

Charity Number 1183558

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group

**Report and Financial Statements
For the year ended 31st August 2022**

Address	Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group PO Box 1615, Southampton SO17 3WF Email: info@swvg-refugees.org.uk Web: www.swvg-refugees.org.uk
Patrons	Miriam Margolyes, OBE John Pilkington Dr. Shirley Firth
Trustees	Chair: Chris Stephens (resigned 6 December 2021) Mark Courtice (appointed 6 December 2021) Treasurer: Andrew White (resigned 20 September 2021) David Smith (appointed 20 September 2021) Co-ordinator: Claudia Glyn Stash Kozlowski Catherine Hartley William Brook-Hart Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer David Retter Jackie Batchelor Momodou Bah (resigned 6 December 2021) Jeyatharshan Vettivel Leila Karimi (appointed 23 May 2022 and resigned 20 October 2022)
Secretary	Jessica Hasan
Administrator	Xanthe Hackett
Bankers	HSBC Bank Plc, 19 High Street, Salisbury SO23 9BZ
Independent Examiner	Peter Casson FCA

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2022.

Formation

The charity was formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation to take over the activities and assets and liabilities of the unincorporated charity of the same name. It was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 May 2019. The assets and liabilities were transferred between December 2019 and March 2020 and the activities were transferred on 1 January 2020.

Governance and management

The Trustee Board comprises a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 12 members elected at each Annual General Meeting. Trustees who held office during the year are listed on page 2.

The Board meets every six weeks and is supported by a number of sub-committees which report to the Trustees.

Aims and objectives

The main objects of the Group as set out in its constitution are:

For the relief of need, hardship and distress in the United Kingdom amongst refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants by providing such charitable assistance as the Trustees think fit, including providing such persons with advice, assistance, representation, counselling, in matters such as money, debts, welfare, benefits, housing, health, asylum, immigration, education, training and employment.

Focus of our work

The Group is a volunteer led charity whose members work with asylum seekers and refugees mainly living in Southampton. Our work includes operating a hostel for those without Government accommodation, providing financial support to those clients pursuing their asylum claim who are destitute but are not entitled to receive benefits or undertake paid work, providing English and other teaching, providing one-to-one support for individual clients who are assigned a trained visitor who meets with them regularly to provide friendship and practical help, and providing well-being support through social and cultural activities. We also have funded the provision of laptops and data to some of the students.

Our Legal Justice fund allows us to use the services of a very experienced immigration solicitor who provides advice to the Group on individual client cases and provides training for our members.

SWVG is a partner in the Avenue Multicultural Centre (AMC) in Southampton and contributes to the running of the Centre with CLEAR and Avenue St Andrews URC. There is a very popular drop-in event each Friday at AMC for people who are seeking asylum, when we staff a help desk with two experienced visitors and the SWVG administrator.

We also work in partnership with SCRATCH, with New Forest National Park with visits and with John Hansard Gallery, MAST Studios, Sea City Museum and Southampton City Libraries in our culture project. We are also have links to Refugee Action and Together with Refugees and are members of NACCOM and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Migration Group

Review of the year

The drop-in centre at Avenue St Andrews URC re-opened post Covid in September 2021 and during the year attendance of refugees and asylum seekers exceeded 3,200.

We supported 50 clients including families with regular visits, most of them living in NASS accommodation. On average only three of the hostel's six rooms were occupied for most of the year. During the year 14 clients were granted Leave to Remain.

Several of our clients have had to wait years to have their asylum case assessed by the Home Office and further months or years for a decision.

The Home Office appears to be increasing the number of people in Southampton who are seeking asylum with the use of hotel accommodation but without adequate support facilities.

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees has been a major development and some individual SWVG members are involved in supporting them. SWVG believes that all refugees should be treated fairly and humanely and our focus continues to be on those of all nationalities who do not get proper government support. More information on our activities can be found on the website at swvg-refugees.org.uk

English teaching

79 individuals are currently receiving English lessons both one-to-one and in groups. A further 37 students received one-to-one lessons during the year with many more joining groups. Grants received from the French Huguenot Church and the One Per Cent scheme totalling £6,000 were utilised to purchase 5 laptops together with routers and mobile hubs to loan to clients and also to purchase monthly mobile data packages for 37 clients which also benefitted other adult family members and children. The project has been very successful and will be continued and expanded.

Volunteers and staff

We have continued to receive applications from potential volunteers. Our training activity is now carried out partly online and partly in person. We have approximately 100 active volunteers.

The Trustees have been grateful to note that the volunteer group now includes people with lived experience of the asylum system and this is reflected in the appointment of two people who are experts by experience as Trustees.

Our two part time staff continue to provide essential support services.

Campaigning

We are a member of the “Together with Refugees” national coalition and have been actively supporting its “Show Your Heart” campaign. During the year, we organised public rallies and meetings with local MPs, when we called for a compassionate asylum system and for changes to the now enacted cruel and damaging Nationality and Borders Act.

We also supported one of the legal challenges to the government scheme to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda, mounted by Freedom from Torture. Our contribution of £5,000 was funded from our Emergency Response Fund.

Finance

Receipts for the year were £93,641, and payments were £94,227, producing a deficit of £586.

Receipts-Grants

Grants from charitable trusts amounted to £53,174. We are most grateful for a further grant from the Tolkien Trust of £20,000 which covers a significant part of our support costs.

We are also grateful for a new grant from Garfield Weston Foundation of £10,000 and a £5,000 grant from The French Huguenot Church of London Charitable Trust to be used for teaching. The National Lottery continues to fund subsistence costs for hostel residents but in view of the low hostel usage they have kindly agreed for part of the remaining grant to be used for teaching and social activities.

