

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

England & Wales · Charity number 1177624

Details

Other names SWINDON CITY OF SANCTUARY

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2018-03-20

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

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:(I) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL, ESPECIALLY IN SWINDON, ABOUT THE ISSUES RELATING TO REFUGEES AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM(II) TO PROVIDE OR ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR RECREATION OR OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATIONS IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE NEED OF SUCH FACILITIES(III) THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY PROMOTING ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS(IV) THE PREVENTION AND RELIEF OF POVERTY AMONGST THOSE GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM IN SWINDON

Activities: Promote a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon with a focus on those seeking sanctuary. We do this by bringing people and organisations in our community together, providing practical support through projects, running community events, raising awareness and campaigning for social justice, therefore contributing to the wider, national movement that is City of Sanctuary.

Classification

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

Geography

- Swindon
- Wiltshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-04-30	£67,244	£93,005	-	-
2024-04-30	£63,479	£97,194	-	-
2023-04-30	£49,191	£37,999	-	-
2022-04-30	£55,706	£41,498	-	-
2021-04-30	£48,883	£31,193	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alrazi Suliman		2024-08-27
Ben Jackson		2025-04-30
John Andrew Lavery		2024-12-17
Lindsay Jane Gutteridge		2025-10-01
Moses Lubanda		2020-04-21
Serena Juul		2020-04-21

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

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Accounts

Swindon City of Sanctuary



Annual Report

May 2024 – April 2025

Swindon City of Sanctuary Registered Charity 1177624

HEADLINES

This year was one of continued growth and impact for us. With a settled team of four staff members, we had the opportunity to promote welcome and inclusion across Swindon with greater reach and focus.

The support of our incredible volunteers and Trustees, dedicating over **500** hours of volunteering, was invaluable and enabled us to continue expanding our work. Our Sectors and Awards Coordinator led the way in promoting our values by working across **3** different sectors in Swindon, with **6** organisations working towards Sanctuary Awards.

Our Schools' Coordinator continued to generate opportunities for Swindon schools to grow, learn, and embed welcome for all. Across the year, we delivered **20** CPD sessions in schools, connecting with **26** schools, and supported staff in embedding sanctuary values into everyday learning. We said farewell to our wonderful FABs Coordinator, who leaves a lasting impact through their work supporting schools to embed literacy and participation for multilingual children and their families. FAB boxes are now being used in **16** Swindon schools.

The changing, turbulent landscape for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon meant that after **7** years, we said goodbye to the We're Open community evenings. We reflected on the many years of shared community, friendships, and connections fostered there. We are incredibly grateful to our brilliant volunteers, without whom this project would not have been possible. We are pleased that We're Open Families continues to grow, offering a welcoming, creative space for families with young children and recorded **703** visits this year alongside many collaborative sessions with other Swindon organisations.

This year again, we saw a rise in negative media coverage and far-right action, creating challenges and barriers to promoting welcome. In response, we increased our campaigning, both locally and nationally, including issues such as the Bibby Stockholm and the Rwanda Scheme, and worked with MPs, Councillors, schools, and community members to highlight acts of welcome and the rights of people seeking sanctuary. Despite these challenges, the response from Swindon's community remained overwhelmingly positive, with more schools, organisations, and businesses wanting to collaborate and champion our values.

"Welcome" remains our word of the year. This year, like every year, welcome is the thread that weaves throughout all our work; we focused on supporting other organisations to embed this within their work too.

As we reflect on the year, we are grateful to everyone who continually supported and embraced Swindon City of Sanctuary. To all those who work to create welcome, make space for all, and speak up for sanctuary, we thank you for being part of this journey.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025–26, we aim to build on this year's successes by deepening our work in schools, expanding our awards work into multiple new sectors, and focusing on projects that strengthen our community partnerships. We plan to explore new ways to amplify the voices of people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, embed welcome in additional sectors, and continue responding to emerging challenges in a supportive and inclusive way. Our focus remains on creating meaningful connections, fostering understanding, and ensuring that everyone in Swindon feels valued, supported, and heard.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

6

Organisations working towards Sanctuary Awards

100+

Events in the community

703

Visits to We're Open Families

175

Visits to We're Open

6

Creative collaborations with Swindon organisations

20

CPD sessions in schools

200

People with lived experience involved with our work

500+

Hours of volunteering

16

schools using FAB Fusion boxes with multilingual students

23

Schools directly connected with our work

2

Campaigns promoting the rights of people seeking sanctuary

7

Volunteers with lived experience of seeking sanctuary or migration

TRUSTEES' NOTE

It's been another year of change and as we remain hugely grateful to our funders who enable us to undertake our work, and to the wonderful people of our local community in Swindon who encourage and support our work, it's quite clear that what we do is now more necessary than ever. With the rise in far-right hatred, global instability, and war and the mass displacement of people due to conflict, it is important that people who arrive and live in Swindon are warmly welcomed here.

We have taken significant strides this year to expand our impact. A key focus has been creating spaces where the community feels welcomed. We're Open Families continues to grow, providing opportunities for families to meet, build support networks, and decrease isolation. Our Sectors of Sanctuary continues to grow. Increasingly, organisations are reaching out to promote welcome and positive change within their work.

As the political narrative around seeking sanctuary and migration continues to polarise, we remain committed to working with all members of our local community, including MPs and Councillors from across the political spectrum, to ensure Swindon remains a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place.

We would like to thank the National Lottery Community Fund for their ongoing support and guidance, as well as Swindon and Wiltshire Community Foundation, South Swindon Parish Council, Co-op Communities Fund, Respond & Adapt, Postcode Local Trust, Nationwide and Magic Little Grants for their invaluable funding contributions.



OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTS

Swindon City of Sanctuary is a registered charity (with CIO status) in Swindon, we seek to build a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon, with a focus on people who are seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.

Our work focuses on celebrating our diverse town. We do this by bringing people and organisations together, raising awareness and campaigning for fairness and inclusivity.

Our Charitable Objects are:

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
- To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations, in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit, by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds
- The prevention and relief of poverty



OUR VALUES

Trust:

We understand that those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

Inclusive:

Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each person with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We actively and equally value the contribution that all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who benefit make and involve them meaningfully in decisions about our work.

Objective:

Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity, which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused. We ensure to work ethically in all we do and who we work with, as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

Informed:

Across our organisation we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create better understanding between us all.

Inspirational:

We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place for all who live here. We believe in generous leadership and that the best work relies on different experiences and perspectives. We seek out the best ideas, wherever they come from.

Positive & Committed:

We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

SECTORS AND AWARDS

People seeking sanctuary experience high levels of hate crime, racism and prejudice which can lead to people feeling isolated within their communities. To combat this, we work to bring people and organisations together to raise awareness and increase understanding about seeking sanctuary and migration.

One of the ways we do this is through our Sanctuary Awards programme, where we collaborate with organisations to promote welcome and sanctuary within their contexts. The Sectors of Sanctuary Awards are awareness raising programmes that give a platform to the voices of people seeking sanctuary so that they can be heard by those who might otherwise never hear them.

The awards are grounded in three core principles: Learn, Embed, and Share.



LEARN

We encourage individuals and organisations to learn about the experiences and challenges faced by those seeking sanctuary. This involves deepening understanding, dismantling stereotypes, and fostering empathy.



EMBED

We work to embed practices that support people seeking sanctuary in every aspect of our community, from housing and education to health and employment.



SHARE

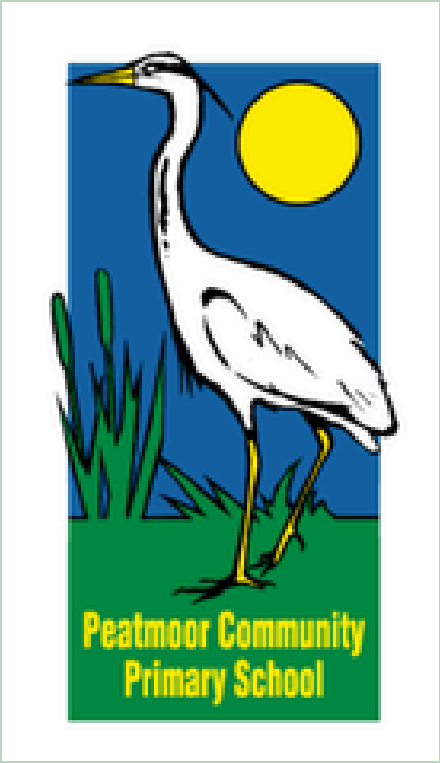
We aim to share positive stories of sanctuary, celebrating contributions made by people seeking sanctuary and amplifying their voices.

SECTORS AND AWARDS

ARTS OF
SANCTUARY



SCHOOLS OF
SANCTUARY



BOROUGH OF
SANCTUARY



SECTORS AND AWARDS

This year, we worked in three sectors:

BOROUGH OF SANCTUARY

In September, the Swindon Borough Council Cabinet voted to start the process of becoming a Borough of Sanctuary.

What does this mean in practice?

- ➡ It's a formal awards process that recognises and rewards good practice and progress in promoting welcome.
- ➡ It recognises a borough-wide commitment, signalling to people seeking sanctuary that Swindon is a place where they will find safety, opportunity, and community.
- ➡ It promotes a whole council approach to embedding 'welcome' and 'sanctuary' in the services they offer.
- ➡ It's also an opportunity to work in partnership with other councils and boroughs across the UK who share similar values.

Swindon Borough Council's Borough of Sanctuary steering group has this year organised two forums addressing key challenges such as health, housing, and community for people seeking sanctuary. These forums have sparked vital conversations and led to practical steps toward improving the experience for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon, through the teams that support them and to make Swindon a more welcoming place. We commend Swindon Borough Council's ongoing commitment to promoting welcome and setting an example for other communities to follow.

ARTS OF SANCTUARY

The Arts play a vital role in creating a culture of welcome, challenging the status quo, and shaping the kind of society we hope to live in. Art and creativity can inspire new ways of thinking and feeling, helping ordinary people understand the realities for those making difficult journeys. Arts Stream of Sanctuary is all about celebrating the arts organisations working with people seeking sanctuary, telling stories of migration, and bringing communities together.

Create Studios continue to pave the way as the first Swindon Arts organisation to gain their award. This year, Create Studios worked towards the final stages of obtaining their award with their application showcasing their incredible and impactful community projects and work. This process included developing a panel to appraise the award – a process filled with collaborative working and making space to hear about the experiences within the arts from people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery pledged to become Swindon's first Museum of Sanctuary, and we are excited to see this process take place.

Our Sectors work has been made possible by an award from the National Lottery Community Fund.

SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY

Our work in schools continued to be one of our greatest successes and has grown from strength to strength - it's been a busy year for our Swindon Schools of Sanctuary!

Throughout the year, we continued to work closely with **17** primary and **6** secondary schools to support them in embedding the values of welcome, belonging and safety. Our Schools' Coordinator supported Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and East Wichel Primary School in preparing their formal applications, helping to embed sanctuary values throughout their school communities. The applications are progressing well and we hope to see these schools and more become Schools of Sanctuary next year.

Our established Schools of Sanctuary continued to lead by example, with Lawn Manor Academy hosting their fourth annual Celebration of Welcomes event. This year saw another inspiring evening, bringing together students, staff, families, and members of the wider community. More than **40** new Welcome Ambassadors took on roles as changemakers in their schools, promoting welcome, belonging and friendship. This work reflects the ongoing growth and commitment across Swindon's schools to promoting welcome and community.

Our other School of Sanctuary, Peatmoor Primary School, were also busy. Along with some staff support, the Welcoming Committee moved into action. Inspired by ideas developed following the Voices of Welcome Conference in November 2023, they began shaping and activating their 2024-25 Welcome Campaign.

In November, Welcome Ambassadors from Lawn Manor Academy and members of the Welcoming Committee from Peatmoor Primary School presented more details about their Welcome Campaigns and other aspects of their role, at a regional meeting of SENDCos in Swindon. A brilliant opportunity for young changemakers to have their voices heard and their actions applauded.

26 schools received our Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network News Updates throughout the year, keeping them connected and informed about activities, resources, and opportunities to participate in the wider network. We welcome schools to work with us in many different capacities, not just through our Schools of Sanctuary Awards programme.

Our Schools' Coordinator delivered CPD for school staff through termly Network meetings and through specific schools' requests. Our Schools' work has been developed with excellent guidance from, and in close collaboration with, the Schools of Sanctuary UK Network.



Schools working towards School of Sanctuary Award



Schools directly connected with our work



Swindon schools receiving updates on our work

WE'RE OPEN FAMILIES

We're Open Families continued to grow as a welcoming space for Swindon families to connect, share culture, and language, and take part in playful, creative learning. Swindon has a large population of families who have migrated here and are looking to make connections and build a community, so with this in mind, the sessions focus on bringing families together through literacy-focused activities, themed crafts, stories, and songs from around the world. With more than 15 languages spoken at We're Open Families, children and families add life to our sessions by sharing tales, traditions, and music from their homes.

This year we collaborated with even more organisations wanting to meet with families to hear their thoughts, offer signposts to services, and make connections with communities in Swindon. Collaborations focused on health, including Swindon Borough Council Oral Health providing essential guidance on children's oral health and hygiene, and educational, artistic, hands-on sessions with local author Kate Claxton and Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Across the year, we delivered 25 sessions, welcoming 703 total visits, including 361 children and 342 parents and carers. Families have become regular attendees, forming friendships and building confidence through shared creativity and expression.

25

Sessions delivered

703

Visits to We're Open Families

9

Collaborative sessions

15+

Languages spoken at the sessions

Before attending, I was unsure where to meet families. Now I feel more settled, confident, and connected in Swindon.



WE'RE OPEN COMMUNITY EVENING - A FOND FAREWELL

After seven wonderful years, we made the difficult decision to end our We're Open community evenings in December. We're Open's purpose was for those who attend to feel welcomed, to decrease the isolation and loneliness felt by many, and create a community where those who are new to Swindon feel able to build a life here. Over the years, the project provided a safe, warm, and inclusive space where visitors could enjoy activities, music, and food without the financial strain that these activities often have. We're Open offered practical relief alongside companionship and community.

Changes in Swindon, including the closure of several hotels, meant attendance was lower in recent years, yet the project continued to offer meaningful connections and support to all who came through its doors. This year we ran 34 evening sessions with 179 visits made possible by 306 hours of volunteer support.

We're Open offered a unique opportunity to bring together people seeking sanctuary and local residents, helping to overcome negative perceptions and foster understanding. By creating a space to interact, connect, and share experiences, We're Open built a community and encouraged conversations about what unites us, in a safe and welcoming environment. We fondly remember food lovingly prepared and shared, open mic nights with music and dancing from around the globe, powerful spoken word and poetry, shared stories with local MPs and Mayors and many wonderful and lasting friendships made.

We are incredibly grateful to our brilliant volunteers, without whom this project would not have been possible.

“We're open has been a place for me to come when I want to see friends. Everyone is kind and welcoming!”



Evening sessions



Visits to We're Open



Hours of volunteering



FAMILY ACTIVITY BOXES (FABs)

Our FAB Fusion boxes continue to support welcome and inclusion in the community within Swindon Schools. FAB are designed to support teaching staff in their spoken and written literacy work with children from multilingual families, who are proficient in their home languages but new to English. FABs provide a free, high-quality resource that supports literacy and encourages conversations about welcome, home, journeys of migration and celebrating cultural diversity, especially important in a climate where many children and families feel isolated.

This year we officially launched FAB Fusion at a brilliant community event. Our FABs Coordinator introduced the project through her own experience as a primary school teacher and parent with lived experience of migration from Syria fleeing conflict and destruction followed by her hopes for FABs impact: to see multilingual families new to English connecting with their children's schools; for multilingual children to see and hear that their languages matter; for multilingual learners and their English-speaking peers to play, read and learn together through supportive small group intervention in their classrooms.

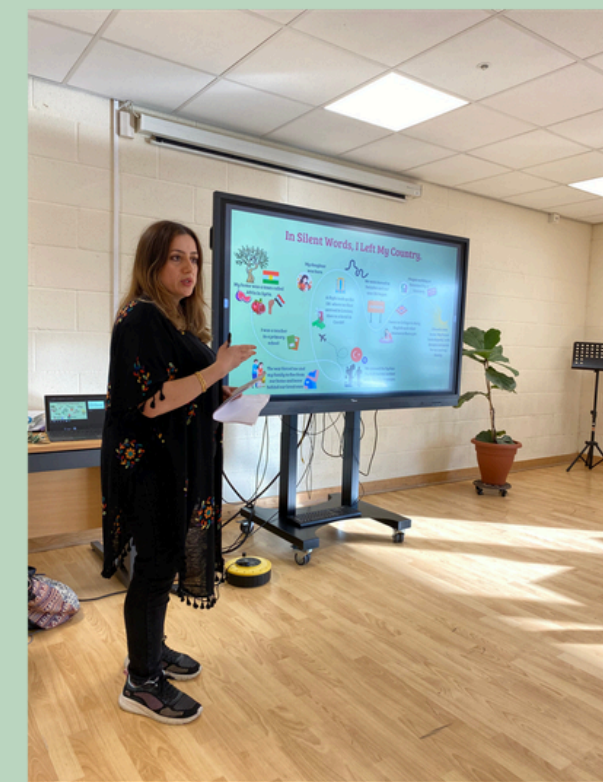
The event contained an inspiring interview, by Swindon children's writer Kate Claxton, with fellow children's writer, Wendy Meddour, whose books, Lubna and Pebble, The Friendship Bench and Sunny and the Birds, feature in some of our FAB Fusion boxes.

Opening the box, and then the bags to discover what's inside, is a great way to engage curious children – and adults! What a wonderful collection of quality resources to bring children together.

FABs have reached over **2000** people across **16** Swindon schools. We held **18** sessions in schools working with over **100** teaching staff to support them in using the boxes with children. Each box was adapted based on the school's needs, ensuring the most common languages spoken in that school community were included in the multilingual resources and books. The leadership of our FABs Coordinator helped children, teachers, and families connect deeply with the materials and inspired teachers to engage further with embedding welcome in their schools. We also used the boxes with families attending our We're Open Families sessions.

FABs show that well-designed, accessible resources can make a real difference. When children are able to explore stories in their home languages, they gain confidence and a sense of belonging.

This work has been made possible by an award from Postcode Local Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery.



SPEAK UP FOR SANCTUARY

As a campaigning and awareness-raising organisation, education of the community remained at the forefront of our work. With the rise in negative and divisive rhetoric surrounding the experiences of people seeking sanctuary, it was more important than ever to speak up for sanctuary and to call others to do the same. We used email and social media campaigns to keep the community updated on current events such as the scrapping of the Rwanda Scheme, and closure of Bibby Stockholm.

In response to far-right action this summer, we engaged with local and regional media to highlight positive examples of welcome and community cohesion in Swindon. We shared a public statement condemning the violence and promoting acts of welcome. The statement was picked up by Wiltshire Greatest Hits Radio and other media outlets, reaching tens of thousands of listeners and showcasing constructive ways for individuals and organisations to respond to negativity.

This year we made a deliberate decision to use our voice to lead with positivity, setting clear boundaries with media: we highlighted campaigns for the rights of people seeking sanctuary, shared examples of community welcome, and condemned racist or bigoted narratives, while refraining from commenting on divisive political debates or incidents that could put others at risk. This meant that our community heard about seeking sanctuary in an informative, clear, and positive way.

We also continued to see welcome embedded systemically through our awards work. Swindon Borough Council is making strong progress towards its Borough of Sanctuary award including holding public forums to consult with partners and residents, raise awareness, and share achievements across the town. These forums combined advocacy, media engagement, and strategic partnership with local government. Connections like these help us to stand up and call for everyone to be involved in building a culture of welcome across Swindon.



Write to your MP

Speak from the heart and tell them exactly why this unfair law doesn't represent you.

People fleeing war and persecution deserve protection not punishment.

Ask them to represent you and your community by standing up against this new law.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Our work focuses on awareness raising and education of the community around the experience of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. Throughout the year, we met with members of the community in different settings to promote welcome and foster discussions about why diversity is so important.

Refugee Week 2024

Refugee Week is an important moment for us to celebrate the contribution of people seeking sanctuary in the UK and promote better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. It's an opportunity to create a programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that embody that year's theme. With Our Home as this year's theme, we led a series of events, open to all who wanted to join. The first included opportunities for the public to get creative and participate; 'What Makes a Home' children's storytelling and craft event where local author Kate Claxton read *Sunny and the Birds*, by Wendy Meddour and led a crafting session where children and their families made homes with words of welcome and love on them. Create Studios created a wonderful video showcasing Refugee Week events which can be viewed here [ADD](#)

We're Open focused on music and shared conversations; we held a food and games night which ended with songs from around the world. It was a fantastic week filled with celebration, awareness raising and joy. "Everybody should love each other, that is home for me."

Celebration of Welcomes– Lawn Manor Academy

For a fourth year running, Lawn Manor Academy hosted Swindon's Celebration of Welcomes evening in Refugee Week. The audience of invited VIPs in the community, family, friends and staff were treated to brilliant dance, music and poetry performances from Lawn Manor Academy students. There was a delicious array of world food tasters too, representing the exciting cultural diversity of Lawn Manor Academy. A small exhibition introduced Swindon City of Sanctuary and featured School of Sanctuary work and FAB Boxes.



CONNECTIONS IN EDUCATION

We have continued to strengthen and expand our connections within the education sector in Swindon, working with schools and educational professionals to embed welcome into everyday practice.

Supporting Teaching Colleagues through CPD

Our Schools' team ran **20** CPD sessions (Workshops and Meetings) over the course of the year. These Workshops and Meetings enabled colleagues attending to disseminate the information gained to the wider school community.

In July 2024, we contributed three workshop sessions to a whole staff CPD day at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy; the theme: Students who may face some sort of disadvantage in their education. 40% of the teaching staff attended our workshops which focused on exploring the experiences faced in schools by multilingual learners - especially those with lived experience of forced migration. In April 2025, we led the first of two whole staff CPD sessions at East Wichel Primary School, to introduce focuses for their School of Sanctuary Award.

In March 2024, our Schools of Sanctuary Team was again invited to make a short update, at the regional PSHE Leads Network meeting in June, about how schools could become a School of Sanctuary, and to highlight our top three suggested resources around addressing discrimination in schools. The theme: Managing Hurtful Behaviour and Bullying, Abuse and Discrimination.

Links within the Borough

We attended numerous forums run by Swindon Borough Council where we look to be a voice for the charity sector, and ensure a focus remains on children and families who are new to the UK schooling system. These forums included Swindon Skills Strategy, where we offered guidance on inclusion, and Swindon Learning Together Partnership meetings, where the focus was Higher Education and Raising Aspirations.



Headteachers' Annual Conference

Schools' Coordinator and FAB Fusion Co-ordinator ran a stall at this event. Broadening Swindon City of Sanctuary's reach and visibility was a key priority of the day. Our stall invited conference delegates to find out about our work with Swindon schools and in the wider community and to see how our new Family Activity Boxes project, FAB Fusion, could support teaching staff in their work with multilingual learners and their monolingual peers. The Conference was attended by **100+** delegates; throughout the day, approximately **50%** of delegates stopped to talk with us. More than 10 delegates signed up to be kept in touch with our work. Subsequently, following the launch of the FAB Fusion Project in October 2024, **15** schools signed up to borrow FAB Fusion boxes.

CONNECTIONS IN EDUCATION

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SEND Leaders Conference

In June 2024, we had a great opportunity to showcase our FAB Fusion resources at the SEND Leaders' Conference. Emphasising how the resources in the FAB Fusion boxes could support schools - especially with their work on social inclusion and language and literacy development for multilingual learners and their families.

SEND Network Meeting

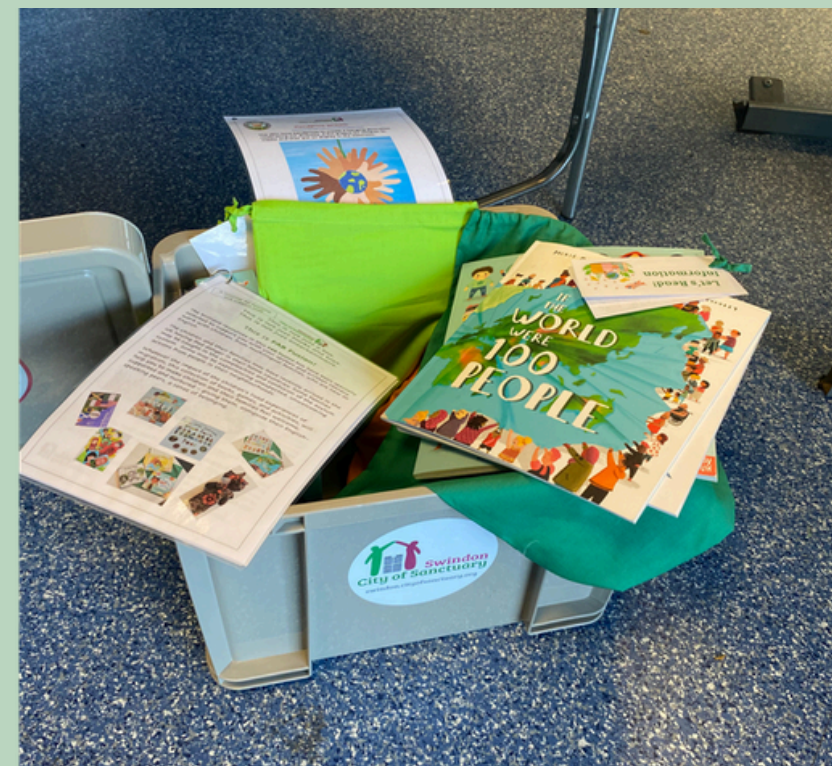
In November 2024, 10 Welcome Ambassadors from Peatmoor Primary School and Lawn Manor Academy joined us at Swindon's SEND Network meeting where they spoke to over 100 teaching staff and professionals about the importance of welcome. It was a fantastic event and an opportunity for young changemakers to share why it is so important that young people are included in decision-making.

Refugee Week 2024

In 2024, we connected with six schools leading up to, and during, Refugee Week 17th-24th June. Following a workshop of ideas led by Schools' Coordinator in March 2024, each of the schools followed their own projects around the RW theme of Our Home. These included, poetry and art competitions, assemblies and PSHE lessons. Some of this work was shared at the successful and moving Celebration of Welcomes event hosted by Lawn Manor Academy and attended by over 100 guests.

FAB Fusion Boxes

Our Family Activity Boxes, officially launched in October 2024, by December reached 16 schools and over 2,000 children and families, supporting literacy development and inclusion for multilingual learners. We provided 18 information and support sessions in Schools to ensure staff could get the most out of the resources.



CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

This year, our creative projects continued to provide meaningful opportunities for people seeking sanctuary to engage, express themselves, and connect with the Swindon community.

Story Sacks Project

Based on the successful work of Neil Griffiths' Story Sacks in schools, we reached out to Swindon Borough Council's Warm Welcome team to develop StorySacks a project focusing on dual-language literacy. In January 2025, we began plans for a project where people seeking sanctuary would create crafts, toys, and traditional clothing linked to a dual language story book with plans for resources to be made to support learning. During March and April 2025, we held three of the planned five workshops with over **15** Afghan and Ukrainian women making traditional clothing and crafts! The development of the project will see participants and their families supported in their enjoyment of reading and playing using English and building confidence and connections as a group. The project is supported by involvement from local author Kate Claxton, and Swindon Museum and Art Gallery - with plans built in to involve Swindon's National Literacy Strategy's Lead.

Kahaani Project

In April 2025, we began discussions with Create Studios to collaborate with developing teaching and learning resources for the Kahaani Project, which will feature migration stories from **50** people with South Asian heritage who have made their homes in the South-west of England. Swindon City of Sanctuary, in collaboration with teaching colleagues, planned to produce teaching resources to accompany a documentary film to be used in up to **50** schools in the South-west region, with plans for nationwide access via Schools of Sanctuary UK. We are excited to be a part of this incredible project and to see it progress.

Festival of Tomorrow

We're Open Families joined with local artist Jo Beal and Festival of Tomorrow for a nature-inspired stitching project where families stitched endangered and vulnerable species of flowers in Wiltshire – the fly orchid, helleborine and cornflower. Over two workshops, seven families crafted and created the finished canvas. It was a fantastic experience to learn more about nature in Wiltshire and new crafting skills. The finished canvases were displayed in the Carriage Works for the community to appreciate.



Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

Swindon Museum and Art Gallery joined us at We're Open Families for a series of engaging and educational sessions tailored to museum exhibitions. The sessions included learning about Wiltshire's fossils, using clay to make their own to take home, watercolour artwork of Swindon's famous Gharial, and more with a brilliant turnout at each event.

These projects helped participants gain confidence, build connections, and contribute creatively and we thank all the creative professionals and organisations who worked with and supported us this year.

PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE DRIVING CHANGE

At Swindon City of Sanctuary, we believe that representation matters and that the voices of people with lived experience should shape our work. Over **200** people with lived experience have been actively involved this year through volunteering, co-production, and attending events, helping ensure our projects are welcoming, relevant, and impactful.

Having team members and volunteers with lived experience of seeking sanctuary and migration means as an organisation, we reflect the vibrant community we live and work in. With over **10** languages spoken by those at Swindon City of Sanctuary including Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, and Yoruba language skills, we are able to reach new communities, increase trust and attendance at our events, helping those we work with see themselves reflected and feel included.

A highlight this year was the StorySacks Project, which welcomed **15** people seeking sanctuary from Afghanistan and Ukraine to take part in crafting and learning together. We saw We're Open Families grow from strength to strength in its second year by listening to feedback from families who have migrated to Swindon on what would be helpful to them. Using their feedback, we have had more organisations join to signpost to services, share information about life in Swindon and provide support. By putting lived experience at the heart of our work, we are building stronger, more connected, and welcoming communities across Swindon

200

People with lived experience involved with SCoS work

5

Projects delivered for people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary and migration



WE COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU

Our volunteers are at the heart of the charity, we simply could not do what we do without them. Our team of **25** volunteers support at our community events, with Sectors of Sanctuary work and at networking events. All new volunteers take part in training before attending sessions. Our training provides a safe space to talk about language, rights and the politics of migration. Volunteers are given advice on how to approach negative narratives and conversations about migration and seeking sanctuary. We ensure we have the highest standards of safeguarding, health and safety, and hygiene.

This year, volunteers worked on a variety of projects: supporting our community events, organising and delivering FAB boxes; exploring opportunities to collaborate with other organisations. We cannot thank our wonderful volunteers enough – their compassion, empathy and desire to promote welcome inspires us every day!



500+

Hours of
volunteering

25

Volunteers

6

Volunteers with
lived experience
of migration

1

Volunteer with
lived experience of
seeking sanctuary

“ I volunteer because it’s an opportunity to show people seeking sanctuary that they are welcome in Swindon. ”

IN THE NEWS

It was a busy year for us in the local and national media. We are grateful that the majority of coverage we received, was positive and in support of our work. Not only has this coverage aided in highlighting our work and promoting welcome, but it has also contributed to increasing awareness around the issues faced by people seeking sanctuary in Swindon.

BBC - <https://feeds.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93q162e7vwo>

Swindon Borough Council -

<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/news/article/1134/swindon-comes-together-to-make-town-more-welcoming-for-refugees>

Swindon Link - <https://swindonlink.com/news/borough-of-sanctuary/>

Greatest Hits Radio -

<https://hellorayo.co.uk/greatest-hits/swindon/news/swindon-city-of-sanctuary-deeply-shocked-southport>

Swindon Advertiser - <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/25125423.swindon-people-learning-english-new-programme/>

While we have been lucky to experience overwhelmingly positive support for our work, negative comments and opinions shared online show that we still have a substantial journey ahead in order to ensure that all feel welcome. We do not let a small minority of negative voices impact our work or sway our vision, but these instances highlight the need for our work to continue in the current divisive political landscape. We will continue to bridge divides and continue to encourage the community to support people seeking sanctuary.



THANK YOU

Our work relies on the generous support from donors and grants. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who help us plan for the future through monthly direct debits, and to local organisations including Wanborough Farmer's Market Community Café who raised much needed funds through their support.

We are continually grateful that the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund grant, now in its fourth year, allows us to carry on with our work.

A special thank you to the charitable funds and trusts outlined in the financial statement - without your support, we simply would not be able to achieve all the incredible things listed in our report.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	2023-2024	2024-2025
Income	63,479	67,244
Expenditure	97,194	93,005
Major Funders	2023-2024	2024-2025
National Lottery Community Fund	33,898	61,442

	2023-2024	2024-2025
Wages	81,535	73,618
Other Operating Leases	-	-
Office Rent & Room Hire	7,443	7,400
Insurance	379	348
Telephone	1,122	1,407
Computers & software	469	254
Postage and Stationery	-	-
Sundry expenses	5,073	5,575
Accountancy fees	780	660

*N.B. whilst a deficit is shown as at the year end date, our quarterly core funding is due and this was received shortly after 30 April 2025 (£14.5k & further funding received in July 2025)

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2025
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2025

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2025

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page nine of the attached financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

S Juul (Interim Chair) – appointed Feb 2025
I Howard
S Juul (Treasurer)
M Lubanda
A Alrazi – appointed Aug 2024
J Lavery – appointed Dec 2024
B Jackson – appointed April 2025
R Newman – resigned May 2024
C Bennett – resigned July 2024
J Vertannes – appointed Chair Apr 2024, resigned Feb 2025
V Vicente – appointed April 2024, resigned Nov 2024
T Harland – appointed Aug 2024, resigned Feb 2025
P Sepulveda – appointed Sept 2024, resigned Mar 2025

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2025

It is recognised that we have encountered significant changes within the Board during this financial year. These changes are reflective of the nationwide challenge of filling Board roles and individual/personal circumstances impacting the ability to continue as a Trustee.

We do anticipate a settling down period this year with an Interim Chair appointed Feb 2025 who has been Trustee/Treasurer for the last 4 years working closely alongside the experienced Charity Manager currently in post driving the charity objectives.

We are actively seeking a new Chairperson and Trustees. At the point of completing our annual report, we have recruited an additional Trustee and the board sits with reasonable comfort at six members, with a wide range of skillsets and experience.

Bankers

Metro
One Southampton Row
London
WC1B 5HA

Coop Plc
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

Governance and management risk looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.

- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key

financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities;
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the year was £67,244 (2024 £63,479). Expenditure amounted to £93,005 (2023 £97,194). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2025 there was a deficit of £25,761 (2024 deficit £33,715) *

**N.B. whilst a deficit is shown as at the year end date, our quarterly core funding is due and this was received shortly after 30 April 2025 (£14.5k & further funding received in July 2025)*

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2025

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

S Juul (Interim Chair)

Date: 31st December 2025

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities
For year ended 30 April 2025

	Note s	Unrestrict ed Fund	Restrict ed Fund	2025 Total Fund	2024 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		1,201	66,042	67,244	63,479
Total		1,201	66,042	67,244	63,479
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities					
Support for Sanctuary seekers		2,159	90,846	93,005	97,194
NET INCOME		(958)	(24,803)	(25,761)	(33,715)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		1,757	32,753	34,510	68,225
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		800	7,950	8,749	34,510

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2025 Total Fund	2024 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		800	7,950	8,749	34,510
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>800</u>	<u>7,950</u>	<u>8,749</u>	<u>34,510</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>800</u>	<u>7,950</u>	<u>8,749</u>	<u>34,510</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				800	1,757
Restricted Funds				7,950	32,753
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>8,749</u>	<u>34,510</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 26/11/2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

S Juul (Interim Chair)

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2025 nor for the year ended 30 April 2024.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2025 nor for the year ended 31 April 2024.

3. STAFF

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Administration	4	3

There were 5 employees as at the year end date
No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

4. LOANS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	-	-
	-	-

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2025

5. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	1,757	1,201	(2,159)	800
	<u>1,757</u>	<u>1,201</u>	<u>(2,159)</u>	<u>800</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
We're Open	842	0	(761)	81
Postcode National Trust	12,914	0	(12,914)	0
Refugee Week	1,649	0	(1,649)	0
Wiltshire Community	0	4,600	(2,173)	2,427
National Community Lottery Foundation	12,130	61,442	(71,099)	2,473
School of Sanctuary	188	0	(188)	0
South Swindon Parish Council	668	0	(668)	0
Coop Community Fund	284	0	(284)	0
Respond & Adapt	0	0	0	0
People Local Trust	0	0	0	0
Local Giving Grant	115	0	(115)	0
Magic Little Grant	421	0	(232)	189
Nationwide	3,544	0	(764)	2,780
	<u>32,753</u>	<u>66,042</u>	<u>(90,846)</u>	<u>7,950</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>34,510</u>	<u>67,244</u>	<u>(93,005)</u>	<u>8,749</u>

6. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **National Community Lottery Funding** – NCLF Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity’s employees, the Charity Manager, Stream Co-ordinator, Schools Co-ordinator and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- b) **People Local Trust** – Fab Fusion project and Co-ordinator role
- c) **Wiltshire Community Foundation / We're open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social including We’re Open Families
- d) **Magic Little Grant** – Fab Extension and resources
- e) **Local Giving** – small donations giving by the public, unrestricted
- f) **Nationwide** -additional funds to cover rent, refreshment for our We’re Open events including We’re open families

Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	67,244	63,479
	<u>67,244</u>	<u>63,479</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	73,618	81,535
Office Expenses	790	393
Office Rent & Room Hire	7,400	7,443
Insurance	348	379
Telephone	1,407	1,122
Computers & software	254	469
Postage and Stationery	-	-
Bank Fees	50	-
Sundry expenses	5,575	5,073
	<u>89,442</u>	<u>96,414</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	660	780
	<u>660</u>	<u>780</u>
	<u>(22,858)</u>	<u>(33,715)</u>

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent review of these financial statements has taken place**.

**REPORT TO BE INSERTED ONCE COMPLETE (AFTER BOARD APPROVAL)

To the Trustee of Swindon City of Sanctuary

As requested by the Trustees of SCOS I have conducted a review of the financial statements for year ending 30th April 2025. As noted in previous reviews this process is intended to identify any possible financial irregularities or misrepresentation, rather than being a formal audit in accordance with the UK Auditing Standards.

Governance and Policy

I have reviewed this year's minutes of the Board meetings, which are currently held every two months, together with the Annual Report. I have noted there has been a constitutional amendment extending the maximum tenure of the trustees to nine years.

The minutes of the Board meetings show that the trustees are committed to strengthening good governance by seeking guidance and support from Voluntary Action Swindon, and by taking steps to address a financial conflict of interest.

During this financial year the Charity had 4 employees: the Charity Manager, the Schools Co-ordinator, the Fab (Family Activity Boxes) Co-ordinator (until January) and a support role across the projects. Serena has previously mentioned that safeguarding and training are provided to the staff and volunteers, and this is confirmed within the Annual Report.

Financial safeguards are in place with the requirement for two signatories on bank transactions and monthly Financial Committee meetings to monitor income and expenditure. Expenses are approved by a trustee, and large amounts of expenditure are agreed by the Board. During the year the trustees have continued to update the Financial Control Policy which is now nearing completion.

Financial Report

I have received the Financial Statements for 2025, together with the Transactions Analysis spreadsheet, all relevant bank statements and a sample of invoices and receipts.

Using this information I have verified that the bank transactions were accurately recorded onto the spreadsheet and, as far as I could tell, allocated to the correct grant and accounts categories. I also checked that the year-end bank balance reconciled with the financial statements and was correctly reflected in the Statement of Financial Activities. The previous access issues with the Co-operative Bank have now been fully resolved.

I have recommended a small number of minor amendments and cosmetic changes, but nothing came to my attention that would indicate any fraudulent activity or deliberate misconduct.

Conclusion

After informing Serena of my findings, I am pleased to report that my review did not reveal any evidence of financial misrepresentation or fraudulent activity. The financial statements accurately reflect the Charity's financial position, and I found no issues for concern regarding the governance of the Charity.



Signed: Elizabeth Hesketh

Tel: 07720 885388

Email: lizkhesketh@gmail.com

Dated: 22/02/2026

I would like to thank the Trustees of SCOS for inviting me to review the financial statements, and to Serena for her support and for providing the necessary documents. I am pleased to support the trustees of this charity, which is very much needed, particularly in today's politically divisive climate. If you have any queries regarding this review, please feel free to contact me using the details above.

My experience with bookkeeping and accounting began when my husband started his own consultancy business, which then led to my involvement in treasury roles for my children's primary and secondary school PTAs. Since retiring I have volunteered as trustee and treasurer for two charities, Vision 4 Youth and The Yateley Society.

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

England & Wales - Charity number 1177624

Accounts

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Registered Charity Number 1177624



Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts
2023-2024

OUR REFLECTIONS

This year was one of growth for us, with a settled team and an increase to five staff roles, we had the opportunity to promote welcome and inclusion across Swindon.

The support of our incredible volunteers and Trustees, dedicating over 750+ hours of volunteering, was invaluable and meant that we continued to expand our work.

We welcomed back our Sectors and Awards Co-ordinator, who led the way in working widely across different sectors in Swindon to promote our values. In the latter part of the year, we welcomed our Schools' Co-ordinator, who continued to generate opportunities for Swindon schools to grow, learn and provide welcome to all. With a newly expanded team, we were able to increase our capacity and develop our work with greater focus. This meant more events in the community where we continued working to educate and raise awareness around the experiences of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. Our work in schools grew, contacting more than 26 schools in different contexts, with the pinnacle being Lawn Manor Academy becoming Swindon's second School of Sanctuary, and first secondary school to achieve the award. *We're Open* social evenings continued to offer a welcoming space, with 365 individual visits, all with the aim of bringing our community together through conversation and coffee. We saw a need for spaces for families with young children, so launched *We're Open Families* which grew from strength to strength with 544 visits in ten months.

The increase in negative media rhetoric, harmful policies and legislation fed into a more hostile environment for people seeking sanctuary and became a barrier to our vision of fostering welcome. We increased our campaigning, focusing on local issues with MPs and Councillors, and nationally, the Bibby Stockholm, joining the voices calling for fair and safer accommodation for those in need. While the asylum system remains unfair and isolating, we saw a continued positive response from the people of Swindon wanting to support people fleeing from war and persecution, alongside an increase in schools, organisations and businesses wanting to work with us and to champion our values.

"Welcome" remained our word of the year. This year, like every year, welcome remained the thread that weaves throughout all our work; we focused on supporting other organisations to embed this within their work too.

As we navigated the challenges of the year, we found solace in all those who unfalteringly supported and embraced our purpose. To all those who work to create welcome, make space for all and speak up for sanctuary, we thank you for being a part of this journey.

OUR IMPACT – THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

- 1 School of Sanctuary Award
- 365 visits to *We're Open*
- 30 volunteers supporting our work
- 6 schools directly connected with our work
- 120+ events in the community
- 2 creative collaborations with Swindon organisations
- 750+ hours of volunteering
- 544 visits to *We're Open Families*
- 3 campaigns promoting the rights of people seeking sanctuary
- 7 CPD sessions in schools

- 2 additional languages regularly used for translating materials, making them accessible to the community
- 2 volunteers with lived experience of seeking sanctuary
- 10 volunteers with lived experience of migration

TRUSTEES' NOTE

It's been another year of change and as we remain hugely grateful to our funders who enable us to undertake our work, and to the wonderful people of our local community in Swindon who encourage and support our work, it's quite clear that what we do is now more necessary than ever. Instability and war are ever present across the globe and the mass displacement of people due to conflict does not look as though it will subside for the foreseeable.

We have taken huge strides this year to expand our impact. A focal point has been creating spaces where the community feels welcomed – with the launch of *We're Open Families* we are providing opportunities for families to meet, build a support network and work to decrease isolation and increase community links. This year our Sectors of Sanctuary works expanded into multiple sectors and it has been fantastic to see the involvement from different organisations to promote change within their work.

We would like to thank the National Lottery Community Fund for their ongoing support and guidance, as well as Wiltshire Community Foundation, South Swindon Parish Council, Co-op Communities Fund, Respond & Adapt, Postcode Local Trust, Nationwide and Magic Little Grants for their invaluable funding contributions.

This year, the political narrative around seeking sanctuary and migration has become ever more polarised. We will continue to speak to and work with all in our local community, including local MPs and Councillors from all political parties, as we endeavour to make our community safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

Swindon City of Sanctuary is a registered charity (with CIO status) in Swindon, we seek to build a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon, with a focus on people who are seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.

Our work focuses on celebrating our diverse town. We do this by bringing people and organisations together, raising awareness and campaigning for fairness and inclusivity.

Our Charitable Objects are:

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
- To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations, in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities

- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit, by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds
- The prevention and relief of poverty

OUR VALUES

Trust: We understand that those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

Inclusive: Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each person with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We actively and equally value the contribution that all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who benefit make and involve them meaningfully in decisions about our work.

Objective: Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity, which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused. We ensure to work ethically in all we do and who we work with, as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

Informed: Across our organisation we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create better understanding between us all.

Inspirational: We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place for all who live here. We believe in generous leadership and that the best work relies on different experiences and perspectives. We seek out the best ideas, wherever they come from.

Positive & Committed: We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

SECTORS AND AWARDS

People seeking sanctuary experience high levels of hate crime, racism and prejudice which can lead to people feeling isolated within their communities. To combat this, we work to bring people and organisations together to raise awareness and increase understanding about seeking sanctuary and migration. One of the ways we do this is through our Sanctuary Awards programme, where we collaborate with organisations to promote welcome and

sanctuary within their contexts. The Sectors of Sanctuary Awards are awareness raising programmes that give a platform to the voices of people seeking sanctuary so that they can be heard by those who might otherwise never hear them.

The awards are grounded in three core principles: Learn, Embed, and Share.

- **LEARN:** we encourage individuals and organisations to learn about the experiences and challenges faced by those seeking sanctuary. This involves deepening understanding, dismantling stereotypes, and fostering empathy.
- **EMBED:** we work to embed practices that support people seeking sanctuary in every aspect of our community, from housing and education to health and employment.
- **SHARE:** we aim to share positive stories of sanctuary, celebrating contributions made by people seeking sanctuary and amplifying their voices.

This year, we worked in three sectors:

BOROUGH OF SANCTUARY

In September, the Swindon Borough Council Cabinet voted to start the process of becoming a Borough of Sanctuary. What does this mean in practice?

- It's a formal awards process that recognises and rewards good practice and progress in promoting welcome.
- It recognises a borough-wide commitment, signalling to people seeking sanctuary that Swindon is a place where they will find safety, opportunity, and community.
- It promotes a whole council approach to embedding 'welcome' and 'sanctuary' in the services they offer.
- It's also an opportunity to work in partnership with other councils and boroughs across the UK who share similar values.

Since the full Council motion in September, Swindon Borough Council has been working towards gaining their award by forming a Steering Group to choose the direction of the work. This work has included working with local groups, charities and people with lived experience. This award will take up to 18 months to achieve, we welcome and commend Swindon Borough Council's commitment to promoting welcome and setting an example for other communities to follow.

LIBRARY OF SANCTUARY

Public libraries play an important role in welcoming people seeking sanctuary in our communities. The Library of Sanctuary award recognises and celebrates the libraries that go above and beyond to show solidarity and welcome. Throughout the years, Swindon Central Library has supported our work, and we were delighted when we began discussions about gaining Library of Sanctuary status. This year, initial work began to identify what was already happening that could contribute to the award and consider and outline areas where welcome and inclusion could be embedded.

ARTS OF SANCTUARY

The Arts play a vital role in creating a culture of welcome, challenging the status quo and shaping the kind of society we hope to live in. Art and creativity can inspire new ways of thinking and feeling, helping ordinary people understand the realities for those making

difficult journeys. Arts Stream of Sanctuary is all about celebrating the arts organisations working with refugees, telling stories of migration and bringing communities together. Our Pilot programme sees Create Studios pave the way for the first Swindon Arts organisation to work towards their award. This year, Create Studios signed the pledge to show their affiliation as a City of Sanctuary Supporting Organisation and work began on curating their application.

Our Sectors work has been made possible by an award from National Lottery Community Fund.

WE'RE OPEN FAMILIES

This year, in Refugee Week we launched *We're Open Families* - a space for families in Swindon to come together, make connections and celebrate the languages and rich culture of the town. Swindon has a large population of families who have migrated here and are looking to make connections and build a community. *We're Open Families* was developed with this in mind, to create a space where families could meet with a focus on literacy and play. Each session focuses on a different theme – nature, food, countries of the world – and features a crafting activity, story time and singing circle. The themes spark conversations about what makes us different and what brings us together. The fortnightly sessions provide an opportunity for families to learn more about other families in our community and make bonds with others. Families are actively encouraged to participate in the sessions – sharing stories and songs from their home countries in their home languages is especially successful and enjoyable. Our *We're Open Families* library events are also an opportunity to collaborate with organisations wanting to meet with families to hear their thoughts, offer signposts to services and make connections with communities in Swindon. This year we collaborated with two organisations. In the first year, we ran 21 sessions, with over 15 languages spoken, building a community who regularly attend each session.

“I absolutely enjoyed each session. It was great to see parents and children enjoying the process of creating, and working together to create”

21 sessions

544 total visits

295 children

249 parents and carers

15 + languages spoken

WE'RE OPEN COMMUNITY EVENINGS

We're Open community evenings celebrated running for seven years in the community, with 365 individual visits. *We're Open's* purpose is for those who attend to feel welcomed, to decrease the isolation and loneliness felt by many and create a community where those who are new to Swindon feel able to build a life here.

As a Home Office dispersal town, Swindon has a large community of people seeking sanctuary with many living in hotels and it is more important than ever to provide spaces where people feel safe, valued and included. The current asylum system is not a fair one. It builds barriers which seek to create an “*us versus them*” narrative. We work to create spaces where local residents and people seeking sanctuary can meet and make connections,

with the aim of breaking down barriers and celebrating our differences in the essence of cultural diversity.

We ran 50 sessions over the course of the year, with seven local musicians providing wonderful entertainment throughout the year. A highlight was our Refugee Week BBQ with 35 visitors sharing food, music and conversation. We could not do what we do at *We're Open* without the support of our brilliant, dedicated volunteers who gave 378 hours of volunteering to the project.

"I feel happy when I come and meet people. We like playing games and beating the volunteers at chess!"

50 evening sessions

365 visits to *We're Open*

378 hours of volunteering

FAMILY ACTIVITY BOXES (FABs)

One way we support welcome and inclusion in the community is through our *FAB Fusion* boxes. They are specially designed to support teaching staff in their spoken and written literacy work with children from multilingual families, who are proficient in their home languages but new to English. The children may have recently arrived in the UK having fled danger in their home countries; some may be caught in the complexities of the asylum system. The purpose of the boxes is for children to feel supported and nurtured. The resources in each *FAB Fusion* box invite children to play, read and learn together.

Fusion means realising that embracing and celebrating our differences can connect us and bring us together without losing our individual identities. FABs are loaned out to schools at no cost; schools can borrow up to three boxes for at least one term. They help embrace and celebrate cultural diversity and to build partnerships with parents, families and carers. This year, our FABs Co-ordinator developed six themes using her lived experience of seeking sanctuary to create powerful resources with a story. The six themes are:

- Cultural Diversity
- Emotions
- Environment
- Journeys
- Welcome
- Home

"The resources are beautiful and so well organised, I can see much time and effort, plus love, has been put into it all."

This work has been made possible by an award from Postcode Local Trust, a grant giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

SPEAK UP FOR SANCTUARY

As a campaigning and awareness raising organisation, education of the community remained at the forefront of our work. With the rise in negative and divisive rhetoric surrounding the experiences of people seeking sanctuary, it was more important than ever

to speak up for sanctuary and to call others to do the same. We used email and social media campaigns to keep the community updated on current events and legislation including campaigning for the closure of the Bibby Stockholm.

Together With Refugees

One again this year, *Together With Refugees* was our main campaigning focus. *Fill the Skies with Hope* campaign involved sending to Members of Parliament, orange heart-shaped paper planes, filled with messages of love, welcome and hope for a fairer system. It presented a great way to engage the community with the issues facing people seeking sanctuary, to listen to others' opinions and to challenge misinformation. We worked with local schools, held events in the community, promoted via social media and encouraged as many people as possible to join in writing messages of welcome and understand the importance of showing welcome to people who are new to Swindon.

SANCTUARY IN THE COMMUNITY

Before the local council elections in May 2023, we called on all parties to publicly pledge their commitment to Swindon becoming a Borough of Sanctuary. In September 2023, the new Cabinet voted to start the process of becoming a Borough of Sanctuary. This will see Swindon Borough Council join a movement of local authorities, around the country, working to create a culture of welcome, inclusion and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary. This is a welcomed and positive move towards embedding welcome widely throughout services in Swindon.

In the lead up to the 2024 national elections, we wrote to all prospective candidates to meet and discuss their position on migration, seeking sanctuary and welcome. We met with Sir Robert Buckland in November and Heidi Alexander in February, both were positive meetings where we asked what they are doing to counter negative public and media perceptions and increase welcome. We discussed Bibby Stockholm, with increased concerns that some people seeking sanctuary in Swindon would be moved there. Bibby Stockholm is Home Office accommodation with documented outbreaks of disease, mistreatment and increased poor mental health for those housed there. A friend of SCoS with lived experience of seeking sanctuary put it best, *"People forced to move there are looking for two things: community and safety. The residents want to meet other residents which will be difficult in the cramped conditions as the barge approaches capacity. They want to meet local people and to become part of a community. This will be almost impossible."* We continue to call for safe, fair accommodation.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Our work focuses on awareness raising and education of the community around the experience of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. Throughout the year, we met with members of the community in different settings to promote welcome and foster discussions about why diversity is so important.

Refugee Week 2023

Refugee Week is an important moment for us to celebrate the contribution of people seeking sanctuary in the UK and promote better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. It's an opportunity to create a programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that embody that year's theme. With Compassion as this year's theme, we led a series of events, open to all who wanted to join. The first, Compassion in Action

Exhibition at Swindon HUB which showcased art by people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, and contributions from the local community including poems from students at Lawn Manor Academy and art from the community.

“I greatly enjoyed contributing 3 pieces of art called Compassion Entwined. The twine used in these pieces represents the strength of working together. Each piece shows how compassion towards others builds stronger communities.”

The rest of the celebrations included opportunities for the public to get creative and participate. The launch of *We're Open Families* at Swindon Central Library had arts, crafts and stalls, recipe exchanges and Arabic dual-language story time, while the BBQ at *We're Open* focused on music and shared conversations. It was a fantastic week filled with celebration, awareness raising and joy. “Compassion is inclusion”

Celebration of Welcomes– Lawn Manor Academy

For a third year running, Lawn Manor Academy hosted Swindon's *Celebration of Welcomes* evening in Refugee Week. Following an introduction about their role by some of the school's Welcome Ambassadors, the audience of invited VIPs in the community, family, friends and staff were treated to brilliant dance, music and poetry performances from Lawn Manor Academy students. There was a delicious array of world food tasters too, representing the exciting cultural diversity of Lawn Manor Academy. A small exhibition introducing Swindon City of Sanctuary and featuring School of Sanctuary work at Peatmoor Primary School, was also on display.

SCHOOLS

Our work in schools continued to be one of our greatest successes and has grown from strength to strength - it's been a busy year for our Swindon schools!

School of Sanctuary Awards

School of Sanctuary awards are grounded in three core principles: Learn, Embed, and Share and make up a large portion of our Awards work. We are delighted to share that Lawn Manor Academy became Swindon's first secondary school to achieve their School of Sanctuary Award in July 2023. As part of the progress our Schools' Volunteer Lead trained a small group to be the formal Appraisal Panel to consider the application including Councillor Adorabelle Shaikh, Swindon Borough Council Cabinet Member: Education and SEND. We thank all Panel members for their support and commitment. Head of PSHE and School of Sanctuary Lead Staff Member commented, “*Now that the school has been officially recognised as a School of Sanctuary ... the staff and Welcome Ambassadors would like to see Lawn Manor Academy work towards being recognised as a Centre of Best Practice for Welcome and Inclusion in Swindon.*”

Sharing of cultural diversity is very much in the ethos at Lawn Manor. Their *Celebration of Welcomes* evening, now in its third year, is a more formal event bringing people together from beyond the immediate school community. Lawn Manor key staff have developed a programme of welcome in their school calendar. Culture Days are part of this calendar. These days feature students and staff wearing traditional dress from their home countries, which provides an opportunity to share languages, stories, food, music and culture. Having

appointed 50+ Welcome Ambassadors with some taking on lead roles, the school shows its continued commitment to the greater responsibility of promoting the values of a School of Sanctuary both in the school and in our community.

