

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales · Charity number 1185663

Details

Other names NCOS

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2019-10-07

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 54 Bridge Street
54 Bridge Street
Blyth
NE24 3AB

Phone 07000000000

Email stenhouse55@gmail.com

Website <https://www.ncos.org.uk/>

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE: 1. THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS, (INCLUDING CONVENTION REFUGEES, REFUGEE COMMUNITIES, PEOPLE WITH LEAVE TO REMAIN, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND EX-DETAINEES), SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POSITION, BY PROMOTING AND/OR CO-ORDINATING SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO ASSIST THEM TO ADAPT WITHIN A NEW COMMUNITY 2. THE RELIEF OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AMONG ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES LIVING OR WORKING IN NORTHUMBERLAND BY ACTING AS AN UMBRELLA AND RESOURCE FOR LOCAL REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICES, 3. THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ABOUT THE ISSUES RELATING TO REFUGEES AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM AND HUMAN RIGHTS.4. THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY PROMOTING ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING AND GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND PEOPLE SEEKING SANCTUARY.

Activities: Assisting asylum seekers in Northumberland with the processing of their claims. This involves advice sessions given in partnership with the British Red Cross. Ensuring that asylum seeker children are

registered for schools. Keeping in touch with our service users (SUs), through drop-ins, telephone, or personal contact. In a developing way, assisting with needs. Advocating. And much more.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Northumberland

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-09-30	£18,160	£22,703	-	-
2023-09-30	-	-	-	-
2022-09-30	£58,436	£22,459	-	-
2021-09-30	£13,419	£9,045	-	-
2020-09-30	£9,971	£3,448	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Murtala Touray	Chair	2025-04-05
Caris Blathin Vardy		2025-05-30
Elena Kassis		2024-02-28
John Stenhouse		2025-04-05
Muhammad Anwar Virk		2023-05-02
Sarah Anne Greaves		2025-05-30
Wendy Mabel Bond		2025-04-05
Zareta Zhamalbinovna Galaeva		2025-04-05

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales - Charity number 1185663

Accounts



Trustees Annual Report

October 1st 2023 – September 30th 2024



Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS)

82 Front Street, Newbiggin by the Sea NE64 6QD

northumberlandsanctuary@gmail.com

ncosnorthumberland@gmail.com

Registered Charity 1185663

NCOS – Appreciation 1.

You provide a rare and much-needed voice of truth about refugees and asylum seekers, countering the growing hostility and misinformation surrounding migration.

For most of us, migration is not a choice—it is a necessity, a last resort for survival. No one willingly leaves behind their home, culture, and loved ones unless staying means facing persecution, war, or unbearable hardship. The journey itself is filled with unimaginable risks, but the challenges do not end upon arrival. Instead of finding safety and acceptance, many refugees are met with suspicion, bureaucratic obstacles, and policies that make integration nearly impossible.

One of the most devastating aspects of forced migration is its impact on children. They carry the trauma of displacement, struggle to adapt to a foreign language and culture, and often witness their parents battling with an unwelcoming system. Instead of supporting them to rebuild their lives, the government's restrictive policies push them further into isolation, denying them the opportunity to contribute and belong.

As you regularly point out, refugees bring resilience, skills, and ambition—qualities that could help strengthen and enrich this country. If given the chance, they would not be a burden but an asset. The UK, with its proud history of fairness and tolerance, should recognize this and build pathways for integration rather than barriers that lead to exclusion and despair.

You are a beacon of hope in these difficult times. Knowing that NCOS exists reminds us that there are still people who believe in justice, humanity, and the true values of this country. Thank you for standing up for people like me, for challenging the harmful narratives, and for calling for a system that treats refugees with dignity.

NCOS Member

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1. Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS)

Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS) was founded from a public meeting on October 1st 2016 and registered as a charitable incorporate organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees in November 2019.

NCOS is governed by a Charity Commission Foundation Model Constitution. It is a group of the national organisation City of Sanctuary (about to become an affiliate organisation) and a membership organisation which takes pride in the participation of people with asylum and refugee experience throughout our work.

We welcome people to Northumberland and help them become part of wonderful communities in places we call home. Throughout our work we try to engage members with the ordinary life of the community and help them integrate with the rich variety of activities open to all.

2. Objects of Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS)

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and people seeking asylum, by promoting and co-ordinating services and facilities to help them adapt to life within a new community.

The relief of financial hardship among people seeking asylum and refugees living and working in Northumberland by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services.

The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.

The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

3. Governance

NCOS Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in April and our financial year is from October 1st to September 30th. This enables full scrutiny of the previous year's accounts as well as the work of NCOS at each AGM.

The governance of NCOS is in the hands of the Board of Trustees.

The Board meets ten times per year on the fourth Wednesday of each month apart from August and December. The trustees co-opt some other volunteers on to the Board with a full role of participation except for those matters which are by the constitution reserved for trustees. Members who would like to join the Board can submit themselves for election at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Board appoints an Executive Committee to meet between Board meetings to undertake day to day governance and for any urgent decisions. The Executive reports to each Board meeting. Minutes of Board meetings are freely available.



4. Officers

October 1st 2023 – September 30th 2024

Chair – Murtala Touray

Secretary – Hilton Dawson

Treasurer – Muhammad Virk

Assistant Treasurer – Zara Galaeva

Data Protection Officer – John Stenhouse

Volunteer Organiser – Hilton Dawson

5. Trustees

Murtala Touray
Muhammad Virk
Zara Galaeva
Elena Kassis
John Stenhouse
Wendy Bond
Hilton Dawson – retiring April 2025

6. Board Members

Daniel Meija (to April 2024)
Lucia Maharero (from April 2024)
Mohammed Zahed (from April 2024 to April 2025)
Sarah Wright (June – December 2024)
Ben Hopkinson (to December 2024)



7. Development Plan and Progress

In 2022-23 NCOS consulted, debated and agreed upon a Development Plan which committed us to working towards financial sustainability, with the means to employ a Co-ordinator, who would work from our own identifiable, accessible base in the community.

2023-24 saw us make some progress towards those goals with the employment of a consultant to help create a fund-raising strategy and continuing efforts with key partners to fund important parts of our regular programme. After a few unsuccessful attempts to locate and rent premises we have come together with other partners in the Hirst Regeneration Project to help establish a shared office base. This should come to fruition in 2025.

Finance is always a struggle, but there is evidence that NCOS is being valued both for the work that we do and for our vision for the future of the communities in which we work. We are grateful to the local authorities, charitable trusts and individuals who are so generous in funding our day to day work. We now need to focus more on sustained fund raising, coupled with the organisational development which will encourage longer term investment in the NCOS which employs a member of staff, from our own base.

8. Volunteers and their Work

However successful we become, NCOS is a voluntary organisation, currently made up solely of volunteers and we are all very proud to be NCOS Volunteers.

A huge pitfall of volunteering is that keen and committed people can quickly end up becoming over-committed and burnt out. We are working hard to recruit people for specific, well-managed roles which would-be volunteers can more easily fit into busy lives alongside other responsibilities and commitments.

One of the absolute joys of NCOS is working with talented and able people who wish to give back to the community where they are seeking asylum and (at least for a while) sometimes have considerable time on their hands. However, it is also vital to recognise that once people gain leave to remain, their whole world will change. Even if they remain living in Northumberland, the pressures of work and new responsibilities must take priority over volunteering.

We have utilised some 50 volunteers during the course of 2023-24, almost 40% of whom have been people currently living in the asylum system.



There are good reasons for a considerable turnover and there are always opportunities as NCOS continues to develop and grow, so we are constantly on the look out for new people to join us. A considerable aid to recruitment is the film 'Hjem' produced by Jamie Sinclair with the participation of many NCOS members and volunteers. This provides an inspirational introduction to our work and is available on the NCOS website and facebook page. Please consider volunteering with NCOS and feel free to get in contact.

Many volunteers join in with existing projects, taking part in the invaluable work of meeting and befriending people at drop ins, advising them about life here in the communities of Ashington and Blyth and Bedlington and helping them access services for them and their families. Additionally, there are great opportunities to employ particular skills and help develop new initiatives to the benefit of people seeking asylum.

In 2023-24 M. an architect from Afghanistan worked with E. S. a company director from Northumberland, to produce an excellent information pack for people seeking asylum to apply for scholarships to Higher Education in the UK and to be mentored in doing so. The first fruit of this programme was M himself obtaining a place on a Masters Degree at a major UK university and all the signs are that others will be following in his footsteps.

Another exemplar of real progress was A, who in a few months seeking asylum in Northumberland found his own volunteering opportunities doing administrative work with Girl Guiding UK and became a regular DJ at a local community radio station as well as working with our Tuesday Drop in to help people register for NHS, helped make NHS appointments, helped with translation, advocated for others to report crime to the Police, participated in meetings with partner agencies, and took part in training with City of Sanctuary online and in London. Much of this created a considerable profile right across the community, helping him gain the confidence to approach local business with proposals for new deals and better access for people seeking asylum.

NCOS Bikes is a fantastic enterprise driven by two volunteers, Bob originally from Birmingham and Victor originally from El Salvador. Bob (ably assisted by Alison) procures old bicycles from all around, Victor who qualified as a cycle mechanic at the local College, fixes them and NCOS supply a helmet, a lock and refer every rider to cycle training. In one year NCOS bikes have provided almost eighty, safe, refurbished bicycles for members of all ages.

These are just some examples of outstanding work from volunteers and there are many more. The more we raise our profile and talk about the excellent opportunities to work with people offered by NCOS the more we are finding real interest and enthusiasm among would-be volunteers, from wherever they originate.

9. Membership



Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS) is the only organisation in Northumberland with a focus upon the needs of people seeking asylum.

Despite all attempts to find further, more detailed information we are only made aware of the broadest information about people seeking asylum who are dispersed to the County.

We believe that there are approximately 1,000 people living in Northumberland who are seeking asylum and are refugees and that there are several hundred more people who have come here via Ukraine resettlement schemes.

We often find out about people who may benefit from our services when they turn up to our drop ins, or occasionally are referred by other agencies. During 2023-24 we began a membership scheme which is open to anyone who supports NCOS objects, whatever their status. Membership is free and conditional only on the supply of an email address which we can use to alert members to our work and activities.

We are gradually building an invaluable database, numbering several hundred people, but we know we have a long way to go to achieve full coverage of all people who might benefit from and contribute to the work of NCOS.

10. Regular Weekly Activities

Monday	10am - 12pm	Members Office Ashington
Tuesday	11am - 1pm	Drop in Ashington
Tuesday	2pm - 4 pm	Art Group Ashington
Thursday	2pm - 3 pm	Support Group Bedlington
Friday	11am - 12pm	Drop in Blyth
Saturday	1pm - 3pm	Drop in Blyth
Saturday	1pm - 3pm	Drop in Ashington

11. Events

NCOS celebrates people and encourages them to enjoy life in Northumberland. Warmth and hospitality is always reciprocal and people are often very keen to take part in opportunities to celebrate culture and their memories of home with food, art, music, clothes and generous sharing and giving.

There are lots of celebrations; one of the biggest is our annual International Day where we invite local people and their representatives to join in a real festival, featuring many of the almost 50 nationalities who are now represented in Northumberland.

Of course, Christmas is very important. This is the report of our volunteer Sarah Bredin Kemp of the 16th December 2023 Christmas Party.

In Ashington, we have developed an excellent partnership with the Salvation Army over a number of years. The Salvation Army ask for an anonymised list of children's ages and genders, then provide us with the appropriate gifts for the children.

Collating the list is a difficult undertaking for volunteers whilst information can become out-of-date quickly and new arrivals come often.

As well as gifts for 68 children, the Salvation Army also gave us a box of sensory toys for neurodivergent children and some additional donations for adults.

From our own donated stock, we added in extra gifts in recognition of the frequency of new families arriving after the deadline for Salvation Army gifts.

The gifts then went to Full Circle Food Project where they were wrapped by the Crafty Lunch group.

NCOS volunteers then sorted the gifts into family bags which would be given to parents/guardians to avoid children opening presents at the party (a hard-learned lesson from previous years!).



