



Rhif Elusen / Charity no. 1174459

Aberaid Annual Report and financial statement 2025

About Aberaid

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 over seven years and achieved the 'right to remain' status in 2023. The family have been able to visit their family in Jordan during the summer holidays. They continue to do well in Aberystwyth and the three boys are happy and doing well at school. The eldest is now in the sixth-form at Penglais School. They would like to move to a larger house and have put in an application for social housing.

By contrast, most refugee families are supported through government schemes which are administered through Ceredigion Council. In November the Council ended the contract with the Red Cross and the three workers are now directly through the Ceredigion Council. We continue to work closely with them.

Aberaid is an entirely voluntary organisation, but it works closely with the Council workers. The charity currently has seven trustees (Moira Vincentelli (Chair), Michael Freeman (Treasurer), Medi James, Vivien Geuter (Minutes Secretary), Kathryn Dupont, Andrea Hammel, Caroline Clark. Vivien Geuter has decided to stand down from her role as a trustee and minutes secretary. With few formal meetings we no longer require a minutes secretary. Activities were largely organised through the regular Wednesday meetings at Morlan Community Centre until July 2025. Since the summer break we have met fortnightly at Capel Seion in Baker Street. In 2026 we will cease to meet regularly but will organise meetings for particular events.

Ceredigion Council Refugee Resettlement Meetings

A representative from Aberaid attends these online meetings normally three times a year, although in 2025 only two were held. They involve various community bodies such as the police, NHS, education services, and the fire service.

Public Engagement

Aberaid is sometimes invited to speak about its work at local events, which provide opportunities to seek donations. However, these invitations have decreased in recent years although we continue to undertake occasional fundraising. Aberaid trustees and volunteers remain active in related causes, such as peace vigils for Gaza. In June many people from Aberaid joined the red ribbon event in Aberystwyth in support of the people of Gaza.

On Wednesday 11th December 2024 Aberaid held a celebration on the liberation of Syria from the Assad regime. The meeting was filmed by BBC Cymru and some members of the group were interviewed and shown on the evening news that night.

Andrea Hammel organised a further exhibition for Aberystwyth Arts Centre *Unsettled Lives - War and Displacement in Wales* showing from June- October 2025 and later at the Senedd in Cardiff. The show included a model of Aleppo Castle by Mohamad Karkoubi and art works by Iryna Kolpakova and Victoria Kazymova. Many of our community attended the opening in Aberystwyth and four of our refugee members spoke at the event in Aberystwyth and again in Cardiff in November 2025.

Community Cohesion Grant

In the summer of 2024, Aberaid was successful in a grant application for a Community Cohesion Fund award to support our work and improve the exhibition display in the Morlan Centre. Between September 2024 and March 2025 weekly meetings were held in Morlan with varying numbers of local volunteers and incomers to the community including people from Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Nigeria, Canada and Egypt. The exhibition area was re-decorated by two Ukrainians and an improved display system organised. The first exhibition opened in December 2024 and showed the work of refugees living in the area: four Ukrainian artists, one Syrian blacksmith, a Ukrainian photographer and a nail art specialist. At the opening we were also able to enjoy the performance of a creative writing project organised by Naji Bakhti. The Syrian Dinner Project provided a light lunch. A second exhibition ran from February through till the summer and showed needlework and stitching from Ukraine, Syria as well as local stitchers and up-cyclers including a group of pieces arising from *Un-stitching Gazes*, a community project initiated by Berit Bliesman and Katy Budge from the university. In March Sarah Haxby organised The Textile Get Together where various stitching groups and individuals came together to present their work and share their skills and activities. Other presentations have included a sushi demonstration by Yana Savko who has since set up a pop-up business, a discussion about costume collecting for amateur drama (Caroline Clark) and a storytelling project inviting incomers to tell their folktales or stories (Elena Spagnuoli).

Regular meetings

Wednesday meetings have continued on a fortnightly basis throughout this year with a break over the summer after which we began to meet in Capel Seion in Baker Street. The council support workers call in most weeks sometimes to meet with particular members of the group who need some information or help with general matters. Rob Allen of NHS Wales visits the group from time to time. We always take the opportunity to practice English conversation and some discussion about current local issues. In the Autumn some members of the group have worked on a friendship quilt, a project led by Eleri Philips for the Welsh Refugee Council. The work will be shown around Wales in 2026. We also had a presentation from representatives of the Welsh Assembly explaining about the new arrangements for voting in Wales. Some Aberaid volunteers also attend the Coleg Ceredigion Thursday morning English practice class run by Sarah McKenna. We have held successful children's parties in post-Christmas and in the Spring and Autumn half-terms.

Prosvita Project

After the great success of the Kolyada Christmas play in December 2024 the Ukrainian families were keen to establish more regular meetings for young people to maintain language and culture activities. In the Autumn we raised funds to support the project led by Victoria Kazymova. The young people meet weekly and we are grateful to Capel Seion who generously offer their meeting room free of charge. The project culminated with a wonderful Kolyada nativity play held at Morlan on Sunday 14th December 2025. The characters in the play were represented by puppets made in a traditional technique and held up by all the different actors in the play. The event was followed by Ukrainian Christmas food offered to everyone in the packed hall.

Sudan Fundraising event

In October Aberaid held a fundraising coffee morning in Morlan for Sudan initiated by Amal Mohammad Saleh who is a loyal volunteer and sometimes Arabic translator. Ben Lake, our local MP gave an excellent speech and Amal was able to give a more personal account of the difficulties in Sudan which is so little publicised in the British media. The event raised over £1500 for the Sadagaat Charity which supports work in Sudan.

Medi James ensures there are regular reports of our activities in *Broaber 360* and the local Welsh newspaper, *Yr Angor*. *The Cambrian News* covered reports on the Sudanese fundraising event.

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, as well as the Morlan Centre and Capel Seion who offer their premises free of charge. All have worked together to welcome refugees and incomers to the area.

Moiria Vincentelli, Chair Aberaid

ABERAID Accounts 9.11.2024 to 8.11.2025	
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Balance on 9.11.2023	£1,984.00
Income Summary	
General donations	£423.13
donations for Ukrainian project	£1,150.00
donations for Syrian project	£1,588.58
in memory of Adnan Demirel	£355.00
Welsh Refugee Council, Grant	£2,000.00
interest	£2.88
Total income 2023-2024	£5,519.59
Expenditure Summary	
Morlan art (grant funded)	£1,719.43
Shaping Nations (grant funded)	£1,749.62
Insurance	£56.00
Syrian Project	£1,543.58
Ukrainain project	£300.00
web site fees	£38.50
Bank account fee	£60.00
total expenditure 2023-2024	£5,467.13
balance on 8.11.2025	£2,036.46