Throughout the year, work began and continued, with two more secondary schools and one primary school preparing to put together formal applications for their School of Sanctuary Award in 2024-2025.

In October we led Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Pilot Scheme Review with Peatmoor Primary School, looking at how the process could be adapted to make gaining a School of Sanctuary Award as simple and accessible as possible.

While we worked closely with six Swindon schools, 26 schools received our Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network News Updates throughout the year. We welcome schools to work with us in many different capacities, not just through our Schools of Sanctuary Awards programme.

CONNECTIONS IN EDUCATION

We spent the year welcoming new and well-embedded connections within the education sector in Swindon. We welcome working with any place of education wanting to find ways to embed and promote welcome and inclusion into their work.

Swindon New College

In September, we attended Swindon New College Freshers' Fair, where we shared with the students our campaigns and highlighted ways in which they could be empowered to use their voices and speak up for sanctuary. We had a good response from the young people, signing up to learn more about our work.

Supporting Teaching Colleagues through CPD

Our Schools' team ran 7 CPD sessions (Workshops and Meetings) over the course of the year. In June and July, we provided two whole staff CPD sessions at Peatmoor School. These Workshops and Meetings enabled colleagues attending to disseminate the information gained to the wider school community.

Primary and Secondary Schools PSHE Network

Our Schools of Sanctuary Team was invited to present at both the Primary and Secondary Schools PSHE Network Meetings, in January and February 2024. Engaging directly with a wider range of schools was an opportunity to expand our small network of schools committed to promoting welcome and belonging in their settings.

SEND Leaders' Conference

Volunteer Schools of Sanctuary Lead and FAB Fusion Co-ordinator ran a stall at this event, where the theme was *Resilience and Beyond*. Broadening Swindon City of Sanctuary's reach and visibility was a key priority of the day. Our stall invited conference delegates to learn about our work with a particular focus on the new development of Phase 3 of the FABs: *FAB Fusion*. The Conference was attended by 100+ delegates; throughout the day,

approximately 50% of delegates stopped to talk with us. More than 10 delegates signed up to be kept in touch with our work.

Refugee Week 2023

In 2023, we connected with four schools leading up to, and during, Refugee Week 20th-26th June. Following a workshop of ideas led by Volunteer Schools of Sanctuary Lead in March 2023, each of the schools followed their own projects around the RW theme of *Compassion in Action*. These included, poetry and art competitions, assemblies and PSHE lessons. Some of this work was shared at the successful and moving *Celebration of Welcomes* event hosted by Lawn Manor Academy and attended by over 100 guests.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

This year, we worked in coproduction with some of Swindon's great creative and community organisations.

Voices of Welcome – a Conference for Young Campaigners and Changemakers aged 10-18 years. This Conference emerged from a fertile seed of an idea as a result of both Swindon's nationally accredited Schools of Sanctuary having successfully created groups of young people, Welcome Ambassadors, keen to be advocates, allies, campaigners and changemakers for promoting and developing the culture of welcome, inclusion and belonging already clearly established in their school settings. In collaboration with *Create Studios* the conference led to two inspirational campaigning sessions for the Welcome Ambassadors, which focused on how to use digital media for maximum impact, and offering to follow-up with film-making support for the Welcome campaigns that emerged from the Conference. Other campaigning support at the Conference came from the *Send My Friend* Campaigning Lead, Rebekah Lucking, who inspired the Welcome Ambassadors in her sessions to think big and campaign with passion. 18 young people attended, creating powerful and passionate campaign ideas. Thank you to Create Studios for their in kind support making the conference happen.

Stitch Your Story

We were delighted to collaborate with local Artist Jo Beal and Create Studios on the opportunity to reflect on our personal histories within the context of Swindon and our place within our home town. We were one of eight community groups creating a large-scale banner that visually represented elements of each of our Swindon stories, which were further explored through short filmed interviews collated by the Create Studios' team. It was an opportunity for us to discuss what Swindon means to us, and the positive impact of migration in Swindon. Over fifteen Swindon City of Sanctuary staff, volunteers, friends and visitors contributed to the banner, leading to a wonderful piece of art that celebrates the rich diversity and stories of Swindon. The event was open to the public as part of the Heritage Open Days trail.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Our volunteers are at the heart of the charity, we simply could not do what we do without them. Our team of 30 volunteers support at our community events, with Sectors of Sanctuary work and with fundraising events. All new volunteers meet with our Volunteer

Coordinator and take part in training before attending sessions. Our training provides a safe space to talk about language, rights and the politics of migration. Volunteers are given advice on how to approach negative narratives and conversations about migration and seeking sanctuary. We ensure we have the highest standards of safeguarding, health and safety, and hygiene.

This year, volunteers worked on a variety of projects: supporting our community events; organising BBQs; exploring opportunities to collaborate with other organisations. We cannot thank our wonderful volunteers enough – their compassion, empathy and desire to promote welcome inspires us every day!

“I have been a volunteer for Swindon City of Sanctuary since it began seven years ago. The ethos of welcome and inclusion within the local community and celebrating its diversity is at the heart of what we do. Working on projects that encourage this generosity of spirit is, for me, very rewarding.”

Volunteer figures

- Volunteers – 30
- Volunteer hours – 750+
- Volunteers with lived experience of seeking sanctuary – 3
- Volunteers with lived experience of migration – 8

IN THE NEWS

It was a busy year for us in the local and national media. We are grateful that the majority of coverage we received, was positive and in support of our work. Not only has this coverage aided in highlighting our work and promoting welcome, but it has also contributed to increasing awareness around the issues faced by people seeking sanctuary in Swindon.

BBC - <https://www.statewatch.org/news/2023/may/uk-joint-civil-society-solidarity-statement-on-the-illegal-migration-bill/>

Swindon Link - <https://swindonlink.com/news/sanctuary-welcome/>

Swindon Link - <https://swindonlink.com/news/city-sanctuary/>

Swindon Link - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-66877977>

Swindon Advertiser - <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/23796763.swindon-council-cabinet-set-approve-refugee-sanctuary-network/>

Swindon Advertiser - <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/23818450.refugees-know-safe-see-dmj-tower/>

While we have been lucky to experience overwhelmingly positive support for our work, negative comments and opinions shared online show that we still have a substantial journey ahead in order to ensure that all feel welcome. We do not let a small minority of negative voices impact our work or sway our vision, but these instances highlight the need for our work to continue in the current divisive political landscape. We will continue to bridge divides and continue to encourage the community to support people seeking sanctuary.

THANK YOU

Our work relies on the generous support from donors and grants. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who help us plan for the future through monthly direct debits.

We are continually grateful that the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund grant, now in its third year, allows us to carry on with our work.

A special thank you to the charitable funds and trusts outlined in the financial statement - without your support, we simply would not be able to achieve all the incredible things listed in our report.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177624

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2024
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2024

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Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	13

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2024

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page nine of the attached financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

J Vertannes (Chair) – appointed Apr
2024
I Howard
S Juul (Treasurer)
B Mannu
M Lubanda
C Bennett
R Newman – resigned May 2024
K Hudson – resigned Feb 2024
B Jackson (Chair)- resigned Feb 2024

Bankers

Metro	Coop Plc
One Southampton Row	PO Box 250
London	Skelmersdale
WC1B 5HA	WN8 6WT

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

Governance and management risk looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.

- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities;
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.
- Public benefit;
- The charity promotes activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds in order to fulfil its public benefit obligations.

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the year was £63,479 (2023 £49,191). Expenditure amounted to £97,194 (2023 £37,999). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2024 there was a deficit of £33,715 (2023 surplus £11,192).

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2024

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



Howard on behalf of the Trustees

Date: 20/02/25

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities
For year ended 30 April 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2024 Total Fund	2023 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		3,809	59,670	63,479	49,191
Total		<u>3,809</u>	<u>59,670</u>	<u>63,479</u>	<u>49,191</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities					
Support for Sanctuary seekers		12,994	84,199	97,194	37,998
NET INCOME		<u>(9,185)</u>	<u>(24,530)</u>	<u>(33,715)</u>	<u>11,193</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		<u>10,942</u>	<u>57,283</u>	<u>68,225</u>	<u>57,032</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>1,757</u>	<u>32,753</u>	<u>34,510</u>	<u>68,225</u>

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2024 Total Fund	2023 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		1,757	32,753	34,510	68,225
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>1,757</u>	<u>32,753</u>	<u>34,510</u>	<u>68,225</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>1,757</u>	<u>32,753</u>	<u>34,510</u>	<u>68,225</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				1,757	10,942
Restricted Funds				32,753	57,283
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>34,510</u>	<u>68,225</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 14/01/2025 and were signed on its behalf by:



20/02/25

I Howard (on behalf of the Trustees)

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2024

2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2024 nor for the year ended 30 April 2023.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2024 nor for the year ended 31 April 2023.

3. STAFF

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Administration	4	3

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

4. LOANS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	-	-
	-	-

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2024

5. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	10,942	3,809	(12,994)	1,757
	<u>10,942</u>	<u>3,809</u>	<u>(12,994)</u>	<u>1,757</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
We're Open	2,439	0	(1,597)	842
Postcode National Trust	0	22,152	(9,238)	12,914
Refugee Week	1,649	0	0	1,649
Wiltshire Community	0	0	0	0
NLCF	44,110	33,898	(65,878)	12,130
School of Sanctuary	188	0	0	188
Swindon Parish Council	668	0	0	668
Coop Community Fund	582	0	(298)	284
Respond & Adapt	3,890	0	(3,890)	0
People Neighbourhood Trust	3,143	0	(3,143)	0
Local Giving Grant	115	0	0	115
Magic Little Grant	500	0	(79)	421
Nationwide	0	3,620	(76)	3,544
	<u>57,283</u>	<u>59,670</u>	<u>(84,199)</u>	<u>32,753</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>68,225</u>	<u>63,479</u>	<u>(97,194)</u>	<u>34,510</u>

n.b. NLCF income includes £19,683 received early May 2024 / Unrestricted income includes £2,903 as an estimate of the Co-op local giving (bank now accessed)

6. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **National Lottery Community Funding** – NLCF Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity’s employees, the executive officer, Stream Co-ordinator, Schools Co-ordinator and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- b) **Refugee week** - Funds relating to a week of activities celebrating sanctuary seekers in Swindon
- c) **School of sanctuary** - Funds utilised for work in schools.
- d) **Swindon Parish Council** - Funds for publicity purposes only including short films
- e) **People Neighbourhood Trust** – Fab Extension and School Co-ordinator role
- f) **We're open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social evening
- g) **Postcode National Trust** – Fab Project Co-ordinator and resources
- h) **Nationwide** -additional funds to cover rent, refreshment for our We’re Open events including We’re open families

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	<u>63,479</u>	<u>49,191</u>
	<u>63,479</u>	<u>49,191</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	81,535	28,574
Office Expenses	393	-
Office Rent & Room Hire	7,443	3,895
Insurance	379	396
Telephone	1,122	862
Computers & software	469	-
Postage and Stationery	-	-
Travelling	-	-
Sundry expenses	<u>5,073</u>	<u>3,551</u>
	<u>96,414</u>	<u>37,278</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	<u>780</u>	<u>720</u>
	<u>780</u>	<u>720</u>
	<u>(33,715)</u>	<u>11,193</u>

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent review of these financial statements has taken place. The associated report is attached.

To the Trustee of Swindon City of Sanctuary

As requested by the Trustees of SCOS I have conducted a review of the financial statements for year ending 30th April 2024. As noted in previous reviews this process is intended to identify any possible financial irregularities or misrepresentation, rather than being a formal audit in accordance with the UK Auditing Standards.

Governance and Policy

I have reviewed the minutes of the Board meetings that were held every two months over the year and have had discussions with Serena regarding the operational process of the charity.

During this financial year the Charity had 4 employees: the Charity Manager, the Streams Co-ordinator and the Volunteer Co-ordinator as in the previous year, but with the addition of the Fab (Family Activity Boxes) Co-ordinator. During the last month a further role as Schools Co-ordinator was added. Serena mentioned that the safeguarding and training policies have been reviewed and updated accordingly.

Financial safeguards are also in place with the requirement of two signatories on bank transactions and monthly monitoring of expenditure. Expenses are approved by a trustee and large amounts of expenditure are agreed by the Board. Due to a conflict of interest, Serena does not have access to the bank account. Serena has confirmed that, as mentioned in the minutes, there has been a full review of the financial policy and procedures.

Financial Report

I have received the Financial Statements for 2024, along with the Transactions Analysis spreadsheet and all relevant bank statements. The expenditure receipts are kept in the Charities Office and difficult for Serena to access, but she was able to provide me with some receipts and invoices.

Using this information I have verified that the bank transactions were accurately recorded onto the spreadsheet and, as far as I could tell, allocated to the correct project and accounts category. I also checked that the year-end bank balance reconciled with the financial statements and were properly reflected in the report of financial activities. This is the case with the bank transactions from the Metro Bank but, due to ongoing access issues, the Co-op Bank transactions have not been included in the transaction analysis. Hence the year-end balance was taken from the previous year. This issue is now resolved and the transactions were fully reconciled in July 2024 with a year-end figure of £792.51.

Conclusion

Following a discussion with Serena about my findings, I am pleased to report that my review did not reveal any evidence of financial misrepresentation or fraudulent activity. The financial statements accurately reflect the Charity's financial position, and I found no issues for concern regarding the governance of the Charity.



Signed: Elizabeth Hesketh

Tel: 07720 885388

Email: lizkhesketh@gmail.com

Dated: 25/02/2025

I would like to thank the Trustees of SCOS for inviting me to review the financial statements, and to Serena for her support and guidance. If you have any queries regarding this review, please feel free to contact me using the details above.

My experience with bookkeeping and accounts began when my husband started his own consultancy business, which then led to my involvement in treasury work for my children's primary and secondary school PTAs. Since retiring I have volunteered as trustee and treasurer for two charities, Vision 4 Youth and The Yateley Society.

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

England & Wales - Charity number 1177624

Accounts

Swindon City of Sanctuary

Registered Charity Number 1177624



Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023

OUR REFLECTIONS

This year was, in all senses, a year of change for us as a charity. We said goodbye to our longstanding Charity Manager and our Streams and Awards Co-ordinator took maternity leave. This meant that for most of the year, we had only one part-time staff member.

While this, undoubtedly, had a great impact on how we were to progress, we strove to ensure that we continued to deliver our projects, meet our charitable objects and provided spaces filled with welcome to those in need. The support of our incredible volunteers and Trustees, dedicating a total of 855 hours of volunteering, was invaluable and meant that we continued to function successfully, finding a 'new normal' during that period.

In the latter half of the year, we welcomed our new Charity Manager and created a new role; the FAB Project Co-ordinator. With a newly expanded team of three, we were able to increase our capacity and develop our work exponentially. This meant more events in the community where we continued working to educate and raise awareness around the experiences of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. Our work in schools grew, contacting more than 20 schools in different contexts, with the pinnacle being Peatmoor Community Primary School becoming Swindon's first School of Sanctuary. *We're Open* social evenings continued to offer a welcoming space, with 736 individual visits, all with the aim of bringing our community together through conversation and coffee.

The increase in negative media rhetoric, harmful policies and legislation fed into a more hostile environment for people seeking sanctuary and became a barrier to our vision of fostering welcome. We increased our campaigning, focusing on the Illegal Migration Bill, joining the voices calling for fair and safer routes for those in need. While the asylum system remains unfair and isolating, we saw a continued positive response from the people of Swindon wanting to support people fleeing from war and persecution, alongside an increase in schools, organisations and businesses wanting to work with us and to champion our values.

As our team grew, it became increasingly obvious that our small office space was no longer viable. In April, we moved into a larger office; a space where we were able to meet our 35 volunteers, deliver training and connect with other Swindon organisations. The new space had a great impact on our ability to work with others to promote welcome, inclusion and support in Swindon.

"Welcome" was our word of the year. During our November Month of Welcome, we launched our Make Every Year a Year of Welcome calendar and started work on our Acts of Welcome packs with 52 Swindon organisations. This year, like every year, welcome remained the thread that weaves throughout all our work and we focused on supporting other organisations to embed this within their own work.

As we navigated the challenges of the year, we found solace in all those who unfalteringly supported and embraced our purpose. To all those who work to create welcome, make space for all and speak up for sanctuary, we thank you for being a part of this journey.

OUR IMPACT – A YEAR IN NUMBERS

- 1 School of Sanctuary Award
- 736 visits to *We're Open*
- 35 volunteers supporting our work
- 6 schools directly connected with our work
- 80+ events in the community
- 2 creative collaborations with Swindon organisations
- 855 hours of volunteering
- 3 campaigns promoting the rights of people seeking sanctuary
- 3 work experience placements
- 9 CPD sessions in schools
- 4 volunteers with lived experience of migration
- 10 volunteers with lived experience of migration

CHAIRS NOTE

It's been another year of change and as we remain hugely grateful to our funders who enable us to undertake our work, and to the wonderful people of our local community in Swindon who encourage and support our work, it's quite clear that what we do is now more necessary than ever. Instability and war are ever present across the globe and the mass displacement of people due to conflict does not look as though it will subside for the foreseeable.

We have taken huge strides this year to expand our impact. A critical pillar of our activity is education – helping people within our community to understand the realities of seeking sanctuary in the UK and how to better welcome and support those people who arrive in our community, often having experienced multiple instances of persecution and trauma. This year our Sectors of Sanctuary works' core focus was schools, and in 2023-24 we plan for the sectors we work within to increase.

We are delighted to have welcomed a new Charity Manager to the team, who has already made a huge difference to us and we look forward to seeing how her energy, drive and passion develop as she becomes more established.

I'd like to personally thank the National Lottery Community Fund for their ongoing support and guidance, as well as Wiltshire Community Foundation, Swindon Parish Council, Co-op Midcounties, Respond & Adapt, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Magic Little Grants and Joffe Trust for their invaluable funding contributions.

The coming years look to be increasingly challenging politically, as the narrative around people who are seeking sanctuary becomes ever more polarised. We will continue to speak to and work with all in our local community, including local MPs and Councillors from all political parties, as we endeavour to make our community safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

Swindon City of Sanctuary is a registered charity (with CIO status) in Swindon, we seek to build a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon, with a focus on people who are seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.

Our work focuses on celebrating our diverse town. We do this by bringing people and organisations together, raising awareness and campaigning for fairness and inclusivity.

Our Charitable Objects are:

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
- To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations, in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit, by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds
- The prevention and relief of poverty

OUR VALUES

Trust: We understand that those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

Inclusive: Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each person with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We actively and equally value the contribution that all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who benefit make and involve them meaningfully in decisions about our work.

Objective: Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity, which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused. We ensure to work ethically in all we do and who we work with, as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

Informed: Across our organisation we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create better understanding between us all.

Inspirational: We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place for all who live here. We believe in generous leadership and that the best work relies on different experiences and perspectives. We seek out the best ideas, wherever they come from.

Positive & Committed: We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

MAKE EVERY YEAR, A YEAR OF WELCOME

Welcome is the foundation of all we do; this year we found more ways to create, promote and share welcome in Swindon.

Year of Welcome Calendar

Every November we celebrate a Month of Welcome, but why stop at just one month of welcome? We used the *Month of Welcome* as a springboard for building welcome throughout the year by creating a calendar that highlights global events with local impact, which reflect and promote our values around welcome and inclusion. The calendar is a reminder of the year-long importance of welcome. It is a call to embed welcome into our day to day lives. Designed by Bekah Grace, Illustrator and former volunteer, the calendar shares dates that encourage important conversations that can be used in many settings. The calendar has been widely used in schools, within Swindon Borough Council and many local organisations and businesses.

Acts of Welcome Cards

Born from our calendar, work began on creating a pack of 52 cards, one for each week of the year, featuring a simple act which fosters respectful and mindful interactions between members of the community. With many facing the daily struggle of isolation and loneliness, Acts of Welcome work to bridge the gap between individuals and show welcome, inclusion and support to all. We began working with some of the 52 Swindon organisations that will eventually fill the pack, to create their own acts. It was important to us that the Acts of Welcome reflected Swindon's diverse community and we were pleased that so many brilliant businesses, charities and organisations wanted to take part and spread welcome.

WE'RE OPEN COMMUNITY EVENINGS

We had another successful year of our weekly *We're Open* community evenings with 736 individual visits*. *We're Open's* purpose is for those that attend to feel welcomed, to decrease the isolation and loneliness felt by many and create a community where those who are new to Swindon feel able to build a life here.

As a Home Office dispersal town, Swindon has a large community of people seeking sanctuary with many living in hotels. With the rise in negative and divisive rhetoric surrounding their experiences, it is more important than ever to provide spaces where people feel safe, valued and included. The current asylum system is not a fair one. It builds barriers which seek to create an "*us versus them*" narrative. We work to create spaces where local residents and people seeking sanctuary can meet and make connections, with the aim of breaking down barriers and celebrating our differences in the essence of cultural diversity.

We ran 50 sessions over the course of the year, with local musicians Karen Phimister - *Tour of Park*, Joe Brown and Anish & Neil - *Canute's Plastic Army*, providing wonderful entertainment at some of the evenings. We could not do what we do at *We're Open* without the support of our brilliant, dedicated volunteers who gave 156 hours of volunteering to the project.

*Due to period of change and limited staffing, 25 weeks of data are an estimate of average numbers.

"You can come along and socialising with people from different backgrounds by talking, playing cards, chess and other board games. While the evenings are designed to support people seeking sanctuary, it's open to every member of Swindon local community. We're Open to all."

SPEAK UP FOR SANCTUARY

As a campaigning and awareness raising organisation, education of the community remained at the forefront of our work. With the rise in negative and divisive rhetoric surrounding the experiences of people seeking sanctuary, it was more important than ever to speak up for sanctuary and to call others to do the same.

Fill The Skies With Hope

In September, *Together With Refugees* launched their national campaign which involved sending to Members of Parliament, orange heart-shaped paper planes, filled with messages of love, welcome and hope for a fairer system. In Swindon, we asked members of the community to write to our MPs (Sir Robert Buckland, South Swindon; Justin Tomlinson, North Swindon) to join us in calling for the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to re-think their harmful policy of sending people in the asylum system to Rwanda. We worked with

local schools, held events in the community, promoted via social media and encouraged as many people as possible to join in. These events fostered conversations about how people's own experiences of migration had impacted their lives and why diversity had impacted Swindon for the better. Through the events, we facilitated opportunities for young people to feel empowered to enact social change through their words.

'Illegal Migration Bill'

This year, the so called '*Illegal Migration Bill*' was introduced to Parliament with the aim of stopping people from crossing the English Channel in small boats. We, like many other campaigning organisations, believe that the provision of safe, accessible routes is vital, yet the Act did nothing to increase them. We used our platform, both in person and online, to outline and explain to the community what the bill entailed and called for others to use their voices in three simple steps: stand up and speak out, organise and continue to have hope.

Protesting forced flight to Rwanda

On the 14th June, we received word that at least 7 people were boarding a flight to Rwanda departing from Boscombe Down Airfield, Salisbury. As the closest Wiltshire based City of Sanctuary group, staff, volunteers and a Swindon based person with lived experience of seeking sanctuary travelled to Salisbury to bear witness and show solidarity with those forced to board the plane. We went to show love and support to those facing a terrible, traumatic situation and to spread awareness to the public. The flight did not depart, cancelled by last minute interventions by the European Court of Human Rights, and all on board departed the plane. We were overjoyed that those aboard the plane continued to live in the community they had come to know.

RAISING AWARENESS

In January 2023, we held a Year of Welcome event at Swindon Hub. It was both a launch for the Year of Welcome calendar and a *Welcome* workshop. Members of the community spoke with us about what welcome meant to them and how we can all look to promote it in Swindon. We had the opportunity to speak with people about their lives in Swindon, some having moved here and made Swindon their home and others having lived here all their lives. It was a great space to discuss what joins us together, despite having travelled different routes to get here.

This year we increased our presence and, in turn, our awareness raising on social media. We shared cultural days of importance, all highlighted in our *Year of Welcome* calendar, with the hope that this action would encourage conversations on the topics. We worked to break down the barriers many people have when learning about Bills, Policies and Laws. The political wording and jargon used in these documents can often cause confusion and the inability to connect to the content, and the lives of those people impacted by the policies.

We shared simple, factual updates on current events and policy surrounding people seeking sanctuary, with the aim of making them easier for all of us to access. We believe it is crucial in our purpose to speak up for sanctuary, that everyone can understand in simple, well-informed terminology how harmful and unfair these policies are and enable us all to challenge those who make them.

Also, as part of our continuing campaign on raising awareness, in the lead up to the local elections in May, we called on all parties to pledge for Swindon Borough Council to become a Borough of Sanctuary and commit to providing welcome and support to all who are seeking sanctuary in Swindon.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Our work focuses on awareness raising and education of the community around the experience of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. Throughout the year, we met with members of the community in different settings to promote welcome and foster discussions about why diversity is so important.

Refugee Week 2022

Refugee Week is an important moment for us to celebrate the contribution of people seeking sanctuary in the UK and promote better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. It's an opportunity to create a programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that embody that year's theme. With Healing as this year's theme, we ran a Mind and Body calming yoga session in GWR Park, open to all who wanted to join. The session was run by one of our volunteers, Siobhan. It was a perfect opportunity to be present, to focus on self-care and think about what healing means to each of us.

Celebration of Welcomes– Lawn Manor Academy

To celebrate the start of their journey in becoming recognised as a School of Sanctuary, Lawn Manor Academy hosted Swindon's second Celebration of Welcomes evening in Refugee Week 2022. As well as brilliant dance, music and poetry performances from Lawn Manor Academy students, there was a delicious array of world food tasters representing the exciting cultural diversity of Lawn Manor Academy. A small exhibition introducing Swindon City of Sanctuary and featuring School of Sanctuary work at Peatmoor Primary School, was also on display.

"They are celebrating diversity and inclusion, which is wonderful." Mayor of Swindon Cllr Abdul Amin

Lush Charity Pot

In March, we spent three days in *Lush* in Brunel Shopping Centre as part of their Charity Pot initiative. As *Lush* says, *"It's the pot that does a lot! A soothing body lotion feeds your skin*

while also funding grassroots groups, all at the same time." By engaging directly with *Lush* customers, our staff and volunteers were not only able to raise money, but also vitally, raise awareness about our work. We had some brilliant conversations with members of the public about the impact our work has in the community. These interactions are so meaningful and really change hearts and minds. *Lush* staff created a welcoming and supportive environment and atmosphere to foster these conversations. We thank the *Lush* team and all who spoke with us and bought the Charity Pot.

SCHOOLS

Our work in schools continued to be one of our greatest successes. Working the majority of the year with only a part time employee, volunteers took on the bulk of schools' work. We are incredibly grateful for their support and knowledge which allowed the work to continue, and to grow. It's been a busy year for our Swindon schools!

Schools of Sanctuary Awards

This year, two schools in Swindon began their journeys to become nationally accredited Schools of Sanctuary: Peatmoor Community Primary School and Lawn Manor Academy.

We ended 2022 on a high with Peatmoor Community Primary School becoming Swindon's first School of Sanctuary! To gain the award, staff and young people, who now join a growing network of almost 400 Schools and Colleges of Sanctuary across the UK, had to show good practice in developing and embedding a culture of welcome and inclusion throughout the life of the school and in the curriculum. The school's application was reviewed by a panel of Swindon City of Sanctuary's trustees and volunteers, and a representative from City of Sanctuary UK.

"We are so proud of this award which recognises the welcome that Peatmoor extends to all. The welcome anyone receives at Peatmoor comes from all our pupils and staff and is very much embedded throughout all that happens." Headteacher, Mrs Libby Matthews

"It is very exciting to be able to announce that Peatmoor Primary School has been awarded the School of Sanctuary Award." Swindon Borough Council's Director of Education, Annette Perrington

While we worked closely with three Swindon schools, 26 schools received our Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network News Updates throughout the year. We welcome schools to work with us in many different capacities, not just through our Schools of Sanctuary work.

Welcome Ambassadors

As part of their School of Sanctuary Award programme, Peatmoor Primary School created their *Welcoming Committee* - a small group of young people from Years 5 and 6, some with Lived Experience of Migration. Their role is to welcome any new person into the school and to empower others to share and spread the values of welcome and inclusion.