Adults were invited to take a 'lucky dip' gift, which were small parcels of toiletries and chocolate from donations and some (mainly men's) purchased from the party budget.

Eleven members offered to bring a dish to share. We offered a £10 contribution towards ingredients which was accepted by 8 people; 3 people wanted to make their contribution themselves. Full Circle Food Project donated 3 traditional yule logs.

We also provided additional food like crudites and dips, crisps, mince pies and drinks. Approximately 100 people attended the party. We organised music and games for the children with small prizes including pass-the-parcel and musical chairs. The amazing spread of food was thoroughly enjoyed by everybody.

Gifts were given out at the end of the party.

Northumberland is a wonderful place to live and NCOS members take good advantage of wonderful amenities such as Woodhorn Museum and the beaches and seaside of Newbiggin and Blyth throughout the year.

Summer is obviously the best time for a holiday programme and visits include both coast and countryside and the glories of Alnwick, Wallington, Craggside, Tynemouth as well as kind supporters who have made their own farms and gardens and amenities available to us. Special mention to the good folk of St Lawrence Warkworth, who have regularly invited people to drop in to the church from their visits around the County to take afternoon tea. One of our members recently housed in the west of the County not only enjoyed volunteering in the community shop but fell in love with the air and splendour of Hadrian's Wall and encourages people to visit.

12. Sport

The 'universal language of football' and sport in general – cricket, boxing, athletics is of huge value in bringing people and communities for together and for health and enjoyment and all-round well-being.

The NCOS walking football team makes a huge impact at the annual 'walking football' tournament held in Hirst Park, while football training goes on throughout the year and many of the young people from NCOS take part in local teams. Both Blyth and Newbiggin boxing clubs have welcomed men and women from NCOS and Blyth and Ashington cricket clubs, are warm and friendly places.

Tatiana took part in the Great North Run in September, completing the half marathon in just over 2 hours.



13. Partners

NCOS members' office and drop in activities are held at the church halls belonging to St Andrews Church, Ashington and St Cuthbert's Church, Blyth. Our new support group is held at the Northumberland County Council Family Hub in Bedlington and our new Art group takes place at Council for Voluntary Action (CVA).

Our Tuesday and Friday drop ins are attended by Northumberland County Council Refugees Service who take on new referrals who have gained 'leave to remain' and also by Mears Housing Association, Northumbria Police and by the British Red Cross. 2024-25 will also see a major partnership with NHS midwifery services develop and grow.

NCOS have just been invited to join the quarterly meetings of the Northumberland Adult and Children Safeguarding Partnership, we participate in the quarterly strategic forum chaired by Northumberland County Council Refugee services and we chair the monthly Northumberland Ukraine network which links members of the Ukrainian community, local support groups in Warkworth, Alnwick, Morpeth, Hexham and the County Council refugee manager in what has become a very positive partnership.

Both Blyth and Ashington Town Councils have exemplified a warm, inclusive community spirit at all times and have engaged our members in their activities, supported us financially and attended and participated in our events. Susan Dungworth, newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria made a point of attending an NCOS drop in very soon after her election in May 2024 and she remains in good contact with our work.

Thankfully, Northumberland was spared the disgraceful, racist riots which were fomented in various parts of England during August 2024. At a very worrying time, we were determined to carry on providing services to members and were enormously strengthened and heartened by the reassuring presence of community police officers. We were glad to be part of a weekly strategic meeting led by senior police officers and we will always be keen to take part in any such forums. While people have been very well received within warm Northumbrian communities, we are vigilant about racism and any sign of organised hate crime.

Northumberland is a warm welcoming place and there are fine, decent people in all its communities who go out of the way to support NCOS and our members in a host of ways, often displaying simple kindness through a thousand actions.

We are enormously grateful to everyone who cares and offers help.

14. Parliament

Ian Lavery MP for Ashington and Blyth and his staff are enormously helpful and supportive at an individual casework level, in responding to our advocacy on changes needed to the asylum system and in their support for NCOS as an organisation.



NCOS are particularly grateful to Ian and his team for their support of the regional group of Asylum organisations which were able to visit Parliament in November 2023 and then prepared for a second lobby late in 2024.

Two NCOS members have played key roles in the lobbying of MPs on asylum issues on behalf of thousands of others. It is wonderful to have the whole-hearted support of the local MP in our work, thus exemplifying to all members that we live in a democratic country in which everyone can participate in the making of law.

15. Destitution

One issue which we continue to pursue with Ian and indeed with the Home Secretary and Home Office Ministers is the disgraceful and absurd practice of removing housing and financial support from people as soon as their initial asylum claims fail and before they can make an appeal. At the end of the day if someone has no right to live in the UK then they can be removed in a humane and respectful way to their country of origin. However, the continuing high success rate at appeal, surely indicates that our current asylum system is quite inefficient in deciding asylum claims.

Whatever the merits of anyone's case there can be no justification for compounding everyone's problems by deliberately making people homeless and destitute. NCOS Safeguarding Policy declares that we do not accept any member being made homeless and destitute in Northumberland and we have always stretched our resources in such cases to pay for bed and breakfast accommodation and indeed to the point where some members have taken people into their own homes.

Such cases are often amongst an increasing number where people do not have any access to legal services and we are enormously grateful to colleagues from British Red Cross and North East Refugee Services (NERS) in helping to sustain people and their human and legal rights.

16. Continuing Contact

NCOS has worked with many hundreds of people over the past eight years. While many people wait many years for a resolution of their asylum case, we have found it extremely rare for someone to fail to be granted Leave to Remain and the refugee status which entitles them to work and to live anywhere in the UK.

Thereafter, many people choose to stay in Northumberland, others move away, often to live nearer to family and some stay in touch. During 2024, Anne Murray travelled the UK from Glasgow to Manchester, Nottingham, London and south east England to meet with ex NCOS people and to hear about their experiences.

No doubt there'll eventually be a book, but in the meantime we can report it was a joyous experience and Anne found people who were doing well, who looked so much better when freed from the pressures of seeking asylum and who are so committed to their future in the UK that they immediately set about becoming British Citizens, once they have been here for 5 years.

17. Looking Forward

NCOS is very busy and in April 2025 looking back on the year from October 1st 2023 – September 2024 it already seems a long time ago.

By October 1st 2026 NCOS will be ten years old and that will be cause for another celebration. By then perhaps we will have our new base, our new worker and more and more new people taking NCOS forward.

It seems unlikely that the world will be taking real steps to end the war, genocide, oppression, climate degradation and poverty which have created 100 million refugees across the globe. Hopefully, the United Kingdom will have become a kinder, more welcoming place for all who need to come here.

Whatever happens, Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS) will undoubtedly carry on.



18. Thank You


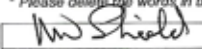
Many people help anonymously or so quietly that we never catch their names, so many people assist us that it's inevitable that some may be missed out. Please let our thanks to the good people and organisations identified here, stand as a very big gesture of gratitude to you all.

Ashington Town Council, Blyth Town Council, Ian Lavery M.P. and his team, Northumberland CVA, British Red Cross, North East Refugee Services (NERS), Ashington and Bedlington Family Hubs, The Bothy, St Andrews Church, St Cuthbert's Church, Ashington, Blyth Rotary Club, Bedlington and Blyth Food Banks, Heart of Blyth co-ordinator Adeline Keogh, Empire School of Boxing, Newcastle Utd Foundation, Iryna Zhomer, Northumberland Homes for Ukraine Network, Northumberland County Council refugee and housing teams, social prescribers from medical practices in Blyth and Ashington, Jane Bassam – Rainbow House, Learn English Together (LET), Northumberland College, Northumberland County Council training and ESOL teams, Rowan Brown and team at Woodhorn Museum.



19. Finance

Thank you very much to every individual and every organisation who have supported our work with your donations. NCOS is entirely funded through grants and donations and nothing could have been achieved without your generous support.

Section A		Independent Examiner's Report	
	CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Independent examiner's report on the accounts	
Report to the trustees/ members of	County Name NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY		
On accounts for the year ended	30 SEPTEMBER 2024	Charity no (if any)	1185663
Set out on pages	<small>(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)</small>		
	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 those disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:	24/3/24
Name:	MALCOLM W SHIELDS		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCMA		
Address:	18 WATERSHAUGH ROAD WAREWORTH MORPETH NE 45 0TX		

Northumberland County of Sanctuary



Income and Expenditure account Year to 30th September 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Restricted Funds				
Donations	10,060		960	
Grants	3,607		10,053	
		13,667		11,013
Unrestricted Funds	4,493		5,040	
		4,493		5,040
Total Income Received		<u>18,160</u>		<u>16,053</u>
Expenditure				
Charities Activities- Restricted	13,198		28,750	
Charitable Activities	9,505		4,174	
Total Expenditure Incurred		<u>22,703</u>		<u>32,924</u>
Net Income/(Expenditure)				
Restricted	469		(17,737)	
Unrestricted	(5,011)		866	
		(4,542)		(16,871)
Funds Brought Forward		30,003		46,874
Funds Carried Forward		25,461		30,003

Northumberland County of Sanctuary



Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	25,461	30,003
Funds of the Charity		
Restricted Funds ¹	22,276	21,806
Unrestricted Funds	3,185	8,196
Total Funds	<u>25,461</u>	<u>30,002</u>
Restricted Funds as at 30 September		
Shoe Fund	582	608
Women's Group Fund	1,591	1,591
Summer Visits Fund	-	43
Warkworth Ukraine Refugee Funds	-	-
Blyth Drop In	3,125	
Ashington Drop In	1,723	
P&G Fund	2,489	
Sir Jamed Knott Trust	0	647
NAP Welcoming Grant	2,660	3,925
Lottery Funding	4,801	4,881
St Hilda Grant	267	1,413
International Day	-	567
Rise North East (Blyth Sports Project)	-	1,348
Homes of Northumberland	-	395
Dicksn Fund (Duke of Edinburgh Project)	240	240
Barbour Fund	-	-
Book Club	1,797	1,797
Newcastle City Council Heritage Fund	-	1
Youth Club	0	4,350
Community Foundation	3,000	-
Total Restricted Fund	<u>22,276</u>	<u>21,806</u>

NCOS – Appreciation 2.

As a refugee myself, I want to thank NCOS personally for your compassion, understanding, and tireless advocacy for people like me.

The journey of a refugee is never easy, but having people like you who stand up for our rights and highlight our struggles makes a tremendous difference. Your work and dedication give hope to many of us, reminding us that kindness and humanity still prevail.

I am one of the many who have received support and opportunities in this country, and I am forever grateful. I just want to express my appreciation for everything you do.

Wishing you all the best and thank you again for being a voice for those who need it most.



Join us to celebrate
Refugee Week 2024

When:

11 am – 1 pm

On Tuesday 18/06/2024

Address:

St Andrew Church Hall

Ashington



Craft Activities and refreshments will be provided.



NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales - Charity number 1185663

Accounts

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY (NCOS)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
October 2022 – September 2023



Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS), 82 Front Street, Newbiggin by the Sea NE64 6QD. northumberlandsanctuary@gmail.com.

Registered Charity 1185663

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Abbreviations

NCOS. = Northumberland County of Sanctuary; PSS = Person(s) seeking sanctuary (asylum); LTR = people with leave to remain; SU = service user; RC = Red Cross. LE = Language Expert; NCC = Northumberland County Council; COS = City of Sanctuary.

About Northumberland County of Sanctuary

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY (NCOS) was founded in December 2016 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees, in November 2019. NCOS is governed by a Charity Commission Foundation Model Constitution. It is a Group of the national organisation City of Sanctuary.

1. OBJECTS.

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, (including convention refugees, refugee communities, people with leave to remain, asylum seekers and ex-detainees), socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and/or co-ordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Northumberland by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services,
3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

2. GOVERNANCE.

THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE.

