



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



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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

Nicola Wood

Charity Manager

December 2022

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:

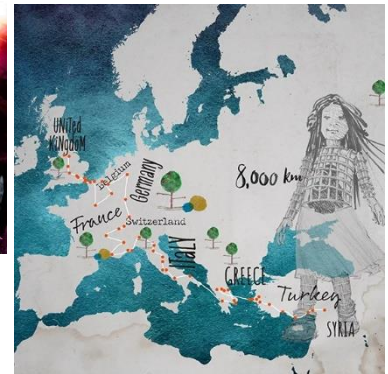
- **Set up a Pilot Scheme for School of Sanctuary Awards**

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.



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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Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	13

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

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

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		-	-	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors:		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank:		11,035	45,998	57,033	25,136
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		11,035	45,998	57,033	25,136
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year:		-	-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		11,035	45,998	57,033	25,136
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year:		-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		-	-	-	-
FUNDS	6 & 7				
Unrestricted Funds				11,035	12,300
Restricted Funds				45,998	30,525
TOTAL FUNDS				57,033	42,825

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 20/02/2023 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.

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	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

4. LOANS

	2022	2021
	£	£
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 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>0</u>
	<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.