Lawn Manor Academy took inspiration from Peatmoor and developed their own *Welcome Ambassador* role appointing more than 50 *Welcome Ambassadors* from all year groups; some designated as Lead Ambassadors with greater responsibility to promote the values of a School of Sanctuary. As it develops, it is anticipated that the role of *Welcome Ambassadors* will be adopted by more schools.

CONNECTIONS IN EDUCATION

We spent the year increasing our visibility and connections within the education sector in Swindon. We welcome working with any place of education who wants to find ways to embed and promote welcome and inclusion into their work.

Swindon New College

In September, we attended Swindon New College Freshers Fair, where we shared with the students our campaigns and highlighted ways in which they could be empowered to use their voices and speak up for sanctuary. We had a good response from the young people, signing up to learn more about our work.

Supporting Teaching Colleagues through CPD

Our Schools' team ran 9 CPD sessions over the course of the year. In June and July, we provided two whole staff CPD sessions at Peatmoor School. Throughout the course of the year at Lawn Manor Academy, we delivered 7 CPD sessions and meetings for Lawn Manor Academy staff members of the Cultural Diversity Group. These sessions and meetings enabled colleagues attending to disseminate the information gained to the wider school community.

Swindon Headteachers' Conference

We attended the Swindon Headteachers' Conference at STEAM in March 2023 where our Swindon City of Sanctuary stall enabled us to connect with another 15 schools. Our stall focused on how schools could celebrate cultural diversity and embrace the 130+ languages spoken in Swindon with resources like dual language books from *Mantra Lingua UK* [Mantra Lingua UK | Dual language books and bilingual books and resources for bilingual children and parents and for the multi-lingual classroom.](#)

Refugee Week 2022

In 2022, we connected with 6 schools: St Catherine's RC Primary School, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, Peatmoor Community Primary School, Lawn Manor Academy, East Wichel

Primary School, and The Commonweal School. Leading up to, and during, Refugee Week 20th-26th June 2022, colleagues from all six schools involved young people in inspirational Arts-based work across the curriculum around the 2022 theme of *Healing*. Some of this work was shared at the successful and moving *Celebration of Welcomes* event hosted by Lawn Manor Academy and attended by over 100 guests.

“Congratulations to everyone involved in this evening's event. I was moved to tears more than once, such a wonderful celebration of the different cultures in the school.”

Preparing for Refugee Week 2023

In March 2023, colleagues from six schools again participated in our Zoom preparation workshops for this all-important week. Together the group explored and shared inspiration around the 2023 theme of *Compassion*. Supported by resources produced by Schools of Sanctuary UK and Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary's *Day of Welcome*, each school's Refugee Week plans began to take shape. The resources provided guidance and suggestions for involving young people in sometimes complex and challenging conversations surrounding the experiences of people seeking sanctuary. Planning also began for another *Celebration of Welcomes* event to be hosted by Lawn Manor Academy during Refugee Week in June.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Our work in schools continued, in coproduction with some of Swindon's great creative and community organisations.

See Me Too Nationwide

We were delighted to be working with Create Studios again this year on their latest project with Swindon's largest employer, Nationwide. In June 2022, 30 young people from two secondary schools, Lawn Manor Academy and Commonweal School, participated in the schools' workshops for *See Me Too Nationwide*. The workshops focused on exploring stories of migration to Swindon by people who worked at Nationwide. Their stories were shared through a series of short films, which provided stimulus for the young people to explore the significance and positive impact of migration, and to be inspired to begin collecting their own family and friends' migration stories.

In preparation for the October 2022 launch of *the See Me Too Nationwide* exhibition, a sequence of lesson plans was written by our schools' team and published on Create Studios' *See Me Too Nationwide* website. These enable young people to explore extracts from the Nationwide films as inspiration for gathering their own school archive of families' stories of migration to Swindon. <https://see-me-nationwide.org.uk>

Work Experience at Swindon Central Library

A 'first' for Swindon City of Sanctuary saw three Year 10 students from Commonweal School completing their three-day Work Experience with the Outreach Team at Swindon's Central Library and Swindon City of Sanctuary: to experience the work of a volunteer at a charity. The students were given a project to complete which involved research into stories about welcome and inclusion by reviewing Central Library's collection of picture books for young readers, including dual-language books and selecting their favourites. This selection and the reviews were shared with young readers in a visual display in the Children's Books area in Central Library. The students enjoyed the experience and the pressure to complete the display by a deadline! Using and developing their skills and qualities as collaborators and communicators, the students gained an insight into the way volunteers at Swindon City of Sanctuary work to promote a culture of welcome and inclusion.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Our volunteers are the heart of the charity, we simply could not do what we do without them. Our team of 35 volunteers support at our community events, with Sectors of Sanctuary work and with fundraising events. This year, our Volunteer Coordinator developed a robust volunteer training course to ensure that all new volunteers understand our ethos, are safe and encouraged to be aware of their duties to others. This included four training videos, updating all volunteering policies and launching Volunteer Management software. All new volunteers meet with our Volunteer Coordinator and take part in training before attending sessions. We ensure we have the highest standards of safeguarding, health and safety and hygiene. This year, volunteers took on the majority of our Schools of Sanctuary work. Swindon's first School of Sanctuary is a culmination of their incredible hard work and dedication. We cannot thank our wonderful volunteers enough - their compassion, empathy and desire to promote welcome inspires us every day!

"I have been a volunteer for Swindon City of Sanctuary since it began seven years ago. The ethos of welcome and inclusion within the local community and celebrating its diversity is at the heart of what we do. Working on projects that encourage this generosity of spirit is, for me, very rewarding."

Volunteer figures

- Volunteers – 35
- Volunteer hours – 855+
- Volunteers with lived experience of seeking sanctuary – 4
- Volunteers with lived experience of migration – 10

IN THE NEWS

It was a busy year for us in the local and national media. We are grateful that the majority of coverage we received, was positive and in support of our work. Not only has it aided in highlighting our work and promoting welcome, but it has also contributed to increasing awareness around the issues faced by people seeking sanctuary in Swindon.

- TV news segment – Peatmoor, Swindon’s first School of Sanctuary
- BBC – Swindon school awarded by City of Sanctuary UK
- Swindon Link – Swindon City of Sanctuary celebrates success of its first School of Sanctuary Award
- BBC Radio Wiltshire – Peatmoor, Swindon’s first School of Sanctuary
- BBC Radio Wiltshire – Fill the Skies Hope event at Swindon Hub
- Swindon Link – Swindon City of Sanctuary calls on the town's parties to commit to having a 'Council of Sanctuary
- Swindon Link – Raising money for good causes from the flower beds
- Swindon Link – Diversity of Swindon celebrated in special performance at school

While we have been lucky to experience overwhelmingly positive support for our work, negative comments and opinions shared online show that we still have a substantial journey ahead in order to ensure that all feel welcome. We do not let a small minority of negative voices impact our work or sway our vision, but these instances highlight the need for our work to continue in the current divisive political landscape. We will continue to bridge divides and continue to encourage the community to support people seeking sanctuary.

PASTURES NEW

As our team grew, we knew that we needed space that would allow us to grow too. Our previous space could not comfortably fit three desks and while it worked when we were a smaller team, and during Covid, we now needed something different. We were lucky to move into a much larger space within Voluntary Action Swindon, a space that not only provided a great working environment for staff but also allowed us to meet with other organisations, volunteers and members of the community. We had previously been holding meetings and meeting volunteers in coffee shops, so having a space that fitted our needs made a huge difference. We now have the capacity to deliver training at our office and, so far, we have met with different schools, organisations and Trustees. We look forward to welcoming many more. Our space is filled with beautiful, moving art work and poetry from people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary living in Swindon.

THANK YOU

Our work relies on the generous support from donors and grants. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who help us plan for the future through monthly direct debits.

We are continually grateful that the funding from the National Lottery Community Fund grant, now in its second year, allows us to carry on with our work.

A special thank you to the charitable funds and trusts outlined in the financial statement - without your support, we simply would not be able to achieve all the incredible things listed in our report.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177624

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2023
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2023

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2023

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page nine of the attached financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

K Hudson
B Jackson (Chair)
S Juul (Treasurer)
J Tompsett – resigned May-22
C Bennett
I Howard
M Lubanda
B Mannu – appointed May-22
R Newman – appointed May-22

Bankers

Metro	Coop Plc
One Southampton Row	PO Box 250
London	Skelmersdale
WC1B 5HA	WN8 6WT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

Governance and management risk looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.

- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
- To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations, in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit, by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds
- The prevention and relief of poverty

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the year was £49,191 (2022 £55,706). Expenditure amounted to £37,999 (2022 £41,498). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2023 there was a surplus of £11,192 (2022 surplus £14,208).

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2023

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



.....
Ben Jackson

Date:15th December 2023.....

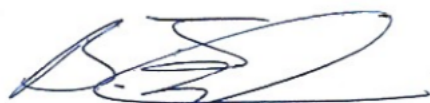
Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2023 Total Fund	2022 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		0	49,191	49,191	55,706
Total		<u>0</u>	<u>49,191</u>	<u>49,191</u>	<u>55,706</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities					
Support for Sanctuary seekers		93	37,906	37,999	41,498
NET INCOME		<u>(93)</u>	<u>11,285</u>	<u>11,192</u>	<u>14,208</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		<u>11,035</u>	<u>45,998</u>	<u>57,033</u>	<u>42,825</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>10,942</u>	<u>57,283</u>	<u>68,225</u>	<u>57,033</u>
<u>For year ended 30 April 2023</u>					

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2023 Total Fund	2022 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		10,942	57,283	68,225	57,033
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>10,942</u>	<u>57,283</u>	<u>68,225</u>	<u>57,033</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>10,942</u>	<u>57,283</u>	<u>68,225</u>	<u>57,033</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				10,942	11,035
Restricted Funds				57,283	45,998
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>68,225</u>	<u>57,033</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 15/12/2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



B Jackson (Chair)

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2023 nor for the year ended 30 April 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2023 nor for the year ended 31 April 2022.

3. STAFF

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Administration	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

4. LOANS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2023

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	11,035	0	(93)	10,942
	<u>11,035</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(93)</u>	<u>10,942</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
Joffe + Bath spa	1,008	0	(1,008)	0
We're Open	3,251	0	(812)	2,439
Room for All	0	0	0	0
Refugee Week	1,721	0	(72)	1,649
Wiltshire Community	6,588	0	(6,588)	0
NLCF	22,588	48,557	(27,035)	44,110
School of Sanctuary	188	0	0	188
Swindon Parish Council	673	0	(5)	668
Coop Community Fund	582	0	0	582
Respond & Adapt	4,495	0	(605)	3,890
Postcode Neighbourhood Trust	4,790	0	(1,647)	3,143
Local Giving Grant	115	135	(135)	115
Magic Little Grant	0	500	0	500
	<u>45,998</u>	<u>49,191</u>	<u>(37,906)</u>	<u>57,283</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>57,033</u>	<u>49,191</u>	<u>(37,999)</u>	<u>68,225</u>

5. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

6. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **Joffe** - Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's main employee, the executive officer. This has now been fully utilised.
- b) **Room for all** - Funds to provide resources to host sanctuary seekers in hosts' homes in Swindon. This has now been fully utilised.
- c) **We're Open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social evening
- d) **National Lottery Community Funding** – NLCF Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's employees, the executive officer, Stream Co-ordinator, Schools Co-ordinator and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- e) **Refugee week** - Funds relating to a week of activities celebrating sanctuary seekers in Swindon
- f) **School of sanctuary** - Funds utilised for work in schools.
- g) **Swindon Parish Council** - Funds for publicity purposes only including short films
- h) **Respond & Adapt** – Wellbeing project
- i) **Postcode Neighbourhood Trust** – Fab Extension and School Co-ordinator role

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	49,191	55,706
	<u>49,191</u>	<u>55,706</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	28,574	30,088
Other Operating Leases	-	-
Office Rent & Room Hire	3,895	1,718
Insurance	396	471
Telephone	862	486
Computers & software	-	1,071
Postage and Stationery	-	31
Travelling	-	-
Sundry expenses	3,551	6,912
	<u>37,278</u>	<u>40,778</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	720	720
	<u>720</u>	<u>720</u>
	<u>11,193</u>	<u>14,208</u>

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent review of these financial statements has taken place. The associated report can be made available on request.

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

England & Wales - Charity number 1177624

Accounts

Swindon City of Sanctuary



Registered Charity No. 1177624



Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2021-2022



If any one of us feared for our lives or the lives of our loved ones, we'd want to know that others would help us to safety, wouldn't we? This is our chance to show our messages of welcome and support for everyone – no matter what we look like or where we come from.

Together With Refugees coalition 2021



Contents

1. Introduction and Summary

Our Year in Numbers

2. Thanks

3. Charitable Objects

4. Culture and Values

5. Our Impact

Streams, Initiatives, Campaigns

a. Schools and Libraries

i. Schools of Sanctuary

ii. FAB Extensions Project

b. We're Open

c. Wellbeing Project

d. Campaigns

6. Organisational Development and Governance

7. Trustees and Staff 2021-2022

8. Ambitions and Long-term Strategy

9. Appendix 1 Finance Report

Introduction and Summary

Every year running a small charity has its challenges, but 2021-22 has been a year in which Swindon City of Sanctuary has developed significantly. Having weathered the storm of Covid in the previous year, we started 2021-22 with staff on furlough and a new strategy based on looking forwards after the difficulties that the pandemic had imposed upon us.

Crucially, in May 2021, as our previous core funding from the Joffe Trust came to an end but thankfully we were awarded a major grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. This funding has secured the immediate future of the charity and enabled us to commit fully to the new strategy, with the main focuses on Streams and Awards, Projects and Campaigning.

This funding has proved to be game-changing during this year. As a result, we are delighted that this year's Annual Report is focussed primarily on how we not only continued to deliver meaningful positive impact throughout our community, but also on how we used this new funding as a springboard to implement the new strategy.

Progress

Streams and Awards

*"We are building a movement of welcome by supporting and encouraging organisations (sic) to embed solidarity, compassion and inclusion within their work. Our **awards programme** recognises and celebrates the organisations who go above and beyond."*

City of Sanctuary UK

We chose to remain with the excellent schools' work achieved in previous years and developed it as our Schools and Libraries Stream of Sanctuary by:

- Following the structures and advice put in place by the City of Sanctuary UK
- Using the City of Sanctuary UK model to shape our Two-year Pilot Scheme, therefore encouraging schools to work towards their Schools of Sanctuary Award
- Supporting two schools through to achieve their School of Sanctuary Awards through our Pilot Scheme
- Creating a significant link with Swindon Central Library through the FABs Extension Project.

Therefore, with Schools and Libraries of Sanctuary now embedded as a key strategic part of our plan, we could continue to strengthen our visibility and values across Swindon.

We felt confident that by refreshing our strategic focus we were more able to help participating schools achieve their awards and more able to create a stronger working relationship with Central Library.

Projects

- **We're Open:** Our weekly social inclusion coffee events, returned to full strength with a record number of attendees.
- **FABs Extension Project** (as part of Schools and Libraries Stream):
 - The FABs created during the first Lockdown were now extended into a viable and active literacy initiative to support schools with their EAL programmes.
 - The concept of Global Libraries in schools was introduced together with links to Swindon Central Library.
 - The funding we received through the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust helped us to employ a FAB Extension Project Coordinator to ensure the project's success.
- **Wellbeing:** We gradually re-introduced one to one sessions over the year, with six people who attended consistently overall, despite the challenges that post-Covid conditions presented to us. Face to face Yoga sessions were introduced with guests The Medaille Trust attending for one of the sessions. The benefit of these sessions cannot be underestimated and we hope to expand the project next year.
- **Room for All:** The discontinuation of our Hosting Scheme reflected a significant change in Government procedure. We are extremely proud of what we achieved whilst we had the opportunity to support people with the uncertainty of destitution ahead. We have included a retrospective of these achievements in the voices of those directly involved – Host and Guest.

Campaigning

We achieved particular success with our **Show Your Heart Month of Welcome** campaign in November 2021 as part of **Together with Refugees** campaign to raise awareness of the need for a fair and just asylum system. Our actions involved collaborating with other local organisations and businesses to create and display a billboard of welcome in the town. We gained significant media coverage with hundreds of Swindon residents and school children getting involved.

Funding

Grants

Alongside the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) grant, we also received and carried forward significant additional funding from Wiltshire Community Foundation, NACCOM Respond and Adapt Programme, the Co-operative Community Fund, the Co-operative Mid-counties Grant, Magic Little Grants, Swindon's Bus Company, Police and Crime Commissioner Grant, Swindon Parish Council, and the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust.

Fundraising

We have continued to work on our fundraising strategy receiving donations to Local Giving and occasional volunteer-led fundraising activities.

Changes

New Staff

We welcomed two new people to our staff team:

- Amanda Black joined us in January 2022 to continue and develop the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Aderonke Akinyele also joined us in January 2022, in the newly-created role of Streams and Awards of Sanctuary Coordinator.

Staff Leaving Us

- Sadly, Stella Mortazavi, our FABs Co-ordinator, left us at the end of the funding term of one year, having done a superb job of aligning the FABs to literacy initiatives within schools. We thank Stella for her huge contribution over the year she was with us.

Trustees

- Sadly, we have said goodbye to Hannah Parry this year. Hannah had been with Swindon City of Sanctuary since we began. She will be hugely missed by us all. We wish her well.
- We welcomed two new trustees to the board: Olatunji Adeniji, and Balaji Mannu.

Reflections

Although one of our key projects, Room for All Hosting Scheme, no longer featured in our work this year, we cannot ignore its legacy. We invite you to read this short retrospective and reflect on the enormous impact of this initiative.

Room for All Hosting Scheme – A Retrospective

The Room for All Project started in 2018 to provide accommodation for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon who had been given their Leave to Remain and were at risk of homelessness. By May 2020, the number of guests had declined to just two. Once our last guest had moved on in June 2020, our Board of trustees made the difficult decision to close our Hosting Scheme.

In the three years of operation, we had provided accommodation for 41 individuals for a total of 2,565 nights. The success and value of the project is best summed up below by one of the hosts and one of those helped.

“The Hosting Scheme run by Swindon City of Sanctuary had an immense impact on my life, as it was what I needed the most in a time of turmoil and desperation. It is more than just a roof over your head. I have

made a life-long friendship with a family who I am extremely grateful to. The whole experience has helped me to acclimatise to life in the UK.”

Male 25, now employed in a professional job, living in his own flat in Swindon

“Our family of four began hosting in 2017. Over the next three years, we hosted ten men from a variety of countries. The impact was huge on all of us. We shared food and personal space soon becoming friends, many of whom we are still in contact with. Two of them attended our daughter’s wedding.

Personally I was in awe and humbled at the experiences of our guests before and after they arrived in the UK. It was an honour to be ‘Mama Fay’ to those who chose to call me that. It was also good to see our teenagers grasping how blessed they were simply by the chance of where they were born.

As a family we have a greater understanding of the simplicity of our lives and feel blessed to have befriended our guests and played a small part in their story. It is always an adjustment having someone move into your home but with the support from Swindon City of Sanctuary and the guests themselves helped smooth the process. Having hosted individuals then we were better placed to host Ukrainian refugees when the need arose.”

Fay Howard, Swindon resident

The impact of our involvement in the community of Swindon has continued. As you will see from this report, we have, again, added significantly to the lives of those seeking sanctuary in our local area. There is, of course, so much more to do. Against a continued backdrop of rising hate crime across the UK, and the pervasive demonisation of “immigrants” via the media and our political landscape, we have worked carefully throughout the year to expand our reach and to help build a more welcoming community.

As we write this report, we find Swindon City of Sanctuary in good health. Financially we are stable, we have a great team of staff and volunteers, and our activities are expanding. Nevertheless, we remain committed to campaigning for the rights of people seeking sanctuary. Working closely with all members of our community, we continue to develop greater understanding of the complexities of the asylum system and the media portrayal of people seeking sanctuary in our work to promote a culture of welcome and inclusion.

As always, we would like to thank the people of Swindon for their support and involvement.

We are excited for the future, and we offer our deepest thanks to everyone who has supported our mission throughout the year covered in this Annual Report.

Ben Jackson

Chair of Trustees

December 2022

Nicola Wood

Charity Manager

Thanks

We thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed to our work and the many others who pledge to do so in the future.

We thank all our volunteers and supporters for their pledges, individual donations, grant funds and time. These essential groups of generous people and organisations have enabled us to continue developing our work to meet our objectives.

Our Charitable Objects

To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.

The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.

Culture and Values

TRUST

Trust is at the core of our organisation. We understand that those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

INCLUSIVE

Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each sanctuary seeker in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We actively and equally value the contribution that all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who benefit make and involve them meaningfully in decisions about our work.

OBJECTIVE

Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity, which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused. We ensure to work ethically in all we do and who we work with, as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

INFORMED

Across our organisation we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting sanctuary seekers, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create better understanding between us all.

INSPIRATIONAL

We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place for all who live here. We believe in generous leadership and that the best work relies on different experiences and perspectives. We seek out the best ideas, wherever they come from.

POSITIVE and COMMITTED

We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

Our Impact: Streams and Projects

Schools of Sanctuary

Schools are committed to creating a safe and inclusive culture of welcome that benefits everybody, including anyone in their community seeking sanctuary.

[Become a School of Sanctuary - Schools of Sanctuary \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](https://cityofsanctuary.org)

Schools of Sanctuary in numbers

- 4 schools participated in Refugee Week 2022 preparation workshops
- 2 schools formally joined our School of Sanctuary Awards Pilot Scheme
- 2 new creative collaborations
- 2 new connections
- 1 new school joined our Schools of Sanctuary Network
- 1 new key volunteer

OUR PROJECT

Although primary and secondary schools re-opened in March 2021 following the lifting of the third Lockdown. The prevalence and legacy of Covid-19 was still evident throughout the remainder of 2021 and into 2022.

- The challenges facing schools, and the impact of these challenges, were the “unknown unknowns” that made planning our work quite problematic, and carrying out some of our plans almost impossible.
- Staff absence from schools due to waves of covid-19 and the recognition of ‘long covid’ meant the temporary suspension of learning for some year groups; young people’s attendance was compromised by personal illness or the impact of staff absences; unequal access to digital learning during lockdowns resulted in complexities of learning gaps, and catch-up learning was further compromised.
- With this backdrop, we continued to be flexible with our work, and in our expectations of schools’ involvement in our work. Often, our plans to visit schools were thwarted at the last minute, and attendance at remote CPD sessions was limited. However, we remained in awe of all our teaching colleagues and continued to be adept at adapting our work to support them.
- We cannot thank enough all teaching colleagues we have worked with in the past and, more especially, those who were able to continue working with us throughout 2021-22,



for making their commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive society a priority.

OUR SUCCESSES

Inevitably, our work was sensitively scaled down, but still yielded great impact. This was largely down to the commitment of teaching staff who, despite the massive pressures the pandemic created, still attended Zoom workshops, continued developing work begun in previous years, and introduced new focuses to extend understanding of the importance of welcome and inclusion – especially for people who have fled danger.



By the end of April 2022, we had:

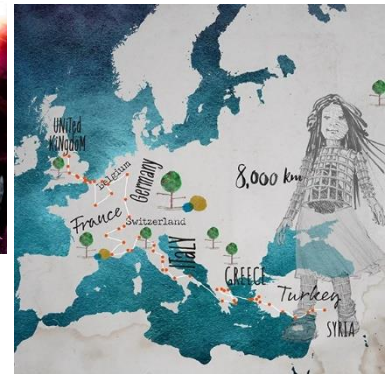
- **Set up a Pilot Scheme for School of Sanctuary Awards**

Having continued to support several schools with their work on social justice, welcome and social inclusion, one of the longer-term aims of a school's involvement with the Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network had been to acknowledge and celebrate each school's work with formal accreditation of a School of Sanctuary Award. Plans were in place from November 2019 for the accreditation process to begin but, by March 2020, everything was dramatically halted. With Swindon City of Sanctuary's success in securing funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund, we were able to begin formalising our approach to a Sanctuary Awards programme in Swindon – starting with acknowledging Schools of Sanctuary developments and accrediting schools that applied for the nationally recognised School of Sanctuary Award. Two schools accepted our invitation to participate in the Pilot Scheme. By June 2023, we anticipate that both schools will have received their formal accreditation.

- **Appointed a key volunteer to support one of the Pilot Scheme schools with preparations for their application for the School of Sanctuary Award**

The work of the key volunteer was invaluable in assisting the school to identify how they met the Sanctuary Award criteria of LEARN, EMBED and SHARE. The range of work was varied – from meeting young people in the school's Welcoming Committee, to leading whole staff CPD workshops.

- **Seen six schools initiate some incredible ideas for their work during Refugee Week 2021**
These ideas were inspired by *The Walk* –the planned remarkable journey between



July to November 2021 of 'one little girl ... with one BIG hope'. Little Amal, a young refugee, embarks on an epic voyage that would take her across Turkey and across Europe to find her mother, get back to school, and start a new life.

Ideas were inspirational. In one primary school, each year group represented different countries on Little Amal's journey; displays and activities involved language, culture and traditions of 'welcome', climate, arts, technological and scientific inventions, famous people, food, and many more things.

In one secondary school, work began across KS3 and KS4 on embedding some learning around the Refugee Week theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone' into the school's values (one of which is 'respect') and daily practices, routines and activities during the week (for example, a 'Thought of the Week'). Daily assemblies took place using a series of five short films (one for each daily assembly throughout the week), which led to a final reflection at end of week with some follow-up questions to link in with *The Walk* project.

- **Seen four schools in our network and hundreds of young people participate in the social justice campaign *Show Your Heart*, led by coalition Together With Refugees**

In December 2021, Swindon City of Sanctuary was delighted to announce the appearance of hundreds of messages of welcome on a special billboard in Old Town.



In collaboration with Create Studios and with the support of Richard James Estate Agents, Swindon City of Sanctuary shared messages of welcome and support, written on orange hearts, to all people who come to live here in Swindon, especially people who have fled danger and are seeking safety here with everyone.

These messages were displayed in a huge orange heart shape on the billboard in Old Town's Newport Street. Hundreds of messages of welcome on orange hearts were written by young people from local schools, school staff, people from local businesses, community organisations and faith groups during Swindon City of Sanctuary's Show Your Heart Month of Welcome in November 2021. These messages showed the true spirit of welcome and kindness in our town. The messages were captured on camera and brought together, in a large heart shape on the billboard, by the Marketing Team at Create Studios.

In preparation for the message-writing, our Schools team led a virtual workshop for primary and secondary school colleagues. This was attended by colleagues from four schools, three of which featured on the huge heart billboard. Subsequently, the four schools directly involved in the campaign have continued to embed the theme of 'Welcome and Inclusion' into their work aligned with their schools' values.



- **Worked on two projects in collaboration with Create Studios, further strengthening our mutually supportive relationship**

One of these projects was the *Show Your Heart* campaign in November 2021; the other was a further development of the *See Me Too* project, using stories of people's migration to Swindon as inspiration for gathering migration stories from within the local communities around schools. In February 2022, planning for schools' workshops for the summer term began, based around some of the stories of migration gathered during Create Studios' *See Me Too: Nationwide* project. The workshops were planned to enable young people in local, ethnically diverse secondary schools to experience the *See Me Too: Nationwide* exhibition of migration stories and be inspired to carry out their own interviews, planned to be captured on film with support from the Create Studios' Team.

- **Made links with another school via our FABs Extension Project**

In the Autumn of 2021, following the arrival in Swindon of a number of families from Afghanistan who were supported by the Warm Welcome Team at Swindon Borough Council, one of the primary schools where some of the children had registered reached out to our Schools team seeking guidance and advice about working with children from Afghanistan who were proficient in other languages, but had not encountered English. Through our connections with City of Sanctuary UK and with the support of our FABs Extension Project Co-ordinator, we were able to provide the school with two boxes of oracy- and literacy-based games and activities, including dual language story books, from which the teaching staff were able to create more activities to support the children who had joined their school. In January 2022, the headteacher told us:

“Thanks to Swindon City of Sanctuary and their donation of books, we have been able to set up a multi-cultural/dual language book area in our school library. Although (our school) has traditionally served a white British community, we having a growing number of children whose first language is not English on roll now (20% currently). As a fully inclusive school, we value this diversity. (All) the children... are loving reading the stories and talking about the print of other languages in the books when they visit the library.”