The governance of NCoS is in the hands of the Board of Trustees. This meets ten times a year regularly. The Trustees co-opt some other volunteers onto the Board, with a full role of participation except for those matters which are, by the Constitution, reserved for Trustees. The Board appoints an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer who may call upon other members as necessary from time to time, to undertake the day to day governance of NCoS and make essential and urgent decisions. The Executive reports to each Board meeting. The minutes are available for any who would like to see them, on request. Several members of the Board are PSS or people with LTR, including the Chair and the Treasurer.

THE CHAIR, SECRETARY AND TREASURER.

Murtala Touray has continued to be the Chair and Hilton Dawson Secretary. Muhammad Virk has taken over as Treasurer.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

This report contains information that brings the picture of NCOS up to the time of writing, for the Annual General Meeting to be held on 20th April 2024. Although the accounts are those for 2022-2023, does not seem sensible to cut information six months ago as much has happened since then.

3. PREFACE.

Last year, Murtala Touray, the Chair, finished his report by saying:

In 2023, we are looking forward to build our new 3-year strategic plan to ensure NCOS grows from strength to strength. We have started this journey with an Away Day in March to assess our current state and desired goal. As we start this journey, we will be calling on our parent organisation, the City of Sanctuary and other partners as well as funders for their invaluable material, moral and financial support.

This report reflects those words. The Away Day in March 2023 was a very significant day for NCOS. It was led strongly by Julian Prior, to whom we are most grateful, in a way which gave us no means of escape, thus setting the path for our development. If progress seemed rather tardy at first that is because it meant such a change of gear for the organisation. We knew it was essential, but in the face of such a large task with our with our then very small resources, we might call to mind the prayer of the Breton Fisherman, *O God, your sea is so great and I am so small....*

But that is how the world is, and the migration situation within it. Refugee and asylum seeker numbers world-wide are in tens of millions. Of those there were 67,337 asylum applications in the UK in 2023 of whom a portion have been sent to Northumberland. It is with these people that we put our effort and try to make it as effective as it may be.

4. FROM THE CHAIR.

Another year to reflect on our work as we celebrate the invaluable contributions of our volunteers who are the cornerstone of this organisation. As a befitting tribute of our volunteers, this year's AGM is dedicated to celebrating our volunteers and the good work of volunteering. As I mentioned in our newly developed Handbook for Volunteers, without the volunteers this organisation will literally collapse at the great expense of our service users and larger community. I would like to start by thanking profusely all our volunteers who are from diverse backgrounds including our service users.

With our meagre resources, NCOS did a lot of work in the past year. The organisation was able to undertake many interventions to cater for our service users as well as to improve the policy of the government to enable a welcoming environment for people in search of sanctuary in the UK. Key highlight include a partnership with Jamie Sinclair to exhibit his film 'Hjem' at the Woodhorn Museum to considerable public acclaim. Its success can be measured by the excellent people who have been so inspired by the film that they have now become excellent volunteers with NCOS.

NCOS was also instrumental in the organisation of a parliamentary lobby to promote a positive message about the need for a fair system of asylum. The lobby in Parliament, promoted by Ian Lavery MP with an Early Day Motion was a great success. (*See below for more details*). This work is continuing ahead of the coming General Election. In addition, our International Day, that brings together the local community and our services users, was a success with Ian Lavery and Mayor amongst other dignitaries in attendance. This annual event celebrates our differences and diversity as well as our common humanity in search of a peaceful co-existence.

Sadly, we had to discontinue our Youth Club, but we are looking at ways of revamping it, when funds permit.

In the year ahead, we are working towards raising substantial amount of funds that will afford us a rented location of our own, where we will be able to provide regular consultation services every day of the week. This work has begun with the determination to ensure we are successful in our funding bid.

I would like to thank all our donors as well as individuals including some members of our board of trustees who have made very generous donations to enable the continuation of our vital services.

As you delve into this report, let's continue to celebrate our volunteers and volunteering. Every little effort goes a long way in making this world a better place for us all regardless of who we are and where we are from .

Murtala Touray

5. FROM THE SECRETARY.

The great strength of NCOS is the independence and commitment of our volunteers underpinned by the engagement of people with experience of seeking asylum.

As Secretary of NCOS during 2024-25 I have tried to build on this unique quality through regular meetings & communication with key partners, writing letters of support on behalf of service users and promoting some new models of practice to

meet people's needs. I have been working with regional support groups to promote the need for a fair asylum system to politicians of all parties.

As Volunteer Co-ordinator, I am delighted that we have recruited 14 new volunteers and generally tried to offer better support through volunteers meetings, some training and the forthcoming volunteer handbook. Our 30% increase in the number of volunteers has taken us to 43 people. We now need to recruit another 50% more volunteers to continue to improve our offer to the people whom we serve. Increasingly we are drawing upon people with asylum experience in our volunteer recruitment. This emphasises the qualities of the people with whom we are working and underlines how much they have to offer to Northumberland communities.

The priority for 2024 – 25 must be the development of a 'Welcome' project using a range of individual and group support to ensure that everyone who arrives in Northumberland receives a very warm welcome and a comprehensive introduction to their new communities.

I am more than ever convinced of the huge need for NCOS. Thankfully, I have never been more confident of our ability to serve people well and make a real difference.

Hilton Dawson

6. HILARY HODGSON.

It was with great sadness that we received the news that Hilary had died, very suddenly. She was the head of the Red Cross in Newcastle and Northumberland and was a tremendous help to NCOS, enabling and developing the key relationship between the two organisations. Hundreds of people seeking asylum will be grateful for her work in helping them through the asylum process. May she rest in peace.

7. HJEM.

Hjem is a documentary film about Ashington, produced by Jamie Sinclair, Ashington born and bred. It features the work of NCOS most empathetically. It was shown for a season at Woodhorn Museum and NCOS is most grateful both to Jamie and the Museum.

8. PARLIAMENTARY LOBBY.

A discussion about the need to promote a positive message about the need for a fair system of asylum at AGM 2023 led to a Saturday afternoon workshop at St Andrews, liaison with Ian Lavery MP & his team & the establishment of a regional group. Zara Galaeva worked with the regional group & took a very active part in their very successful lobby in Parliament, promoted by Ian Lavery MP with his Early Day Motion. The wording of the motion may be obtained from the secretary.

9. DEVELOPMENT.

As noted above, the direction of NCOS development since the last AGM was given by the Away Day in March 2023. The key findings from this were:

1. A comprehensive fundraising strategy needs to be implemented urgently.
2. Trustees must decide whether or not to invest in a professionally developed funding bid to employ a paid member of staff to lead NCoS.
3. Urgently consult with people seeking sanctuary in Northumberland to ascertain what they would like from NCoS.
4. Negotiate with Mears and Northumberland County Council to improve working practices to deliver actual joined up services.
5. A training programme for volunteers and trustees must be rolled out.
6. Closer working arrangements with other agencies to support the well being of service users.

Of these, the one that has been least developed, for various somewhat complex reasons, is the first. It has not been forgotten and is being implemented but other matters have had to take priority. Number 2 has been agreed, for when an adequate infrastructure is in place. 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all well under way, with positive progress.

No, 3 is being well practised at the drop-ins, though NCOS does wish, strongly, to find more effective ways of communicating with a wide number of people who may be at the drop-ins only rarely.

No. 4 has really taken off, as is outlined in the Secretary's report above.

There is a horrible cliché, "work in progress" (often used as an excuse) but this development really is ongoing with difficulties being tackled.. It has to be; once NCOS is satisfied it will be dead.

10 . VOLUNTEERING.

All who are active within NCOS are volunteers (we would not exist without them) and they carry out a multiplicity of roles. Volunteers meet together every three months for discussion, the development of awareness, necessary training, meeting partner agencies, sociability and networking. Here are three pieces written by volunteers.

NCOS Volunteering and me

NCOS is an amazing team of people who are making migrants & refugees welcome in Northumberland. I was introduced to their existence by a post on Facebook & started to volunteer at the Saturday Drop-in. I have been thoroughly impressed by the warmth of the people who volunteer in this and the warmth of the response from those we welcome.

Some of the youngsters who have arrived in the UK without their families are particularly hard hit so the work that Hilton and I have done with Rachel Anderson, at Northumberland College, has helped them to be involved in social and sporting activities. I hope that this will enable them to feel more at home and to integrate with their local communities. I look forward to watching their progress.

It has meant so much.

I've been volunteering with NCOS since 2018 when I was 24. At the time, I struggled with various mental health issues which impacted my confidence and self-esteem – I didn't imagine that I would ever have much significance.

The impact of being part of this community has been transformational for me. Over the last 6 years, I have met hundreds and hundreds of people from around the world. The media would have us believe that people seeking asylum are either threatening opportunists or pitiful victims. While the former sells newspapers, charities often need to illicit sympathy for their cause and so they produce imagery of helplessness, suffering and pain. Neither of these representations have much to do with the human beings we have met.

The title of 'asylum seeker' is the only thing in common amongst a host of people, each with a completely unique: story, background, perspective, sense of humour, journey, favourite film, family, dream, talent, ambition, childhood, bravery, weakness, taste in music, experience of loss, experience of love...

To be part of NCOS is to be part of a sharing network of support, compassion and welcome for beneficiaries and volunteers alike. While the circumstances of people's arrival is horrendous, it is a privilege to be part of so many people's journeys.

Whether Northumberland becomes their home or whether this is one stop on the road, we're here to soften the landing and help people find their footing again.

Although it wasn't my goal, my career has benefited immensely from my volunteering experience. When I started volunteering, I was a support worker (a job I enjoyed but I didn't plan to stay forever); since joining NCOS I've been given amazing opportunities to access training and learn how charity operates, as well as taking a lead on drop-ins and projects. Through getting to know so many people, it's impossible to avoid learning new depths of knowledge, compassion, inclusion and respect. Thanks to these experiences, I'm now managing a local charity where I can practice all these things I've learned, to support and advocate for the community on a higher level.

When I first started, I didn't think I would ever have significance. Through being here and being part of a much bigger picture, I can see clearly that we all have significance in a community – we all depend on each other, celebrate together and learn from each other. I'm so grateful to be a piece of this community and for every single person I've met through NCOS.

My hope is that everyone that we welcome at NCOS will settle, find peace and be happy in the UK. Every one of them has so much to offer and I hope that they are given the opportunity to do so. I will work to help them in any way that I can.

I'm an asylum seeker from Russia.

I joined NCoS first time as a service user six years ago when I just arrived in Ashington. NCOS is everything to me: my moral and material support, my friends, my family and my teachers. I can't really remember when officially I became a volunteer, I feel like I've always been part of this wonderful community and cannot imagine myself without all of you. NCOS is doing an amazing work supporting those who are here temporarily or came up to this area to start their new lives from scratch. Having someone in the new area who is warmly welcoming you when you don't speak English, don't know how people live here, not familiar with the culture, when everything is different from where you came from is extremely important. When I joined NCOS and started to not just take but also to give something back I began to be a little bit better version of me and feel myself useful which is very important for any human being. Positive feelings help a person to cope with difficult situations and being surrounded by such strong, kind and enthusiastic people helps me to find peace of mind and balance and to understand the real values of life. I believe that being kind and tolerant is in British people genesis. Recent and past history provide the best evidence for this. You light up the souls of those you help and I just want that light to go through me and also make someone's soul a little bit lighter.

Thank you 🙏.

11. ACTIVITIES.

Descriptions of activities are written by volunteers involved.

In general:

NCOS offer :

Weekly drop-in meetings

Ashington on Tuesday 11-1 Saturday 1-4

Blyth on Tuesday 10-11 Saturday 1-3

Drop-in Cramlington, Church of the Nazarene, 2.00pm Thursday

These meetings provide good links with key partners from Red Cross, County Council, Mears & Northumbria Police & and whole range of practical & very friendly support.

We have weekly football training in Ashington & Blyth & support people into a huge variety of sporting activities

We hold an annual international festival to celebrate the countries & cultures from where people have come, to which we welcome the local community to join in.

We are currently developing art classes run by service users for the benefit of all.

We make contact with and welcome people who have newly arrived in Northumberland & are currently preparing for a specific weekly welcome meeting & a programme of home visits.

We are wholly run by volunteers & we are recruiting every month to our lively & expanding volunteer team. All volunteer meetings are held every 3 months & provide a great opportunity to share new ideas for development.

