters as explaining the transport services locally, explaining how the NHS operates or the refuse and recycling system. Families may be taken out to visit local attractions or to be shown the shopping facilities. Befriending volunteers can appeal by means of WhatsApp groups for household items needed by the families or apply to the trustees for funding for an item, if a suitable donation cannot be found.
- **English teaching.** In addition to befriending support, there is an experienced and dedicated team of teachers who supplement the English lessons provided under the various Resettlement Schemes by local adult education providers. Often the small group teaching or individual coaching TWR provides is more successful, especially with those who have limited experience of education or who are not literate in their first language.

TWR runs classes in Tonbridge School premises on Monday and Friday during school terms. There are classes at Advanced, Intermediate and Beginner 1 and Beginner 2 levels. TWR provides the learning resources and Tonbridge School allows TWR to use their premises free of charge. 5 teachers deliver the classes. In addition, a small number of adults receive tuition at home or through Zoom if they cannot travel through ill health or the distance to Tonbridge. Further teachers are involved in this work.

In addition to the classes provided for adults, there is a very active team of teachers who volunteer in local schools to support refugee children. Five children of primary age currently receive this support – three Ukrainians, an Afghan and a Syrian. The support normally takes the form of three lessons per week, carefully planned and delivered by a small teaching team at school. At secondary level, a further six Ukrainians, an Afghan, a Sudanese and two Syrian students receive support in school and sometimes also online. Further Afghan and Syrian students receive online teaching.

In 2023, KCC undertook a review of the provision of ESOL under the various Schemes and TWR volunteers participated in this review in the hopes of improving the formal, funded provision. They also attend a steering group led by the new ESOL Coordinator at KCC which is instating improvements by standardising levelling assessments of students and providing funded training for volunteer teachers in areas such as digital teaching and the overlap between EAL and ESOL. KCC acknowledges that volunteers will continue to be needed if refugees are to receive the minimum level of 8 hours per week of English that the Government expects.

- **Transport.** It is often difficult for the charity's beneficiaries to get to medical or dental appointments by using public transport. TWR maintains a WhatsApp group of volunteers who are willing to provide lifts for these appointments. The charity also provides bicycles and related safety equipment for beneficiaries where this is needed and, for some beneficiaries, the trustees have

agreed to provide some assistance to fund driving lessons. This is so expensive that it has been limited to cases where the beneficiary needs to drive in order to work or where the beneficiary is already a driver and only needs a few refresher classes to enable a UK driving test to be taken. In suitable cases, young person's or family railcards are provided.

● Social Support.

Following on from the grant awarded by the London Foundation of Clifford Chance in 2022 to 2023, TWR was grateful to receive funding from Paul Stepto's Member KCC Grant of £1000 and of £7500 from the London Gatwick Community Fund in the autumn of 2023 to finance the charity's activities and courses programme for children for the year to August 2024. Under this Scheme, TWR pays for, or subsidises, after school activities and clubs during term time and activity or educational courses in the school holidays. The current subsidy level is of up to £150 per school age child for each of the school holidays at Easter and in the summer.

These courses aid social integration and provide children with a chance to escape for a while from the anxieties of their position as refugees. The courses have been of all types – trampolining, gymnastics, climbing, drumming, Arts and crafts, football and badminton.

In 2022 to 2023, TWR initiated a swimming programme under which twenty children attended swimming lessons at Tonbridge Town Pool under their TM Active school. The funding received this year has enabled TWR to extend the programme to further children. 26 children between the ages of 5 and 18 have benefited from the programme in 2023 to 2024– 15 Ukrainian students, 6 Syrian, 3 Afghan and 2 Sudanese.

On 23rd April 2023, TWR held a picnic to celebrate Eid al Fitr at the end of Ramadan at St Philip's Church Hall in north Tonbridge. All Muslim refugees from Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling were invited and Syrian, Afghan and Sudanese families attended with volunteers from Maidstone offering transport. Each family brought a dish to share and volunteers also contributed vegetarian and sweet items.

In July 2023, Tonbridge Lions organised and funded a day out for 30 refugees at Bedgebury Pinetum. Every participant could take part in Go Ape or hire a bike and lunch was provided by the Lions. Transport was provided by Compaid. TWR provided volunteers as escorts on the day.

In September 2023, Tonbridge Fire Station held an Open Day to which refugees were invited and great fun was had with the equipment. Again, volunteers escorted the families who attended.

Support provided for Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Refugees arriving under this Scheme are placed with British hosts and they perform many of the befriending activities which would otherwise be provided by TWR befriending teams or by support workers from Clarion.

Shortly after the Scheme started, Tonbridge School decided to support refugees by offering a space for refugees to meet each other every Tuesday evening for two hours. TWR has acted as a partner providing information to Tonbridge School. In the early part of the year, two volunteers attended at each of the Tonbridge School gatherings to gather information about the support needs of arriving families or families leaving hosts to live independently. Latterly, Tonbridge School has hosted the gatherings without TWR support.

The new initiative of having conversation buddies started in 2022 to 2023 with newly arrived Ukrainians who were on a waiting list for English classes. This entailed a refugee being matched with a volunteer with the intention that they should meet so as to give an added opportunity for practice in English. This proved very successful and those volunteers often became friends with the refugees and have extended support when the refugees have moved into homes independent of the original host. The scheme is still open and has been extended to refugees of other nationalities too.

Overview – objective 2 to advance the education of the public about the position and needs of refugees and asylum seekers

TWR took part in various public events where volunteers had stalls with activities for children, and explained TWR's role in caring for families arriving in our area, raising public awareness by handing out our newly redrafted information leaflets and having a large display with key information at a glance to engage passers-by. These were:

1. To coincide with Refugee Week in June 2023, Heather Evernden delivered two assemblies at Tonbridge Grammar School and worked with their community action group to decide how they might best try to support refugees
2. Tonbridge Calling on 1st July 2023 at which £168 was raised and, perhaps more important, volunteers met the public and awareness was raised
3. Dragon Boat Race on 3rd September 2023. This was very successful and raised £4002 for funds. The stall was busy with a variety of games being run and baked goods sold. There was information at hand regarding TWR's work. Many useful conversations happened to educate those locally as to our purposes and aims
4. Recorded Assemblies were provided by Ruth Connelly for use at Hillview School in the autumn term.
5. Nicky McGregor gave an assembly at Hilden Grange School explaining the charity's work and the school selected TWR as its annual charity. Volunteers attended a subsequent fair and gave further information to the pupils.

Management and day to day running of the charity

The Trustees normally hold a monthly trustees' meeting and in this financial year these were mostly online. Several times a year, there is an Open Meeting for the charity's supporters. Reports of the charity's activities are given and supporters invited to ask questions. In months where there is an Open meeting, a trustees' meeting is not always held. The AGM was held on 14th June 2023.

In October 2023, a coffee morning for volunteers was held at Tonbridge Old Fire Station. Its aim was to allow volunteers to share best practice and to meet volunteers they might have worked with before, but never met in person. Several trustees attended and were able to make introductions, answer questions and appeal for help for various matters.

On 4th December 2023, a social evening was held at Tonbridge Old Fire Station. The trustees offered a brief presentation on current developments and then encouraged volunteers and supporters to mix.