The headteacher also commented how this had led to the children from Afghanistan feeling more included in the life of the school.

- **Worked closely with Swindon Central Library’s Outreach Team, in collaboration with children’s writer and educational guru Neil Griffiths**

In April 2022, Swindon Libraries organised a hugely successful Storytelling and Activities session, which had originally been planned in collaboration with our Schools team for the library’s Storytelling Week in February. The session was specially curated for the children of families from Afghanistan brought to the UK by the Government through the ARAP Scheme. It took place at the hotel where the families had been placed. The brilliant and entertaining storyteller, Neil Griffiths, told two of his stories to a mixed group of 15 young people (mostly KS1 and KS2 – but two young people, one each from KS3 and KS4, were also present) and a few parents.

All the young people, and the adults, were totally captivated as Neil engaged them. His words were translated into Dari and Farsi by a brilliant volunteer who hadn’t quite expected this type of translating, but who gained equal enjoyment. The translator, in talking with some of the young people and the parents, told us that the occasion had been a great experience. The storytelling was followed by hands-on creative activities led by the Swindon Libraries’ Outreach Team; these were also a great success. The morning’s experience was a welcome relief from the constant stress and uncertainty of living in a hotel, in a state of ‘limbo’ with little knowledge of how long Government support would last.

- **Organised and led workshops to prepare for Refugee Week 2022**

As with previous years, at the end of March 2022 members of our Schools team invited teaching colleagues to attend a virtual workshop to introduce the Refugee Week theme, 'Healing'. The workshop, attended by colleagues from six schools in the network, was a valuable forum for exploring ways of extending young people's understanding of the importance of welcome inclusion and belonging. Through these workshops, which our Schools of Sanctuary Team has led every year since 2017, we convey the message that Refugee Week is not something that happens for just a week each year; it is a time for reviewing staff learning and young people's learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary and to further embed this into areas of the curriculum and into the life of our schools.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- To keep to our intended outcome of supporting at least three more schools to gain School of Sanctuary Awards.
- To return to developments for bringing together EAL teaching collages to learn and share expertise, ideas and resources.
- Further collaboration with Swindon Libraries and Create Studios.
- To highlight Acts of Welcome across the schools within our network.
- To continue links with national campaigns and organisations working to promote safe and just routes to sanctuary.

Our Impact: Streams and Projects

FAB Extensions Project

FAB Extensions Project in Numbers:

- 1 Project Coordinator
- 2 pilot schools
- 2 additional schools
- 8 FAB boxes created
- 5 Tablets with software

OUR PROJECT

Due to the success of the FAB project during lockdown, the return to school, and our successful recruitment of a FAB Co-ordinator, we were able to shift the focus away from Lockdown's emphasis on direct family support. At the beginning of the current year, we were well on the way to achieving our aim of strengthening existing and much needed EAL support within schools. This shift would also help schools to develop their work around 'welcome' and 'inclusion'; and would therefore sit holistically within our Schools of Sanctuary stream.

Our FAB Extensions Project, a one-year Pilot Scheme, in effect, would enable schools to provide literacy support in fun and engaging ways and to involve families of multilingual learners by:

- Using the new FAB boxes as they felt appropriate to meet the needs of multilingual learners
- Assisting schools to connect families with Swindon Libraries and the National Literacy Trust
- Continuing activities with Story-Sacks.

We continued to encourage more schools to participate by linking with each school's parental engagement focus on literacy, especially for families who have first languages other than English. We also continued our collaboration between the FAB Co-ordinator, Swindon Central Library, schools, and the National Literacy Trust.

With the gradual lifting of Lockdowns, we were able to meet in-person and online:

- To make contact with and visit schools
- To recruit volunteers
- To engage children and families in schools in order to make the exchange of information less challenging

We also strengthened our connection with Swindon Central Library by:

- Holding meetings with Swindon Central Library's educational outreach staff
- Connecting with the Library Summer Reading Scheme to draw in multi-lingual families and help the library to enrich their quality of engagement and social inclusion
- Obtaining a Library Card for Swindon City of Sanctuary so that we could compile a collection of multi-lingual books for teaching colleagues to borrow to support their literacy and oracy work.

OUR SUCCESSES

"Our whole school project on belonging and everyone welcome was a huge success. We based it around the book 'All Are Welcome Here' and the children loved doing different activities on it (including our display in the entrance)."

"The FAB boxes have been a success and are currently being used to support our EAL learners and new children joining the school. The support it has provided us has also been invaluable, especially with funding resources for our new Farsi-speaking child."



- Receiving twelve months funding from the postcode Neighbourhood Trust for extending our original FABs initiative
- Supporting teaching colleagues with resources for involving multilingual families in their children's learning
- The family liaison in one school will now be working on FABs directly with families.
- Only two schools are fully engaged so far, but the quality of this engagement superseded quantity. Two more schools are interested, one primary and one secondary.
- We are very proud of the Global Library initiative introduced and developed by our FAB Coordinator. The Global Library enabled schools involved to increase awareness of the diversity in our global communities, providing books which featured people from other cultures and covering topics connected to migration and enabling children to identify themselves in an awareness of a wider world.



One Headteacher said:

“It has made us more aware, as staff and for the children, of the vast number of languages we speak in the school. The display in (our) Library really caught the children’s attention and got them thinking and talking about our differences in a positive way.”

- **At another school, parents were invited to visit their children’s Global Library**
- **The FAB boxes were branded with sustainable materials and became a good quality resource in their own right.**



- **With expertise from a volunteer with lived experience of migration, the tablets successfully acquired with funding from last year were uploaded with a wide variety of digital resources. These contributed to the overall quality of the FAB Extension boxes.**
- **The quality and level of engagement was very good, even though just two schools have been involved so far. As already mentioned, quality is preferable to quantity!**
- **We felt that a secure and sustainable foundation for future development was being developed.**
- **A successful and positive link was established with Swindon Central Library. This made it possible for us to consider future work together to explore welcome and inclusion.**
- **Our Project Coordinator left the role with a clear plan of involving other organisations within the community eg. Swindon Central Library and plans for extending the work to other schools.**



OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- **To consider ways of supporting Swindon Central Library to become a Library of Sanctuary using the principals behind the FAB Project.**
- **To consider future work with Swindon Libraries to build on findings from our Consultation in December 2020, researching the need for and use of dual-language books and exploring welcome and inclusion.**
- **A progress tracker is planned for gathering evidence to indicate and inform future development.**
- **In the early stages, the pandemic was still making schools wary about opening their doors. Therefore, introducing the project created a bigger challenge than we anticipated. Contact with schools was limited to remote communication, at this time, resulting in a slower start.**
- **Covid-19 'fallout' meant that building a team of volunteers remained a challenge.**
- **The research, gathering of resources and assembling of boxes, as well as liaising with schools productively, fell to the project coordinator – this had not been anticipated.**
- **Being unable to predict the full impact of Covid-19 when drawing up our proposed twelve-month funded programme, remained a constant challenge and tested creativity, flexibility and ingenuity of our project coordinator and our Schools of Sanctuary team.**

Our Impact: Projects and Initiatives

We're Open

Having a place where worries about issues relating to asylum claims can be left behind and where people can meet in a friendly and inclusive environment.

Our Project

We're Open is a weekly café which had been postponed from February 2020 due to the impact of the covid lockdown. As restrictions began to be lifted, we recognised the need for the project to be re-started. In May 2021, We're Open was relaunched in a new location, the Bakers Café in the historic Railway Village on the edge of Swindon town centre.



The Bakers Café – home to We're Open

A new team of Core Workers was formed to run We're Open on behalf of Swindon City of Sanctuary. It was planned to provide the usual tea, coffee and cakes, along with board games for members of the community of those seeking sanctuary, as well as inviting local entertainers to visit. The Baker's Café is part of a residential area, so it was hoped to also welcome local people in to meet those using We're Open and, in so doing, break down prejudice – leading to a stronger community.

OUR SUCCESSES

- The reopened We're Open project **exceeded** the numbers of users compared to the year before the pandemic (see table below).
- A group of **Key Workers** was **established** to ensure that the project ran according to the aims of Swindon City of Sanctuary, and developed it as an event that met the needs of the sanctuary-seeking community.
- The newly appointed Volunteer Co-ordinator was able to use We're Open as a way of introducing volunteers to the work of our charity. This has allowed a rota of volunteers to work behind the counter, providing refreshments to those attending.

From May 2021 to May 2022, a total of **130 volunteer sessions were achieved**, with an average of four volunteers per session.

- From January 2022, We're Open began to encourage people from the local community to attend to understand the aims of the project and meet the sanctuary-seeking community. A total of **64 local people visited We're Open between January and May 2022**. This has allowed us to bring people together and work to break down prejudice and discrimination.
- We have had other visitors, such as the High Sheriff of Wiltshire and Sir Robert Buckland MP.
- We have been able to put on **20 sessions** over the course of the year, with local musicians providing entertainment. Groups such as Canute's Plastic Army, Altones and individuals such as Jules Hill, Sarah Anstey and Joe Brown have added to the welcome for the sanctuary-seeking community.

Month	Attendees pre-covid, May 2019 – April 2020 (average per week in brackets)	Attendees, May 2021 – April 2022 (average per week in brackets)	Pre-covid volunteer sessions, May 2019 – April 2020	Volunteer sessions, May 2021 – April 2022
May	59 (11)	2 (2)	7	5
June	28 (4)	18 (6)	22	19
July	41 (10)	67 (13)	5	18
August	41 (10)	23 (5)	8	14
September	16 (8)	51 (10)	6	21
October	42 (8)	62 (15)	27	19
November	35 (9)	49 (11)	27	12
December	44 (11)	19 (9)	16	6
January	41 (12)	45 (11)	12	12
February	0	65 (16)	0	13
March	0	86 (17)	0	17
April	0	20 (5)	0	12
Total	367	884	130	168
% increase post Covid lockdown		140%		29%



Volunteers serving at We're Open

OUR PLANS & CHALLENGES

We aim to maintain the current success of this project by:

- **Seeking further funding;**
- **Maintaining current safeguarding practice which will be reviewed by a designated staff member of Swindon City of Sanctuary;**
- **Planning for broadening the reach of We're Open to be held during the daytime in a family friendly venue, perhaps in another part of the town, to extend the opportunity to the wider community; currently, although very successful, We're Open is held in the evening. This makes it difficult for women and children to attend.**

Our Impact: Projects and Initiatives

Wellbeing Project

Improving the mental health of people seeking sanctuary through exercise and access to counselling.

Wellbeing Project in numbers:

- **6 people accessed regular 1:1 yoga and counselling sessions**

OUR PROJECT

The aim of the project was to focus on how those seeking sanctuary could best cope with their lives since arriving in the UK. Cultural changes can have a huge psychological impact on individuals as well as dealing with possible trauma experienced in their home-country. Language barriers, dealing with new forms of bureaucracy, new customs, even hostility, in their country of sanctuary, can all take their toll on physical and mental well-being.

The services we undertook were undertaken with the strictest confidentiality and in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

A skilled and qualified volunteer practitioner was already in place, having run all pre-planned Yoga and 1:1 support sessions remotely during lockdown. At the beginning of this year, we were keen to gradually resume face to face sessions again with the focus on how those seeking sanctuary could best cope with their lives since arriving in the UK and particularly since the start of the pandemic.

OUR SUCCESSES

- **Our skilled yoga teacher (British Wheel of Yoga) and accredited counsellor (HPD, DipCHyp, MCNHC, NLP Master Practitioner) with experience of working with military personnel who suffer from PTSD, continued to be an active part of our Volunteer Team at Swindon City of Sanctuary. With a cautious start at the beginning of the year we gradually resumed face to face provision of gentle, guided movement and breath-work exercises. Our yoga teacher enabled people who attended classes, to stay connected with important well-being techniques. Some of these were virtual.**
- **We were also able to provide 1:1 support, through weekly check-ins for those suffering with mental health issues during the lockdown periods.**

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Maintaining and regenerating contact with original and virtual yoga class members, and those who attended the virtual 1:1 counselling sessions during the pandemic, presented a challenge. Some of this was due to circumstances beyond our immediate control; Home Office moving people to other areas of the country and the continuing issue of digital poverty.
- Digital poverty was again highlighted as many could not access any online classes due to Home Office accommodation having no Wi-Fi provision. Added to this, the cost of mobile phone data was prohibitive to people receiving Asylum Support.
- The uncertainty that a post-coronavirus world presented made our plan to continue links with other community organisations so that the classes could be more inclusive and of benefit to the whole community, were stalled for this year. Many people and organisations were still being cautious.
- By making our main focus on increasing our number of attendees we hope to:
 - recruit another volunteer yoga teacher;
 - source a bigger space in which to hold the classes, and a separate smaller space for counselling;
 - re-engage with, and invite, other communities to participate in our Wellbeing sessions.

FREE YOGA CLASSES AT:
Central Community Centre
Emlyn Square
Swindon
SN1 5BP

Funded by
the CO-OP
community
fund

FREE Yoga

SWINDON CITY OF SANCTUARY INVITE YOU

FRIDAYS (FORNIGHTLY)
Starting: 17th Sept 2021
Women's Class - 10am
Men's Class - 11am

To book email or text:
info@swindon.cityofsanctuary.org
07903 167142

Our Impact: Campaigns

Campaigning in Numbers:

- **2 key campaigns**
- **350 people**
- **1 billboard**
- **15 businesses**

Our Project

A key aspect to being part of the City of Sanctuary UK network is campaigning for change to the asylum process so that it is more just and equitable.

Our Successes

- **Participation of local businesses and schoolchildren in the Show Your Heart Campaign in November 2021**
- **Correspondence with South Swindon MP Sir Robert Buckland during the passage of the Nationality and Borders Bill on its journey through parliament**
- **Visibility of our message of welcome and inclusion across the town during the month of December 2021 with the billboard in a prominent place**

Our Plans and Challenges

- **Sustaining a positive impact of the message of welcome and inclusion within a hostile environment of negative media coverage about asylum seeking**
- **Continuing to support the work of Together With Refugees coalition to campaign for a fair and equitable asylum process**

Organisational Development and Governance

This is our fourth year as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and the sixth since Swindon City of Sanctuary began as a small voluntary steering group. Staff, volunteers and trustees have weathered the coronavirus pandemic, adapting projects to meet the challenges it brought – and learning lessons which enabled us to deliver stronger initiatives as we emerged from lockdown.

OUR SUCCESSES

- We transitioned out of the pandemic period having adapted our activities to challenging and changed circumstances (for instance, the flexibility demonstrated in our work with schools) and the need to furlough staff)
- Trustees played a key role, providing staff with individual HR and workstream support which was especially important during staff furlough and their return post-furlough
- We secured funding which enabled us to plan and execute a strategy focused on Streams and Awards of Sanctuary, Education, and Campaigning
- We enjoyed strong collaboration with Swindon institutions, especially schools, libraries, and other organisations supported us in our activities.
- We secured high-impact visibility across the town with the Hearts of Welcome billboard display, generating wide discussion of asylum matters and what welcome means to us in our communities, both locally and nationally
- We supported the mental and physical wellbeing of people seeking sanctuary in our community through **We're Open** and our **Wellbeing Project**.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- We continue to hope to secure wider press attention for our campaigns and successes, from Swindon's broadcast, print and online outlets.
- We will work to widen the Swindon Schools of Sanctuary network, and enable local schools to achieve School of Sanctuary Awards.
- We will strive to ensure that we continue to elevate the voices of people seeking sanctuary in a challenging media and political environment through campaigning and the recruitment of people with lived experience as volunteers within our streams, projects and other work
- We will continue to focus on fundraising, to enable us to reach more individuals and strengthen our campaigning activity.
- We will develop and expand our volunteer recruitment and training programme
- We will continue to develop our relationship with Swindon Central Library outreach team and guide them through the early stages of gaining their Library of Sanctuary Award

- We plan to extend the concept of We're Open by introducing and piloting another We're Open called We're Open Families.

Ambitions and Long-term Strategy

We would like once again to take this opportunity to thank the institutions that have made our work possible through their generous funding, especially the Joffe Trust and now the National Lottery Community Fund, whose generous funding offer has secured the future for our charity for five years.

We would also like to thank the Wiltshire Community Foundation, the Cooperative Community Fund, Cooperative Mid-counties Fund, Magic Little Grants, NACCOM Respond and Adapt Programme, Swindon Parish Council, Police and Crime Commissioner Grant and the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust for grants awarded to us for supporting our work through 2021-22. We would also like to thank everyone who donated to us this year via Local Giving.

This is the first full year in which our post-Covid strategy has been implemented, although it should be noted that due to the time required to recruit and train new staff, the full impact of the new strategy will only be fully realised in 2022-23 and beyond.

We will continue:

- To work with schools to promote and implement the Schools of Sanctuary Award, the FABs literacy project and to develop a closer bond with Swindon Central Library with the view to them becoming a Library of Sanctuary
- To campaign for the rights of those who seek sanctuary in the UK by using various platforms like the Show Your Heart Campaign to foster our ethos of welcome and inclusion and to offer informative, objective and fair representations of the real challenges they face
- To share information with the local community, press, local politicians and councillors to ensure that the difficulties faced by people seeking asylum in our community are highlighted
- Where possible, we will aim to contribute to national policy regarding people seeking sanctuary.
- To continue to develop, enrich and extend our We're Open Project
- To expand our trustee and volunteer capacity in order to extend our reach and increase our visibility
- To support the ongoing development and professionalism of our small team of employees.

We will review:

- The impact that the Schools Stream of Sanctuary has made and evaluate the need for a new Stream once we have set Schools and Central Library on a secure footing with the Awards process
- How we work with institutions and service providers in the community
- How to expand the positive impact of initiatives such as We're Open, our weekly drop-in sessions
- How we manage and develop our volunteer community, with a specific focus on building programmes that: add value to volunteers seeking sanctuary who would benefit from professional development and whose social isolation would be reduced through the experience of volunteering
- How we invest our limited resources (financial and human) to best advantage.
- Our funding and diversification strategy e.g. local partnerships and other ways to make Swindon City of Sanctuary truly sustainable, without relying solely on the generosity of grant funders.

We will begin:

- To build our fundraising capability and capacity in order to fund projects and any ongoing activities that are not directly funded by our core funding via the National Lottery Community Fund.
- To create a financial surplus to enable us to run the charity for three months without any further funding.
- To seek funding for additional Schools of Sanctuary developments over the coming years, as we identify both need and opportunity and, in doing so, to reduce dependency on trustees/volunteers who we rely on in this space.
- To upskill our Board of Trustees and assign individual responsibilities to each one.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177624

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2022
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2022

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Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2022

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page nine of the attached financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

K Hudson
H Parry – resigned Jun-2021
B Jackson (Chair)
S Juul (Treasurer)
J Tompsett
C Bennett
I Howard
M Lubanda
O Adeniji – appointed January 2021
B Mannu – appointed March 2021

Bankers

Metro	Coop Plc
One Southampton Row	PO Box 250
London	Skelmersdale
WC1B 5HA	WN8 6WT

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2022

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

Governance and management risk looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.

- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2022

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities;
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.
- Public benefit;
- The charity promotes activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds in order to fulfil its public benefit obligations.

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the year was £55,706 (2021 £48,885). Expenditure amounted to £41,498 (2021 £31,195). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2022 there was a surplus of £14,208 (2021 surplus £17,689).

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2022

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



.....
Ben Jackson

Date:20th February 2023.....


Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities
For year ended 30 April 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2022 Total Fund	2021 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		684	57,561	55,706	48,885
Total		<u>684</u>	<u>57,561</u>	<u>55,706</u>	<u>48,885</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities					
Support for Sanctuary seekers		1,948	42,088	41,498	31,196
NET INCOME		<u>(1,265)</u>	<u>15,472</u>	<u>14,208</u>	<u>17,689</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		<u>12,300</u>	<u>30,525</u>	<u>42,825</u>	<u>25,137</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>11,035</u>	<u>45,998</u>	<u>57,033</u>	<u>42,825</u>

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2022 Total Fund	2021 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		11,035	45,998	57,033	25,136
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>11,035</u>	<u>45,998</u>	<u>57,033</u>	<u>25,136</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>11,035</u>	<u>45,998</u>	<u>57,033</u>	<u>25,136</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				11,035	12,300
Restricted Funds				45,998	30,525
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>57,033</u>	<u>42,825</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 20/02/2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



B Jackson (Chair)

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2022

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2022

2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2022 nor for the year ended 30 April 2021.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2022 nor for the year ended 31 April 2021.

3. STAFF

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Administration	3	2

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

4. LOANS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	-	-
	-	-

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2022

5. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	12,300	684	(1,948)	11,035
	<u>12,300</u>	<u>684</u>	<u>(1,948)</u>	<u>11,035</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
Joffe + Bath spa	6,266	1,961	(7,219)	1,008
We're Open	1,054	3,000	(803)	3,251
Room for All	0	0	0	0
Refugee Week	1,721	0	0	1,721
Wiltshire Community	0	10,000	(3,412)	6,588
NLCF	0	41,662	(19,074)	22,588
School of Sanctuary	188	0	0	188
Swindon Parish Council	1,333	0	(660)	673
Coop Community Fund	211	633	(262)	582
Respond & Adapt	5,534	305	(1,344)	4,495
People Neighbourhood Trust	14,104	0	(9,314)	4,790
Local Giving Grant	115	0	0	115
	<u>30,525</u>	<u>57,561</u>	<u>(42,088)</u>	<u>45,998</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>42,825</u>	<u>58,244</u>	<u>(44,037)</u>	<u>57,033</u>

6. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **Joffe** - Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's main employee, the executive officer
- b) **Room for all** - Funds to provide resources to host sanctuary seekers in hosts' homes in Swindon
- c) **We're open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social evening
- d) **National Lottery Community Funding** – NLCF Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's employees, the executive officer, Stream Co-ordinator, Schools Co-ordinator and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- e) **Refugees week** - Funds relating to a week of activities celebrating sanctuary seekers in Swindon
- f) **School of sanctuary** - Funds utilised for work in schools.
- g) **Swindon Parish Council** - Funds for publicity purposes only including short films
- h) **Respond & Adapt** – Wellbeing project
- i) **People Neighbourhood Trust** – Fab Extension and School Co-ordinator role

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	55,706	48,885
	<u>55,706</u>	<u>48,885</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	30,088	23,182
Other Operating Leases	-	-
Office Rent & Room Hire	1,718	1,210
Insurance	471	304
Telephone	486	532
Computers & software	1,071	297
Postage and Stationery	31	100
Travelling	-	283
Sundry expenses	6,912	4,328
	<u>40,778</u>	<u>30,236</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	720	960
	<u>720</u>	<u>960</u>
	<u>14,208</u>	<u>17,689</u>

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent review of these financial statements has taken place. The associated report can be made available on request.

CITY OF SANCTUARY SWINDON

England & Wales - Charity number 1177624

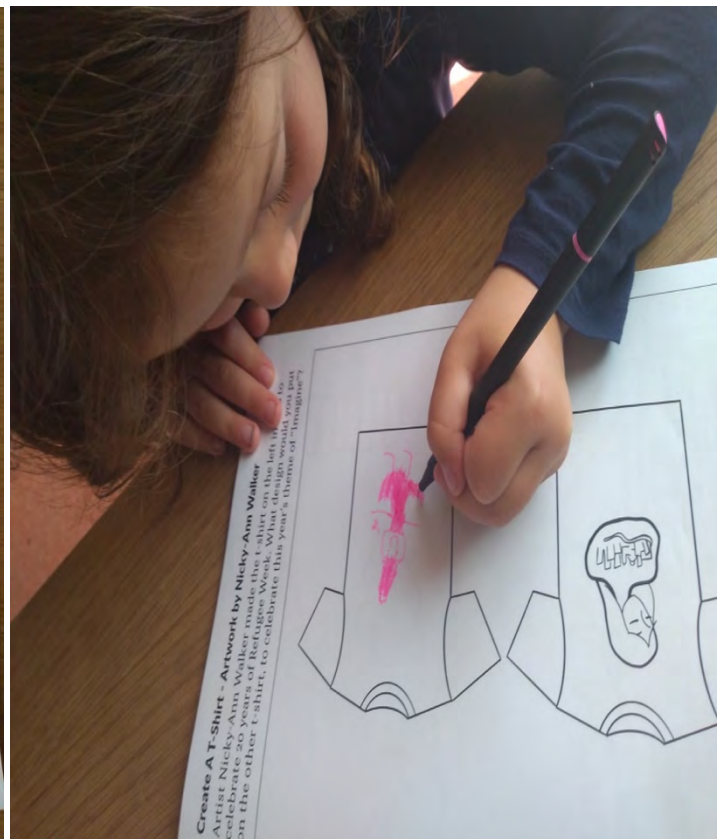
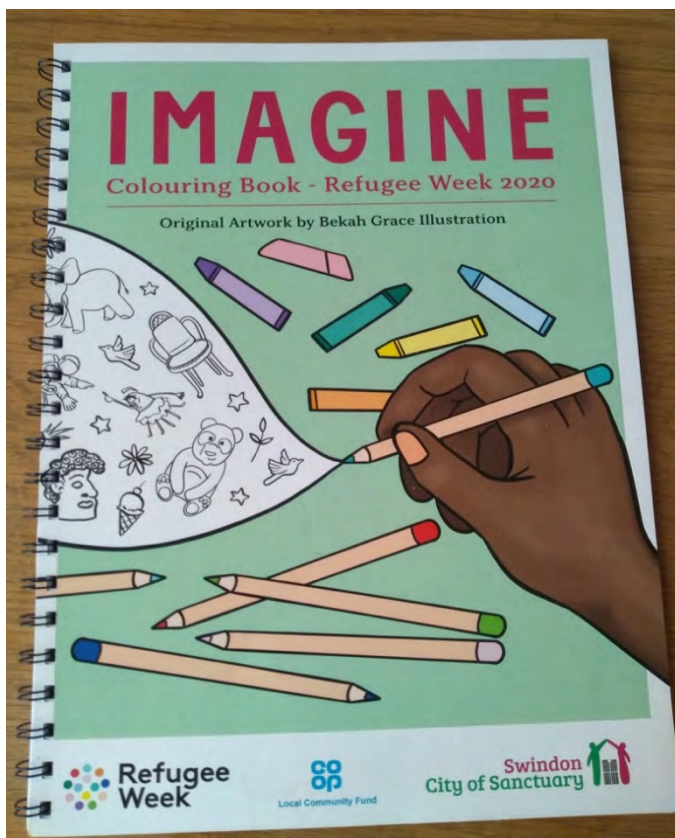
Accounts

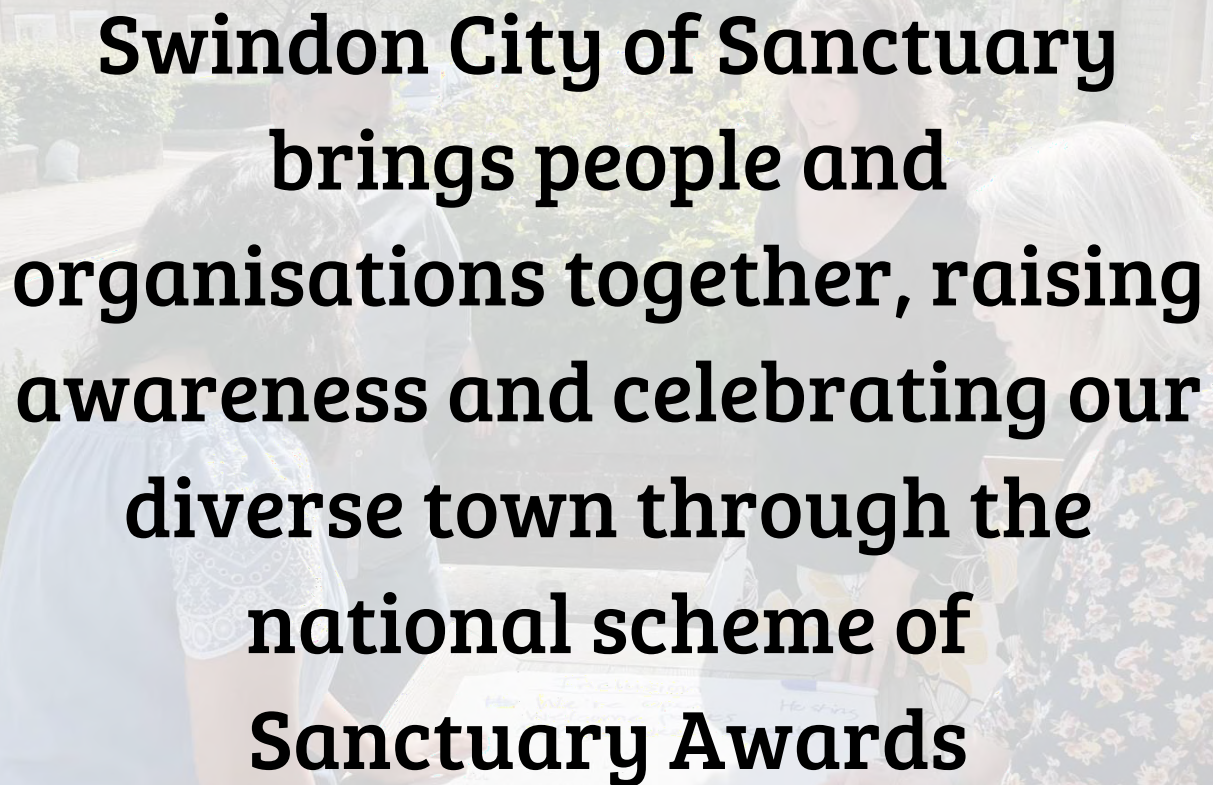
Swindon City of Sanctuary



Registered Charity No. 1177624

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2020-2021





**Swindon City of Sanctuary
brings people and
organisations together, raising
awareness and celebrating our
diverse town through the
national scheme of
Sanctuary Awards**

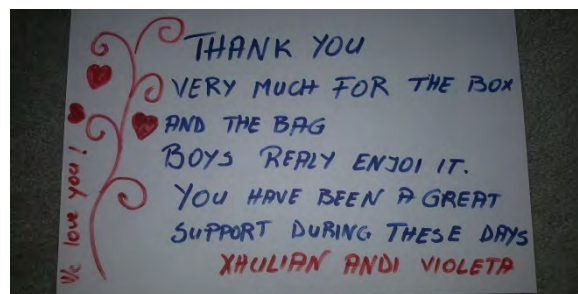


1. Introduction and Summary
 - Our Year in Numbers
2. Thanks
3. Charitable Objects
4. Culture and Values
5. Our Impact:
 - Projects affected by the Pandemic**
 - a. Room For All
 - b. Transport Fund
 - c. Well-being
 - d. We're Open
 - Projects which continued during the Pandemic**
 - e. Events: Refugee Week 2020
 - f. Schools
 - g. Campaigning
 - Responsive Support During Pandemic**
 - h. Remote Befriending
 - i. FAB! Project
6. Organisational Development and Governance
7. Trustees and Staff 2020-2021
8. Consultation
9. Ambitions and Long-term Strategy
10. The Year Ahead: 2021-2022
11. Appendix 1 Finance Report

Introduction and Summary

Our focuses for 2020-2021:

- The impact of our work
- Building stronger foundations for the future



It is fair to say that 2020-21 was a challenging year for Swindon City of Sanctuary, as it was for many charitable organisations. When we commenced this financial year (1st May 2020), the UK was in the first full Lockdown due to Covid, and none of us could foresee exactly what change this global crisis would have on our organisation. We are pleased to say that we have emerged from this crisis stronger than we were when it began, but this year's Annual Report is heavily focussed on the significant changes that we were forced to bring about as a result of Covid-19.

