



## Trustees' Annual Report for the Financial Year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> 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



<b>Report to the trustees/ members of</b>	Tonbridge Welcomes Refugees		
<b>On accounts for the year ended</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	1173758
<b>Set out on pages</b>	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:**




 <b>CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES</b>	Charity Name		No (if any)		<b>CC16a</b>
	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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations (inc fundraising)	17,120	-	-	17,120	13,868
Grants	5,000	7,000	-	12,000	8,500
Interest	682	-	-	682	59
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>22,802</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,802</b>	<b>22,427</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>22,802</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,802</b>	<b>22,427</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
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
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>15,486</b>	<b>8,288</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,774</b>	<b>23,054</b>

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

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

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

			-	
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	