There are no employees and all the support given to beneficiaries and the administration of the charity is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers can reclaim expenses and a mileage allowance, but many volunteers simply carry those expenses themselves.

There were seven trustees at the 31st March 2024. In addition, there were approximately 70 active volunteers working directly with refugee families including trustees and in addition, further supporters and donors of household items. Any volunteer who has direct contact with refugee families through befriending, teaching or giving lifts follows a recruitment process involving an application form, an interview with two trustees and the taking up of two references. They must also have an enhanced DBS certificate to cover both vulnerable adults and children and agree to the confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding policies.

Family teams deal directly with the beneficiary families, but report regularly to the trustees on what is needed. The two teaching coordinators also report back to the trustees on a regular basis. This is made easier because many of the trustees are themselves on family teams or are teachers.

In December 2023, TWR held a training afternoon at which befriending and teaching volunteers took part in a workshop led by a Bereavement Professional. She explained how the grief caused to refugees by bereavement or trauma manifested itself in children as well as adults and gave volunteers reassurance that simply by listening to a grieving person and adopting simple strategies they could be of assistance. Volunteers were provided with information about useful groups to contact for help and given advice as to how to respond to the traumatic information they sometimes receive in a way that protects their own mental health as well.

Financial Review for the year ended 31st March 2024.

The Accounts are attached and show income of £22,247. Of this, £ 13,868 was received in the form of donations from individuals and institutions. £8500 was received in the form of two grants.

Total expenditure for the year was £23,054.

The Charity's running costs amounted to £1,545. Insurance, safeguarding training and travel costs accounted for 80% of the Charity's running costs.

A total of £8637 was paid direct to, or for the benefit of, refugees as resettlement costs. Other resettlement expenditure included payments for IT equipment, driving lessons, assistance for paying household bills, clothes, furniture, hardship payments and travel costs for such things as Family or Young Person Railcards.

£12,465 was paid for clubs and activities for school children and £407 for educational resources, as part of the English teaching programme.

Payments made from the bank account are usually input by the Treasurer, but can be input by one of three other Trustees appointed to this task. Once input, payments must then be authorised by one of the appointed Trustees other than the inputter.

Expenditure up to £50 can be pre-approved by one (or more) Trustee(s). Expenditure between £50 and £150 can be approved by two (or more) Trustee(s). Expenditure over £150 will be discussed and pre-approved by a majority of Trustees on WhatsApp, email or at a Trustees meeting. A “blanket” approval may be agreed for some categories of expenditure (e.g. holiday courses or swimming).

TWR does not have any outstanding guarantees to any other person or organisation. It does not have any debts secured by a charge on property. None of the trustees or persons related to them receive remuneration in any form and there are no transactions with any trustee or related parties.

The reserving policy is to retain a reserve of six months’ committed expenditure in the bank. Committed expenditure means running costs plus any other expenditure to which we are committed.

This policy was adhered to in the financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Achievements and Performance

1. TWR’s very successful teaching programmes for adults and children have continued. 19 school children and 25 adults benefit.
2. In response to the increase in numbers of adult students, the charity introduced a new conversation buddy scheme for Ukrainians, but this has now expanded to refugees from other nationalities.
3. The charity managed to obtain grant funding for activity courses in the school holidays. This enabled children to have fun and integrate with other children on the courses and to improve children’s mental health.
4. The swimming programme was extended to 26 children in the course of the year.
5. The Syrian pharmacist, whose course was funded through TWR, mostly through donations from London lawyers, completed her UK qualification successfully and is now practising.
6. TWR has continued to run WhatsApp groups to find household items for refugees and to offer donations to them. Over 450 items were provided by donors and moved to the recipient, including
 - 74 furniture items including 10 tables, 6 beds, 5 mattresses, wardrobes,
 - 32 electrical items including vacuum cleaners, TVs, printers, mobile phones
 - 82 household items
 - 135 items of baby equipment and clothing for children and babies
 - 90 toys
 - 4 adult bikes, a child’s bike and an exercise bike
 - Miscellaneous other items

7. The drivers' WhatsApp group continues to provide lifts for appointments and to deliver items from donors to recipients.
8. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, TWR has managed to attract sufficient funds to offer support for its beneficiaries through hardship payments, funding IT items and activities.

Future Challenges

Despite the many achievements of the last financial year, there are also challenges which should not be ignored. These are:

1. Housing. It is very difficult to attract new private landlords to the Schemes. This is due to a number of factors:
 - The severe shortage of rental properties means commercial rents outstrip housing allowances for those on benefits
 - The number of rental properties has plummeted because of higher mortgage interest rates and new regulations for landlords
 - Many of the families arriving on the Schemes are larger than the UK average so there are fewer properties which can house them
 - Families arriving under the Schemes grow with the birth of children. As children become teenagers, children of different genders need separate bedrooms and older children marry and need homes of their own so the demand for housing outstrips what is available
2. As the cost-of-living crisis affects more and more people and businesses, TWR may find it more difficult to raise funds
3. Many of our retired volunteers, who joined as the charity started, are facing health issues personally or in their families and our younger volunteers have to manage full time jobs with the demands of family life so that many volunteers have had to reduce the hours they offer to TWR. New volunteers are also able to offer fewer hours volunteering. The resulting extra workload on some volunteers is becoming unsustainable and a review is under way to address this.

Strategic Aims at 31st March 2024.

1. To continue welcoming refugee families, including through befriending and English programmes, but with modifications to ensure these programmes remain sustainable
2. To support refugees with educational and vocational courses
3. To continue the activity and swimming programmes for school-age children
4. To maintain a hardship fund for families struggling financially
5. To encourage families to set and achieve their own goals, encouraging families to develop self-sufficiency more quickly
6. To raise sufficient funds to continue to meet these aims

This Report was approved by the Trustees on 2nd May 2024 and signed on their behalf by Chair of Trustees, Jane Blessley.

J. M. Blessley



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/members of Charity Name
Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees

On accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 Charity no (if any) 1173758

Set out on pages 10 to and 11

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent examiner's statement 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:

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

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

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 10 JULY 24

Name: Matthew Sellen

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Address: [Blank]



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2023	To	31/03/2024
---------------------	------------	----	------------

Section A Receipts and payments

	funds to the nearest £	funds to the nearest £	funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
One off donations (inc fundraising)	7,666	-	-	7,666	23,175
Regular giving	6,202	-	-	6,202	4,716
Grants	-	8,500	-	8,500	4,068
Interest	59	-	-	59	49
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	13,927	8,500	-	22,427	32,008
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	13,927	8,500	-	22,427	32,008
A3 Payments					
Running costs	1,545	-	-	1,545	1,099
Refugee support	8,637	-	-	8,637	22,419
Activity fund	5,253	7,212	-	12,465	10,158
Teaching resources	407	-	-	407	1,720
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	15,842	7,212	-	23,054	35,396
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	15,842	7,212	-	23,054	35,396
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 1,915	1,288	-	627	3,388
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	31,424	-	-	31,424	34,812
Cash funds this year end	29,509	1,288	-	30,797	31,424

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	funds to nearest £	funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	29,509	1,288	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	29,509	1,288	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>L. P. Mead</i>	Lee Mead	2.5.24
<i>J.M. Blessley</i>	J.M. Blessley	2.5.24

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1173758

Accounts



TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report
for the Financial Year
1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report

for the Financial Year from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees
c/o Burns & Co
2a Bank Street
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

Trustees	Term(s) of office
Jane Blessley (Chair)	January 2019 - January 2022 January 2022 -
Fiona O'Brien	July 2017 - July 2020 July 2020 -
Ruth Connelly	July 2017- July 2020 July 2020 -
Nicky McGregor	December 2018 - December 2021 January 2022 -
Jan Lloyd	January 2020 - December 2022 January 2023 -
Lee Mead (Treasurer)	August 2020 –
Sarah Pratten	July 2022 –

Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

Appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity's trustees, for a term of three years. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the Trustees have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

During the year Jane Blessley and Jan Lloyd were reappointed as trustees and Sarah Pratten was appointed as a new trustee

There are currently seven trustees.

Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependants, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent.
 - The relief of financial hardship;
 - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
 - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.

2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Overview – Objective 1: To provide relief for refugees

Most of the refugees supported by the charity have reached the UK under one of the Government's Resettlement Schemes. At 31st March 2023, Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was supporting:

- ten families living in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone who had arrived under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its replacement, the UK Resettlement Scheme 2021 (UKRS). 9 families were from Syria and a further one from Sudan. The charity also supported two Syrian families who had claimed asylum and a further Syrian family who had reached the end of the five-year period under the SVPRS and had indefinite leave to remain.

- three Afghan families who arrived in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone (in December 2021 and February and May 2022) who had been evacuated from Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy 2021 (ARAP).

- Homes for Ukraine Scheme, under this Scheme the charity supports approximately 200 individuals. Because of the role of hosts, the model of support differs for Ukrainian refugees and they are dealt with separately below.

The total number of individuals supported on 31st March 2023 is approximately 287.

TWR works closely with Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and staff from KCC's appointed social care provider, Clarion, to support refugees resettled under the SVPRS, the UKRS and the ARAP in our area of Kent. As Maidstone does not have a Welcomes Refugees Group, we have a group of volunteers working to support families within the Maidstone Borough Council area. Our Maidstone volunteers also work with some of our SVPRS families in TMBC, as sometimes their location is closer to Maidstone. The Maidstone team of volunteers complete their DBS with us. We also work closely with our sister charities, Tunbridge Wells Welcomes Refugees (TWWR) and Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees (SWR).

Support provided for refugees under UKRS

- **Befriending.** Each refugee family arriving under the Resettlement Schemes or ARAP is assigned a small team of volunteers to assist them on arrival. Whilst the Clarion Support Officers manage applications to schools, to GP registers, to the Home Office and to the DWP for benefits, the volunteer teams make welcoming and befriending visits. The support is tailor-made to the family, but often includes such matters as explaining the transport services locally, explaining how the NHS operates or the refuse and recycling system. Families are often taken out to visit local attractions or to be shown the shopping facilities. Befriending volunteers can appeal by means of WhatsApp groups for household items needed by the families or apply to the trustees for funding for an item, if a suitable donation cannot be found.
- **English teaching.** In addition to befriending support, there is an experienced and dedicated team of teachers who supplement the English lessons provided under the various Resettlement Schemes by local adult education providers. Often the small group teaching or individual coaching TWR provides is more successful, especially with those who have limited experience of education or who are illiterate in their first language.

In addition to the classes provided for adults, there is a very active team of teachers who volunteer in local schools to support Syrian, Sudanese and Afghan children. Currently two Afghan, two Syrian and two Sudanese children benefit from this support.

In March 2023, KCC started to undertake a review of the provision of ESOL under the various Schemes and TWR volunteers are participating in this review in the hopes of improving the provision especially for those refugees who are illiterate in Language 1.

- **Transport.** It is often difficult for the charity's beneficiaries to get to medical or dental appointments or to social gatherings held by the charity by using public transport. TWR maintains a WhatsApp group of volunteers who are willing to provide lifts for these appointments or occasions. The charity also provides bicycles and related safety equipment for beneficiaries where this is needed and, for some beneficiaries, the trustees have agreed to provide some assistance to fund driving lessons. This is so expensive that it has been limited to cases where the beneficiary needs to drive in order to work or where the beneficiary is already a driver and only needs a few refresher classes to enable a UK driving test to be taken. In suitable cases, young person's or family railcards are provided.
- **Social Support.** TWR has undertaken several new initiatives in 2022 to 2023. A grant was obtained to provide activity courses in the school holidays in addition to the after-school clubs for children of school age already funded. The funding was provided by Clifford Chance London Foundation with a requirement that TWR match the spending with £4000 of charity funds. Courses have been attended both by the original cohort under the Resettlement Schemes but also by many Ukrainian school children too. Such courses aid social integration and provide children with a chance to

escape for a while from the anxieties of their position as refugees. The courses have been of all types – trampolining, gymnastics, climbing, drumming, Arts and crafts, football, badminton and the charity has placed about twenty children into swimming lessons at Tonbridge Town Pool. It has never been possible to fund swimming before because of the high cost and the initiative has been very successful indeed.

In May 2022, TWR was able once again to hold a picnic to celebrate Eid al Fitr at the end of Ramadan with a picnic held on 8th May at St Philip's Church Hall in north Tonbridge. All Muslim refugees from Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling were invited and Syrian, Afghan and Sudanese families attended with volunteers from Maidstone offering transport. Each family brought a dish to share and volunteers also contributed vegetarian and sweet items. There was football on the field outside, a seed planting activity, a face painter and a craft activity. Both families and volunteers enjoyed a sunny afternoon and the chance to renew friendships after so long apart and to meet new arrivals.

Support provided for Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Refugees arriving under this Scheme are placed with British hosts and they perform many of the befriending activities which would otherwise be provided by TWR befriending teams or by support workers from Clarion.

TWR set up a small committee of volunteers in April 2022 to coordinate the support given to arriving refugees. The trustees decided that they had neither the manpower nor the expertise to act as a matching service for potential hosts and refugees. Instead, the committee provided information for both hosts and refugees and gave logistical help for example to enable refugees to access free sim cards from Vodafone and to distribute laptops provided by West Kent Mind. The team shared a toolkit with hosts and provided frequent newsletters full of information on things to do and practical support. There was a lot of coordination between hosts and refugees too. TWR not only distributed laptops provided by MIND, but also funded laptops for refugees including those in areas normally just outside ours where there was no similar support.

Shortly after the Scheme started, Tonbridge School decided to support refugees by offering a space for refugees to meet each other every Tuesday evening for two hours. TWR has acted as a partner providing information to Tonbridge School. Two volunteers attend at each of the Tonbridge School gatherings to gather information about the support needs of arriving families or families leaving hosts to live independently. Such questions are then followed up by volunteers.

Further emotional and social support was provided to both hosts and Ukrainian refugees by a volunteer holding a coffee evening on a fortnightly basis for hosts and refugees separately to enable them to air any difficulties and learn from others in a similar position.