Progress:

- Schools of Sanctuary, our flagship education programme, remained afloat and engaged three new schools taking our network total to twenty throughout Swindon.
- In all our projects and initiatives, we have maintained contacts and connections and collaborations with individuals and organisations.
- Significant additional funding was received from Wiltshire Community Foundation, Adapt and Respond, the People's Neighbourhood Trust and the Cooperative Community Fund
- We launched a new project during Lockdown, Family Activity Boxes (FABs), designed to offer support with resources for families seeking sanctuary who were new to Swindon. Boxes of brand-new books, games, crafts and activities ensured that, during Lockdown, children and their families were able to thrive in challenging circumstances presented by school closures.
- The People's Neighbourhood Trust funding allowed us to recruit a new member of staff, Stella Mortazavi, to coordinate and develop the FAB Extensions Project.
- Work had already begun on our Case for Support which was completed by May 2020 and which influenced our consultation process.
- As planned, we conducted a consultation in December 2020. We talked with a representative sample of people seeking sanctuary in Swindon to enable us to shape our operational strategy over the next 5 years.

Changes:

- We welcomed two new trustees to the Board, Moses Lubanda and our new Treasurer, Serena Juul.
- Our hosting scheme, Room for All, came to a natural end due to the pandemic.

- **We're Open**, our successful weekly social inclusion project, was paused due to government restrictions.
- **Sadly, we have some leavers and we thank both for their contributions:**
 - **Sarah Brunskill**, our Volunteer Coordinator moved on to a new post.
 - **Ian Robertson**, who had served as a trustee on our board.

Our financial year runs May to April but this report extends from the beginning of the first Covid-19 Lockdown (March 2020) to the end of April 2021.

Swindon City of Sanctuary has continued to have a positive impact. During this year of challenges, we have drawn on our strengths as an organisation to adapt and use our creative thinking. We have prioritised where our focus and expertise should be directed to enable us to meet the needs of people seeking sanctuary during the pandemic; most notably by supporting families seeking sanctuary new to Swindon with our Family Activity Boxes (FAB!) Project.

The continued engagement of people and organisations in our community reinforces our belief that Swindon is fundamentally a welcoming and inclusive town.

We're excited for the future and, as always, we offer our deepest thanks to everyone who has supported our mission in the last twelve months.

Ben Jackson
Chair of Trustees



Nicola Wood
Executive Officer



December 2021

A note about terminology:

UK law defines an asylum seeker as a person who has an asylum claim pending with the Home Office. A refugee has been given their 'Leave to Remain' meaning they have been granted the right to stay and live in the UK. We prefer to use the term, 'people seeking sanctuary' when referring to people we work with, instead of 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees'.

Our Year in Numbers

200+ activities, puzzles and games in **FABs!**

20 **FABs!** created for families

3 **We're Virtually Open** trial sessions

20 young people from families seeking asylum received **FABs!**

40+ **IMAGINE Colouring Competition** entries

3 new schools joined our **Schools of Sanctuary Network**

2 guests accommodated in **Room for All** hosting scheme during Lockdown#1

3 key **Campaigns** for change

2 innovative new Schools of Sanctuary projects

12 people with lived experience of seeking asylum involved in Consultation

50+ school staff involved in training, curriculum developments, special projects

1 person successfully advocated for

2,500 young people in local schools involved in projects and curriculum developments

5 online **Well-being** yoga sessions



Thanks

We thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed to our work and the many others who pledge to do so in the future.

We thank all our volunteers and supporters for their pledges, individual donations, grant funds and time. These essential groups of generous people and organisations have enabled us to continue developing our work to meet our objectives.

Abdulaziz Gulay	Staff in Schools of Sanctuary Network
Andrew Wood	Swindon Advertiser
Angela Atkinson	Swindon Borough Council
Artway, Melksham	Swindon's Bus Company
Arts and Humanities Research Council	Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind
Asylum Matters	Swindon Libraries
BBC Wiltshire	Swindon Link
Bekah Grace (Illustrator)	Swindon Quakers
BookTrust	Swindon Stories - National Literacy Trust
Carole Bent	The Baker's Café
Child's Play International	The Co-operative Group
City of Sanctuary UK	The Harbour Project
Coffee#1, Swindon	The Joffe Charitable Trust
Create Studios	The Medaille Trust
Curry's PC World	The Olive Tree Café
Disability Experts	Viewpoint Community Media
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service	Voluntary Action Swindon
Gateway Furniture Store	Volunteer Centre Swindon
Good Gym	Volunteers - We're Open
Great Western Hospital	Volunteers - Hosting Scheme
High Sheriff of Wiltshire	Volunteer judges - Colouring Competition
Hungry Little Minds (Literacy Initiative)	Volunteer respondents for Consultation
INTEL	Wiltshire Community Foundation
Justin Tomlinson, MP for Swindon North	
Los Gatos	
Mantra Lingua Publishers	
Mike Horan Printers	
Neil Griffiths	
No Accommodation network	
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner	
Postcode Neighbourhood Trust	
Refugee Action	
Robert Buckland, MP for Swindon South	
Sam Frith	
Siobhan Nell	
South Swindon Parish Council	

Our Charitable Objects

To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.

The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.

Culture and Values

(updated version for 2020)



Our Values are woven into all of our Projects and Initiatives

TRUST

Trust is at the core of our organisation. We understand that those we support and collaborate with deserve and expect our trustworthiness in the ways we work and the decisions we take. We are open and approachable and take safeguarding seriously in personal and confidential matters.

INCLUSIVE

Being inclusive is essential in our work and for us this means we begin with consideration and care in each individual encounter. We support each sanctuary seeker in a consultative, empowering and respectful way, showing encouragement and patience. We actively and equally value the contribution that all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who benefit make, and involve them meaningfully in decisions about our work.

OBJECTIVE

Our kindness is not lessened by our objectivity and clarity, which are important in the way that we conduct our work internally and externally. We are non-judgmental, fair and focused. We ensure to work ethically in all we do and who we work with, as well as considering our environmental impact as a charity.

INFORMED

Across our organisation we stay informed and knowledgeable of the circumstances and laws affecting sanctuary seekers, and the issues around hate crime locally. We use our knowledge and awareness proactively to challenge preconceptions, to share knowledge across Swindon and to help create better understanding between us all.

INSPIRATIONAL

We use our creativity and innovation to make our expressions, our connections and our outreach work as educational and inspirational as they can be. We hope to inspire others to actively help make Swindon a welcoming place for all who live here. We believe in generous leadership and that the best work relies on different experiences and perspectives. We seek out the best ideas, wherever they come from.

POSITIVE and COMMITTED

We are strongly committed to work, educate and campaign in a responsible, coordinated and strategic way. We aim to focus on the positive, overcoming challenges and hostility by finding common ground. We respond with activities that bring our community together and enable us to listen and learn from each other, in order to break down stereotypes and resentment driven by fear.

**Projects affected by the Pandemic:
Room for All**

**Our hosting scheme
contributed towards
reducing
homelessness in
Swindon through
arranging temporary
accommodation for
people seeking
sanctuary.**

Projects affected by the Pandemic:

Room for All

Providing a safe place to live for people seeking sanctuary who would otherwise face homelessness.

Room for All in numbers:

- 2 guests accommodated during first lockdown and
- 1 guest accommodated until May 2021
- 8 host households as volunteers
- 3 volunteer support workers
- 1 guest successfully advocated for

Room For All, Hosting Project meets one of our Charitable Objects:

“The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.”



OUR PROJECT

Having already coped with a traumatic journey to get to the UK, on arrival, people seeking sanctuary very often face a hostile environment. Ahead of them is a long and unpredictable asylum process. Even having gained their 'Leave to Remain' (ie. refugee status), the struggle for acceptance is still not over.

A whole series of new difficulties face people seeking sanctuary once they have been given their 'Leave to Remain'. However, this process has been made even more challenging with the arrival of Covid-19.

The whole experience of the asylum process has become more precarious, with even longer delays than had previously been the case, before screening interviews and substantive interviews could take place – in fact, all substantive interviews were paused until July 2020; when they resumed, they could only be done by video call. This delay meant fewer people were able to complete their asylum claims.

On 27th March 2020, the Home Office announced that those people who had been informed of their positive decisions, (i.e. people being granted 'Leave to Remain') would NOT be sent 'Notice to Quit' or 'Move On' letters to leave their asylum accommodation within the pre-pandemic timeframe of twenty-eight days. Instead, the Home Office announced that people would NOT be asked to leave their asylum accommodation until at least the end of June 2020, possibly later. However, by October 2020, 'Notice to Quit' or 'Move On' letters were once again re-introduced, but the challenges of where people could be housed remained a serious concern.

[Video update on the asylum and immigration system – Right to Remain](#)

[Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): institutional accommodation - Home Affairs Committee - House of Commons \(parliament.uk\)](#)

For our Hosting Scheme, the situation became increasingly complex. From the end of March 2020, our priorities focussed on keeping hosts and guests safe; thus, we hosted only two guests over the three Lockdowns. During this time, we also received fewer referrals because Local Authorities were now taking on the responsibilities of housing, in hotels, people who were at risk of street homelessness and destitution. Formerly, this had been the point that our Hosting Scheme would have been activated.

"Staying with my host was very, very lovely – feels sometimes like they are my family"

Guest of Hosting Scheme – May 2021



OUR SUCCESSES

During 2020-2021, our third and most challenging operational year, we continued to use our funding from the **Wiltshire Community Foundation (WCF)** and the grant from the **No Accommodation Network (NACCOM)**. In September 2020, we were successful in being awarded a **Respond and Adapt Grant** to help with our core running costs for our **Room for All** initiative.

NACCOM, which we joined in February 2017, nationally supports schemes like **Room for All** that work to prevent destitution amongst people seeking sanctuary.

Our membership of **NACCOM** became especially vital this year with their weekly and monthly **Zoom** calls which featured support and guidance. With changing government advice, it was vital for us to be kept informed in this way.

- 1 guest successfully moved on during Lockdown#1 after receiving their Leave to Remain and finding employment.
- 1 guest was hosted with us until May 2021 during a time of uncertainty and delays in a fresh legal claim during the pandemic. Our hosts were able to provide stability, friendship and a safe place to be.
- We successfully advocated on behalf of a guest who was going to be moved to Canvey Island, miles away from all their support in Swindon. With help from our local MP, they were relocated to London and then Gloucester.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Unfortunately, many of our hosts were unable to host during this year because of the need to isolate and avoid the risks posed by Covid-19.
- It was difficult for our support workers and Hosting Coordinator to meet with our guests and hosts during this year, but they still kept in regular (remote) contact.

- Coupled with the changed circumstances for people being granted Leave to Remain, recruiting new volunteers became a further challenge.
- Sadly, Covid-19 had a dramatic impact on our **Room for All** project. Early in 2020, we could not have anticipated the enormous extent of this impact. Despite the restrictions and changes brought about during Lockdown#1, we were able to continue to support our beneficiaries who were already in the Hosting Scheme. However, to protect hosts, support workers and guests, plans were put in place ready to suspend the project, if necessary. At the same time, fewer referrals were being made and concern continued for the safety of guests and hosts. Therefore, once our last guest had moved on in June 2020, our Board of Trustees made the decision to close our Hosting Scheme.

*"As our Room For All Hosting Scheme came to a close we had accommodated **41 guests** for a total of **2,565 nights**.*

*This is the equivalent of keeping one person off the street for **7 years!***

We are incredibly proud of our Room For All Hosting Project, from the kindness shown by Swindon residents to house a stranger in-need, for the relationships that have grown, the sharing of culture, food and languages.

As one chapter closes another opens, we are now able to focus our work on the nationally recognised Sanctuary Awards, building on our work with the local community, our campaigning efforts for a more compassionate asylum system and will continue to contribute to Swindon being a welcoming town for all.

Hosting Coordinator - 2021

Projects affected by the Pandemic: Transport Fund



Being able to travel means that people seeking sanctuary can ... begin to take part in the life of their new community.

Transport Fund in numbers:

- 9 free monthly bus passes

OUR PROJECT



Swindon's Bus Company again generously pledged its support for another year by providing reduced bus passes for us to match-fund according to individual need.

For 2020-2021, the fund was again supported by individual monthly donations from the public via **Local Giving**.

This partnership project with a significant local organisation, meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

“The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.”

The project started in 2018 to provide monthly bus passes to some people seeking sanctuary who live on the outskirts of the town. Without means of transport, accessing English classes, asylum advice, health care, social activities and volunteering opportunities which enable participation in community life, can be an additional and unnecessary challenge.

A monthly TravelPass from **Swindon's Bus Company** costs £55 (correct at time of writing), more than one third of the income of someone seeking asylum, therefore, the idea of travel into the town centre becomes untenable without support. To have a bus pass means greater opportunity for participating in community life.

OUR SUCCESSES

Despite the challenges of all three Lockdowns and subsequent travel restrictions, we were able to provide free travel to a person seeking sanctuary who was able to volunteer at the Great Western Hospital five days a week throughout the pandemic. It also helped them to attend their IT classes. This is an example of how a single opportunity has a remarkable 'ripple effect' in terms of its benefits: positive impact on mental health; social inclusion reducing social isolation; being of value to, and valued by, the community.

"I had training provided by the Hospital and started volunteering there in 2018, in the most busy ward, caring for the elderly who have chronic disease. I gave them lunch, tea and coffee, and helped with their personal care. I chatted with them, I would tell them stories to make them happy. I'd also tell them jokes too and would help to feed them. They really appreciated that and I feel very happy and blessed I could help them."

The words of a lived experience Volunteer

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

Due to the challenges of Lockdowns and Covid-19 the need for bus passes was considerably reduced compared to previous years. Guests in our Hosting Scheme were not travelling due to restrictions. With our weekly social inclusion project, **We're Open**, postponed, there was no longer a need for Day Rider tickets during this time.

Without the Hosting Scheme, we will focus our attention on providing Day Rider tickets to ensure people can travel to, and attend, our evening social inclusion project, **We're Open**, which will be needed more than ever when restrictions are lifted allowing us to re-open.

Our plans for 2021-2022:

- To maintain funding and support from **Swindon's Bus Company** and **Local Giving** for next year.
- To increase funding for more Day Rider tickets when applying for grants to fund the continuation of **We're Open**.
- To sustain our monitoring of tickets issued and to be aware of any other immediate needs regarding travel once restrictions ease.

Projects affected by the Pandemic: Well-being Project

Although the Government's measures led to more people being housed, concern for their personal safety, lack of privacy and general wellbeing increased. The closure of drop-in centres means isolated people become even more lonely, while others are at risk because they no longer have access to the services they rely on ...

Projects affected by the Pandemic: Well-being Project

Improving the mental health of people seeking sanctuary through exercise and access to counselling.

Well-being Project in numbers:

- 5 beneficiaries
- 5 people accessed regular online yoga sessions

This initiative meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

“To provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.”

OUR PROJECT

At the beginning of 2020, we started our **Well-being Project** for people seeking sanctuary in Swindon. We wanted to focus on how those seeking sanctuary could best cope with their lives since arriving in the UK. Cultural changes can have a huge psychological impact on individuals as well as dealing with possible trauma experienced in their home-country. Language barriers, dealing with new forms of bureaucracy, new customs, even hostility, in their country of sanctuary, can all take their toll on physical and mental well-being.

“61% of asylum seekers experience serious mental distress...refugees are five times more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population”

Refugee Council 2021

<https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>

We were conscious that any services we planned to provide would be undertaken with the strictest confidentiality and in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. Reminders of difficult periods in the life of a person seeking sanctuary that may have happened in the past, or that may be occurring in the present, could cause

further stress and anxiety, so they would therefore need skilled and qualified volunteer support.

From January 2020, **Yoga and 1:1 Counselling** sessions were held fortnightly, every Thursday, in the function room at **The Baker's Café**, a community café in the town centre. This venue was not only easily accessible for people to attend, it was also a welcoming and friendly place for meeting. Every fortnight, there were two yoga sessions: one class for men; one class for women.

Sadly, as with all of our projects and initiatives, there was no escape from the impact of Covid-19; this led to suspension of the **Well-being Project** from March 2020.

OUR SUCCESSES

- Despite the **Well-being Project** having to pause, our skilled yoga teacher (**British Wheel of Yoga**) and accredited counsellor (**HPD, DipCHyp, MCNHC, NLP Master Practitioner**) with experience of working with military personnel who suffer from PTSD, continued to be an active part of our Volunteer Team at **Swindon City of Sanctuary**. Providing online videos during Lockdown, of gentle, guided movement and breath-work exercises, our yoga teacher enabled people who had attended classes, to stay connected with important well-being techniques.



Volunteer Yoga Teacher and therapist

- We were also able to provide 1:1 support, through weekly virtual check-ins for those suffering with mental health issues during the Lockdowns.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- With the ongoing restrictions due to Covid-19 and the suspension of the classes, maintaining contact with yoga class members and those who attended the 1:1 counselling sessions presented a huge challenge. We would have liked more people to have been able to access the online yoga sessions, but reaching others was difficult during this year.
- The additional uncertainties, facing us all in the wake of the pandemic, meant the future for our **Well-being Project** was still precarious. Also, with plans to start them up again we had to ensure that the project was sustainable and manageable within our current capacity.
- Digital Poverty was highlighted during this time as many could not access the online classes due to the Home Office accommodation having no Wi-Fi provision. Added to this, the cost of mobile phone data was prohibitive to people receiving Asylum Support.
- For 2021-2022, within a post-Covid-19 context, we plan to continue with, the yoga classes by linking with other organisations like Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind and Booth House, Salvation Army so that the classes are more inclusive and of benefit to the whole community.
- We would like to recruit another volunteer yoga teacher if there is high demand for the classes, so that we can offer classes on a weekly basis.
- With need for social distancing, we aim to source a bigger space in which to hold the classes, and a separate smaller space for counselling.

Projects affected by the Pandemic: We're Open

Since the start of **We're Open** in 2017, we have seen how different communities and perspectives have come together in the spirit of friendship.



Projects affected by the Pandemic: We're Open

Having a place where worries about issues relating to asylum claims can be left behind and where people can meet in a friendly and inclusive environment, is crucial.

We're Open in numbers:

- 3 We're Virtually Open 'trial' sessions
- 5 people who are seeking sanctuary in attendance
- 3 lead volunteers

This inspirational initiative meets two of our **Charitable Objects**:

- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds

OUR PROJECT

This year is the fourth year of **We're Open**. Our unique weekly café evenings, funded by donations and a grant from **Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**, was temporarily put 'on hold' in March 2020 when the Government announced a nationwide Lockdown.

The focus of **We're Open** is to bring our community together through our shared love of good coffee (or tea), conversation, acoustic live music and maybe a little competitive board game playing. Since the start of the project in 2017 we have seen how different communities and perspectives have come together in a spirit of friendship. The involvement of local volunteers being on hand to ensure people feel welcome, has helped to ensure that those who might be isolated within our community are less daunted about coming. In turn, the experience has helped to promote integration and social inclusion.

Its positive impact cannot be over-stated.

We're Open, valued by so many in our local community, from individuals to organisations working with the many new arrivals in Swindon, is a place where people seeking sanctuary can temporarily leave behind the worries about issues relating to their asylum claim and meet other people in a friendly and inclusive environment; a perfect setting for developing understanding of other cultures and nurturing the common things shared by humanity. Where people were born, what languages they speak or faiths they follow can often be things that divide people; at **We're Open**, they are a strong uniting force.

We're Open, was run solely by volunteers pre-pandemic, and will continue to run in the same way post-pandemic. This is testament to its success and the continued commitment of all volunteers.

OUR SUCCESSES

- Before we closed our doors and the pandemic hit, we were able to trial a potential new venue at **Gateway Furniture Store** which offered us a first floor cafe space with hot drinks, cakes and other refreshments available to all in attendance. During this trial we realised that accessibility would be compromised. We are, however, so grateful to the staff at Gateway for the generosity and kindness shown to us and the project.
- With doors closed on **We're Open**, our wonderful lead volunteers who were worried about the social isolation faced by many who attended the evenings, decided to trial holding **We're Open** as a virtual event.



- We held 3 '**We're Virtually Open**' sessions with volunteers, staff and trustees making contact with as many people as possible to get the word out so that people could join us online for quizzes, Pictionary (using the Zoom online whiteboard) and general conversation.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- **'We're Virtually Open'** attracted our volunteers and only a few people seeking sanctuary over the three trial sessions. This was due to two main factors:
 - **Contact details** – due to the relaxed and open nature of **We're Open** to the whole community we did not record people's contact details when attending. This meant we were only able to reach people through our social media platforms, asking other charities to spread the word for us with their clients/visitors, and, by getting in touch with people who had shared their phone numbers with us.
 - **Digital Poverty** – Many people could not join us due to a lack of equipment, data and/or Wi-Fi access. Although digital poverty already existed before the pandemic, the Lockdowns really highlighted and broadened the gap for those who struggled to connect with others online.
- Due to Government restrictions, some people who did attend **'We're Virtually Open'** experienced even more social isolation. One attendee mentioned how wonderful it was to, *"see and speak with other people."* He felt very isolated as he lived in one room, alone. By the third week fewer people were joining. We decided, along with our volunteers, that perhaps our efforts would be best put to use planning for a new venue and format for when we could be back in person.
- We hope to re-open our doors if restrictions ease. We plan to re-start **We're Open** at a new venue, **The Baker's Café**, which is centrally located in Swindon.
- Our Lead Volunteers will prepare a risk assessment in order to open up safely; this will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a future meeting.
- This project has never been more important to bring people together in Swindon. With so much separation caused by Covid-19, people seeking sanctuary have been even more isolated.
- We plan a further review of this much-needed project with a view to considering extending **We're Open** to more than one evening a week.

IMAGINE

Colouring Book **The** **IMAGINE** Colouring Book

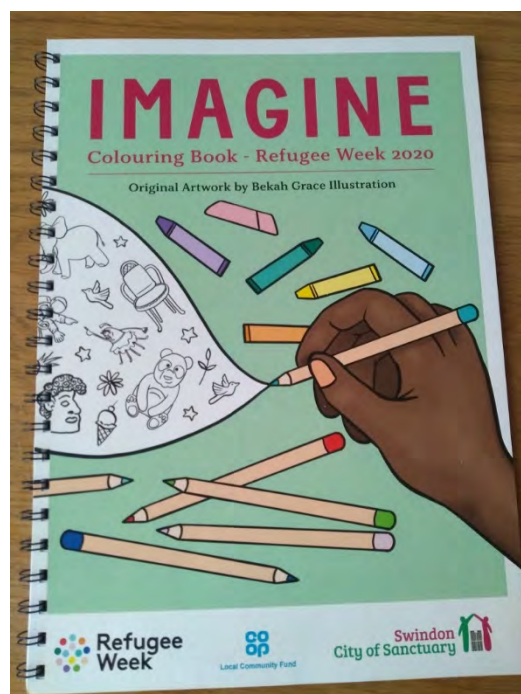
IMAGINE Colouring Book

is for young people to
celebrate being part of a
community made up of
people with different
pasts and to help them to
'imagine' our shared
future.

Projects which continued during the Pandemic: Refugee Week – The IMAGINE Colouring Book

Refugee Week in numbers

- 1 children's illustrator
- 2 weeks planning
- 20 young people from families seeking asylum
- 1,000 young people in local schools
- 2 new volunteers
- 3 competition judges
- 40+ competition entries



The **IMAGINE Colouring Book** meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.

OUR PROJECT

With Covid-19 restricting the physical reach of our plans for **Refugee Week 2020**, we took our celebrations for the week online. [Imagine Colouring Book - Refugee Week 2020 | Swindon City of Sanctuary](#)

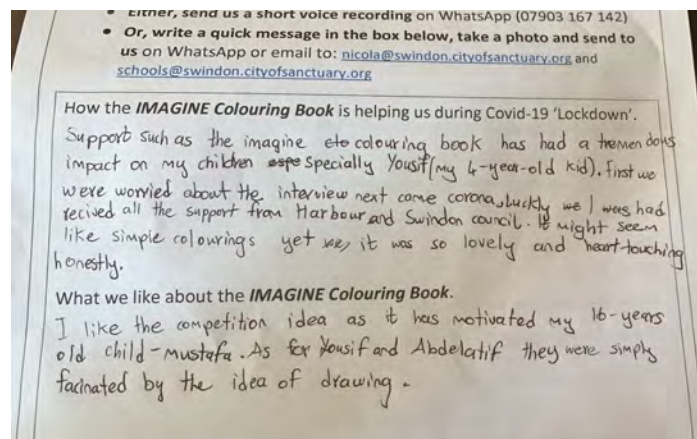
In May 2020, a chance meeting at a monthly Zoom gathering of **Harbour Project** volunteers led to a unique collaboration between **Swindon City of Sanctuary** and Swindon-based artist and children's illustrator, **Bekah Grace**. After an intense two weeks of inspiration, vision and consultation, Bekah created a truly amazing colouring book for all pre-school and school-age young people in Swindon, built around the **Refugee Week 2020** theme of **IMAGINE**. The **IMAGINE Colouring Book** was a further development of the Schools of Sanctuary FAB! project.