NCOS is run by trustees & people elected to our Board at our Annual AGM. The Board meets monthly, people with asylum experience are well represented & we review all aspects of our work & promote NCOS development. Board members keep a close eye on our advocacy work on behalf of individual service users & their families.

In particular.

Drop-ins. These continue to be held twice a week in both Ashington and Blyth. They continue to be our most valuable way of keeping contact and they are shown to be most valuable to our SUs.

Ashington. Tuesday. Sarah Greaves writes:

I have wanted to work with refugees and asylum seekers for many years, and in March 2022 my husband Andrew and I responded to the “Homes for Ukraine” project, and were put in touch with NCOS.

It was Ben and Sarah who responded to us, and asked whether we would be willing to come and join the team working with the Non Ukrainian asylum seekers, who as we know were not receiving the level of support from the government that the Ukrainian refugees – very justly- were.

In September 2022 we did the training to begin volunteering delivered and I believe written by Sarah BK that face to face training in a group was really valuable- it was very comprehensive and I have relied on it since.

I started to support Anne Murray with the Tuesday drop-in in November I think, but took over as organiser in April last year when she retired from that role. The main focus of the drop-in is to offer a welcome to those who come, as well as signposting to other services – and it is a place where people come to socialise and relax with each other.

It is also a time and place where the formal services working with asylum seekers and refugees come and can be accessed face to face, to offer advice and support. I think the personal human element here is fundamental to what we do.

Ashington is having to accommodate really significant numbers of new comers, and is itself offering a typical North Eastern welcome. I am not local to Ashington, and am so encouraged by the warmth and kindness of local people. I love working with our growing team at the drop-in, which combines “indigenous” Northumbrians with our service users, who bring so much ability and energy to their work with us.

I also really enjoy developing relationships with other agencies – there are lots of local organisations we are developing links with, so as to integrate our asylum seekers into the local community.

Having said that, we are having to confront real suffering and trauma. So this is not easy work. When it is very busy I can feel quite overwhelmed. But we are all working together as a team, and the relationships with the people we support, and each other, are massively sustaining. When I am at the drop-in I feel really alive...this is about being human.

Sarah Greaves.

Ashington, Saturday. Nicole Dumes writes:

We typically have between 30-40 attendees of all ages at Saturday drop-ins. The Saturday drop-in's most basic function is to provide a safe and welcoming space for asylum seekers to use the available Wi-Fi to connect with friends and family. It's also a social gathering, where people can play the games we have made available, make art, and browse our current donations for anything they may need. We have a wish list of items that people are hoping for that ranges from prams and cookware to bicycles and sewing machines.

Most of the needs of asylum seekers are simple and straightforward. Their housing doesn't provide internet, which they need to communicate with solicitors, to study English, and to provide access to services. We have been signposting and assisting those who need it to have a free SIM card from the National Databank, and are in the process of applying for our own supply to more efficiently serve our service users. Some people have limited right to work and are very motivated to find employment in the care sector, and we have assisted them with job applications, creating CVs, and coaching in preparation for interviews, as well as signposting to job agencies and the NCVA for volunteer positions to further improve their CVs.

It's my hope that in the coming year we can develop better communication and organisation to make the Saturday drop-in more enriching for everyone and to empower service users to organise activities they want to participate in.

Blyth. John Stenhouse writes:

It's been a significant year for NCOS in Blyth. Linda Tooby who had been running the weekly drop-in from its inception as well as being the Red Cross presence, moved away from the area when her husband Tony retired in October. We wish them well in their new home in Humberside. Another volunteer had to leave due to health reasons. They are a huge miss.

Despite this, the amount of support to those living in the Blyth area has developed further. The ESOL provision has improved dramatically with over 100 attending classes in Blyth provided by the County Council Learning and Skills Department, and a significant number travelling to Newcastle College. This has had a knock-on effect with attendance at the Tuesday drop-ins therefore an additional session has been introduced on Saturday afternoons. Generous funding to enable this has been received from Blyth Rotary Club, Rainbow House and a personal donation from a hard working volunteer. We are working to obtain sustainable support for the future.

Cramlington.

A Thursday afternoon drop-in is held at the Church of the Nazarene.

Other questions and problems are dealt with by the volunteers attending and clothing and household items are available.. Another extremely useful aspect of these events is that PSSs who may feel isolated and lonely have the opportunity to meet others and form friendships. They are also a way of consulting and finding out what SUs feel they need.

NCOS partnership with the Red Cross remains a cornerstone of our existence. The Red Cross have a worker assigned to NCOS needs. Since Linda moved away, we have had a bit of a struggle to maintain the quality of the connection, but that is now greatly improving. Zara Galaeva has qualified as a Red Cross volunteer, so handles things from the Ashington end. Ellen Touray has now been taken on as a Red Cross worker, for which we congratulate her.

As well as the Red Cross, NCOS also has good links with NERS, WERS and Action Foundation, and the North East Migration Partnership (NEMP) who provide expert additional support. A future step may be to enable some volunteers to train for OISC qualifications.

New Arrivals Pathway.

This programme, of which NCOS is a part, is an invaluable initiative to improve the welcome of PSSs sent to the north east. For various reasons, with NCOS it has been slow to get going. However, steps have been, and are continuing to be, taken to overcome the obstacles and enable this to grow into a major aspect of NCOS' work.

English Language Learning.

We have kept our connection with Northumberland College, which now has expanded ESOL programmes to Blyth, where over a hundred PSSs take part. For new arrivals not yet allowed to register with the College, the **LET** (Learn English Together) programme continues in Ashington on Thursdays. This is not an NCOS run programme.

Sports. NCOS has continued to help fund people, especially youngsters, with sports equipment and club fees. Football is a great way to integrate and, in Blyth, some people have contributed spectacularly to cricket teams.

Ashington sport 2023 – Report of Daniel Meija

NCOS has supported sport to ensure the physical and mental health of asylum seekers and refugees in and around Ashington.

Over the last 18 months, we have continued to support the Ashington football team, signing a partnership with Get Onside to provide financial and logistical support from a team of sports professionals. During these months, 25 pairs of indoor and outdoor football boots have been delivered and the Ashington Leisure Centre and Newbiggin Sport and Community Centre sports hall has been hired for the football team so that during the autumn and winter months the NCOS football team can continue to play. With this support we have managed to have an average attendance of 15 to 18 players of different nationalities.

Also, in the month of October 2023, the pilot scheme of fitness classes for NCOS women in Ashington was launched. Unfortunately, the weather conditions were not suitable for the women to attend the fitness classes, so we will try to start the project again in the summer of 2024.

Finally, over the next 3 years the NCOS sports coordination will be looking to implement new sports projects for the women and men asylum seekers and refugees settled in and around Ashington.

From Blyth John writes:

It has been a good year for sports and fitness activities in Blyth. Empire School of Boxing run exercise sessions each week day with additional sessions for those with mobility problems and mental health conditions. Our football team has trained weekly thanks to the funding we were granted from RISE. Our coach Bilal moved to Glasgow for work after being granted leave to remain however Newcastle United Foundation have stepped in to keep the team going. All of these activities were made possible through the Heart of Blyth coordinator Ade Keogh who works tirelessly to support NCOS. The Saturday drop-in now has a table tennis table, a caron board and a pool table to keep people occupied as well as the usual board games, toys and activities.

NCOS and Ukrainians.

NCOS helped set up and chair the network of local groups who have supported more than 500 families accommodated in Northumberland under the various homes for Ukraine initiatives.

We meet every month with the excellent Di Munro from Northumberland County Council & we have been pro-active in working with local MPs & various agencies over a whole range of issues.

The response of Ukrainian people, hundreds of Northumbrian families who have provided them with a home & communities all over the County who have welcomed them has been magnificent. Another superb initiative to send aid from Northumberland to people living & defending their Country on the front line is in operation every month.

The Ukraine support schemes have allowed people to work & Ukrainian people have worked extremely hard to the benefit of the community & themselves. In some ways this is a model for the way that the U.K. Government should treat all people fleeing war & genocide & oppression from all corners of the world.

12. EVENTS.

Trips. During the summer it was again possible to organise several trips to places in the County, including a farm and beach visits.

Clothing and household goods. NCOS has continued to receive and give these necessities as opportunity affords.

Bicycle Training. As PSS have acquired donated bicycles, we have been able, through some generous donations, to recommend them to Cycle with Jan, for coaching on cycling safely in Britain.

ACTIVITY OF A MORE GENERAL SORT.

Blyth. Activity in Blyth is both similar and different from that centred in Ashington. The following report has been written.

The opportunity to participate in activities has increased thanks to the Heart of Blyth project (a Northumberland County Council Health Improvement initiative) which has linked us with many organisations in the town including the Blyth Resource and

Initiative Centre (BRIC) which provides free SIM cards, lunches and training opportunities, Blyth CVA who are assisting NCOS develop funding know how, Forget me Not community hub which many of our service users access particularly after gaining leave to remain, Blyth Town Council who've donated bikes, Bede Academy (the only School of Sanctuary in Northumberland), who are keen to work with us on Saturdays to serve multicultural food. There are many others we have wonderful relationships with who are very supportive of our work. Mears and the County Council Housing team provide a presence most Tuesdays and there's an occasional visit from Northumbria Police, NHS, local school staff and the MPs office all of which are valuable contributions.

It has been a good year for sports and fitness activities in Blyth. Empire School of Boxing run exercise sessions each week day with additional sessions for those with mobility problems and mental health conditions. Our football team has trained weekly thanks to the funding we were granted from RISE. Our coach Bilal moved to Glasgow for work after being granted leave to remain however Newcastle United Foundation have stepped in to keep the team going. All of these activities were made possible through the Heart of Blyth coordinator Ade Keogh who works tirelessly to support NCOS. The Saturday drop-in now has a table tennis table, a caron board and a pool table to keep people occupied as well as the usual board games, toys and activities.

A new venture we are working with is Tales Without Borders. It's a very comfortable reading room containing books written by black, Asian and minority ethnic authors. It's run by a former refugee who has created a welcoming space to encourage people to gather together and share the enjoyment of reading books by people from their culture. We already have a service user volunteering there.

Much of our work is outside the drop-in sessions and there's usually something that needs doing most days of the week. We could do with a couple of extra volunteers to help spread the load.

From the far West of the County.

Wendy Bond writes:

While most asylum seekers are housed in the south east of the County, some families find themselves in the far west, in a rural setting close to Hadrian's Wall. Here they are made welcome by one of our trustees and a substantial group of friends who have helped to settle the youngsters into college courses in Carlisle and the local schools, and even a local women's football team! A local landlord went out of his way to make sure one family could settle into a home when they were granted leave to remain and furniture was lent and donated to make it comfortable. Local churches and activity groups welcome them in and they invite new friends to celebrate all their birthdays together. Best of all, they can now volunteer as full members of the community.

Youth Club.

As reported by the Chair, the trustees had to take the hard decision to close the Youth Club, in spite of the hard feelings that were entailed. During its time, the leader, volunteer Ken Cochrane, was ably assisted by teenagers from the refugee community who now have leave to remain. During its existence members had Received First Aid Training, Decided on their logo, and chose their activities, which included both leisure activities and serious learning about human rights. They

looked at topical issues that divide humanity and how these may be tackled. A key event here was taking part in the Holocaust Memorial Day at County Hall. They worked together as a cohesive democratic team, learning what that entailed.

13. IN GENERAL

Much of what goes on cannot really be categorised. We are, at present, an entirely voluntary organisation and much is done by so many people helping in many ways.

Support is given to SUs within our resources as needs become clear, but especially prominent in the memory are times of crisis. Racist or xenophobic incidents (see below) are one example. These are much fewer than they were at one time, but do still occur. We always inform the police and the Home Office. We also work with Mears if people need to move.

On the whole, people in Ashington and Blyth have been welcoming and warm.

FUNDING.

Much of NCOS' funding has come from very generous individuals and local organisations, to whom we are enormously grateful. Larger donations have come from grant giving bodies, as listed in the accounts and we are, of course equally grateful to them.