The most urgent need for arriving Ukrainians was the provision of English lessons. Using premises provided by Tonbridge School, TWR's English coordinator for adults set up a programme for the Ukrainian students. Classes were run throughout the school summer holidays and have continued throughout the rest of our TWR financial year. There have been six classes a week, led by TWR volunteer teachers using course and practice books funded by TWR. At the start, there were too many students so a waiting list was needed. To enable those on that list to progress whilst waiting for classes, a system of conversation buddies was started. This entailed a refugee being matched with a volunteer with the intention that they should meet so as to give an added opportunity for practice in English. This has proved very successful and those volunteers have often become friends with the refugees and have extended support when the refugees have moved into homes independent of the original host.

Local schools saw an influx of Ukrainian children too. The level of English of these refugees was widely variable. The coordinator of English for children organised support for children in five local schools. The numbers of Ukrainian children have varied as some have returned to Ukraine, others have moved to different parts of the UK and in one case a school recruited a TEFL qualified Ukrainian as a teaching assistant. At the end of March 2023, 11 Ukrainian students were receiving help.

Using WhatsApp groups, TWR has been able to assist Ukrainian families to equip their new homes when they leave their original hosts.

The Ukrainian families have also benefited from the activities' courses during school holidays and after school clubs (including swimming) provided thanks to the London Foundation grant.

Overview – Objective 2: To advance the education of the public about the position and needs of refugees and asylum seekers

- The Chair and several volunteers were involved in a campaign with Citizens' UK to persuade MPs to support an initiative to regularise the position of undocumented migrants. The aim is to protect them from modern slavery and exploitation and allow them to take a proper place in the workforce benefiting from the protection of employment laws. It provides a societal benefit too because of tax and National Insurance payments and by filling jobs in those sectors now suffering manpower shortages, such as agriculture or care sectors.

The campaign culminated in a meeting with Conservative MP for Tonbridge and Malling, Tom Tugendhat, in September 2022 at which these arguments were put forward and he accepted the idea in theory, but had concerns about its practicality because of the danger of creating a 'pull factor' which might encourage further migrants to come to the UK using the dangerous small boat crossings.

- Several presentations have been given at meetings of local organisations – PROBUS Crowborough men’s club and Hilden Ladies’ PROBUS. Donations have been made to our funds from these clubs.
- TWR took part in various public events where we had stalls with activities for children, we explained our role in caring for families arriving in our area and raised public awareness by handing out our newly redrafted information leaflets. These were:
 1. Bishop Chavasse School Fair
 2. Tonbridge Calling at which we had very popular pig racing and hoopla activities which also raised funds
 3. Dragon Boat Race. This was very successful and raised £2220 in sponsorship and £532 on the day for funds as well as seeing us crowned as the best dressed crew, though not the best rowers. Again, the racing pigs proved very popular as did the Treasure Island lovingly crafted over a month by the same volunteer who designed the costumes.
 4. The Maidstone Mela. Our Maidstone volunteers organised this with an activity to raise awareness of the choices faced by refugees when deciding what to carry with them when they are forced to flee. There were many visitors to the stall to whom we were able to give information and leaflets.

Management and day to day running of the charity

The Trustees normally hold a monthly trustees’ meeting and in this financial year these were online. Several times a year, there is an Open Meeting for the charity’s supporters. Reports of the charity’s activities were given and supporters invited to ask questions. In months where there is an Open meeting, a trustees’ meeting is not always held. The AGM was held on 15th December 2022.

At the AGM, it was reported that in future the AGM would be held shortly after the end of the financial year, in the summer. The December meeting would, in future, be a social with an update from the trustees.

There are no employees and all the support given to beneficiaries and the administration of the charity is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers can reclaim expenses and a mileage allowance, but many volunteers simply carry those expenses themselves.

There were seven trustees at the 31st March 2023. In addition, there were approximately 75 volunteers including trustees and further supporters and donors of household items. Any volunteer who has direct contact with refugee families through befriending, teaching or giving lifts follows a recruitment process involving an application form, an interview with two trustees and the taking up of two references. They must also have an enhanced DBS certificate to cover both vulnerable adults and children and agree to the confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding policies.

Family teams deal directly with the beneficiary families, but report regularly to the trustees on what is needed. The two teaching coordinators also report back to the trustees on a regular basis. This is made easier because many of the trustees are themselves on family teams or are teachers.

Financial Review for the year ended 31st March 2022

The Accounts are attached and show income of £32,008. Of this, £27,891 was received in the form of donations from individuals and institutions. £4,068 was received in the form of a single grant.

Total expenditure for the year was £35,396. The Charity's running costs amounted to £1,099. Costs relating to insurance and safeguarding training accounted for almost half of these costs. A total of £22,419 was paid direct to, or for the benefit of, refugees as resettlement costs. This figure included £11,505 used to support refugees in further education from donated funds restricted for this purpose. Other resettlement expenditure included payments for IT equipment, driving lessons, assistance for paying household bills, clothes, furniture, hardship payments and travel costs for such things as Family or Young Person Railcards. £10,158 was paid for clubs and activities for school children and £1,720 for educational resources, as part of the English teaching programme.

Payments made from the bank account are usually input by the Treasurer, but can be input by one of three other Trustees appointed to this task. Once input, payments must then be authorised by one of the appointed Trustees other than the inputter. Spending proposals originating from volunteers or refugees below £50 must be pre-approved by at least one Trustee. Such proposals above £50 must be approved by a second Trustee.

TWR does not have any outstanding guarantees to any other person or organisation. It does not have any debts secured by a charge on property. None of the trustees or persons related to them receive remuneration in any form and there are no transactions with any trustee or related parties. The trustees aim to retain a reserve of six months' average expenditure in the bank, and this was adhered to in the financial year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Achievements and Performance

1. TWR was able quickly to respond to the needs of refugees arriving from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The number of its beneficiaries rose from about 80 to 280 within a very short period, but the charity expanded its English teaching rapidly, both for adults and children, to address the need.
2. In response to the increase in numbers of adult students, the charity introduced a new conversation buddy scheme for Ukrainians, but this is now being expanded to refugees from other nationalities.
3. The charity developed a toolkit for hosts of Ukrainian families and supported refugee families and hosts by assisting at Tonbridge School gatherings and a volunteer also offered coffee evenings for Ukrainian refugees and their hosts separately to provide social and emotional support
4. The charity managed to obtain grant funding for activity courses in the school holidays. This enabled children to have fun and integrate with other children on the courses.

5. TWR introduced a new swimming programme in conjunction with TM Active at the town pool. Through this about 20 children have been funded for courses of 15 weeks of swimming lessons.
6. A pharmacist with a Syrian qualification has been supported to obtain a UK qualification through the support of London lawyers.
7. TWR has continued to run WhatsApp groups to find household items for refugees and to offer donations to them. The drivers' WhatsApp group continues to provide lifts for appointments and to deliver items from donors to recipients.
8. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, TWR has managed to attract sufficient funds to offer increased support for its beneficiaries through hardship payments, funding IT items and activities.

Future Challenges

Despite the many achievements of the last financial year, there are also challenges which should not be ignored. These are:

1. Housing. It is very difficult to attract new private landlords to the Schemes. This is due to a number of factors:
 - The severe shortage of rental properties means commercial rents outstrip housing allowances for those on benefits
 - The number of rental properties has plummeted because of higher mortgage interest rates and new regulations for landlords
 - Many of the families arriving on the Schemes are larger than the UK average so there are fewer properties which can house them
2. With more Ukrainian families moving out of their hosts' homes, TWR anticipates that there will be higher demands for household items in the coming year
3. As the cost-of-living crisis affects more and more people and businesses, we may find it more difficult to raise funds

Strategic Aims at 31st March 2023.

