

Report from the chair - 18th November 2025

The Trustees

There are some changes to the Board of Trustees to report: past Chairman John Harris retired a few months ago. We much appreciate the important part he played as Chair and trustee.

We are very pleased to have a new Trustee, John Cuthbert. John quickly became involved in various areas of the charity's work and an additional bonus is that he is a volunteer for the Refugee Council which is a useful point of contact for us.

The one change in the board of Trustees which came as a great shock and disappointment was the resignation last Friday of our Volunteer Coordinator, Derek Gibson. Derek will be greatly missed for all his work, his commitment and his experience.

You may recall that this time last year we pointed out that the existing team of Trustees could not go on indefinitely and we asked for people to come forward to join the board. Earlier on this year Dennis and I were planning on stepping down as from this AGM and again asked for anyone prepared to take on a role to come forward. This was sent out by email to all volunteers and members. The same request was made at the training day on 8th November. There has been absolutely no response to any of these messages. Dennis and I therefore agreed that we could not walk away with no one lined up to take over and so we have said that we will stay on in our current roles – Dennis as Treasurer, me as Chair and Secretary, until the 2026 AGM, but at that point we will definitely step down and no longer be trustees. This period of notice allows plenty of time for new trustees to join and to learn from us what is entailed. If you wish this charity to continue to exist please think about what role you could play and ask yourself whether you know of other people who would be interested in putting themselves forward.

The website

Some time ago we were warned by City of Sanctuary of possible threats from the far right and were recommended to remove anything from our website which allowed people to be identified. We complied with this and I asked all volunteers to make sure they had my phone number in case of safeguarding issues as the documentation is no longer online. The website is therefore very bare now, which is the case for all affiliated groups.

Refugees:

We had expected new arrivals this year but this has been very slow, though not for the want of refugee families who need rehousing. I understand from Jonathan Spencer that hold-ups are due to delays in upgrading council properties. We know of two properties, one in Knaresborough, one in Harrogate which are currently undergoing work so hopefully these will be ready before too long.

Asylum seekers:

This year we have helped four families of asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers are not the responsibility of North Yorkshire. They are dealt with by the Home Office. Once they are granted leave to remain, they are placed in home office housing for a limited period at the end of which they have to make alternative arrangements. They are the responsibility of a company subcontracted by the Home Office, who don't inform anyone that a family has moved in to an area and we have been approached to help through various channels – in one instance we were approached by a school who were given no notice of the arrival of a non-English speaking young teenager; on another occasion I was contacted by phone by a Sudanese lady in need of help and on two other occasions by email. These are the ones we know about and who we have been able to help in various ways.

Social Events

Last January we hosted a New Year party for Afghan families and decided to present it as an English afternoon tea for a change. We put on a splendid spread, much of which was donated by Betty's. Unfortunately this did not go down well with the families and it was sad to see so much good food go in the bin. On the other hand, the children had a lovely time entertained by Rascals and a face painter.

In the summer we organised a picnic at Conyngham Hall. In spite of a forecast of rain quite a few families turned up and seemed to enjoy themselves and the rain held off until eating was over!

Harrogate Symphony Orchestra has very kindly donated 20 tickets for each of their concerts this year for Ukrainians. These are very much appreciated.

English classes

We continue to fund English classes through NYC grants for the Ukrainians. These are very well supported and valued.

Funding from NYC also allows us to pay for English at Home for the resettled families which is coordinated by Nina.

Also, Nina is running an online Life in the UK course with over 20 signed up.

Sewing group:

Ivana has continued to give her time generously and we would like to support this activity long-term but it has been difficult to secure the commitment from the women to make it viable. The rental of the sewing room is quite steep and so we need a minimum of 8 to 10 regular attendees to justify the expenditure.

Yoga:

Tamanna has been trying to provide yoga classes for Afghan women but as with the sewing classes, to make them viable there has to be a minimum number of committed participants.

Football

Sabriah, who is here with us this evening, is hoping to start football training for refugee children. We have provided her with the equipment – balls, bibs, goals etc. So far the initiative has not got going for various reasons but we are hopeful that it will in due course.

Refugee Week 2025

We were very pleased with the success of this year's Refugee Week- Harrogate's best effort to date, masterminded by Dennis. Harrogate Film Society put on an animation called The Breadwinner; the Mercer Gallery worked with some Afghan women to produce a small exhibition of craft work; there was a quiz loosely based on refugee matters, and the climax was a superb concert with supper at the West Park Centre, featuring the Beati choir and a wonderful Ukrainian concert pianist, Natalia Smirnova. The various activities raised our profile and were the incentive for several applications to become volunteers. The following week there was an Afghan Kitchen evening to round everything off.

After the financial report this evening, as is the norm, all trustees will tender our resignation. We will stand for re-election but anyone else can also put their name forward if they so wish, and voting will take place.



Harrogate District of Sanctuary

Statement of Accounts Financial Year 2025

Balance brought forward from 2024	£22718
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Income 2025

Subscriptions	£200
Donations	£809
Grant Ukraine classes	£34,036
Grant English in UK	£900
Other grants	£1612
Fundraising	£539
Refugee Week	£1853
Loan repaid	£300
TOTAL INCOME	£40249

Expenditure 2024

Equipment, stationery, meetings	£424
Insurance, DBS, Fees	£1412
Loan	£300
Family support	£2991
Refugee Week	£947
Two Ridings Foundation small groups project	£673
Football project	£463
Language provision – Resettlement families	£1215
Language provision - Ukrainians	£18395
English in the UK	£410
Social events – Resettlement families	£182
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£27412
In year net total	£12837
Opening balance 1st January 2025	£22718
Closing balance 31st December 2025	£35555



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Harrogate and Knaresborough District of Sanctuary

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st of December 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1183095

Set out on pages

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended **31/12/2025**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

A. Q. Khan

Date:

Name:

Abdul Qudeir Khan

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

FMAAT
FCPA

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