

CHAIR'S AGM REPORT 2020-2021

INTRODUCTION

I am writing this report after a prolonged period of leave of absence due to pressing family issues which have meant that the whole of the reporting year April 2020 – March 2021 NNT I was absent and NNT had an acting chair who has since resigned and moved out of the area. This means that I have been back in post only for 3 + months from 27th August 2021. This report will therefore fall into two sections. The first section will be a report compiled from information passed to me via documents from Susan Bains, our Acting Chair, during my absence, and the last section will be my reflection on our work now and then – looking to the future and how work accomplished then, is now informing and progressing the ongoing work of our charity.

Section 1

Our Board continued to meet regularly via Zoom to plan and direct all our work and manage our finances during the year and we are pleased to report the following.

1. During the year despite Covid, NNT continued to stay connected with people and provide care and support to all our new neighbours using methods such as via whats app - video and written messaging and as follows
2. We filled in essential/ necessary forms for people on their doorsteps maintaining social distancing
3. We distributed School Uniform vouchers at the start of the new school year to families with school age children.
4. We distributed Winter Care packs – vitamins, honey and Covid info in different languages through our doorstep delivery service.
5. We delivered Christmas presents for children, supermarket vouchers to families and single asylum seekers for extra seasonal food.
6. At Easter we sent out a Covid vaccines survey and started to develop and establish our website using £2,225 funding from the Burnley Community Champions Fund together with chocolate easter bunnies for children
7. Between Lockdowns we ran appointment-based Advice & Advocacy Sessions and concurrently appointments for clients to come in and select clothing/bedding/towels and necessary items from our donated goods store. Heavy items were transported in volunteers' cars to people's doors.

8. Through our Local Giving page, we raised funds to help us to provide internet access through the purchase of dongles and equipment for children and young people who could not attend school or college.
9. We developed a Welcome to Burnley Guide in Arabic and English for new Arrivals coming via the refugee resettlement programme and for future use with clients coming to our town.
10. From February 2021 we noticed that there was a marked increase in new asylum seekers arriving in Burnley due to the Home Office Policy 'Operation Oak' emptying the hotels which had provided temporary accommodation during the pandemic. This continued unabated and indeed has picked up speed as the year has moved on. A lot of these moves have seen new people arriving alone in taxis, dropped off with their key and belongings outside their accommodation. Many were left with no money because things like Aspen cards had not arrived or did not work- not knowing the area, who to turn to or how to access help. It has been a difficult and demanding time for all concerned.

Despite all the challenges NNT has continued to provide a welcome and support to all sanctuary seekers arriving in our town. We have reviewed and reorganised many of our policies and paperwork and retained and grown our volunteer team - through initiatives such as establishing free online messaging on Whats App. Our volunteer team now numbering 30+. In addition, we have established a website to publicise our work and availability to people. We feel we have emerged stronger and more organised than before and ready to continue and develop our services to all seeking asylum and refuge in Burnley.

Compiled From: Reports by Susan Bains - Acting Chair until August 26th, 2021.

Section 2

Firstly, I would like to express my personal and NNT's profound thanks to Susan Bains for taking over temporarily and steering our charity through the difficult and troubled times of Covid lockdowns and at the same time renewing and developing our work and commitment to those we serve. In addition my thanks are also due to our volunteer team and Board who kept our services going because of their incredible dedication and hard work throughout all the difficulties the pandemic threw up.

As mentioned in Susan's report, numbers arriving, seeking Asylum, in Burnley and surrounding areas has grown substantially and we now have over 200 people on our books - a rise of 30+ on 12 months ago. This has meant that our Board has undertaken a review of service needs and investigated means of securing future resourcing to fund ongoing development and increasing workloads.

A Development Programme is now underway to 'futureproof' NNT's ability to continue to respond effectively. This will of course be the subject of the next set

of reports for the 21-22 AGM. We are confident we will meet the challenges and look forward to what lies ahead. Our confidence is based in the quality and commitment of our amazing management and volunteer teams and the support knowledge and expertise of our Trustee Board, underpinning and driving the work forward into the future with the support of many local organisations/churches and individuals. Together we move forward as 'Good Neighbours' to welcome and support our 'New Neighbours' within our midst.

Ruth Haygarth: Chair of Trustees NNT

November 2021

New Neighbours Together

(Regd Charity No.1179812)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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