1. To continue welcoming refugee families, including through our befriending and English programmes.
2. To support refugees with educational and vocational courses
3. To maintain a hardship fund for families struggling financially
4. To encourage families to set and achieve their own goals, encouraging self sufficiency
5. To raise sufficient funds to continue to meet these aims

This report was approved by the trustees by email on 23rd May 2023 and signed on their behalf by Jane Blessley

J. M Blessley

Chair of Trustees



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2023 **Charity no
(if any)** 1173758

Set out on pages

10 and 11 (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 31/03/2022.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent
examiner's statement**

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:

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

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

Signed:

Date: 23 May 23

Name: Matthew Sellen

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

Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Address:



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES	No (if any) 1173758
----------------------------------------------------	------------------------

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2022	To	Period end date 31/03/2023
------------------------	---------------------------------	----	-------------------------------

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
One off donations (inc fundraising)	21,126	2,049	-	23,175	25,072
Regular giving	4,716	-	-	4,716	4,027
Sales (greeting cards)	-	-	-	-	55
Grants	-	4,068	-	4,068	2,000
Interest	49	-	-	49	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	25,891	6,117	-	32,008	31,154
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	25,891	6,117	-	32,008	31,154
A3 Payments					
Running costs	1,099	-	-	1,099	1,611
Refugee support	10,914	11,505	-	22,419	6,028
Activity fund	6,090	4,068	-	10,158	440
Teaching resources	1,720	-	-	1,720	385
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	19,823	15,573	-	35,396	8,464
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	19,823	15,573	-	35,396	8,464
Net of receipts/(payments)	6,068	- 9,456	-	- 3,388	22,690
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	24,236	10,576	-	34,812	12,122
Cash funds this year end	30,304	1,120	-	31,424	34,812

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	30,304	1,120	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	30,304	1,120	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

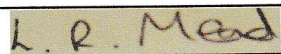
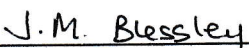
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Lee Mead	23/5/23
	Jane Blessley	23/5/23

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1173758

Accounts



TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES ANNUAL
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR 1ST APRIL
2021 TO 31ST MARCH 2022



TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES charity number 1173758

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

Trustees' Annual Report for the Financial Year from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees
c/o Burns & Co
2a Bank Street
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

Trustees:

Jane Blessley (Chair)

Ruth Connelly

Jan Lloyd

Nicky McGregor

Lee Mead (Treasurer)

Fiona O'Brien

Term(s) of office:

January 2019 -January 2022 and
January 2022 -

July 2017- July 2020, July 2020 -

January 2020 -

December 2018 – December 2021 and

January 2022 -

August 2020 -

July 2017 – July 2020, July 2020 -

Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

Appointment of trustees

The charity's first trustees were Johanna Elderfield, Fiona O'Brien and Ruth Connelly (serving from July 2017 for an initial period of three years). Subsequent trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity's trustees for a term of three years. Nicky McGregor was formally appointed a trustee at the AGM on 11th December 2018. Jane Blessley was appointed trustee at a trustees' meeting on 17th January 2019. Jan Lloyd was appointed as trustee in January 2020 and Lee Mead became trustee and Treasurer in August 2020. Fiona O'Brien and Ruth Connelly were reappointed trustees in July 2020. Nicky McGregor and Jane Blessley were reappointed trustees on 6th January 2022.

Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependants, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent.
 - The relief of financial hardship;
 - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
 - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.

2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Overview – TWR’s objective 1 to provide relief for refugees.

Most of the refugees supported by the charity have reached the UK under one of the Government’s Resettlement Schemes. At 31st March 2022, Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was supporting ten families living in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone who had arrived under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons’ Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its replacement, the UK Resettlement Scheme 2021 (UKRS). 9 families were from Syria and a further one from Sudan. The charity also supported two Syrian families who had claimed asylum and a further Syrian family who had reached the end of the five-year period under the SVPRS and had indefinite leave to remain.

Two Afghan families arrived in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone (in December 2021 and February 2022) who had been evacuated from Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy 2021 (ARAP).

At 31st March 2022, the total number of individuals supported was 75.

TWR works closely with Kent County Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and staff from KCC’s appointed social care provider, Clarion, to support refugees resettled under the SVPRS, the UKRS and the ARAP in our area of Kent. As Maidstone does not have a Welcomes Refugees Group, we have a group of volunteers working to support families within the Maidstone Borough Council area. Our Maidstone volunteers also work with some of our SVPRS families in TMBC, as sometimes their location is closer to Maidstone. The Maidstone team of volunteers complete their DBS with us. We also work very closely with our sister charities, Tunbridge Wells Welcomes Refugees and Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees.

Support provided

- **Befriending.** Each refugee family is assigned a small team of volunteers to assist them on arrival. Whilst the Clarion Support Officers manage applications to schools, to GP registers, to the Home Office and to the DWP for benefits, the volunteer teams make welcoming and befriending visits. The support is tailor-made to the family, but often includes such matters as explaining the transport services locally, explaining how the NHS operates or the refuse and recycling system. Families are often taken out to visit local attractions or to be shown the shopping facilities. Befriending volunteers can appeal by means of WhatsApp groups for household items needed by the families or apply to the trustees for funding for an item, if a suitable donation cannot be found.
- **English teaching.** In addition to befriending support, there is an experienced and dedicated team of teachers who supplement the English lessons provided under the various resettlement schemes by local adult education providers. Often the small group teaching or individual coaching TWR provides is more

successful, especially with those who have limited experience of education or who are illiterate in their first language.

At 31st March 2022, most adult teaching was happening online, using laptop computers provided with grants to TWR. However, some was taking place in person and volunteers were once again going in to provide support in schools, both primary and secondary. This school support is especially important as many children are placed straight into mainstream classes where they are unable to access the curriculum because their English is so weak.

- **Social Support.** The charity normally tries to organise social gatherings and events, but the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings in Spring 2021 meant that the usual Eid Picnic could not be held. The trustees reviewed the feasibility of gatherings on a number of occasions, but concluded that since many of the refugees have complex medical conditions, it would be wise to wait until the risks of infection subsided. In the meantime, volunteers kept contact with refugee families either remotely or by doorstep or garden meetings or socially distanced coffees. Some family teams arranged out door visits to Hastings or the Hop Farm for their families. However, in March 2022, the trustees decided it would be possible to hold a celebration of the Afghan/Iranian New Year at Now Ruz, 20th March. The newly arrived Afghan families in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone were invited and brought to Tonbridge where celebratory refreshments were provided as well as activities for the children – art and craft and a seed planting activity.

The trustees had planning underway to celebrate Eid with the usual picnic in May 2022.