The **IMAGINE Colouring Book** was created for young people everywhere who want to celebrate being a part of a community of people with different pasts. It is for young people everywhere who want to imagine and create a shared future of understanding, respect and fairness. It is more than just a colouring book – it is a spark for imagination!

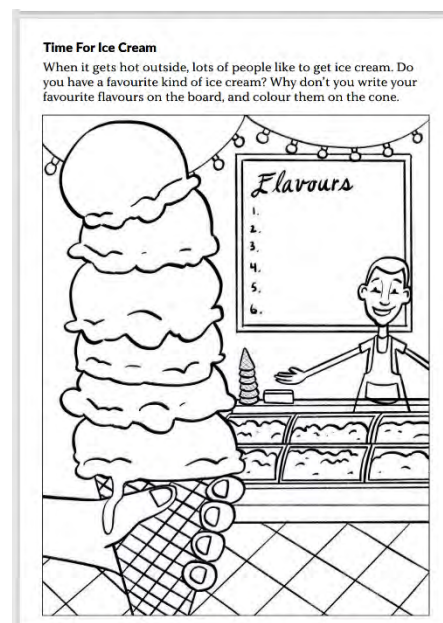
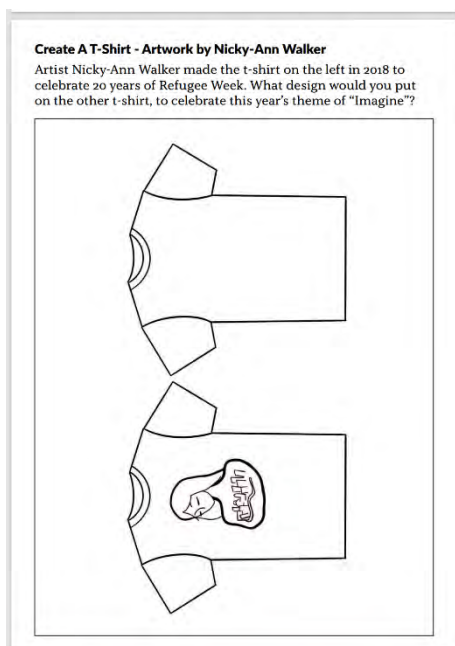
Each of the twenty children and young people in the families who had received FAB! received specially printed editions of the **IMAGINE Colouring Book**, signed by its creator. These young people, along with others living in, or attending school in Swindon, had the chance to enter a special Colouring Competition.

OUR SUCCESSES

- Through volunteering her time, talent and inspiration, Bekah Grace had created something unique for young people in families seeking asylum and for young people in our Schools of Sanctuary Network.



- Supported by the incredible skills of another talented new Swindon City of Sanctuary volunteer, Sam Frith, the **IMAGINE Colouring Book**, which is full of illustrations to colour, and which invite young people to add in their own imaginative ideas, was digitalised and made available for downloading and sharing across schools and between family and friends. [Imagine Colouring Book - Refugee Week 2020 | Swindon City of Sanctuary](#)



- Primary and Secondary school teachers set activities from the **IMAGINE Colouring Book** as home-schooling tasks and encouraged young people to enter the competition. [Imagine Colouring Competition | About \(samifrith.wixsite.com\)](http://samifrith.wixsite.com)
- More than 40 young people submitted entries in the competition, coloured-in digitally or by hand; with prizes and certificates presented at their schools to some talented winners. One teacher said, *“The students loved the prizes and were delighted to win!”*



- The **IMAGINE Colouring Book** presented an inspirational opportunity for young people to think about the world in which they were growing up and gave them a chance to express themselves with imagination and creativity.
- Being supported by external funding **Coop Local Community Fund** and being able to engage a professional printer **Mike Horan Printing Limited**, meant more people were reached with our work – certainly a successful path to follow for future projects.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Limited time for outreach to communicate with teaching staff and run virtual workshops about the possibilities offered by using the **IMAGINE Colouring Book**.
- For future years, set up workshops with teaching staff to look at ways of including resources produced for developing work around the **Refugee Week** theme.



Projects which continued during the Pandemic: Schools of Sanctuary



It's sad that we'll not be meeting together soon...for our celebration of artistic expression from young people in our schools...but, rather than regret what we couldn't do, let's embrace what we can do!

(Extract from News Update to Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network, June 2020)

Projects which continued during the Pandemic: Schools of Sanctuary



We all have a part to play building a welcoming and inclusive society.

([Home | Schools of Sanctuary \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](http://Home | Schools of Sanctuary (cityofsanctuary.org)))

Schools of Sanctuary in numbers

- 1,500+ young people
- 50+ teaching staff
- 3 new schools (total now 20)
- 1 new volunteer with lived experience
- 2 innovative new projects
- 2 new creative collaborations
- 3 new connections



"I feel that wearing the SENCO hat in school now increases my understanding of the importance of inclusion even further...It would be great to be part of moving this (Schools of Sanctuary) forward into the future."

Primary School Deputy Headteacher, March 2021



Photos from Westlea Primary School – showing what 'welcome' looks like in their school foyer

OUR PROJECT

Our project meets two of our Charitable Objects:

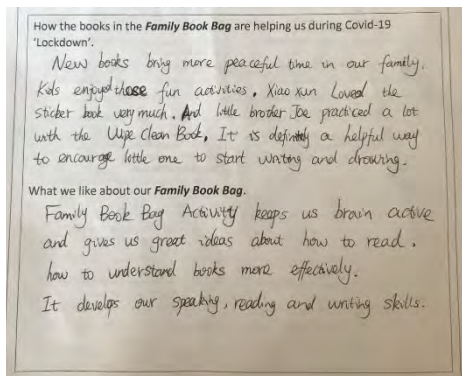
- **To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities.**
- **The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.**

From March 2020, the scope and nature of our schools' work inevitably changed.

- **With school closures, it became impossible to work directly with staff and young people until much later in the year. In line with our Swindon City of Sanctuary vision to promote a culture of safety, welcome and inclusion and with support from the Wiltshire Community Foundation Covid-19 Response funding, between March 2020 and November 2020, we focused on supporting local families seeking asylum whose school-age children were unable to access their school-closure work.**
- **Whilst schools were navigating complex systems for providing support to all vulnerable families, we felt our expertise and energies would be best used in maintaining our connections with some of the schools in our network by supporting vulnerable families in their communities who were in the asylum system. Our Schools of Sanctuary team planned to provide Family Activity Boxes (FAB!) filled with a selection of brand-new activities, games, books and toys to assist children's learning at home. Without internet access in Home Office asylum accommodation, families were unable to get updates of school-closure work from their children's schools. Through responses from the families who received the FAB! we learned how these activities became important continuity for building confidence and staying in touch with English speaking, reading and writing.**
- **Another important focus of our work throughout the year was to continue building a sustainable framework for developing and extending the importance of welcome, inclusion and social justice across the curriculum in an increasing number of Swindon schools. At the same time, we were also keen to extend new connections we had begun to make early in 2020 with other organisations to support our work.**

OUR SUCSESSES

At the end of last year (end of March 2020), the challenges facing us at the start of Lockdown#1 meant we were unsure about our developments and the impact of the work we had begun. Halted plans and school closures was not the ideal backdrop for staging success, but with our Schools of Sanctuary team's creativity to adapt the way we approached our work, our successes were abundant.

- Apart from the success of the FABs initiative, many other developments took shape throughout the year to strengthen our Schools of Sanctuary Network. By the end of April 2021, we had:
 - engaged and connected with three more schools
 - become adept at keeping in touch remotely with the incredible teaching staff who continued their contact with us
 - had connected with more local and national initiatives and organisations than we would have if there had not been three Lockdowns and unimaginable national disruption!
- With the support of The Harbour Project, we were able to prepare and deliver bespoke boxes of activities (FAB!) for families with school-age children not able to attend school during Lockdowns.
- We were supported in all stages of our FAB! Project developments by the expertise of a new volunteer with lived experience of seeking sanctuary. Their IT skills enabled us to set up some tablets for including in the FAB Extensions Project school resources and their proficiency in other languages led to translation support with instructions for the FAB!
- Building on our relationship with **Swindon Libraries**:
 - New books were donated and included in the **FAB!** Every family receiving a **FAB!** received a bag of new books relevant to the young people's age groups. Feedback from some of the families showed how important these books were to them and their children.

The image shows a handwritten note on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and is divided into two sections. The first section is titled 'How the books in the Family Book Bag are helping us during Covid-19 Lockdown.' and describes how new books bring more peaceful time to the family, mentioning that kids enjoyed fun activities, Xiao xun loved a sticker book, and little brother Joe practiced writing with the 'Upe Clean Book'. The second section is titled 'What we like about our Family Book Bag.' and states that the activity keeps the brain active, gives great ideas about how to read, helps understand books more effectively, and develops speaking, reading, and writing skills.
 - In September 2020, some families in the asylum process, who had recently arrived in Swindon, were introduced to and engaged with local literacy development projects led by **Swindon Libraries** and the **National Literacy Trust**. One parent, who had been in the UK for only a few weeks, became a volunteer Literacy Champion with the **Hungry Little Minds** initiative.

- By the end of 2020, we had welcomed three new schools into our network; all three contacted us requesting support from our Schools of Sanctuary team as new young people from families seeking asylum had joined their schools. One of these schools was Westlea Primary School.

October 2020 saw Swindon City of Sanctuary Schools' team, in collaboration with The Harbour Project, run our first remote whole staff CPD at Westlea Primary School.

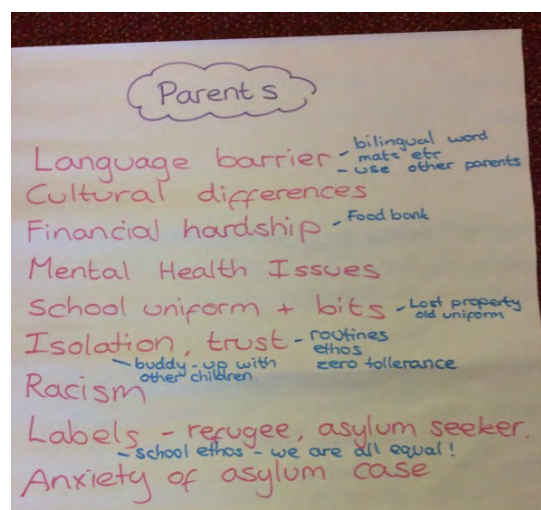
The workshop, *Seeking Sanctuary – Shaping Our Understanding: How to Work Supportively in Our School* was a bespoke 90-minute session responding to the school's request for assistance with language support for children newly arrived at the school whose families were going through the asylum process.

This need to find language support is not new, it is repeated across our town and country, but meeting the need is challenging; it is not as straightforward as simply finding someone to translate the language.

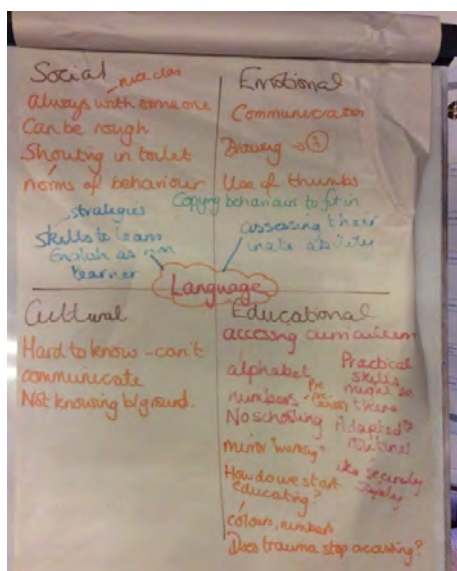
Behind this need for language support is a cultural gap; a gap often filled with media-sourced (mis)information and unhelpful stereotypes – hence the school's desire to be well-informed in order to welcome new families and know how best to support them.

With all families being unique, we are keen to inform all schools that there are no quick-fix answers. Given that people seeking asylum are likely to have experienced a range of very difficult challenges which may have impacted on their mental and physical health, and their confidence with settling into entirely new contexts, we ensure that our staff CPD sessions for all schools, begin with an understanding of:

- the challenges facing the parents new to the experience of the UK education system;
- the challenges facing the staff who are welcoming and teaching the young people new to the school;
- the challenges facing the young people themselves settling in to an entirely new experience where language is a barrier.



Exploring these challenges, enables schools to begin to find their own solutions to meet the needs of the families in their communities. This approach, along with more specific information about the countries from which the families have had to flee, and some generic detail about what may have led to the need for people to flee and seek asylum outside their home countries, was well-received.



Feedback from the staff was very positive, “Really good background knowledge to help us understand where our children are coming from and what their lived experience might have been... ‘Home’ poem (by Warsan Shire) was especially thought-provoking.”

The realisation that there was more to learn than was possible in 90 minutes was important, “Time to do activities in groups was really good as we had time to talk and reflect... we could have spent much more time on this as I don’t think we managed to do a fraction of the things we could have done!”

These reflections have been important for the way the school has continued their positive work across the curriculum and enrichment programmes, and with the FAB! Extensions Project. We hope Westlea Primary School’s work will take them on their journey towards becoming an accredited School of Sanctuary by 2023.

- Our connections with the wider community through attendance at networking Zoom and Teams meetings was much greater than pre-pandemic days. This meant we were able to fully embrace new ways of communicating with and involving schools with School of Sanctuary developments. Volunteer members of our Schools of Sanctuary team joined webinars and meetings for a number of local and national initiatives from, the Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network exploring ways to support young people during school closures, to the National Institute for Economic and Social Research webinar series “Supporting Newly Arrived Migrants During Lockdown”. The opportunity to share ideas with so many people across the country, and to pass on what was learned to the schools in our own Network, was enormously valuable.
- Throughout the year, we continued to engage with schools in our Network and remained connected to the national Schools of Sanctuary. Even though reaching schools physically was impossible, we kept in touch by sending termly news updates which included links to resources, reminders of key learning events on the Global Calendar and invitations to connect with us for specific events / activities. Through the South West Regional City of Sanctuary Network, our Schools Volunteer Lead was involved with a Sanctuary Award appraisal for a university in the region. Invaluable experience to gain an ‘inside’ understanding of the process – especially as we plan to guide a number of Swindon schools towards achieving Sanctuary Awards in the next few years. The Schools of Sanctuary UK Network grew throughout the year – leading online webinars and workshops for schools to join. Colleagues from some Swindon schools were able to participate in some of these – and to begin making connections with schools experiencing similar challenges.

- Some of our Swindon schools fully engaged with planning and preparing for **Refugee Week 2021** – this is testament to their continued commitment to Schools of Sanctuary developments. From November 2020, we had sown seeds with some schools in our Network about the amazing inspirational arts event, **The Walk**. By March 2021, the idea had gathered interest for basing some of our schools' work for Refugee Week around the project. Every year since 2017 when our Schools of Sanctuary team first formed, Refugee Week has been a brilliant opportunity for all involved to explore perceptions, develop understanding, and consider welcome and inclusion in our communities for people who make (and have made) migratory journeys, particularly people seeking sanctuary.

The theme for **Refugee Week 2021, We Cannot Walk Alone**, was an invitation to us to extend our hands and welcome people who are new to our communities. Sharing **The Walk** project with colleagues in our Network at virtual workshops in April 2021 was not only an inspirational trigger for endless possibilities for Arts-based work and broader curriculum approaches to migration, it was also a tremendous boost to morale.

At the end of one of our April 2021 workshops (we ran the same one three times to enable as many colleagues as possible to attend) positive feedback comments were plentiful.

From a primary school Deputy Head, "It's great to get back to the things I love doing in school!"

*From our artistic mentor, Bekah Grace (inspiration behind the **Refugee Week 2020 IM-AGINE Colouring Book**), "It was such a great meeting. I'm buzzing about the ideas that two of the teachers came up with after our session today...I love the good things that always come from learning about, celebrating and supporting Refugee Week!"*

From a Citizenship Lead in one of our secondary schools, "I definitely want to celebrate Refugee Week this year in school... hopefully with restrictions lifting in schools and outside life, I can plan something for the whole school to participate in."

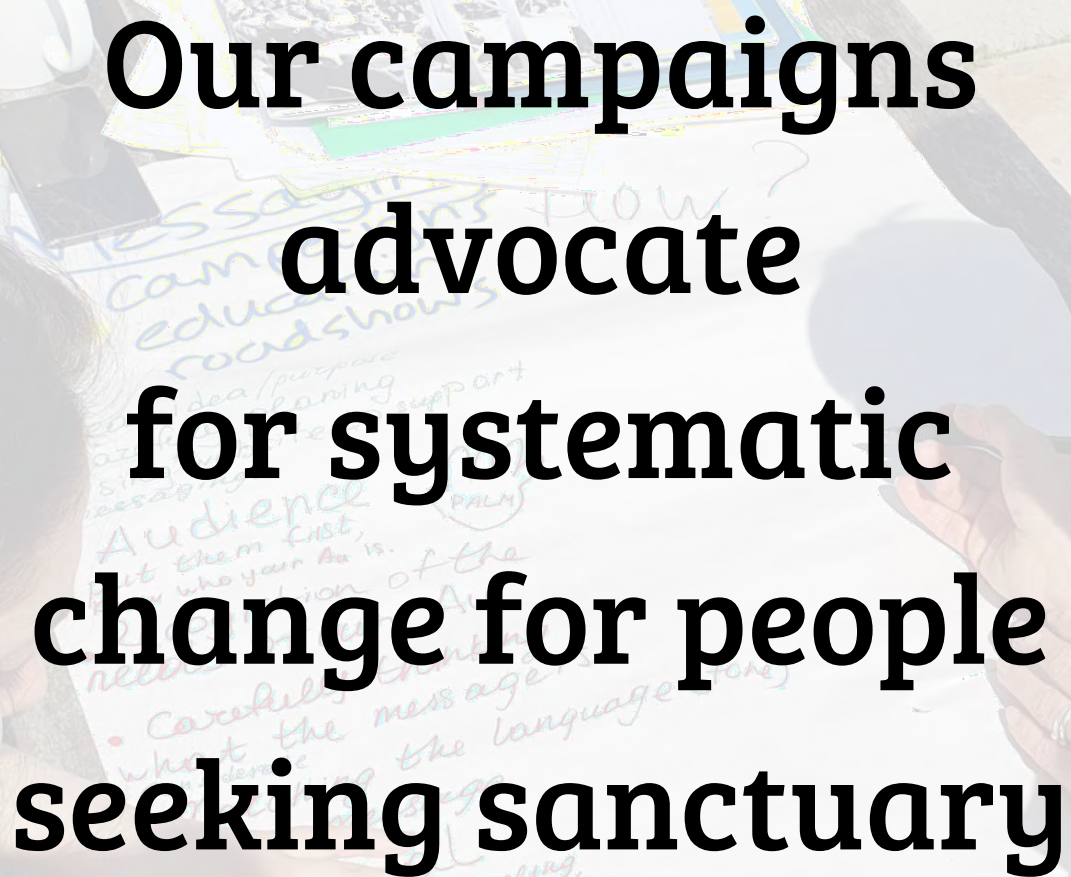
We look forward to seeing and sharing the work that **The Walk** project inspired in classrooms, corridors and playgrounds around Swindon.

- So, our year ended with hope! (It is no coincidence that the name of the 3.5m tall puppet character featured in The Walk project, Amal, is the Arabic word for 'hope') We have been in awe of our teaching colleagues who have kept up connections and curriculum developments around 'welcome' and 'inclusion', and who have had to become as accomplished with remote teaching as with face-to-face classroom teaching – and on many occasions having to do both! We look forward to continuing our work together into next year.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- One of our plans for last year, that was significantly affected by Covid-19 was to extend our work around community cohesion and inclusion by reaching out to all EAL teaching staff to bring them together to learn and share ideas, expertise, and resources within the context of EAL support for multi-lingual learners. We hope to return to this development.

- **To bring together colleagues and young people to extend messages of welcome and inclusion across the town.**
- **Continue to bring together colleagues in our Network schools to share curriculum developments in SMSC, Citizenship and PSHE around social justice and the human right to sanctuary.**
- **To work closely with some schools to enable them to achieve their School of Sanctuary Award**
- **Further collaboration with Create Studios to develop Citizenship-related projects for primary and secondary schools**

A person is writing on a whiteboard with various notes and diagrams. The notes include "Message Flow?", "Audience", "Careful about the message (one)", "the language (one)", "appealing", and "home". There are also some diagrams and a list of items: "idea/purpose", "learning", "support", "at them first", "who your Au is.", "needs of the", "of the", "the message (one)", "the language (one)", "appealing", "home".

**Our campaigns
advocate
for systematic
change for people
seeking sanctuary**

Projects which continued during the Pandemic: Campaigning



Campaigning in numbers:

- 3 key campaigns
- 1 person advocated for successfully

OUR PROJECT

A key aspect to being part of the national **City of Sanctuary** network is campaigning for change to the asylum process so that it is more just and equitable. As such, we work at local, regional and national level engaging with key partners to help bring about positive changes for people seeking asylum.

This initiative meets more than one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

OUR SUCCESSES

- **Advocacy:** we successfully advocated on behalf of one person this year with a positive outcome by helping to relocate a previous guest in our hosting scheme. They were going to be accommodated miles away from Swindon but with our advocacy they are now in accommodation nearby in Gloucestershire. The success of our advocacy means they are still able to see their support network in Swindon which makes a huge difference to their mental health.
- **Participation in national campaigns to improve the lives of people seeking sanctuary in the UK:**
 - In September 2020 we added our names to the Joint Letter to the Prime Minister put together by Migrants Rights Network, NACCOM and Asylum Matters. The letter referred to the Home Office restarting evictions from asylum accommodation for people who have had a negative decision on their asylum claim. The letter outlined the significant concerns about the decision and called for an immediate halt on evictions alongside more support for Local Authorities to meet the needs of people with NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds).
 - We continued to support **Lift The Ban** campaign (to give those in the asylum system the right to work) and engaged with local MPs on the issue.
 - We joined calls with national partners against the use of army barracks as accommodation for people seeking sanctuary.
 - We supported and joined the **TALK/together Project**. **TALK/together** is the largest ever survey on what unites us and divides us. Over 150,000 people took part. Our involvement was through filling out surveys and participating in online in-depth discussions. The report revealed, *'...we are a society at a crossroads. We have witnessed a remarkable upsurge in neighbourliness and community spirit, which most of us strongly wish to see continue. Yet, we can see that significant divisions persist and there is the fear that, if not addressed, these have the potential to deepen in future'*. This report is a helpful guide for the work we continue to do in Swindon to help create a more welcoming and inclusive town.
 - We contributed to the national **City of Sanctuary**, and the national hosting network **NACCOM's** annual survey, which helps to give a national picture and inform where policy changes are needed.

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

Due to a number of political changes some of our plans were affected and delayed:

- Meetings with our local MPs. The emergence of Covid-19 and Lockdown, made it difficult to re-establish and maintain contact with local MPs, though they still responded to individual requests for advocacy.
- The annual event **Sanctuary in Parliament**, which gives people seeking sanctuary living in Swindon an opportunity to meet their local MPs and others in government, was cancelled this year. We hope to be able to re-join this annual event in future.

Planning for 2021-2022 we are now:

- Trying to arrange a virtual meeting with our MPs to re-establish communication and inform them of the work we are doing in Swindon
- Envisaging an opportunity to engage and work more with our Local Authority and to better inform them of our work
- Planning to increase the involvement of people with lived experience of recent migration, especially within our local campaigning work and Streams and Awards development. It is only with the voices of people with lived experience at the forefront of our organisation (e.g. Trustees, Staff and Volunteers) that meaningful and long-lasting change will occur
- Planning to build on knowledge gained from attending national training workshops, and to attend further training, to enable more effective campaigning.

Responsive Support During Pandemic: Remote Befriending

Remote Befriending in numbers:

- 1 beneficiary

OUR PROJECT

When Covid19 Government restrictions began we first considered the support we already provide successfully which could also be adapted to remote support for people seeking sanctuary who were facing potentially long periods of social isolation like so many others in our Swindon community.

We made a plan to extend our already established volunteer befriending which we provided for guests on our **Room for All Hosting Scheme** through our Volunteer Support Workers. Many of our volunteers had spare time during the pandemic and reached out to see if they could help and we soon had a list of volunteers to provide **Remote Befriending**.

We opened up this support, usually provided only to guests and hosts in our hosting scheme to any person seeking sanctuary in Swindon (people in the asylum system, with their leave to remain and those with no recourse to public funds). The remote support was to give people someone to talk to and if any issues arose then our volunteers could direct them to the most useful support, agencies etc.

The Remote Befriending was in addition to keeping in touch with those we currently support and had relations with through our other projects. We planned to match volunteers with someone once we received a referral (through an agency or self-referral) and for the volunteer to be in contact with them on a weekly basis.

This initiative met our **Charitable Objects**:

- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

OUR SUCCESSES

- **We quickly formed a base of volunteers ready to support the Remote Befriending scheme.**
- **We received our first referral 2 weeks into launch**

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- **Our first referral was our only referral during the 3 month trial period from March – May 2020, they were newly arrived to Swindon. We kept in contact with them on a weekly basis during the first lockdown and helped direct them to other agencies where appropriate.**
- **The stigma around asking for support or admitting outwardly that you might be suffering from social isolation led to the decision after the 3 month trial to not continue this project. By this point our FAB! Project was really making a difference, the families receiving the boxes also contacted us through WhatsApp some regularly and so we decided to direct our time and attention fully to the FAB! Families.**

Responsive Support During the Pandemic: FAB! and FAB! Extensions Project

FAB! in numbers:

- 20 families
- 28 school-age young people
- 2 pre-school children
- 20 FAB!
- 100 books
- 200+ activities and games



OUR PROJECT

In March 2020 our Schools initiative was faced with the challenges of Covid and imminent 'lockdown'. We could foresee that for those families seeking sanctuary with school-age children the implications of this government decision might be particularly difficult. We realised that we must put a plan into action as soon as possible and that any action should be carefully researched and managed.

When schools closed Swindon's City of Sanctuary Schools' Team discussed the issues that would now arise for our town's sanctuary seeking families. Their children were not eligible to still attend school, had few resources at home and no WiFi in their Home Office accommodation. This meant they were unable to access the work being set by their teachers. Out of the team's discussions emerged the idea of the Family Activity Box (FAB!) which would contain 'educational but fun' activities, puzzles and games to support young people whilst they weren't at school.

This project meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

OUR SUCCESSES:

- Funding from The Wiltshire Community Foundation, the generous donation of books from Swindon Libraries and National Literacy Trust, and the amazing drive, commitment and availability of our staff and volunteer team, we wouldn't have been able to do any of what we did.
- A number of teachers in our Swindon Schools of Sanctuary Network helped in the research stages of creating and compiling the **Family Activity Boxes (FABs)** for the school-age children of the families seeking asylum in our community. See more here: <https://swindon.cityofsanctuary.org/2020/05/22/fab-family-activity-boxes>
Some offered physical resources, some offered ideas, some researched a range of resources and some informed us of problems experienced by some of the families who attend their schools. Whatever their contributions, they were all incredible and enabled our small team of **Swindon City of Sanctuary** staff

and volunteers to put together something special, unique and brand new, for twenty school-age children and young people in fifteen families seeking asylum known to **The Harbour Project**.

- We worked closely with staff from **The Harbour Project** who knew which families would benefit from receiving **FABs**; families who had little or no access to online resources from their children's schools during 'lockdown'; families who may not have had the understanding of how to make contact directly with their children's teachers. Having the names and ages of the children and young people meant we were able to personalise the **FABs** and the **Book Bags**. The **Book Bags** contained three or four brand new books donated by **Swindon Libraries** and the **National Literacy Trust**.
- Once our small staff and volunteer team of four had put together all the research and resources ideas from the Network teachers and from our own research, we then:
 - downloaded a collection of amazing puzzles, activities and challenges from **TWINKL** (who had enabled free access to the full range of their incredible resources during school closure);
 - ordered puzzles, games and activities from **The Works** and **Baker Ross**.
 - Within a few weeks, the sanitised **FABs** and their carefully sanitised contents were ready for delivery, along with the fortnightly food packs prepared by **The Harbour Project** staff and volunteer team.
 - Within two weeks, our amazing team had created 15 **FABs**! full of arts and craft items, puzzles, games and activities carefully chosen for the ages of the 20 school-age (ages 5-16 years) children and young people in 15 families. All these resources will help young people with their English learning during this time. We will continue to top-up the **FABs**! until the funding ends in July.