Now, funding bids for the future are in the final stages of preparation. Following the strategic review in March 2023 facilitated by Julian Prior, Helen Crowe, Peter Wood, Muhammad Virk and John Stenhouse worked on a draft to provide possible funders with evidence about our ability to deliver successful projects. Katherine Williams, a freelance consultant, was engaged to forge the ideas and information into a cohesive document. Her valuable expertise is reflected in the latest draft. Once the budget forecast for the next 3 years is approved we can apply for appropriate grants with increased confidence.

14. RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

We are part of the **Northumberland County Council's** coordinating body, and value this and the help available.

The Northumberland Council for Voluntary Action (NCVA) has been most helpful on many occasions.

We ask advice from other groups working in the sector, particularly locally, and are grateful to **Action Foundation, WERS, NERS and NEMP** for great cooperation and friendship. We have looked farther afield at times, as well.

Ian Lavery, the MP for Wansbeck has been very helpful indeed.

NCOS is a member of City of Sanctuary. This is a nationwide organisation, whose members are independent groups or individuals who subscribe to CoS aim, which is to create welcome, everywhere in the UK, for people seeking asylum, and

for those granted leave to remain. It is very helpful in keeping us informed and in bringing us together with other CoS members in the North East.

We subscribe to **Asylum Matters**, which keeps us up dated on a huge amount of activity in the refugee charity sector and makes us aware of government policy, and more. It is important and, more than useful, providing us with vital information.

15. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT.

NCOS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are the trustees. It is governed by Constitution based on the Charity Commission's Foundation Model.

TRUSTEES at 31st March 2024:

Wendy Bond
Hilton Dawson
Zara Galaeva
Elena Kassis
John Stenhouse
Murtala Touray

The maximum number of trustees is twelve.

The officers of the charity are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. They are appointed at a meeting of the trustees. Apart from the Chair, the other officers do not have to be trustees.

Management.

As outlined at the beginning of this report.

Policies.

NCOS has policies covering: Code of Conduct; Confidentiality; Cycling; DBS checking; Equality and Diversity; Financial Control; Grievance; Health and Safety and Safeguarding. These have all been approved and updated. They may be seen on request to the Secretary.

16. THANK YOU.

NCOS is very, very grateful for all the help it has received since its inauguration. Much of this has been financial, both private giving and from trusts and organisations, without which NCOS could not have continued. However, much else has come in voluntary, sometimes unsought and unexpected, help from people who have raised funds or provided help in all sorts of ways, which has made a tremendous difference to our effectiveness. We are not only talking finance, but also friendliness and practical help in all sorts of ways. Very few names have been mentioned in compiling this report, because there are so many who deserve to be mentioned and it would not be fair to leave anyone out. However, we do want to mention:

The Northumberland Council for Voluntary Action (NCVA),
Ashington Town Council,

Northumberland County Council,
Community Police,
The Salvation Army,
Full Circle Food,
The Wardens of St. Andrew's Church. We are very sad that Christine Simpson,
who took enormous trouble to welcome us, died very recently.
Woodhorn Museum,
The Empire School of Boxing,
Blyth Rotary Club,
Blyth CVA,
BRIC,
Forget me Not Community Centre,
Blyth Town Council,
St Cuthbert's Church,
Ade Keogh, the Heart of Blyth Coordinator.
*If any organisation has been omitted, please forgive the inadequacy of the compiler
of this report.*

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH INDEED

<https://www.ncos.org.uk/>
<https://northumberland.cityofsanctuary.org>

17. STATISTICS

Owing to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) it is not possible to publish detailed statistics of SUs. What we can say is that recent figures show that there are over 490 SUs in Northumberland. They come from Afghanistan, Albania, China, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Turkey amongst others. There may well be other more recent arrivals from the countries who are not in this count.

There are also a number of people who have received leave to remain and have stayed in the area.

ACCOUNTS



Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Registered Charity no: 1185663

***Financial Statements
for the period ending
30th September 2023***

Northumberland County of Sanctuary Independent Examiners Report

I have examined the accounts of the charity for the year ending 30th September 2023 as set out page 1 and 2 and the supporting document on which the accounts are based.

I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in the course of my examination which would give me cause to believe in any material respect that:

- a) Proper accounting records have not been kept
- b) These financial statements do not accord with those records
- c) The Trustee have not met their obligations in respect of financial record keeping.

I have no other concern in connection with the examination of these accounts which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of these financial statements to be reached.

Malcolm Shield - FCMA
18 Watershaugh Road
Workworth
Morpeth
14 April 14, 2024

Income and Expenditure account

Year to 30th September 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Restricted Funds				
Donations	9,134		7,167	
Grants	41,422		40,034	
		<u>50,556</u>		<u>47,201</u>
Unrestricted Funds	12,371		11,235	
		12,371		
Total Income Received		62,927		58,436
Expenditure				
Charities Activities- Restricted	28,750		13,377	
Charitable Activities	4,174		9,082	
Total Expenditure Incurred		<u>32,924</u>		<u>22,459</u>
Net Result for the Year				
Restricted	21,806		33,824	
Unrestricted	8,196		2,153	
		30,003		35,977

Balance Sheet

as at 30th September 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	30,003	46,875
Funds of the Charity		
Restricted Funds ¹	21,806	39,543
Unrestricted Funds	8,196	7,332
Total Funds	<u>30,003</u>	<u>46,875</u>

Restricted Funds as at 30th September

Shoe Fund	608	1,085
Women's Group Fund	1,591	1,597
Summer Visits Fund	43	43
Warkworth Ukraine Refugee Funds	-	5,450
Sir James Knott Trust	647	4,521
NAP Welcoming Grant	3,925	4,164
Lottery Funding	4,881	7,129
St Hilda Grant	1,413	2,617
International Day	567	4,360
Rise North East (Blyth Sports Project)	1,348	4,697
Homes of Northumberland	395	395
Dickson Fund (Duke of Edinburgh Project)	240	240
Barbour Fund	-	486
Book Club	1,797	1,877
Newcastle City Council Heritage Fund	1	883
Youth Club	4,350	-
Total Restricted	<u>21,806</u>	<u>39,544</u>

Northumberland County of Sanctuary



Income and Expenditure account

Year to 30th September 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Restricted Funds				
Donations		960		7,167
Grants		10,053		40,034
		<u>11,013</u>		<u>47,201</u>
Unrestricted Funds		5,040		11,235
		5,040		
Total Income Received		<u>16,052</u>		<u>58,436</u>
Expenditure				
Charities Activities- Restricted		28,750		13,377
Charitable Activities		4,174		9,082
Total Expenditure Incurred		<u>32,924</u>		<u>22,459</u>
Net Income/(Expenditure)				
Restricted		(17,737)		33,824
Unrestricted		865		2,153
		(16,872)		35,977
Funds Brought Forward		46,875		10,897
Funds Carried Forward		30,003		46,874



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Charity Name NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

On accounts for the year ended

30 SEPTEMBER 2023 REVISION

Charity no (if any) 1185663

Set out on pages

(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: [Signature]

Date: 24/3/25

Name: MALCOLM W SHIELD

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

FCMA

Address:

18 WATERSHAUGH ROAD
WARKWORTH
MORPETH NE65 0TX

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales - Charity number 1185663

Accounts

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY (NCOS)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD October 2021 – September 2022

Abbreviations: NCOS. = Northumberland County of Sanctuary; PSA = Person(s) seeking asylum; LTR = people with leave to remain; SU = service user; RC = Red Cross. LE = Language Expert; NCC = Northumberland County Council; COS = City of Sanctuary.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY (NCOS) was founded in December 2016 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees, in November 2019. NCOS is governed by a Charity Commission Foundation Model Constitution. It is a Group of the national organisation City of Sanctuary.

OBJECTS.

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, (including convention refugees, refugee communities, people with leave to remain, asylum seekers and ex-detainees), socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and/or co-ordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Northumberland by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services,
3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

FROM THE CHAIR.

I am very pleased and honoured to preside over my maiden AGM as the new chair of the board of trustees of NCOS. I took over in March 2022 from John Stenhouse, who acted as an interim chair after Hilton Dawson, a founding member of NCOS stood down in December 2021. I am very thankful for the trust and confidence of the trustees in me to assume the position.

NCOS continues to provide a welcoming environment and support to our service users in this challenging environment of rising cost of living and tough government policy against people seeking sanctuary in the UK. In 2022, NCOS saw an increase in the number of asylum seekers dispersed to Northumberland. At present, there are over 200 singles and over 100 families including 98 children. These figures might be a conservative number. NCOs also saw an increase in the number of new projects as well as new restricted and non-restricted funds.

Furthermore, our flagship activity, which is the drop-ins, has slowly expanded to accommodate the growing number of our service users. There are now two drop-in sessions in Ashington on Tuesdays and Saturdays and in addition to the drop-in in Blyth, a new one has also been established in Cramlington.

NCOS also introduced two new projects, which are the New Arrivals Pathway to help facilitate the settlement of new asylum seekers in Northumberland and a Youth Club to foster greater understanding and friendship between young kids from Ashington and asylum seekers and refugee kids. We are all proud of these positive developments underlining the growth of NCOS to meet the growing and new demands for our service users.

Our International Day, that brings together the local community and our services users, had to be postponed last year following the death of the Queen. This event will be held this year to continue to celebrate our differences and diversity as well as our common humanity in search of a peaceful co-existence.

Before I single out certain individuals to thank them profusely for their invaluable contributions to the growth of NCOS, I would like to mention sadly some of the internal challenges we had to deal with over the past year as a fledgling organisation. The organisation lost very important volunteers and trustees due to various reasons ranging from retirement, heavy workload, competing commitments and disagreements over the direction of NCOS. The valuable volunteers who resigned in 2022 from their roles are

- Hilton Dawson, chair
- Benjamin Hopkinson, secretary
- Peter Edge, treasurer
- Sarah Bredin-Kemp, volunteers coordinator
- Ken Cochrane, secretary

Following the resignation of Ken, who is now a volunteer running our Youth Club, Ben had to come out of retirement to take up the position of secretary. Hilton is also returning to take up the position of treasurer and volunteers coordinator as a stopgap measure.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their hard work and dedication to providing selfless services in making our service users feel welcome and safe in Northumberland.

Another outstanding volunteer and a founding member of NCOS, who is worthy of a special mention is Anne Murray. Anne is going on a sabbatical after the AGM to recuperate and re-energise after having single-handedly run the Ashington drop-ins, and the Learn English Together (LET) for several years now. Anne has also organised and coordinated many trips for our service users for sightseeing and other leisure activities to relieve some of the stress coming from the asylum system. I would also want to mention, Anne's husband, Mark who has been very supportive not only of Anne but also NCOS. I would like you all to join me in a round of applause for Anne and Mark and wish them well and speedy return to NCOS.

As we have lost some volunteers so we have welcome new volunteers that have come on board to ensure the smooth running of the drop-ins in Ashington and other activities.

In 2023, we are looking forward to build our new 3-year strategic plan to ensure NCOS grows from strength to strength. We have started this journey with an Away Day in March to assess our current state and desired goal. As we start this journey, we will be calling on our parent organisation, the City of Sanctuary and other partners as well as funders for their invaluable material, moral and financial support.

I would like to end my remarks by thanking you all for making the time to attend this AGM.

Murtala Touray

COVID

For the first quarter of the year we were still subject to covid restrictions. Although these were lifted in at the end of February 2022, it has taken a considerable time to develop a new normal. The drop-ins in Ashington and Blyth opened again, forming a foundation of our relationships with PSA and other SUs. Sports activities began again, and by June Board meetings were once again being held in person, together with other ad hoc activities. As last year,

we do owe many thanks for the way people on the Board kept going and, when it became possible, rescued the momentum.

THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE.

The governance of NCoS is in the hands of the Board of Trustees. Early in 2022 what was called the Executive Committee was reconstituted as the Board, with some added co-opted members. These took full part in the meetings on all matters except those which, by the constitution, are reserved for trustees. The Board appointed an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, who could call upon other members as necessary from time to time, to undertake the day to day governance of NCoS and make essential and urgent decisions. The Executive has to report to each Board meeting.