- **Transport.** It is often difficult for the charity's beneficiaries to get to medical or dental appointments or to social gatherings held by the charity by using public transport. TWR maintains a WhatsApp group of volunteers who are willing to provide lifts for these appointments or occasions. The charity also provides bicycles and related safety equipment for beneficiaries where this is needed and, for some beneficiaries, the trustees have agreed to provide some assistance to fund driving lessons. This is so expensive that it has been limited to cases where the beneficiary needs to drive in order to work or where the beneficiary is already a driver and only needs a few refresher classes to enable a UK driving test to be taken.

Overview – objective 2 to advance the education of the public about the position and needs of refugees and asylum seekers

In summer 2021, TWR started to participate in events once again. The following opportunities were taken to publicise the plight of refugees and asylum seekers in the months up to 31st March 2022:

- In August 2021, TWR had a stall at Tonbridge Calling on the theme of 'What would you take?' The aim was to make the choices faced by refugees real to the public. The event coincided with the fall of Kabul to the Taliban and the activity required people to decide what they would take/leave. Items were displayed to make the choices more real. It initiated some touching conversations with adults and children. There was a photographic display showing the meagre belongings that many refugees left their homes carrying.
- In September 2021, the Dragon Boat Races again provided an opportunity to engage with the public and inform them about our work in addition to its primary purpose of fund raising.
- In October 2021, the Chair made a presentation to the congregation at Tonbridge Parish Church about the work of the charity and wrote an article for the December 2021 Parish Church magazine, Perspectives.
- In early 2022, a trustee made a presentation to the congregation at St. Stephen's church.
- In early 2022, a trustee made a presentation at Hillview School for Girls about the life of a refugee.
- A further assembly was led by two trustees at Sussex Road Primary School
- The Chair was invited to the FEAST Food Larder with one of our beneficiaries to explain the requirements for a halal diet so the Larder could more effectively stock for refugees suffering hardship.
- The Chair and several volunteers were involved in a campaign with Citizens' UK to persuade MPs to support an initiative to regularise the position of undocumented migrants. The aim is to protect them from modern slavery and exploitation and allow them to take a proper place in the workforce benefiting from the protection of employment laws. It provides a societal benefit too because of tax and National Insurance payments and by filling jobs in those sectors now suffering manpower shortages, such as agriculture or care sectors.

Management and day to day running of the charity

The Trustees normally hold a monthly trustees' meeting and in this financial year these were online. Three or four times a year, there is an Open Meeting for the charity's supporters and again these were online. Reports of the charity's activities were given and supporters invited to ask questions. In months where there is an Open meeting, a trustees' meeting is not always held. The AGM was held on 7th December 2021 online.

There are no employees and all the support given to beneficiaries and the administration of the charity is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers can reclaim expenses and a mileage allowance, but many volunteers simply carry those expenses themselves.

There were six trustees at the 31st March 2022. In addition, there were approximately 65 volunteers including trustees and further supporters and donors of household

items. Any volunteer who has direct contact with refugee families through befriending, teaching or giving lifts follows a recruitment process involving an application form, an interview with two trustees and the taking up of two references. They must also have an enhanced DBS certificate to cover both vulnerable adults and children and agree to the confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding policies.

Family teams deal directly with the beneficiary families, but report regularly to the trustees on what is needed. The two teaching coordinators also report back to the trustees on a regular basis. This is made easier because many of the trustees are themselves on family teams or are teachers.

Thanks to a grant from KCC to provide safeguarding training, volunteers who work closely with families were placed on online safeguarding courses to cover the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the Safeguarding Lead and her deputies took further additional courses. Not all these were completed by 31st March, but in many cases they had been.

Financial Review for the year ended 31st March 2022.

The Accounts are attached and show net income of £31,153.87. Of this, £29,098.91 was from donations, including proceeds from the Dragon Boat Race, some large individual donations and £2000 in grant income. Some of these donations were to a restricted fund to pay for a student's university fees.

The Charity's running costs amounted to £1611.35. This represents a payment of £1170.00 to pay for safeguarding training for all volunteers who were actively involved with refugees as befrienders or teachers. £215.04 was paid as an insurance premium for the charity's public liability insurance. This leaves administrative costs at £226.31 and shows the trustees' focus on efficiency.

A total of £6026.78 was paid direct to, or for the benefit of, refugees as resettlement costs. This included payments for IT equipment and funding broadband, payments for driving lessons, assistance for paying household bills, clothes, furniture and travel costs for such things as Family or Young Person Railcards. £440 was paid for clubs and activities for school children and £385 for educational resources as part of the English teaching programme. This was not a normal year because of the effects of the pandemic and expenditure on activities for children and on teaching resources would usually be higher.

The trustees of TWR reviewed the procedures for making payments in February 2022 to ensure that the charity's funds were safeguarded. Every payment made from the bank account must be second authorised by one of three trustees after the payment is input by the Treasurer. A trustee may authorise expenditure up to £50, but above £50 a second trustee must agree in advance.

TWR does not have any outstanding guarantees to any other person or organisation. It does not have any debts secured by a charge on property. None of the trustees or persons related to them receive remuneration in any form and there are no transactions with any trustee or related parties.

The trustees aim to retain a reserve of six months' average expenditure in the bank and this was adhered to in the financial year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Achievements and Performance

1. Despite the continuing restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, TWR maintained its record of support to refugees arriving in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone sourcing or purchasing household items, clothing and shoes, bicycles and safety equipment and issuing hardship payments in cases of need.
2. Volunteers kept in touch with families through phone calls, WhatsApp messages and (when permitted under Covid regulations) by doorstep or socially distanced visits. They offered lifts for important medical appointments and made vaccination appointments for their beneficiaries and gave lifts to those appointments.
3. The adult and school teaching teams continued teaching by adapting to teach online when that was necessary or by returning to the school environment as soon as they reopened.
4. Despite anxieties about the effect of the pandemic on fundraising, TWR was successful in increasing its funding for the financial year by a combination of record proceeds at the Dragon Boat Race, the kindness of regular donors and grant income.

Strategic Aims at 31st March 2022.

1. To continue welcoming refugee families, including through our befriending and English programmes.
2. To support refugees with educational and vocational courses
3. To maintain a hardship fund for families struggling financially
4. To encourage families to set and achieve their own goals, encouraging self sufficiency
5. To share more responsibility with family teams and other volunteers

This report was approved by the trustees at a meeting on 1st December 2022 and signed on their behalf by

J. M. Blossley

Chair of Trustees



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2022
Charity no (if any) 1173758

Set out on pages

1-6, 8, 9 (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 31/03/2022.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").


