



Rhif Elusen / Charity no. 1174459

Aberaid Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Presented at the Annual General Meeting, Morlan Centre, Wednesday 13th December.

I am delighted to say that this is the first AGM that we have been able to hold in person since 2019. Even last year it was on Zoom. This year we wanted to make it more of a social occasion and extend out to our wider constituency particularly those coming to Morlan.

About Aberaid

As many of you will know Aberaid is a charity set up in 2015 in response to the crisis in Syria. Its aim is to support and raise funds for refugees settling in the Aberystwyth area. Since then the area has welcomed some people from Afghanistan and many more from Ukraine. In 2017 Aberaid raised sufficient funds to undertake a Community Sponsorship scheme to find housing and pay costs to settle a family here. That family has now been here for nearly five years and has just recently achieved the 'right to remain' status. During the summer holidays the whole family were even able to go back to Jordan for a few weeks to visit relations (with some financial help from us).

By contrast, most refugee families are supported through government schemes which are administered through Ceredigion Council and, until last month, with paid workers through the Red Cross. In November the Council ended the contract with the Red Cross and now the paid support is undertaken directly by the council but with some of the same workers.

Aberaid is an entirely voluntary organisation but it works closely with the Council and the paid workers.

The charity currently has five trustees (Moirá Vincentelli (Chair), Michael Freeman (Treasurer), Medi James, Vivien Geuter (Minutes Secretary), Andrea Hammel)

In October one of the founder trustees, Sion Meredith, resigned as he has had a long period of ill health. I would like to thank him on behalf of Aberaid for all his devoted work over the years with Aberaid and wish him well for a speedy return to good health.

Meetings attended by Trustees

- Aberaid attends the Ceredigion Council Refugee Resettlement Meetings These meet three times a year and have representation from many different bodies including police, NHS, education and the fire service.
- Aberaid is also invited to talk about its work and these are sometimes an opportunity for inviting donations. Michael and Medi have been active in this.
- In May Michael and Moira attended 'Meet the community and voluntary organisations?' at the National Library of Wales, and Michael manned an Aberaid stall at the University's Peace week event in the National Library.

Morlan Centre Meetings

We have ceased to hold zoom committee meetings and since the spring have found it easier to keep in touch through the Morlan meeting.

The most significant initiative this year has been the Wednesday meetings at Morlan Centre in conjunction with the 'Warm room' opening of the building. We are very grateful to the Morlan Centre for offering us this meeting place and especially Eifion Roberts who has supported us so willingly. The main aim is to offer an informal meeting to encourage English speaking (and even sometimes Welsh). It has proved to be a useful drop-in place where people can make friends or come for specific advice when needed. We have now agreed that the recently appointed Council workers, Alison Dunnette and Luned Jones will join us to offer their services.

At Morlan we have held half-term meetings for children to attend. We kept running throughout the summer holidays and Peter Stevenson did a storytelling event. By far our best attended event was the fundraiser organised by the Syrian Dinner Project to raise funds in response to the Syrian / Turkey Earthquake in February. Money was sent directly to a charity in Syria. A regular feature has been the attendance of Rob Allen, Community Development Outreach for NHS who has brought in other staff including last month two midwives. It was a useful opportunity to exchange information particularly in relation to the need for interpreters/ translators.

Fundraising

Aberaid needs to keep raising funds which tends to be easier for a sad reason – at moments of crisis – recently in 2021 for Afghanistan and in 2022 for Ukraine. Ceredigion Council is not able to accept donations directly and Aberaid offered to accept and administer such donations. Although we prefer donations to be 'for refugees generally' money is often donated for a particular group. We have had to devise ways of distributing these funds in a fair way. Since 2022 we agreed to allocate £200 to any Ukrainian family as they came to the area for any immediate needs and we respond to other specific requests – laptops, baby equipment, bicycles, online courses.

Since the autumn 2022 we decided to use the money more strategically and we have been able to offer a contribution to ongoing costs of rent for a limited period. The gap between what people receive on Universal Credit and the actual cost of housing means that it is hard to find properties in town. This is particularly relevant to Ukrainians as they move on from their hosted situation to living independently.

Other fundraising initiatives were at Easter on the Prom and in November - *Hope and Harmony*, a music and poetry evening in conjunction with the university. The funds were divided between Aberaid and Ukraine Train. In April we ran an appeal for medical equipment for Ukraine Train.

Art and cultural activities

I am passing round some sheets with photographs of different Aberaid events that have run over the past year.

Aberaid wishes to extend its huge thanks to all our members and supporters in the community especially our volunteers, trustees, members of the local Arabic-speaking community and council officials, all of whom have worked together to welcome refugees to the area.

Thank you, Diolch yn fawr.

Moiria Vincentelli

Chair Aberaid

ABERAID Accounts 9.11.2022 to 8.11.2023	
Balance on 9.11.2022	£10,763.46
Income Summary	

donations	£1,326.85
interest	£14.14
total income 2022-2023	£1,340.99
Expenditure Summary	
Deposit on accommodation	£461.00
Trauma Treatment training	£325.00
event, Christmas party	£50.00
event, Cardigan	£595.00
event, silk workshop	£245.00
Our family (Christmas present, travel and Leave to remain)	£1,600.00
Furniture	£1,015.99
£200 to 13 families, £100 to another	£2,700.00
rent support (4 properties)	£2,180.00
Student support	£1,125.00
Account fee	£60.00
total expenditure 2022-2023	£10,356.99
balance on 8.11.2023	£1,747.46