

## **TAUNTON WELCOMES REFUGEES**

### **Chair's Report to Annual Meeting May 21 2025.**

Earlier this year at the end of a coffee and conversation session a young Iranian woman stood and, with tears in her eyes, made a short speech in clear but not perfect English, *"This is my last time here. Tomorrow I am going to Portsmouth. Thank you so much. You have been so kind to me. I don't know what I could of done without you. I will never forget your kindness."*

In a world in which war, famine and desperation continue to force large numbers of people to flee their countries of origin and in a political climate that is often hostile to them, Taunton Welcomes Refugees remains proud of our work to welcome and offer support to people who have arrived here seeking refuge and asylum.

#### **Settled Families**

Liaising with the Local Authority we continue to offer befriending support to newly arrived families with settled refugee status now mostly from Afghanistan. We see this as a long term commitment of up to two years to help the family settle and integrate into life in the UK. Currently we are supporting 7 families.

#### **People Seeking Asylum**

Our work offering support to people housed by the Home Office in a building formerly used as a hotel continues to develop with a small group of volunteers visiting twice a week. The hotel is still at full capacity with families and single women from many different countries and our volunteers offer friendship, moral support, practical advice and help with understanding documents and procedures. With the Home Office now processing claims faster, a lot of our work is guiding people through, and helping them understand, the difficult process of trying to settle into their new lives. On average 24 people attend each of our sessions though on occasion it has been as many as 60.

In partnership with RAFT (Refugee Aid from Taunton) we also help supply clothing and source other essential items such as mobiles and SIM cards.

We offer similar support to a smaller number of people who are housed in dispersal accommodation in the area.

#### **Coffee and Conversation**

Coffee and Conversation, now in its fourth year, continues to go from strength to strength. We hold sessions twice a week at the Quaker Meeting House in Taunton, where we welcome a mix of people from the displaced community. There are Afghan families from the resettlement schemes as well as asylum seekers from a wide range of counties who are in the hotel or in dispersal properties in Taunton and Bridgwater. Families and individuals enjoy the opportunity to engage in one to one conversation with native English speakers at whatever level is appropriate for them and also to mix and socialise. With people from so many diverse backgrounds the opportunity to mix and engage with each other is very rewarding. We

currently have an average of 17 people attending each session (this has on occasion risen to nearly 30) with an equal number of volunteers.

As ever, our incredible volunteers are the backbone of the work we do, and we are extremely lucky to be able to draw on such a range of skills and talents as well as their unbounded kindness and compassion.

We set up Bridgwater C&C in March 2024, in response to a need to support Refugees in Bridgwater who are unable to attend the Taunton C&C.

We approached Diversity Voice who run a Welcome Hub in Bridgwater. They allow us to use their resources for free. The Bridgwater C&C is only small but really appreciated by the small number of Afghan ladies that attend. Two ladies, in particular, now have the confidence to attend College. Initially A translated for B. A now attends College. C has started with us and B now translates for C. This is such a positive and a real pleasure to watch.

The Hub also hosts other organisations such as the Community Employment Hubs, CAB and The Pantry so we can easily signpost to these organisations. More importantly there is a great deal of laughter and smiles!

### **Minehead Holidays**

In the summer of '24 working in partnership with a Minehead group we were able to arrange seaside holidays for four of the families we have supported over the years. The whole family benefits but the children's delight is a joy to behold.

### **English Language Lessons for Ukrainians.**

This project is now nearing the end of its third year. Katya continues to be a fabulous teacher and has run three classes, two in-person at QMH and one online from home. The attendance hasn't been full, as people are more likely to be employed or are visiting Ukraine for extended periods - but nevertheless the social interaction between the two classes at QMH is such that the first class hangs around and the second class arrives early so that they have coffee and chat together. Katya tells me that they all benefit hugely from this time, herself included. The whole project has been funded in full by SCC at no cost to TWR other than organisational time.