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

**Independent
examiner's statement**

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:

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

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

Signed:  Date: 6-DEC-22

Name: Matthew Sellen

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

Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Address:

[Empty address field]



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES	No (if any) 1173758
----------------------------------------------------	------------------------

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2021	To	Period end date 31/03/2022
---------------------	---------------------------------	----	-------------------------------

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
One off donations (inc fundraising)	15,566	9,506	-	25,072	7,862
Regular giving	4,027	-	-	4,027	2,691
Sales (greeting cards)	55	-	-	55	477
Grants	2,000	-	-	2,000	8,490
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	21,648	9,506	-	31,154	19,520
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	21,648	9,506	-	31,154	19,520
A3 Payments					
Running costs	1,611	-	-	1,611	439
Refugee support	6,028	-	-	6,028	13,848
Activity fund	440	-	-	440	126
Teaching resources	385	-	-	385	312
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	8,464	-	-	8,464	14,725
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	8,464	-	-	8,464	14,725
Net of receipts/(payments)	13,184	9,506	-	22,690	4,795
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	11,052	1,070	-	12,122	7,327
Cash funds this year end	24,236	10,576	-	34,812	12,122

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	24,236	10,576	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	24,236	10,576	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name		Date of approval
	L. R. Mead	Lee Mead		
	J. M. Blessley	J. M. BLESSLEY		1/12/2021

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES

England & Wales - Charity number 1173758

Accounts

TONBRIDGE WELCOMES REFUGEES ANNUAL REPORT

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

December 2021

Reference and administration details

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees
c/o Burns & Co
2a Bank Street
Tonbridge TN9 1BL

Registered charity number: 1173758

Trustees:

Jane Blessley
Ruth Connelly (Chair)
Jan Lloyd
Nicky McGregor
Lee Mead (Treasurer)
Fiona O'Brien

Term(s) of office:

January 2019 -
July 2017- July 2020, July 2020 -
January 2020 -
December 2018 -
August 2020 -
July 2017 – July 2020, July 2020 -

Structure, governance and management

Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees was registered with the Charity Commission as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) on 11 July 2017. Our governing document is our constitution (foundation model).

Appointment of trustees

The charity's first trustees were Johanna Elderfield, Fiona O'Brien and Ruth Connelly (serving from July 2017 for an initial period of three years). Subsequent trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity's trustees for a term of three years. Nicky McGregor was formally appointed a trustee at the AGM on 11th December 2018. Jane Blessley was appointed trustee at a trustees' meeting on 17th January 2019. Jan Lloyd was appointed as trustee in January 2020 and Lee Mead became trustee and Treasurer in August 2020. Fiona O'Brien and Ruth Connelly were reappointed trustees in July 2020.

Objectives and Activities

Our charity's objects, as set out in our constitution, are as follows:

1. For the relief of those granted refugee status and their dependents, or those seeking asylum living (temporarily or permanently) in Kent.
 - The relief of financial hardship;
 - The preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
 - The advancement of their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. To advance the education of the public in general about the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Overview:

We work closely with Kent County Council and staff from their appointed social care provider, Clarion, to support refugees resettled under the government's **Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) which replaced it in February 2021** in our area of Kent, specifically in the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) area. In 2022, we also hope to be supporting families under the government's **Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ARCS)**. As Maidstone does not have a Welcomes Refugees Group, we have a group of volunteers working to support families within the Maidstone Borough Council area. Our Maidstone volunteers also work with some of our SVPRS families in TMBC, as sometimes their location is closer to Maidstone. The Maidstone team of volunteers complete their DBS with us. We also work very closely with our sister charities, Tunbridge Wells Welcomes Refugees and Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees.

We assist by assigning small teams of volunteers to support each family, by welcoming and befriending visits soon after initial arrival, sourcing household and other items, accompanying and/or giving lifts to appointments, advocating for their needs, all while cooperating closely with their designated Clarion support worker. Perhaps most importantly, we have an experienced and dedicated team of volunteer teachers who teach English to refugees, as a much-needed supplement to the English classes provided by local adult education providers and funded by the SVPRS and UKRS. More recently, we have identified secondary school children as a priority area, as they may arrive with beginner English, but they are placed into normal secondary school classes, sometimes with little support, so it is very difficult for them to access the National Curriculum.

Refugee resettlement in our area

When the UK government expanded the SVPRS in September 2015 to accept 20,000 refugees, predominantly from Syria, by 2020, the founding members of TWR, successfully lobbied our local council, TMBC, to commit to a target of welcoming ten families under the scheme. Currently, there are a total of eleven properties let under the Resettlement Schemes within Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone, providing homes for Syrian refugee families and a Sudanese family. The family units vary in size, but one young man who was originally resettled with his uncle and aunt's family now lives on his own. The first family who settled in Tonbridge in April 2016, moved in 2021 to be closer to friends and family members in the West Midlands.

Local landlords who agree to take part in the Resettlement Schemes, despite the fact that the funding only covers rent at local LHA rates (rather than a commercial rate), make the Schemes work. Thanks to them, families, who would otherwise be living in much worse conditions in countries bordering Syria or Sudan, are now living safely in our community and able to start rebuilding their lives.

As in 2020, in 2021 our operations have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, two families who were due to have arrived during the first lockdown in 2020 finally arrived in January and March 2021. They are settled in houses in Tonbridge and have their own family support teams and English teaching support is being provided to all the children and adults in those families who want it.

In January 2021, the Government introduced a new resettlement scheme, operational from April 2021, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). This was designed to assist, "any current or former Locally Employed Staff directly employed by HMG assessed to be at serious risk of threat to life ...regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served." Examples of the people covered by ARAP include army interpreters, cultural advisers and individuals working in counter-terrorism roles.

In August 2021, in response to the rapid Taliban advance and the fall of Kabul, the Government introduced a further scheme, the Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme (ARCS). ARCS is designed to provide support for vulnerable Afghan citizens.

The ACRS prioritises:

- those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law
- vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+)

These Afghan schemes have different provisions from those for the SVPRS and the UKRS. They provide for indefinite leave to remain to be granted on first arrival, with a path to Citizenship after five years. Under the SVPRS and UKRS indefinite leave to remain is only granted after five years. There are further differences in that the period during which support is provided by support workers is limited to 3 years rather than 5 years under the previous resettlement schemes. However, many of those arriving from Afghanistan under the ARAP are likely to have a greater mastery of English than those arriving under the SVPRS or UKRS. Representations have been made to the MP for Tonbridge and Malling, Tom Tugendhat, about the shortcomings of the SVPRS and UKRS in an effort to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated. The most serious of the problems under the SVPRS and UKRS are caused by the application of the Benefit Cap to the refugee family's benefits on their first arrival when they may have so little English it is entirely unreasonable to expect them to find employment.

TMBC have pledged to support the resettlement of five Afghan families under ARAP and the ACRS over the next five years. One property has been secured and is currently being prepared and it is hoped the first family will arrive in the next month.

English teaching programme

For refugees and asylum seekers newly arrived in the UK, learning or improving English is vital to their future job prospects and longer-term settlement. **We support refugees' English language needs by running a volunteer-led ESOL teaching programme**, supplementing the official classes organised via the council.

Until lockdown in March 2020, we provided three forms of support:

1. Classes were held twice weekly in rooms kindly provided free by Tonbridge Parish Church,
2. Home visits from our volunteer teachers for those unable to access group classes for childcare or other reasons,
3. Some students were supported at school.

In March 2020 face-to-face classes stopped due to the pandemic. After we obtained grant funding for laptops for the families, we were able to continue to teach online using Zoom. Some families had insufficient skills or confidence to attempt this form of learning, but gradually more families are managing to take advantage of this help.

As of November 2021, nearly all adult teaching continues online, but since spring 2021, some teachers have been back in school to support both primary and secondary school students. We are very grateful to all the teachers who have familiarised themselves with new technology and continued to support both adults and children during this period. We hope to return to teaching in person with groups of adults in the future, but bearing in mind the medical vulnerability of some students, the need for them to travel on public transport and the continuing high infection rates in Kent, it has not yet seemed appropriate to return to teaching with groups of students in an enclosed space.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dora O'Brien, who has taken over coordinating adult English teaching, and to Eve Otley, who has taken over coordinating English teaching for children and to their fantastic teams of teachers who all go above and beyond to support our families, even in these particularly challenging times.