The Board has met regularly each month with exceptions during peak holiday periods. The minutes are available for any who would like to see them, on request. As last year, several members of the Board are PSA or people with LTR.

THE CHAIR. AND SECRETARY.

After the resignation of Hilton Dawson at the last AGM, the Trustees appointed Murtala Touray as Chair of the Board. Ken Cochrane took over as Secretary.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANISATION.

The last Annual Report recounted the decisions taken at the Away Day held in June 2021, of which the key was that NCOS should aim to be “**a Funded and Employing Organisation, with premises**”. It went on to say “*It is difficult to talk here without using outworn, overused phrases, but to describe this as a sea change is appropriate, and the result means embarking on a complex, exploratory voyage, the final destination of which will not be reached until people seeking asylum are no more, because they have no need to fly from their own countries*”.

At a following Board meeting it was agreed to follow this up, using the skills of an experienced fund raiser to look for funding for the rental of premises and the employment of a project coordinator, a family and children’s worker and an administrator. Job descriptions and thorough costings were drawn up and approved. However, the first results were mixed. Funding for premises was secured but employment money was not forthcoming. The funders gave the main reason for this as a need for NCOS to develop greater experience of

working with larger budgets than at present. So this had to be paused for a while. The premises grant has been used for hiring rooms for various purposes.

The Secretary, also the fund raiser, did secure considerable grant money for other projects. (See below, in Activities and the accounts).¹

It remains that this aspect of development is still something on which NCOS has to concentrate.

ACTIVITIES.

However, NCOS has maintained much activity towards meeting the Objects and the needs, felt and expressed by the people we serve, particularly in the following ways:

Drop-ins. These continue to be held weekly in Ashington and Blyth. They are shown to be most valuable to our SUs. The link, at each one, to the Red Cross is vital for those needing help and advice on their asylum process. Other questions and problems are dealt with by the volunteers attending and clothing and household items are available.. Another extremely useful aspect of these events is that PSAs who may feel isolated and lonely have the opportunity to meet others and form friendships. They are also a way of consulting and finding out what SU feel they need.

A new drop-in has been started in Cramlington, by the Church of the Nazarene. While it is not part of NCOS, it is associated.

NCOS partnership with the Red Cross remains a cornerstone of our existence. The Red Cross have a worker assigned to NCOS needs and there are two NCOS volunteers (one a trustee) who have been trained by the RC and who are available at most times for those in need. One of the NCOS RC volunteers reports:

“The main aim of Red Cross support at the drop ins is to triage the support needed by a newly arrived asylum seeker. Red Cross register them on the data base, ensure they have a lawyer, if not try to arrange one (this is something that is becoming more and more difficult with the increase of numbers), ensure they are registered with a GP have HC2 certificate and have Aspen card and are in receipt of their money. We then make referral to NCOS (who in Ashington arrange college) and make any relevant referrals.

The reason for being registered with Red Cross is to be able to access a national support system. If things go wrong and money is stopped we can apply for destitution support for a short period. RC also has a tracing service and referrals can be made on request.”

¹ At a recent Away Day held beyond the dates of this report, it was agreed that NCOS should again explore employing staff.

As well as the Red Cross, NCOS also has good links with NERS, WERS and Action Foundation, who provide additional support in difficult cases.

New Arrivals Pathway. This innovative and important initiative was organised by the North East Migration Partnership and NCOS was invited to apply for funding to be a pilot on the scheme. It involves being given knowledge about new arrivals in the area and following this up with information, befriending and ensuring they understand about health care and schooling, together with other things about life in Britain. It is being developed, and a fuller report will be available at a later date.

Digital Inclusion. NCOS continued to be part of this initiative, sponsored by the North of Tyne Combined Authority in partnership with Action Foundation. Its aim is to enable PSA who have been in UK for 6 months to become digitally literate. It has, undoubtedly, been most successful and it was a sad day when the funding ceased. It was led by two NCOS service users.

English Language Learning. This was started again as soon as possible. PSA who have been in the country at least 6 months are able to enrol for ESOL classes at Northumberland and Newcastle Colleges and great numbers of people take advantage of this opportunity. The College is very helpful in many ways and we are most grateful to them. For our part, we make sure that people know of the opportunity. People who have been here less than 6 months have the option of going to the LET (Learn English Together) scheme, which is sponsored by a group of churches, in close cooperation with NCoS. Newcastle College has a very productive link with the Blyth drop-in. Many Blyth SUs go there for ESOL, and their transport costs are met. There is also a link for ESOL provided by the County Council at the Blyth Sports Centre. .

Communication by Language Group. Instigated when lockdown prevented drop-ins, this scheme has proved most useful and continues. With their agreement, service users are assigned to a language group, each having a coordinator and language expert. Each week the Chair writes a text giving information to the group members, which is translated into the relevant language. .

The Women's Group in Ashington has ceased to meet, as the time available for it now clashes with college classes. This does not mean it is abandoned and it may well be resuscitated when possible.

Sports. It has been possible to help fund people, especially youngsters, with sports equipment and club fees. Football is a great way to integrate and, in Blyth, some people have contributed spectacularly to cricket teams.

NCOS Football Team 2022 – Report of Daniel Meija

In keeping with Northumberland County of Sanctuary's (NCO'S) main objective, a primary form of support and help to maintain excellent physical and mental health, is the football team. The team has maintained an average of 15 players

of different ethnicities (African, American, Asian and Middle Eastern) during the year 2022.

Also, this year a partnership contract was signed with the Get Onside project administered by Northumberland County Council and funded by the FA (Football Association). This partnership was signed for a period of 5 years, whereby Get Onside will support our football team with sports equipment, such as Football Nets, Football Trainers, Bibs, Balls, sports guidance such as Football Coach certificated, First Aid Kit and First Aider certificated and facility hire, providing an indoor playing space (Ashington Leisure Centre) during the autumn and winter months.

Now that the sports equipment is in place, the members of the football team are more excited and come to training sessions and football matches much more often. Also, by having a First Aider we play with more security because we know that in case of an emergency there is a qualified person, also we have a first aid kit which is equipped with what is necessary to deal with any emergency. It is worth mentioning that all of us in the football team see this partnership as a great opportunity to continue to maintain optimal physical and mental health and we value it very much.

Finally, the doors of the football team are open to all asylum seekers and refugees over the age of 16 who wish to play football.

Events. Several trips for SUs were successfully run during the summer school holidays. Feedback shows that they were very much appreciated and are important, both in relieving the tedium of existence when restricted by the resources available to PSA, and, also, showing people new and unaccustomed sights.

We have funding for an International Day, but this, though planned, had to be postponed for unforeseen reasons. It is hoped that such a day will be held in 2023.

Clothing and household goods. NCOS has continued to receive and give these necessities as opportunity affords.

Schools and further education. A strong liaison has been built with the Northumberland County Council (NCC) education department and the Diocese of Newcastle Education Department to ensure that all a/s children of school age are given places. Many good stories about how well the children have settled in school and how well they perform have come from the teachers.

Schools of Sanctuary is a programme sponsored by City of Sanctuary. In Northumberland Ian Luke is leading the challenge for schools to be awarded Schools of Sanctuary status and has enabled five schools to be awarded School of Sanctuary status. He writes: *The Schools of Sanctuary award is only awarded to schools that celebrate difference outwardly and involve everyone in a child's family, giving them the opportunity to engage with others in their community.*

These schools are breaking down barriers that stop communities thriving and letting that community know the truths behind the myths, creating a culture of welcome and inclusion whilst raising awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers.

Bicycle Training. As PSA have acquired donated bicycles, we have been able, through some generous donations, to recommend them to Cycle with Jan, for coaching on cycling safely in Britain.

ACTIVITY OF A MORE GENERAL SORT.

Blyth. Activity in Blyth is both similar and different from that centred in Ashington. The following report has been written.

Blyth drop in runs out of St Cuthbert's Community Hall on a Tuesday 10-11. I am delighted to say we have a fantastic group of volunteers who come every week and provide great support. I am sorry to say we have lost two volunteers, we were very thankful for the support they gave. Our fantastic groups of volunteers have provided clothing, kitchen equipment, and bread and even better a place that asylum seekers can come and practice spoken English.

Blyth has changed since starting back after COVID and numbers are a bit like a roller coaster up and down. Over the past year we have welcomed over ten families and thirty five single men to Blyth. This has been a significant change from when we originally started in July 2019. We mainly had families then and only two houses of multiple occupancy. Because of the changes not all feel the need to attend every week. The main service for the service users is to find a college places either at the new provision at the Sports Centre or at Newcastle College. Both of these organizations have been very accommodating to our service users. We support service users attend college with bus fares till they get a bus pass.

We have also over the year had a few people from the Ukraine attend the drop in, as well as Afghanistan relocated refugees and regularly have a lady from Turkey who attend our drop in for the community support.

We have developed a good relationship with the housing managers and welfare officers, building on the good work Lillian had put in place. We have also maintained a good contact with schools and the welfare support teams, they have visited the drop in and contact me if a family needs support. We also have a good local food bank and are able to make referrals. We have had a few baby arrivals and have developed a good relationship with the health visitors and the early support hub.

We are able to sign post our users to local activities and have had a positive response. We are lucky to have John our resident football man (one of the many jobs he does for NCoS). John has made great head way in forging good community links for our service users to have free activities.

We have developed good relationships with local services. Heart of Blyth, Blyth Sparton, Buffalo Centre, Briardale House, Forget me Not, Blyth Man Shed,

Empire School of Boxing, Community Food and Friendship and Blyth Town Council this enable us to be able to have a wealth of services available to our asylum seekers.

In general much of what goes on cannot really be categorised. We are, at present, an entirely voluntary organisation and much is done by so many people helping in many ways. All who “work” with NCOS are registered on a list of volunteers and are DBS checked. Among us and between us we pick up things that need doing in a variety of ways, especially people’s needs. We can learn our shortcomings, too, and the need to develop our work. This knowledge is often brought to the Executive Committee, and is developed over time.

Support is given to SUs within our resources as needs become clear, but especially prominent in the memory are times of crisis. Racist or xenophobic incidents (see below) are one example.

Racist and xenophobic incidents. By and large, our service users lead peaceful lives in our area and have good neighbourly relations. However, it is sad to say that nastiness (a stronger word is often needed) does take place. Most incidents are verbal, but frightening, especially for families with young children, but there have been occasions of smashed windows and paint daubing, too. Some of these incidents are one off, but there have been times when trouble has gone on day after day. The Police and the housing provider, Mears, have been very cooperative, on some occasions moving people to different addresses, known to be peaceful. We must stress, however, that these problems are the exception rather than the rule. There are plenty of people who are very positive about their new neighbours.

OUR NEW WEBSITE.

A new website has been designed and is up and running <https://www.ncos.org.uk/> We owe a great debt of thanks to Ehab Monir, an SU with LTR who has done this work so well. It is very new, so if there are a few teething problems, please be patient.

<https://northumberland.cityofsanctuary.org>. The old site is still running.

VOLUNTEERS.

At present, everyone active with NCOS is a volunteer. There are no paid staff.

NCOS continues to have an excellent corps of volunteers. It is sad to report that the Volunteer Coordinator has had to resign as she has a new and highly

responsible job, which leaves her no time to spare. Sarah Bredin Kemp is owed a debt of gratitude. We are looking, urgently, for a new Volunteer Coordinator.

STATISTICS

It has become much more difficult to publish detailed statistics of people seeking asylum, owing to the increasing tightening of data protection rules. It can be said that numbers remain much the same as last year. The latest figures that can be given are

Single people:	212
Families:	103
Children	98.

They are concentrated in Ashington and Blyth, but are also scattered in smaller towns around, with one family in Haltwhistle. The number includes people from some 30 different countries. We have reason to believe, however, that these numbers are a considerable underestimate.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

We are part of the Northumberland County Council's coordinating body, and value this and the help available.

We ask advice from other groups working in the sector, particularly locally, and are grateful to Action Foundation, WERS and NERS for great cooperation and friendship. We have looked farther afield at times, as well.