We have also received a grant of £1,910 from Southampton City Council to establish a bike hub which will provide refurbished bikes for members, and also train asylum seekers in bicycle repair skills.

Details of grants received are set out on page 8 of this report.

Receipts-Other income

We are grateful for the donations we have received from churches, other organisations and many individuals who have continued to support us in difficult circumstances. In particular we are grateful for a donation of £2,000 from Capsticks LLP and to Claire Pigott for raising £2,585 from a sponsored bike ride from Winchester to Liverpool.

Payments included £35,673 for accommodation and subsistence for destitute asylum seekers which include rent of £27,500 for the hostel. Expenditure on other client activities was increased as we emerge from the pandemic. Expenditure on social activities to improve well-being amounted to £7,674 and £7,535 was spent on English teaching by providing internet access as described above.

Emergency Response Fund

This fund was created in 2021 by setting aside a legacy of £20,000 to be used as its title implies. The trustees decided that SWVG should support the legal challenge by Freedom from Torture to the inhumane

policy of transferring asylum seekers to Rwanda for their claims to be processed. We donated £5,000 as explained above.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have agreed that the value of unrestricted reserves should be in the region of £55,000 representing approximately 6 months normal expenditure plus a provision for two and three months respectively for rent and salaries. Unrestricted reserves at 31 August, excluding the designated fund, were £53,406.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 31 October 2022 and signed on their behalf by Mark Courtice (Chair).

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group (the Group) for the year ended 31 August 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Trustees of the Group you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Group's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Group as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Peter Casson FCA

8 November 2022

13 Skylark Road
Trumpington
Cambridge
CB2 9AQ

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022

Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	Total £	2021 Total
RECEIPTS				
Donations from organisations	4,120		4,120	3,615
Donations from individuals including gift aid	22,668		22,668	20,706
Grants from charitable trusts	33,407	19,767	53,174	38,815
Legacies	0		0	20,200
Proceeds of fund-raising events	13,083		13,083	11,327
Interest	596		596	490
Total receipts	73,874	19,767	93,641	96,153
PAYMENTS				
Client-facing activities				
Campaigning	6,667		6,667	0
Visitors' travel and other expenses	4,003		4,003	1,417
Professional fees		175	175	1,034
Accommodation and subsistence	29,338	6,335	35,673	38,410
Food vouchers			0	2,260
Travel	5,523		5,523	3,156
English teaching		7,535	7,535	8,947
Social activities	4,674	3,000	7,674	1,895
Other	3,106	1,708	4,814	2,489
Total payments to or for clients	53,311	18,753	72,064	59,608
Support activities				
Communications	1,906		1,906	216
Salaries	16,144		16,144	15,376
Fund-raising costs	652		652	216
Training	443		443	694
Insurance	480		480	477
Other office and admin costs	2,538		2,538	1,175
Total administration expenses	22,163		22,163	18,154
Total payments	75,474	18,753	94,227	77,762
Net excess of receipts over payments for the year	(1,600)	1,014	(586)	18,391
Balance brought forward	70,006	11,270	81,276	62,885
Balance carried forward	68,406	12,284	80,690	81,276

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 August 2022

	01.09.21	Received	Paid	31.08.22
	£	£	£	£
CASH FUNDS				
Unrestricted Funds				
General Unrestricted Funds	50,006	73,874	70,474	53,406
Emergency Response Fund	20,000		5,000	15,000
Total Unrestricted Funds	70,006	73,874	75,474	68,406
Restricted Funds				
Subsistence for hostel residents	6,595	12,857	10,870	8,582
Legal Justice Fund	2,901		175	2,726
English teaching	1,000	5,000	6,000	0
Bike project		1,910	934	976
Other	774		774	0
Total Restricted Funds	11,270	19,767	18,753	12,284
Total Funds	81,276	93,641	94,227	80,690

Represented by:	31.08.22	31.08.21
	£	£
HSBC current account	8,890	1,876
Nationwide Building Society	22,000	25,000
Redwood Bank	54,000	54,000
Float for expenses	800	400
Less: Deferred income	(5,000)	0
	80,690	81,276

DEBTORS

Tax on Gift Aid donations	1,086	789
Other debtors	416	410
	1,502	1,199

CREDITORS

For expenses	142	161
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Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees on 31 October 2022 by

Mark Courtice (Chair)

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
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NOTES:

GRANTS

	Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	Total	2021 Total
Grants received from charitable trusts were:	£	£	£	£
The Tolkien Trust	20,000		20,000	20,000
Garfield Weston Foundation	10,000		10,000	
Knight Charitable Trust	400		400	400
Sheba Charitable Trust	400		400	400
St Clare and St Francis Trust	500		500	500
The Orange Tree Trust				5,000
Legal Justice Fund				
Lush Charity Pot				5,000
Subsistence for hostel residents				
The National Lottery		12,857	12,857	6,365
English teaching				
One Percent Scheme	2,107		2,107	1,000
The French Huguenot Church of London		5,000	5,000	
Bike hub				
Southampton City Council		1,910	1,910	
Other				150
	<u>33,407</u>	<u>19,767</u>	<u>53,174</u>	<u>38,815</u>

TRUSTEE EXPENSES

Expenses reimbursed to trustees during the period amounted to £890 (2021 £595).

COMMITMENTS

The Group had outstanding commitments for the support of clients which fall after the year end of £4,943 (2021 £5,023).