The teaching team works very effectively to provide an appropriate and personalised approach for all the students including those who are illiterate in their first language and who find the official provision of ESOL does not meet their specialised needs.

Employment opportunities for family members.

In 2020, we reported that our priority for 2021 would be to help find employment for members of the families and we set up a Jobs Group to assist in this. Unfortunately, owing first to the lockdowns and second to reluctance by Clarion to share information because of potential problems with GDPR regulations, this has not been as active as hoped. Early in the year, Clarion found job opportunities for some of the men at a fruit and packing warehouse in Paddock Wood. TWR assisted by attending an induction and providing notes of the many regulations, which Clarion had translated into Arabic to distribute to the men working there. However, the work was short-lived for a number of reasons. The contract was zero hours one where shifts could be cancelled at very short notice making it difficult to ensure employees would earn enough to avoid the benefit cap, the hours were very difficult and the work very heavy. All those who started at the warehouse have now left and many found themselves work at a car wash company where the manager is an Arabic speaker. Other families have found themselves jobs in construction or with a local Council.

Befriending / social support

There have been few opportunities to hold social gatherings this year because of the pandemic. TWR has reviewed the feasibility of gatherings on a number of occasions, but concluded that while infection rates remain high, it would not be appropriate to encourage purely social gatherings in an enclosed setting. Volunteers have kept in contact with families remotely, with doorstep/garden visits or socially distanced coffees when possible. Some family teams have organised outdoor visits to Hastings or to the Hop Farm for the families they support. TWR has provided lifts on a smaller scale than in earlier years especially for medical, dental, vaccination or other essential appointments.

Achievements and performance

- TWR has supported refugee families in both financial and material ways by e.g. funding broadband contracts to enable them to keep in touch with loved ones, supplying household goods, bikes, computers, items of furniture and other needed items, many of which have been sourced as donations. We have also funded extra-curricular activities (such as football clubs or tennis coaching) which would otherwise be too expensive for our beneficiaries to take part in.
- Our **English language teaching programme**, which started running in February 2017, has provided refugees, many of whom have very little or no English on arrival, with expert, small group and, when appropriate, individual tuition. This has supplemented the official English language provision for adults. In the last year, TWR has also increased the number of school children

who receive English support. Currently, six secondary school children are receiving tuition and one primary school child. In total, volunteer teachers spend 33 hours every week in school term supporting children and 34 hours a week in term time supporting adults. These figures include contact time, preparation and travelling time. A grand total of 67 hours each week. As we are shortly expecting new families to arrive, there is room to recruit further teachers and we would also like to be able to offer more support for mathematics.

- In terms of **community engagement**, we were able to participate in Tonbridge Calling in August 2021. The TWR stall main activity invited individuals to look at items refugees might wish to take in a hurry when they were forced to flee, which were displayed in a suitcase. Participants in the activity filled in postcards showing what they would take and what they would be sad to leave. This activity attracted a lot of attention and some very moving and thoughtful responses from both children and adults. The event coincided with the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and many individuals approached TWR to make known their horror at what was taking place and promise support.

A few weeks later, TWR took part in the annual Dragon Boat Race. This raised a record breaking £4063.29 and provided further opportunities to make contact with the public and explain our role in helping in the resettlement of refugees. These activities require a great deal of organisation and hard work and the trustees extend their thanks to Nicky McGregor and her team of helpers.

Volunteers have been invited to speak at Tonbridge Parish Church and St. Stephen's Church recently about the charity's work and we are grateful for the churches' help in publicising the need for landlords to enable refugees to be resettled and for offers of help in finding household items for the families. Tonbridge Parish Church invited us to write an article for the December issue of Perspectives. This details our role in resettlement and includes a contribution from a family member of one of our resettled families.

• **New Volunteers and Safeguarding training**

This year has seen a large growth in the number of volunteers joining TWR. There have been 23 new volunteers since the beginning of 2021 and 12 of those have joined since the fall of Kabul in August. Many other individuals have also made contact through our website and have offered help. Our robust recruitment process involving an application form, interview, the taking up of references and a full

enhanced DBS check for each new volunteer takes a considerable amount of administrative time and is ably managed by trustees, Jan Lloyd and Nicky McGregor. It is essential that TWR adopts this process to protect the vulnerable individuals settling under the Schemes.

In autumn 2021, TWR secured a grant of £1000 from KCC for the provision of safeguarding training for volunteers. It is, however, difficult to find suitable courses which really match the needs of settling refugees. The trustees are currently researching to find suitable courses to cover safeguarding for both adults and children and volunteers who have contact with families will be invited to do an online course shortly and to update their Prevent training.

We hope to deploy some of our new volunteers in family befriending teams shortly and we plan to adopt new methods with the families we support by encouraging them to become more independent by setting their own attainable goals and working towards them to improve their English, gain employment and the like.

We also wish to form a team whose function will be to help organise fundraising events and a second team to organise social gatherings and outings so the families have a chance to socialise which has been missed during the pandemic.

- **Fundraising:**

In late 2020, TWR launched a drive to encourage regular donations by its Refugee Pledge, asking donors to subscribe the cost of a coffee each month. This has been a great success. Our regular giving now amounts to £5142 per year. Our regular donors are now 160, up from 8 a year ago. Thank you to all of them.

- The Dragon Boat Race raised £4063.29.
- The Grants group set up in 2020 raised £3490 (£2490 from the Lottery Fund for laptops and £1000 from KCC for safeguarding training) in grants and continues to

find grants opportunities and make applications. The trustees would like to thank Philip Badman, Caroline Field and Farzana Mohamedbhai for their work.

- One of our ongoing aims is to minimise our running costs, we would like to say thank you again to Dominic Burns of **Burns & Co. accountants** for allowing us to use their office as a c/o address.

Financial review

Our financial report provided by our Treasurer, Lee Mead, is attached.

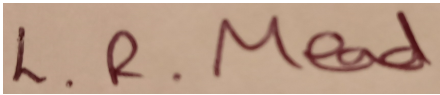
Strategic objectives for 2022

1. To continue welcoming refugee families, including through our befriending and English programmes
2. To support refugees with educational and vocational courses
3. To maintain a hardship fund for families struggling financially
4. To encourage families to set and achieve their own goals, encouraging self sufficiency
5. To share more responsibility with family teams and other volunteers

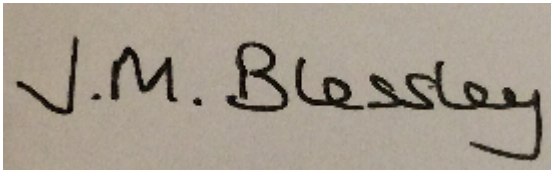
Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature	
Full Name	Lee Mead
Position	Treasurer
Date	21 January 2022

Signature	
Full Name	Nicky McGregor
Position	Trustee
Date	22/01/2022

Signature	
Full Name	Jane Mary Blessley
Position	Chair
Date	22/01/22