Ian Lavery, the MP for Wansbeck has been very helpful indeed.

NCOS is a member of City of Sanctuary. This is a nationwide organisation, whose members are independent groups or individuals who subscribe to CoS aim, which is to create welcome, everywhere in the UK, for people seeking asylum, and for those granted leave to remain. It is very helpful in keeping us informed and in bringing us together with other CoS members in the North East.

We subscribe to **Asylum Matters**, which keeps us up dated on a huge amount of activity in the refugee charity sector and makes us aware of government policy, and more. It is important and more than useful.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT..

NCOS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are the trustees. It is governed by Constitution based on the Charity Commission's Foundation Model.

TRUSTEES at 30th September 2022:

Wendy Bond
Ken Cochrane.
Hilton Dawson

Herbert Dirahu
Zara Galaeva
Ben Hopkinson
Ian Luke
Lilian Nelson
John Stenhouse
Linda Tooby
Murtala Touray

The Constitution states: *“Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.”*

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.”

The maximum number of trustees is twelve.

The officers of the charity are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. They are appointed at a meeting of the trustees. Apart from the Chair, the other officers do not have to be trustees.

Management.

NCOS is managed through meetings of the Board, which includes all trustees and other people whom the trustees co-opt, up to a maximum of four non trustees. The Board meets once a month.

The Executive Committee, consisting of the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and other people brought in by the Chair from time to time, manages the day to day business of the organisation.

Policies.

Policies NCOS has policies covering: Code of Conduct; Confidentiality; Cycling; DBS checking; Equality and Diversity; Financial Control; Grievance; Health and Safety and Safeguarding. These have all been approved and updated. They may be seen on request to the Secretary.

THANK YOU. NCOS is very, very grateful for all the help it has received since its inauguration. Much of this has been financial, both private giving and from trusts and organisations, without which NCOS could not have continued. However, much else has come in voluntary, sometimes unsought and unexpected, help from people who have raised funds or provided help in all sorts of ways, which has made a tremendous difference to our effectiveness. Very few names

have been mentioned in compiling this report, because there are so many who deserve to be mentioned and it would not be fair to leave anyone out.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH INDEED

<https://www.ncos.org.uk/>

<https://northumberland.cityofsanctuary.org.>

A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER.

I want to say that there has been a substantial increase in financial activity this last year and this is probably reflective of NCOS doing and being able to do much more. It's clearly positive that we have been able to help many more people more often. We have spent much more money and also been donated much more. We have processed more transactions in the last year than the previous 5 years of NCOS existence put together.

Additional sources of funding have been substantial restricted funding from organisations for specific activities, mostly raised by Ken though also by Wendy as well. We have gained over £1800 in gift aid from tax back from donations due to us being a charity. We have also gained money from very generous donations from a handful of individual donors who continue to donate regular amounts every month. We couldn't do the work of NCOS without their enormous generosity. NCOS is in a good position with money being held in restricted funds for good purposes if they can be managed. We also have some unrestricted funding for day to day activities such as drop ins and petty cash. However, NCOS can't be complacent here- the unrestricted funds could be spent within a matter of months without sourcing continual private donations.

Malcolm Shields has generously signed off the accounts and this has taken many hours of his time. He has done this for free and by doing so has saved NCOS somewhere in the region of £800 to £1000 for this service. By signing off the accounts it keeps us legitimate with the charities commission, ensures we are safe and well managed and maintains our hard earned reputation. It means we can continue to source funds from large restricted donations. We are very grateful to him and Ben for working together on this. This increase in the amount of work for me this year as treasurer has been very difficult to manage. This is combined with having a full time job and also being an environmental activist. There is certainly no slowdown with the latter issue. The climate crisis is going from bad to worse with inactivity throughout government, business and throughout. That partly is why I am stepping down.

I hope NCOS finds another treasurer who can continue to do the work of NCOS going forward and I look forward to be bring involved in other forms.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Registered Charity no: 1185663

Financial Statements
for the period ending
30th September 2022

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Independent Examiners Report

I have examined the accounts of the charity for the year ending 30th September 2022 as set out on pages 1 and 2 above and the supporting documents on which the accounts are based.

I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in the course of my examination which would give me cause to believe in any material respect that:

- a) proper accounting records have not been kept
- b) these financial statements do not accord with those records
- c) the Trustees have not met their obligations in respect of financial record keeping.

I have no other concerns in connection with the examination of these accounts to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of these financial statements to be reached.

Malcolm Shield FCMA
18 Watershaugh Road
Warkworth
Morpeth
22 March 2023

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Income and Expenditure Account

Year to 30th September 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Restricted Funds				
Donations	7,167		5,075	
Grants	40,034		1,100	
		47,201		6,175
Unrestricted Funds		11,235		7,244
Total Income Received		<u>58,436</u>		<u>13,419</u>
Expenditure				
Charitable Activities- Restricted	13,377		4,883	
Charitable Activities	9,082		4,162	
Total Expenditure Incurred		<u>22,459</u>		<u>9,045</u>
Net Result for Year				
Restricted	33,824		1,292	
Unrestricted	2,153		3,082	
		<u>35,977</u>		<u>4,374</u>

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Balance Sheet

as at 30th September 2022

	2,022	2,021
	£	£
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	46,875	10,897
Funds of the Charity		
Restricted Funds	39,543	5,719
Unrestricted Funds	7,332	5,179
Total Funds	<u>46,875</u>	<u>10,897</u>

Restricted Funds as at 30th September:

Shoe Fund	1,085	2,515
Women's Group	1,597	813
Summer Visits	43	1,500
Warkworth Ukraine Refugee Funds	5,450	
Sir James Knott Trust	4,521	
NAP Welcoming Grant	4,164	
Lottery Funding	7,129	
St Hilda Grant	2,617	
International Day	4,360	
RISE North East (Blyth Sports Project)	4,697	891
Homes for Northumberland	395	
Dickson Fund (Duke of Edinburgh Project)	240	
Barbour Fund	486	
Book Club	1,877	
Newcastle City Council Heritage Fund	883	
Total Restricted	<u>39,543</u>	<u>5,719</u>

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales - Charity number 1185663

Accounts

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY



City of Sanctuary

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD October 2020 – September 2021



Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS)
Registered Charity No. 1185663



a group of

City of Sanctuary

Contact details:

<https://northumberland.cityofsanctuary.org/>

Secretary: benh.ncos@yahoo.com

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY



City of Sanctuary

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD October 2020 – September 2021

Abbreviations: NCoS. = Northumberland County of Sanctuary; PSA = Person(s) seeking asylum; LTR = people with leave to remain; SU = service user; RC = Red Cross. LE = Language Expert; NCC = Northumberland County Council; CoS = City of Sanctuary.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY (NCoS) was founded in December 2016 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees, in November 2019. NCoS is governed by a Charity Commission Foundation Model Constitution. It is a Group of the national organisation City of Sanctuary.

OBJECTS.

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, (including convention refugees, refugee communities, people with leave to remain, asylum seekers and ex-detainees), socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and/or co-ordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Northumberland by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services,
3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

FROM THE CHAIR.

On October 1st 2021 we reached our fifth anniversary as Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCo S).

The fact that this very significant anniversary passed by almost unnoticed, perhaps demonstrates that we have had a very busy year.

Perhaps the most joyous events have been when some very long-standing friends, who have been seeking asylum for almost as long as NCoS has been in existence, gained Leave to Remain. Others who have been here almost as long, are still waiting, and we will always be with them, supporting them. We will always support everyone, no matter when you arrived.

As the world continues to tackle Covid, this has been a difficult year. Thankfully we have started a few smaller meetings in Blyth and Ashington and we have continued with the weekly text, translated and sent to some language groups. We have funded cycling proficiency, football, cricket, some trips out and we ended with a superb International Social in Ashington, where the local MP declared everyone very welcome.

We also know that some people have faced intolerable racism, abuse, vandalism and threatening behaviour. We refuse to put up with this disgraceful, criminal behaviour and have regularly called upon our friends in the Police for assistance. Our efforts to challenge racism and support community integration received some good TV coverage this Autumn.

More than 100 people are now attending College in Ashington and Newcastle and many children are doing very well at school. This year we began being part of the Digital Inclusion programme and now more than 60 people have been given free tablets. This programme is due to continue for two more years.

Our good friend Lilian from Red Cross has been ill and in hospital and away from her work and we have missed her very much, even though her colleagues are working hard to fill the gaps. We wish Lilian well – and hope she enjoys very much better health in future.

Unfortunately, we have had to deal with one personnel issue and an ongoing case where we seem to be the victims of a malicious attempt to smear NCoS and undermine our reputation. A police investigation is ongoing.

This is my last report as Chair of NCoS as I am standing down from my role as Chair in December. I won't be going very far away, but I think it appropriate to record that this is some of the best work I have ever been involved in, with some of the finest people I have ever met.

I wish you all well.



Hilton Dawson

COVID

Restrictions and lockdown have severely hampered our activity, in common with many similar organisations. We continued, as last year, with essential meetings on Zoom, which has been a great help, but the problem is the loss of the dynamics of face to face meetings. Body language is largely lost, as is quick fire debate, for two examples. Networking, even in small groups, goes by the board, so suggestions and matters of

importance are not taken up and are left hanging. We do owe many thanks for the way people on the Executive Committee kept going and, when it became possible, rescued the momentum.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The governance of NCoS is in the hands of the trustees. However, early on, after NCoS was registered as a charity, the trustees set up the Executive Committee, with the membership being the trustees and others appointed by them. It was given executive powers, except for those responsibilities which could not be devolved from the trustee body. It is 13 strong and it is a pleasure to report that 5 members of this body are either people seeking asylum or with leave to remain. The Committee has met nearly every month and these meetings have proved essential for the welfare of the way NCoS has worked. A momentous decision taken was, when restriction easing made it possible, to hold an Away Day.

AWAY DAY 2, 14th June 2021, held in St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Blyth.

The purpose was to assess where we are and plan our direction. It was superb to be in each other's presence again. In one respect, the day was a long postponed follow up to **Away Day 1** which was held in September 2019, but since then so much water has passed under the bridge that much thinking again had become very necessary. It was more than worth the effort, producing results that are life changing for NCoS.

Analysis. We undertook a **A SWOT** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, which showed up much that was good, but faced us with how much more needs to be done in the face of the growing numbers of people seeking asylum in the area. We were still a bunch of volunteers with limited time and abilities ("radical pensioners" someone called us) and we were faced, starkly, with the question of how we should develop if we are to meet our objectives and be of real and comprehensive service..

To be a Funded and Employing Organisation, with premises, was the conclusion. It is difficult to talk here without using outworn, overused phrases, but to describe this as a *sea change* is appropriate, and the result means embarking on a complex, exploratory voyage, the final destination of which will not be reached until people seeking asylum are no more, because they have no need to fly from their own countries.

FOLLOW UP.

The Executive met, in person, on the 5th July. It was agreed to accept the offer of a skilled and experienced volunteer to raise funds for:

- Rental of premises.
- To employ:
 - A project coordinator.
 - A family and children worker.
 - An administrator.

It was made clear that the process would take some time and final confirmation or refusal will, probably, not be known until spring 2022. The submissions were all completed and submitted over the following two months.

NCoS needs to record how grateful we are to Ken Cochrane, who has undertaken the fundraising. It is a huge piece of work.

AWAY DAY 3, 28th October 2021, held at The Round House, Ashington.

This was to have been the follow up to the July day, with two parts. A consideration of how the funding will affect the way NCoS functions, together with a look at the immediate pressures upon us. However, the agenda was thrown out of kilter by the Chair's announcement that he is to resign as Chair at the end of the year. We therefore spent the first half of the meeting working on the process of appointing a new Chair and how we should function in the mean time. The role and qualities needed for filling it were discussed.

It was agreed that:

The appointment is made by the trustees, but not necessarily out of the existing trustees. We should advertise the role and search advice through contacts. A small group are to draw up the role description, person specification and the appointment process. After agreement by the trustees, this should be put into action.