### **Multi Agency work.**

TWR is not alone in wanting to give a positive welcome to people seeking refuge. Working with Somerset Council, CHARIS and Raft we have been proud to contribute to a series of events and to the work that recently has led to Taunton achieving City of Sanctuary status. We hope that this status will raise the profile of our work and act as a catalyst for further developments.

### **Safeguarding**

Because we work with vulnerable families and individuals we are determined to ensure that our safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective.

Over the last 12 months we have ensured that our safeguarding and CP policy has been reviewed and updated. A quick point of reference safeguarding flowchart was created and sent to all volunteers and added to our safeguarding policy.

There have been 2 safeguarding concerns raised with the DSL and Deputy DSL. One which resulted in multi-agency working with CSC, police and other professionals.

Safeguarding training for all new volunteers has been delivered either face to face or online by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Along with DBS checks and reference checks.

All Trustees have up to date DBS checks.

Outside agencies have been contacted in situations where professional advice was required.

Moving forward the safeguarding team will continue to:-

- Look to continue to maintain, review and improve our safeguarding systems.
- Ensure the training of volunteers and trustees remains up to date and relevant.
- Ensure further safeguarding training for trustees

## **Volunteers**

TWR is a volunteer organisation, all our trustees and face to face workers give their time voluntarily. Currently we have 56 active volunteers. As an organisation we are mindful of the enormous value of this contribution and of how it enables us to achieve a great deal with very limited finance. Our volunteers bring a diverse range of remarkable skills and experience underpinned by compassion and a desire to make our community a better place for all of us. We endeavour to ensure that volunteers are well trained and supported through regular volunteers events and opportunities to give feedback and raise issues.

At TWR we cannot thank our volunteers enough, working face to face or behind the scenes as trustees their effort is amazing. We know it is greatly appreciated by the refugee community and we believe that the experience enhances the lives of the volunteers themselves.

*“Hello, my dear, thank you for your kindness. After arriving in England, people like you made us endure the distance and the difficulties. Thank you □□□□”* Kurdish woman from Iraq.

Eddie East and Simon Forrester, TWR Co Chairs.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Taunton Welcomes Refugees

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 March 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1183921

Set out on pages

1 - 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust'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 (other than that disclosed below \*) 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.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

20/06/2025

Name:

Christopher Cherry

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

FCCA

Address:

3 Marco Polo House, Cook Way, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6BJ

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**



## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

01-Apr-24

To

31-Mar-25

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Individual Donations	1,165	-	-	1,165	2,334
Institutional Donations	2,053	-	-	2,053	790
Grants	-	17,461	-	17,461	27,303
Gift Aid Claim	565	-	-	565	-
Cards & Calendars	213	-	-	213	1,069
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>3,996</b>	<b>17,461</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,457</b>	<b>31,496</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>3,996</b>	<b>17,461</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,457</b>	<b>31,496</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Co-ordinator	515	12,309	-	12,824	8,966
IT	45	-	-	45	325
Volunteer Meetings	1,124	-	-	1,124	1,489
Management	832	-	-	832	1,074
Other	-	331	-	331	1,010
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	338
Publicity	-	-	-	-	4,745
Conversation Taunton	2,170	6,251	-	8,421	571
Conversation Bridgwater	-	-	-	-	12,192
English for Ukrainians	-	12,609	-	12,609	97
Asylum Support	119	-	-	119	271
Grants to Clients	-	-	-	-	500
Kilve	-	-	-	-	-
Minehead	225	-	-	225	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>5,030</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,530</b>	<b>31,578</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>5,030</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,530</b>	<b>31,578</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 1,034</b>	<b>- 14,039</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 15,073</b>	<b>- 82</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>14,935</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,081</b>	<b>18,163</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>18,081</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Main account	2,102	896	-
	Public account	10	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Projector		152	-
	Dsisplay Boards		144	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Robin Peeler		