Having received funding from the Wiltshire Community Foundation's Wiltshire and Swindon Corona Virus Response Grant, we consulted with The Harbour Project, who welcomed the initiative and agreed to help us in identifying the families who would benefit from FABs!

Nicola Wood, Swindon City of Sanctuary



OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- Receiving feedback from families who were less confident in speaking English
- Keeping in touch with the families who had contacted us
- Best practice for continuing and connecting with schools for wider literacy engagement.
- Finding further funding for widening our outreach with schools.
- Extending initial involvement of Swindon Libraries and other literacy projects.

FAB! EXTENSIONS PROJECT

FAB Extensions Project in numbers:

- 1 Project Coordinator
- 2 pilot schools
- 4 FAB! for schools
- 5 tablets



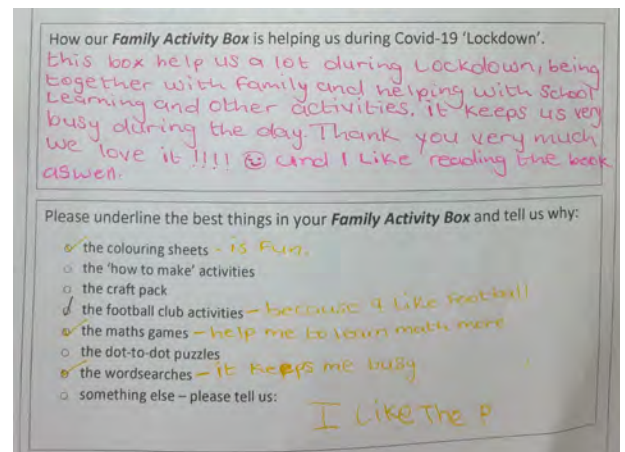
This project meets one of our **Charitable Objects**:

- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds.

OUR PROJECT

Due to the success of the FAB! project during Lockdown1we realised there was exciting potential for refining, developing and expanding the project for the rest of the year. The boxes themselves had real value as a literacy resource in their own right and in this way FAB! could continue during subsequent Lockdowns and beyond. We also felt that FAB! might be something schools could use as part of their work on the Schools of Sanctuary Award and as support with their existing EAL provision. Our ideas for expansion were stimulated by enthusiastic feedback from families who had used the boxes.

We wanted to shift the focus from direct family support to looking at our support with schools to develop their work around 'welcome' and 'inclusion'. This way, the project would sit holistically within our Schools of Sanctuary stream.



A crucial part of the extension work would be for schools to extend parental engagement in literacy, especially for families who have other first languages. We wanted to seek further collaboration with Swindon Central Library to help develop the National Literacy Trust's work on Literacy Champions where we would encourage some parents (with sanctuary seeking backgrounds) to become (digital) Literacy Champions and engage with The Reading Agency collaboration and Reading Sparks. We would also aim to initiate meetings between schools, the Library and the creator of the original Story-sacks, **Children's Writer and Educational Guru Neil Griffiths**.

Basically, our FAB Extensions Project would enable schools to provide literacy support in fun and engaging ways to involve families of multi-lingual learners by:

- Using the new boxes as they felt appropriate to meet the needs of multi-lingual learners;
- Assisting schools to connect families with Swindon Libraries and the National Literacy Trust;
- Introducing and creating Story-Sacks;

OUR SUCCESSES:

- **In August 2020 we prepared and sent a funding application to Postcode Neighbourhood Trust for FAB! Extensions Project. In November 2020 we successfully received the £16,700 that we had costed and applied for. A press release was sent to our local newspaper to celebrate our success.**
- **In December 2020 we appointed our (very proficient) new member of staff, Stella Mortazavi; the FAB! Extensions Project Coordinator (FAB!EPC).**
- **We received confirmation that Local Giving funding could be used for the purchase of 5 tablets, one for each of the 5 prototype new FABs. This was a boost to families who would now have access to digital resources sent by both ScoS and their School.**
- **A dynamic relationship was built, initially with two pilot schools Westlea and Drove, via digital contact.**
- **A foundation for planning was firmly established with Neil Griffiths the creator of Story-sacks, with the view to collaborate between FAB!, our Schools and Swindon Libraries. The Story-sacks with their focus on oracy and storytelling had potential for bringing multi-lingual families together in a fun and engaging way.**
- **Collaboration with, and between Swindon Libraries, the National Literacy Trust and Schools was established to plan and discuss projects such as Literacy Champions, Swindon Libraries and the Reading Agency's Reading Sparks initiative.**



OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

- **It soon became clear that due to Covid 19 and Lockdown it was difficult to recruit Volunteers to support the expansion of this project. Without extra help with researching resources and assembling boxes in particular, progress could be frustratingly slow.**
- **Being unable to engage children and families and the schools face-to-face, due to the constraints of Covid 19 and Lockdown, made the exchange of information more challenging.**
- **We intend to continue with the project for the future and hopefully with the eventual lifting of restrictions we will be able to visit our schools, children and their families in person. Although we met most of our aims despite Covid-19, we know that personal contact will be instrumental to the ultimate success of this project.**

Organisational Development and Governance

This is our Third year as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and it is also our fifth year since **Swindon City of Sanctuary** began as a small voluntary steering group.

This year has seen us face the challenges of a pandemic. Using our expertise and strength as a team staff, volunteers and trustees have risen to meet the changing needs within our local community and for people seeking sanctuary.

OUR SUCCESSES

- We have strengthened our links and contacts with the national network of City of Sanctuary, and NACCOM (The No Accommodation Network)
- We have continued to collaborate with Schools, with Swindon Library, the National Literacy Trust and local artists despite the pandemic.
- We have created our [Case for Support](#) which has helped us to summarise the first four years of our charity's impact and this in turn has influenced our consultation and strategic decisions for the next 5 years.
- Throughout 2020-2021, our Board of Trustees has been busy:
 - with a year of reflection
 - working on strategic development
 - recruiting more people to the Board including a new Treasurer with accountancy expertise and a new trustee with skills and experience from the charity sector who also has lived experience of seeking sanctuary
 - maintaining clear and regular communication
 - two trustees have taken on specific roles to directly support staff (Charity Manager and FAB! Coordinator)
 - attending online local and national conferences
 - acting as Volunteers to administrate and organise Events for our online Refugee Week and Schools of Sanctuary coordination

OUR PLANS AND CHALLENGES

We have been unafraid to admit when projects have needed some reflection, reviewing, and revising. In some instances, we have made bold strategic decisions to move away from certain projects in order to maintain clearer focus on our work. We have learnt where we are most needed in Swindon and where to focus our time and attention using the skills and knowledge that we have within the charity. This way, we feel that we will have the best positive impact in making Swindon a Welcoming and Inclusive Town.

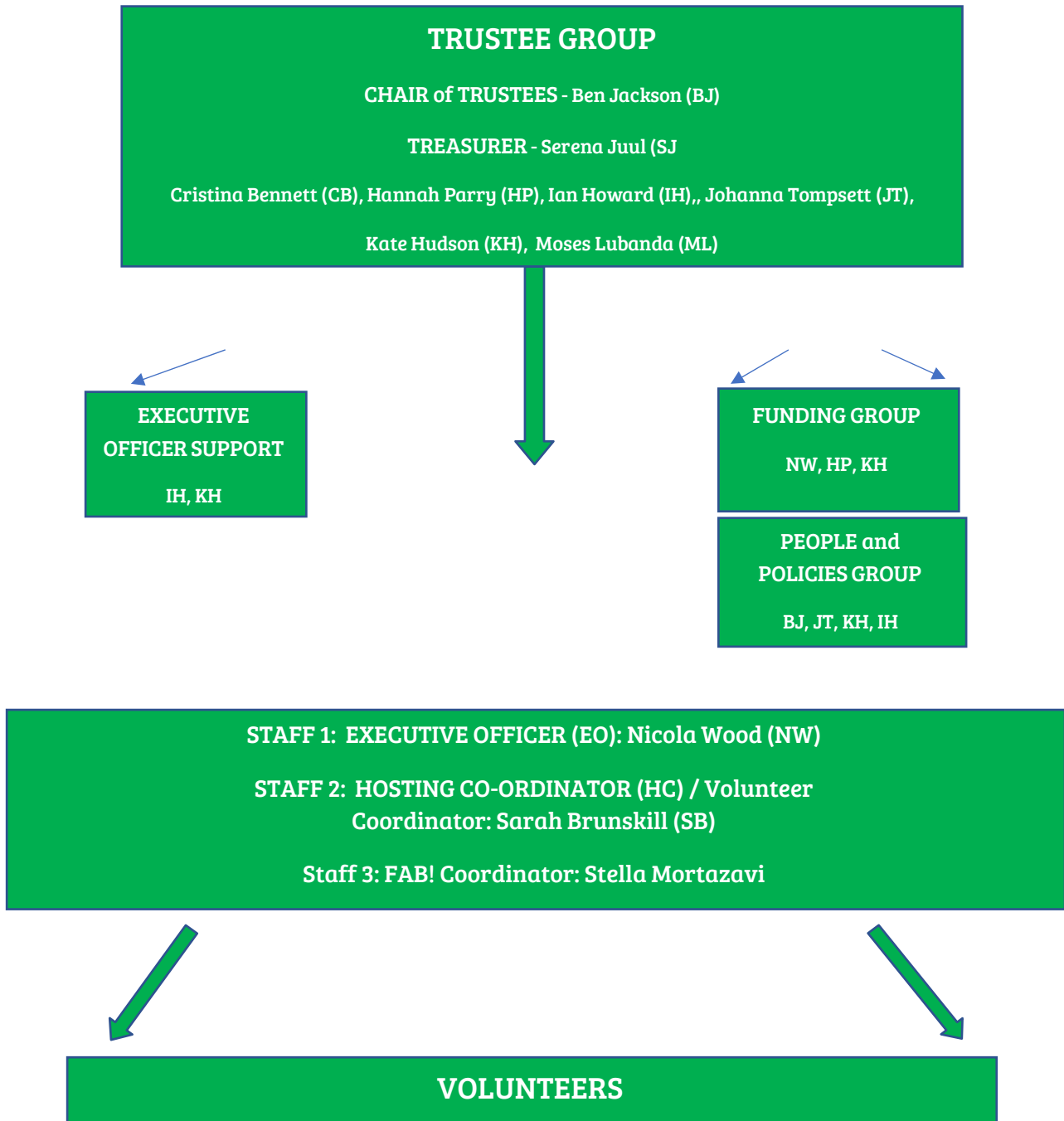
By the end of the year we were facing further challenges with the continuation of Covid-19, more nationwide Lockdowns, and an uncertain and unpredictable year ahead for the whole of the UK.

- Our funding from the incredibly supportive **Joffe Charitable Trust** would come to an end in May 2021. This focussed the Board's attention to funding that would support our plans for the

next five years. With funding being key to the future of the charity we began to anticipate solutions:

- Bringing in an expert fundraiser to support us in applying for core funding and to support our Streams and Awards of Sanctuary work
- Taking up the free offer of support through our Respond and Adapt Grant to access expert consultants from the Lloyds Enhance Programme to guide us with our Theory of Change and small funders applications.
- Anticipating further challenges with our projects and initiatives as we moved cautiously towards the next financial year, we:
 - Implemented our five- year plan which focuses on Streams and Sanctuary Awards for Schools
 - Created a plan to re-open our weekly social We're Open, safely and when restrictions are lifted.
 - Built on the success of FAB! With our extension project and new employee
 - Focused on funding and fundraising to secure the future of our core roles
 - Continued to work towards creating a sense of community and hospitality in our town, through projects like **We're Virtually Open**, the **FABs**, **Refugee Week** initiatives with schools
 - Continued to participate in national and global campaigns for social justice for people seeking sanctuary
 - Disseminated our achievements to the national network (through City of Sanctuary UK online regional and national meetings) in order to help drive change

Trustees and Staff 2020-2021



Consultation

Consultation in numbers:

- 12 people with lived experience of the asylum system interviewed

THE CONSULTATION

A detailed analysis of our consultation – its process and results – is available on request. Please contact Nicola Wood: info@swindon.cityofsanctuary.org)

What follows here is a simple overview of the main finding which will influence the future direction of some of our work.

By talking to a small cross-section of people seeking sanctuary* who live in Swindon, we aimed to find out their experiences of 'welcome' and 'inclusion'. What we found has helped us establish 'need' as well as 'actions' for our future work, especially in the light of the impact of the pandemic and how this might influence change.

"Welcome is more than just a greeting, and inclusion is more than an invitation to participate in something. The phrase, 'welcome and inclusion' refers to a whole inter-connected process which enables all people new to Swindon, especially those seeking sanctuary, to feel safe, settled, engaged with, involved in, and belong to the place where they live."

Why is 'welcome and inclusion' important? Simply put:

- If people don't feel welcomed and included in a community, they may experience social isolation and may be less likely to know how to influence or affect change.
- People may feel socially isolated and lack a sense belonging in the community.
- With opportunities that enable people to engage with and get involved in the place where they live, there is more chance to feel a sense of belonging which could empower and inspire.
- Belonging offers more chance to help change and broaden a community's attitude to those labelled (incorrectly) by the media as 'illegal' and a drain on our communities' resources.

The questions:

- Being aware that respondents might be less confident with speaking English, staff and trustees worked together to form questions based on 'welcome and inclusion'.

- Our final draft, influenced by opinions and guidance from The Harbour Project and feedback from a pilot sample, focused on Swindon and the sense of community in the town, our charity, and the impact of Covid-19.

The Interviews (aka: Consultation Conversations):

- We anticipated all consultation conversations as face-to-face discussions, or to speak to people in small group settings, but Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions prevented this. However, a few of the consultations were conducted in person during a Harbour Project drop-in session just before Lockdown.
- To ensure confidentiality and the option of anonymity, all respondents received a consent form;
- All responses were noted on a secure Google form.

Results

This simple overview reveals what we had anticipated:

- Over 50% responded positively to the question: *Do you like living in Swindon?* Further exploration about why the respondents like living in Swindon revealed the importance of the need to belong in a community.
- The following examples taken from responses show that the feeling of belonging is complex and have given us some significant pointers for our future work at SCoS.

“...joining a community organisation enables me to meet people.

“I feel safe and secure in Swindon,”but “I don’t go out a lot, I wait for my son to come home.”

“It (being trapped in the asylum process) can be an incredibly lonely experience. Two hours spent there (at We’re Open) once a week makes a big difference; it takes away a lot of sadness, stress and anxiety of isolation ”

OUR SUCCESSES

- Despite the inherent constraints of the pandemic, organising and completing the consultations - some of which were face-to-face.
- We received clear and useful responses that could influence how we might develop, re-shape and improve how we work as an organisation.

OUR CHALLENGES

- As a result of the Consultation we discovered that the whole experience of **how to go about finding out about community organisations** in the neighbourhood and **knowing how to join** remain elusive to some people.
- Community spaces need to be accessed in which people who seek sanctuary can feel safe outside their home to help them avoid mental health issues related to social isolation.

- Gender differences in responses were evident. These often have complex cultural origins and contexts, which do not and cannot change for someone when they move to another country. This needs to be taken into consideration when planning events and project
- It was revealed that confidence with speaking an unfamiliar language also has an impact on a person's feeling of security so building EAL/Literacy support into our core work will be vital.
- It has also become clear from the consultation that we need to continue our campaigning, weave in more training sessions that educate communities we work with about the asylum process, racism and hate crime.

OUR PLANS

Our consultation and the impact of Covid among our beneficiaries and the Swindon community has refreshed our strategic focus. Our new strategy for 2021 represents a shift from a 'service delivery' to a more 'enabling' organisation, and sets out our focus on 2 key areas – led by, and working alongside people with Lived Experience of Migration wherever possible:

Systemic Change & Awareness Raising

- **Streams & Awards of Sanctuary**
 - Encouraging the town's communities to come together and embed the concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within their professions, sectors, and organisations, through gaining a Sanctuary Award.
 - In the next 5 years we plan to support institutions such as Swindon Central Library to gain their Award. The award is not just a token gesture but a way for an organisation to celebrate what they are already doing to be an inclusive, welcoming place for all but also to work on areas where there are gaps in their understanding and practice when it comes to sanctuary seekers, migration and Equality, Diversity, and inclusion and being an actively anti-racist organization.
- **Education**
 - Working with schools in Swindon to broaden understanding of the positive impact of migration and how people seeking sanctuary enrich our culturally diverse town.
 - FAB! Project -social inclusion, family engagement through literacy using creative and educational resources in partnership with Swindon Libraries & the National Literacy Trust.
- **Campaigning**
 - Supporting national campaigns which highlight the challenges of seeking sanctuary and improve the lives of those who come into our community.

Meaningful connections, building community

- **We're Open, weekly evening social**

- This has been temporarily suspended due to Covid 19 but face to face meetings at our designated venue will return once restrictions are lifted.

- **Refugee Week & Events**

- We will collaborate with organisations and communities who are managing local events so that we can reach the wider community who might not be engaged with our work.

- **Wellbeing Project**

- We intend to re-establish free, accessible group yoga and 1:1 therapy sessions for the community (linking with other charities such as Mind, Medaille Trust etc.)

Ambitions and Long-term Strategy

We would like once again to take this opportunity to thank the institutions which have made our work possible through their generous funding, especially the Joffe Trust, whose support over the last three years has been fundamental to our success. Our funding from the Joffe Trust was due to come to an end in May 2021. It is not overstating things to say that without this funding, we would not exist as a registered charity today.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for grants and continued support throughout 2020-21:

- Wiltshire Community Foundation
- Respond and Adapt
- People's Neighbourhood Trust
- Cooperative Community Fund
- NACCOM
- Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Swindon Parish Council.
- Everyone who donated this year via Local Giving

Again, we have to reference Covid-19. The strategy outlined below is consistent where possible with our previous strategic direction. We should make clear at this stage that after the first Covid Lockdown in March 2020, we had to make quick, tactical decisions to enable us to continue to support our beneficiaries despite the restrictions of the Lockdown. It is fair to say that our strategy for 2020-21 had to adapt very quickly from original plans. As we moved into the new year, our focuses were as follows.

We will continue:

- To work with schools throughout the Swindon area to promote our Schools of Sanctuary educational programme
- To work with the local community, press, local politicians and councillors to ensure that the difficulties faced by people seeking asylum in our community are highlighted, and where possible, we will aim to contribute to national policy regarding asylum seeking
- To expand our capacity, our reach and our range of projects
- To support the ongoing development of our small team of employees

We will review:

- How to shift focus from our Room for All programme to a new initiative more suited to a post-pandemic world
- How to provide direct and immediate assistance to people seeking sanctuary at risk of social isolation, especially as a result of the measures imposed to reduce transmission of Covid-19 (lockdown etc)
- How we manage and grow our volunteer community, to ensure that we maximise our impact while maintaining careful cost control
- How we invest our limited resources (financial and human) to best advantage
- Our diversification strategy – what other routes can we pursue in order to make Swindon City of Sanctuary truly sustainable, without relying solely on the generosity of grant funders

We will begin:

- **A new literacy focussed initiative to support families seeking sanctuary in Swindon**
- **To seek significant core funding as well as funding to enable us to recruit personnel to coordinate our new, post-pandemic initiatives**
- **To create a financial surplus to enable us to run the charity for three months without any further funding**
- **To seek funding for additional Schools of Sanctuary developments over the coming years, as we identify both need and opportunity**
- **To expand our Board of Trustees to include some people with direct experience of seeking sanctuary and also to bring our board back up to optimal levels (our constitution states a maximum of 12 trustees, which would give us significant additional capacity to govern and support the organisation as it grows)**

Our year ahead at a glance 2021-2022:

Projects:

Room for All – Hosting Scheme:

- To close the scheme and ensure that all beneficiaries are accommodated via alternative schemes / provision

We're Open:

- Re-establish the We're Open drop-in café when lockdown restrictions allow
- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are conducted and risk mitigation measures are implemented and monitored when We're Open recommences
- Establish a new long-term venue for We're Open after a period of uncertainty
- Build long term funding channels for We're Open

Schools of Sanctuary:

- Expand the number of schools participating in the scheme
- Support teaching and support staff with managing the challenges of remote learning which are amplified for the sanctuary seeking community, including literacy support
- Increase the participation of members of our Advisory Group who have lived experience of migration
- Seek funding to ensure that we can continue our work in a sustainable way without relying on the leadership of a Schools' Lead Volunteer

Campaigns:

- Continue our work pressing for people seeking asylum to have access to free ESOL courses during their first six months in England
- Focus on three national campaigns for change: **End Indefinite Detention**, **Lift the Ban** and **Families Together**
- Contribute to the annual survey collated by national **City of Sanctuary** and national hosting network, **NACCOM**

Training:

- Implement training for our volunteers across our projects so that they gain a better understanding of our work, the asylum system and the issues that those we support may face
- Ensure that our employees have regular access to training and networking opportunities

Governance:

- Continue to review our people and financial strategies in order to ensure that our future, in a post-Covid world, is sustainable
- Ensure that the voices of people who have experienced migration, particularly those seeking sanctuary in the UK, are fully represented on our Board of Trustees and in our volunteer population

Appendix 1

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177624

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 April 2021
for
Swindon City of Sanctuary

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Contents of the Financial Statements
For year ended 30 April 2021

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Report of the Trustees	3-6
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Comparative Statement of Financial Activities	7
Balance Sheet	8
Notes to the Financial Statements	9-12
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	13

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2021

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page nine of the attached financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, regulations applicable to that Act, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from accounting periods commencing 1st January 2015 or later.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1177624

Principal address

Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 1RT

Trustees

K Hudson
H Parry
B Jackson (Chair)
S Juul (Treasurer)
J Tompsett
C Bennett
I Howard
M Lubanda

Bankers

Metro	Coop Plc
One Southampton Row	PO Box 250
London	Skelmersdale
WC1B 5HA	WN8 6WT

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2021

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document dated 6th March 2018 and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Trustees are generally volunteers although some are contacted and recruited through other charitable organisations.

New trustees are requested to provide details of their key skills and competencies, which are used to complete a skills matrix for the entire board; this serves to inform training plans and to identify how best to deploy their skills in the service of the charity, and to identify skills gaps across the board. The charity holds strategy days and various workshops to inform trustees in respect of their roles.

Organisational structure

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet regularly to review developments with regards to the charity, its activities and to make any important decisions. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks. The trustees have identified five main areas where risks may occur and considered how they might mitigate against them:

Governance and management risk looks at the risk the charity might suffer from the lack of direction, the skills and training of the trustees and the good use of its funds.

- **Operational risk** looks at the risk inherent in the charity's activities including continuity of staff, lack of a disaster recovery policy, etc.
- **Financial risk** includes those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, etc.
- **Reputational risk** looks at the possible damage to the charity's reputation, through association with unsuitable charities, or with inappropriate activity.
- **Laws, regulations, external and environmental risk** looks at the effects of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular to its finances, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over the key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

- To advance the education of the public in general, especially in Swindon, about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities and activities for recreation or other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities;
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- The prevention and relief of poverty amongst those granted refugee status and those seeking asylum in Swindon.
- Public benefit;
- The charity promotes activities to foster understanding and engagement between people from diverse backgrounds in order to fulfil its public benefit obligations.

Public Benefit

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees will maintain adequate reserves to cover grant commitments and budgeted costs for the current financial year and maintain an appropriate budget for future years to cover longer term grant commitments.

Financial Summary

Income for the year was £48,885 (2020 £36,369). Expenditure amounted to £31,195 (2020 £36,247). As a result, for the year ended 30th April 2021 there was a surplus of £17,689 (2020 surplus £121).

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Report of the Trustees
For year ended 30 April 2021

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

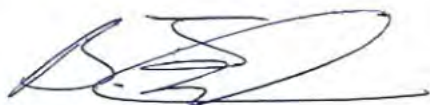
The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



.....
Ben Jackson

Date:28th February 2022.....

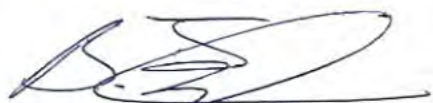
Swindon City of Sanctuary
Statement of Financial Activities
For year ended 30 April 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2021 Total Fund	2020 Total Fund
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		5,885	42,998	48,883	36,368
Total		<u>5,885</u>	<u>42,998</u>	<u>48,883</u>	<u>36,368</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable Activities Support for Sanctuary seekers		2,674	28,519	31,193	36,247
NET INCOME		<u>3,211</u>	<u>14,479</u>	<u>17,690</u>	<u>121</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		<u>9,090</u>	<u>16,045</u>	<u>25,135</u>	<u>25,014</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>12,301</u>	<u>30,524</u>	<u>42,825</u>	<u>25,135</u>

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Balance Sheet
As at 30 April 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	2021 Total Fund	2020 Total Fund
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		12,300	30,525	42,825	25,136
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>12,300</u>	<u>30,525</u>	<u>42,825</u>	<u>25,136</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>12,300</u>	<u>30,525</u>	<u>42,825</u>	<u>25,136</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
FUNDS					
	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				12,300	9,090
Restricted Funds				30,525	16,045
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>42,825</u>	<u>25,135</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 03/02/2022 and were signed on its behalf by:



B Jackson (Chair)

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Income & Expense Account on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2021

2. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2021	2020
	£	£
This is stated after charging:		
Other operating leases	-	-

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2021 nor for the year ended 30 April 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2021 nor for the year ended 31 April 2020.

4. STAFF

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Administration	2	2

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

5. LOANS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Bank overdraft	-	-
	-	-

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Notes to the Accounts
For year ended 30 April 2021

6. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	O/Balance Total Fund	Incoming resources	Resources expensed	C/Balance Total Fund
UNRESTRICTED				
General Fund	9,090	5,885	(2,675)	12,300
	<u>9,090</u>	<u>5,885</u>	<u>(2,675)</u>	<u>12,300</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS				
Joffe + Bath spa	3,532	20,000	(17,266)	6,266
We're Open*	5,078	(4,024)	0	1,054
Room for All	2,866	0	(2,866)	0
Refugee Week	1,896	0	(175)	1,721
Wiltshire Community*	729	(729)	0	0
Transport Fund	0	0	0	0
School of Sanctuary	217	0	(29)	188
Swindon Parish Council	1,728	0	(395)	1,333
Coop Community Fund	0	210	0	210
Respond & Adapt	0	10,000	(4,466)	5,534
Postcode Lottery	0	16,700	(2,596)	14,104
Local Giving Grant	0	841	(726)	115
				0
	<u>16,045</u>	<u>42,998</u>	<u>(28,519)</u>	<u>30,525</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>25,135</u>	<u>48,883</u>	<u>(31,193)</u>	<u>42,825</u>

*N.B. The We're Open and Wiltshire community funds have been reclassified as Unrestricted as permission given to redistribute.

7. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The charity operates the following restricted funds;

- a) **Joffe** - Funds provided to cover core costs of the charity's main employee, the executive officer
- b) **Room for all** - Funds to provide resources to host sanctuary seekers in hosts' homes in Swindon
- c) **We're open** - Funds to cover rent and drinks for a weekly social evening
- d) **Refugees week** - Funds relating to a week of activities celebrating sanctuary seekers in Swindon
- e) **Transport** - Funding for bus passes for sanctuary seekers
- f) **School of sanctuary** - Funds utilised for work in schools.
- g) **Swindon Parish Council** - Funds for publicity purposes only including short films
- h) **Respond & Adapt** – Wellbeing project
- i) **People Neighbourhood Trust** – Fab Extension and School Co-ordinator role

Swindon City of Sanctuary
Detailed Income & Expense Account
For year ended 30 April 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Gifts	-	-
Donations	48,883	36,368
	<u>48,883</u>	<u>36,368</u>
EXPENDITURE ON		
Charitable Activities:		
Wages	23,182	23,552
Other Operating Leases	-	-
Office Rent & Room Hire	1,210	3,729
Insurance	304	304
Telephone	532	608
Computers & software	297	921
Postage and Stationery	100	162
Travelling	283	2,093
Sundry expenses	4,325	3,668
	<u>30,233</u>	<u>35,037</u>
Legal and professional costs:		
Accountancy fees	960	1,210
	<u>960</u>	<u>1,210</u>
	<u>17,690</u>	<u>121</u>

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

An Independent review of these financial statements has taken place. The associated report can be made available on request.



Voluntary Action Swindon, 1 John Street, Swindon, SN1 1RT

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Registered Charity