

Annual Report to the AGM of KRA 2025

Dear Friends

A lot has happened to KRA since our AGM in March of last year. When the current Trustees began their tenure we had just begun our collaboration with the North Northants Resettlement Team to host a drop in centre for the Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Kettering. This was to be based on a model the Team had already put in place in Corby. We were providing a venue, (the Methodist Church), and volunteers to provide refreshments and play Connect Four with the clients, while the NNC did the real casework and helped the asylum seekers and refugees to access services and find their way around the system. Within just a few months that dynamic changed completely.

In early June, just as the sessions were becoming established and the English lessons we had organised were beginning to take off, we were told that the Resettlement Team would no longer be able to attend the drop in every week, but would be attending every fourth week instead. Furthermore their remit had changed and they were no longer able to help asylum seekers, only those who had leave to remain as refugees.

The Trustees made the decision that the drop in sessions were too important and that we needed to continue to hold them on a weekly basis to maintain momentum and not confuse the clients. We committed to taking over hire costs of the church for the 3 weeks when NNC were not there and we found ourselves taking over some of the work that the NNC were no longer able to do.

At this point I would like to thank our core volunteers who have committed themselves to supporting the drop in sessions. Without them none of this work would be possible. Ian Gemmall, Ian Haynes and Annie Balding have provided English classes, which regularly attract 20 - 25 learners. Some of these clients have gone on to attend English classes at KCU and Tresham College. Anne Lee has supported the English teachers by photocopying resources. Cynthia and Eddie Kettyles have regularly come along to provide conversation and support and a warm welcome to all. Cynthia has been in hospital recently and has been much missed. One of the asylum seekers asked after her because he had just been given leave to remain and wanted to share his good news with her. Rebecca Dee has been supporting Russell and me by sharing the case work. There are others who have managed to come occasionally and we are always

grateful for their support and the help they have generously given to the refugees. These include Rayna Smith, (thanks for the Christmas presents), Andy Byatt and Sue Walters.

In the course of this year we have:

Helped asylum seekers register with a local GP

After much trial and error, forged links with the local branch of Halifax to provide asylum seekers with a bank account

Forged links with local food banks and clothes banks, particularly the Salvation Army and the Solace Trust so that we can signpost our clients to their services

We've learnt about ARC cards, Aspen cards and EVisas

We have forged a link with the Northampton Town of Sanctuary and sent clients who desperately need legal support to their monthly clinics

Helped refugees to apply for travel documents online

Helped asylum seekers to lodge an online appeal if their case is rejected

Helped refugees with driving licence applications

Linked up with the charity Brightwayz to begin providing bicycles for asylum seekers and refugees

Contacted the Red Cross and Migrant Help for advice and referred clients to them

Helped clients access a GP appointment

Helped clients access a Dentist (no mean feat)

We have learned that the bureaucracy of asylum claims is horrendous even for a native English speaker, never mind someone with limited English skills

Thanks to our revamped Facebook Page, new website and email address we have been contacted by third parties who want to help or want help, including Solicitors of asylum seekers.

A representative from the charity MIND has joined us on occasion and helped with clients experiencing mental health difficulties

We have been visited by Kettering's mayor and another member of the council, who saw what we were doing and gave us a grant to help us continue to offer this service to our community

We have formed preliminary links with local police and hate crimes officers

It has been a steep learning curve for all of us. We need more volunteers, willing to give up their Thursday afternoons. We need more members willing to support us financially. We are grateful to the members of the

North Northants Resettlement Team, who have given us whatever guidance they can and often nudged us in the right direction.

My final thanks go to the Methodist Church here in Kettering who have been so supportive in letting us use their premises for our drop in sessions and to my fellow Trustees who have risen to this challenge.

Respectfully Submitted
Terri Attwood
Secretary
KRA



Income		expenditure		Balance 01-July-2024	14329.92
membership fees	135	bank charges	-60		
donations	60	public liability insurance	-56		
other	0	administration	-29.92		
				Balance 30-June-2025	14379
Total income	195	total expenditure	-145.92	surplus (deficit)	49.08