People present recorded their very great appreciation of Hilton Dawson's time as Chair.

We then spent time planning the AGM and looking at the present functioning of NCoS and how that may be improved.

STATISTICS

At the end of August, NCoS was in touch with 315 people in Northumberland, most of whom are people seeking asylum, though some have leave to remain and have stayed in the area. They are concentrated in Ashington and Blyth, but are also scattered in smaller towns around, with one family in Haltwhistle. The number includes 70 children and people from 29 different countries.

ACTIVITIES.

Towards meeting the Objects and the needs, felt and expressed by these people, NCoS is active in the following ways:

Asylum advice, through the Red Cross. This is really our key activity, to ensure that those seeking asylum receive qualified advice and assistance with the process. Two trustees are trained by the Red Cross (one, in fact, is also employed by them) to register people arriving with the RC and ensure that they are able to contact the organisation when necessary. New arrivals are also given information about NCoS and, provided it is their wish, their contact details and countries of origin are registered confidentially with the Chair. The RC regional office in Newcastle has a

case worker responsible for NCoS referrals. It is an enormously valuable partnership. Hilton mentions in his report that one of our trustees, Lilian, who has had responsibility for RC contact has been ill. We have missed her greatly, but we must also show our gratitude to Linda, also a trustee, who has held the work together. Most of the advice has to be by telephone, though some is by video link, with interpretation available.

Digital Inclusion. NCoS is part of this new initiative, sponsored by the North of Tyne Combined Authority in partnership with Action Foundation. Its aim is to enable PSA who have been in UK for 6 months to become digitally literate. Each trainee is provided with a tablet and three months of data; trainers are selected and trained, as many as can be, from the asylum / refugee community. This has been eagerly used, with training being done both on line and in groups, where possible.

English Language Learning. This was started again as soon as possible. PSA who have been in the country at least 6 months are able to enrol for ESOL classes at Northumberland College and great numbers of people take advantage of this opportunity. The College is very helpful in many ways and we are most grateful to them. For our part, we make sure that people know of the opportunity. People who have been here less than 6 months have 2 options. Some go to the LET (learn English together) scheme, which is sponsored by the a group of churches, in close cooperation with NCoS. Others attend pre college ESOL at the charity Being Woman.

Communication by Language Group. Instigated when lockdown prevented drop-ins, this scheme has proved most useful, and has continued even as drop-ins have started again. With their agreement, service users are assigned to a language group, each having a coordinator and language expert. Each week the Chair writes a text giving information to the group members, which is translated into the relevant language. As well as events, the text includes information about how to contact help in time of need.

Drop-ins have started again in Blyth and Ashington. A new feature here has been an arrangement to use space at the Ashington Full Circle Food Project, a most marvellous charity. The events here have specialised in learning about aspects of living and working which have been asked for by participants and have been, as far as possible, PSA led.

The Women's Group in Ashington is meeting again and providing valuable friendship and learning opportunities. It has recently opened up to be a drop-in for men, as well, partly because many women were unable to come because the time now clashes with college classes and partly because of the drop-in needs felt by young men.

Community Activity. Various initiatives are being taken by PSA to be more part of the community. One that has been most striking has been by a group who undertook to clear litter and tidy up in Woodhorn.

Sports. It has been possible to help fund people, especially youngsters, with sports equipment and club fees. Football is a great way to integrate and, in Blyth, some people have contributed spectacularly to cricket teams.

Events. Since lockdown ended, it has been possible to run two trips out, to a farm and a small holding, both run by wonderfully warm and welcoming people, who gave the visitors a great time.

The main event of the year was the International Day, held at the Full Circle. With food and music and conversation, this brought together a large number of people, both PSA and from the community, to enjoy music, dancing and international food, provided by participants, and, of course, conversation. We are enormously grateful to Sarah at Full Circle for all she did to make this such a memorable day.

Clothing and household goods. NCoS has continued to receive and give these necessities as opportunity affords.

Schools and further education. A strong liaison has been built with the Northumberland County Council (NCC) education department to ensure that all a/s children of school age are given places. Many good stories about how well the children have settled in school and how well they perform have come from the teachers. We have also spent time working on the possibilities of university places for PSA and continue to do so, searching for scholarships (PSA cannot get university loans). As mentioned above, Northumberland College is very helpful, both with ESOL and other learning possibilities.

Schools of Sanctuary is a programme sponsored by City of Sanctuary. In Northumberland Ian Luke is leading the challenge for schools to be awarded Schools of Sanctuary status. He writes:

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

Schools of Sanctuary is a growing network, nationwide, of more than 300 primary and secondary schools all committed to supporting the thousands of young people seeking sanctuary in the UK, creating a culture of welcome and inclusion whilst raising awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers.

Northumberland currently have four Schools of Sanctuary: Central Primary upper and lower school and Bothal Primary lower and upper school. With one other schools about to be awarded soon, the future looks bright for Northumberland.

Being a recognised School of Sanctuary is no different than being a school. The only difference is making it stand out more in its community. Engaging the community with the school is nothing new but many schools do not celebrate this. Schools are the hub of any community and are special because they are central to that community, it is the one place where nearly everyone in that community must be a part of. But most schools do not celebrate this in a way that shows everyone.

The Schools of Sanctuary award is only awarded to schools that celebrate difference outwardly and involve everyone in a child’s family, giving them the opportunity to engage with others in their community.

These schools are Breaking down barriers that stop communities thriving and letting that community know the truths behind the myths.

Bicycle Training. As PSA have acquired bicycles, we have been able, through some generous donations, to recommend them to Cycle with Jan, for coaching on cycling safely in Britain.

ACTIVITY OF A MORE GENERAL SORT.

Much of what goes on cannot really be categorised. We are, at present, an entirely voluntary organisation and much is done by so many people helping in many ways. All who “work” with NCoS are registered on a list of volunteers and are DBS checked. Among us and between us we pick up things that need doing in a variety of ways, especially people’s needs. We can learn our shortcomings, too, and the need to develop our work. This knowledge is often brought to the Executive Committee, and is developed over time. Befriending is one very important aspect. This goes on informally. However, we have been in conversation with the West End Refugee Service (WERS) about understanding the excellent befriending service they run, and would like to put something similar into practice ourselves. A project was produced and funding applied for. Unfortunately we were not successful this time, so we shall continue to look to other sources.

Support is given to SUs within our resources as needs become clear, but especially prominent in the memory are times of crisis. Racist or xenophobic racist incidents (see below) are one example.

Racist and xenophobic incidents. By and large, our service users lead peaceful lives in our area and have good neighbourly relations. However, it is sad to say that nastiness (a stronger word is often needed) does take place. Most incidents are verbal, but frightening, especially for families with young children, but there have been occasions of smashed windows and paint daubing, too. Some of these incidents are one off, but there have been time when trouble has gone on day after day. The Police and the housing provider, Mears, have been very cooperative, on some occasions moving people to different addresses, known to be peaceful. We must stress, however, that these problems are the exception rather than the rule. There are plenty of people who are very positive about their new neighbours.

OUR NEW WEBSITE.

<https://northumberland.cityofsanctuary.org>. Try it, it’s good. It is designed and maintained by one of our Service Users, to whom we are very grateful.

VOLUNTEERS.

At present, everyone active with NCoS is a volunteer. There are no paid staff.

NCoS continues to have an excellent corps of volunteers. As the drop-ins have begun again they have been active here but also in many other ways. Simply being around is one of them, so meeting casually and finding time to talk. This has led, for example, to two young men being taken on by a fine cricket club. From time to time we get asked for help when a PSA is relocated to our area from somewhere far away. Volunteers will welcome and help these newcomers to know what is available. There are also people helping in financial administration and funding, and one volunteer who is doing a superb job on statistics.

When, rather than if, we develop and have a paid Coordinator, NCoS will still depend for its effectiveness on the work of volunteers.

All volunteers are registered with our volunteer coordinator and are DBS checked.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

We are part of the Northumberland County Council's coordinating body, and value this and the help available.

We ask advice from other groups working in the sector, particularly locally, and are grateful to Action Foundation, WERS and NERS for great cooperation and friendship. We have looked farther afield at times, as well.

Ian Lavery, the MP for Wansbeck has been very helpful indeed.

NCoS is a member of City of Sanctuary. This is a nationwide organisation, whose members are independent groups or individuals who subscribe to CoS aim, which is to create welcome, everywhere in the UK, for people seeking asylum, and for those granted leave to remain. It is very helpful in keeping us informed and in bringing us together with other CoS members in the North East.

Through CoS we subscribe to **Asylum Matters**, which keeps us up dated on a huge amount of activity in the refugee charity sector and makes us aware of government policy, and more. It is important and more than useful.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT..

NCoS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are the trustees. It is governed by Constitution based on the Charity Commission's Foundation Model.

TRUSTEES

Wendy Bond
Hilton Dawson (Chair)
Zara Galaeva
Ben Hopkinson (Secretary)
Anne Lowrie (to march 2021)
Anne Murray (to April 2021)
Lilian Nelson

John Stenhouse
Linda Tooby
Murtala Touray

The Constitution states: *“Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.*

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.”

The maximum number of trustees is twelve.

The officers of the charity are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. They are appointed at a meeting of the trustees. Apart from the Chair, the other officers do not have to be trustees.

Management.

NCoS is managed through meetings of the Executive Committee, which includes all trustees and other people whom the trustees appoint, up to a maximum of four non trustees. The committee was established in November 2019 and has executive powers. Should there be a dispute which cannot be solved by other means, the solution is decided by the trustees. The Committee meets as necessary, usually once a month.

Policies.

Policies NCoS has policies covering: Code of Conduct; Confidentiality; Cycling; DBS checking; Equality and Diversity; Financial Control; Grievance; Health and Safety and Safeguarding. These have all been approved and updated. They may be seen on request to the Secretary.

THANK YOU. NCoS is very, very grateful for all the help it has received since its inauguration. Much of this has been financial, both private giving and from trusts and organisations, without which NCoS could not have continued. However, much else has come in voluntary, sometimes unsought and unexpected, help from people who have raised funds or provided help in all sorts of ways, which has made a tremendous difference to our effectiveness. Very few names have been mentioned in compiling this report, because there are so many who deserve to be mentioned and it would not be fair to leave anyone out.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH INDEED



City of Sanctuary

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Registered Charity no: 1185663

Financial Statements for the period ending 30th September 2021

Income & Expenditure Account 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2021

	2021	2020
Income		
Restricted Funds		
● Donations	£5,075	£221
● Grants	<u>£1,100</u>	<u>£5,284</u>
	£6,175	£5,505
Unrestricted		
● Donations	£6,534	£4,446
● Other Income	<u>£710</u>	<u>-</u>
	£7,244	<u>£4,446</u>

Total Income Received	£13,419	£9,971
Expenditure		
Charitable Activities - Restricted	£4,883	£619
Charitable Activities	<u>£4,162</u>	<u>£2,829</u>
Total Expenditure Incurred	£9,045	£3,448
Net Result for the Year		
● Restricted	£1,292	£4,886
● Unrestricted	<u>£3,082</u>	<u>£1,637</u>
	<u>£4,374</u>	<u>£6,523</u>

Balance Sheet
as at 30th September 2021

	2021	2020
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	<u>£10,897</u>	<u>£6,523</u>
Funds of the Charity		
Restricted Funds	£6,518	£4,886
Unrestricted Funds	<u>£4,379</u>	<u>£1,637</u>
Total Funds	<u>£10,897</u>	<u>£6,523</u>

Restricted Funds as at 30th September 2021 comprise:

- Service User Visits	£1,500
- Shoe Fund	£2,515
- Women's Group	£ 904
- Rise Sports Fund	£ 891
- Emergencies Fund	<u>£ 348</u>
	<u>£6,518</u>

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the accounts of the charity for the year ending 30th September 2021 as set out on pages 1 and 2 above and the supporting documents on which the accounts are based.

I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in the course of my examination which would give me cause to believe in any material respect that proper accounting records have not been kept these financial statements do not accord with those records the Trustees have not met their obligations in respect of financial record keeping.

I have no other concerns in connection with the examination of these accounts to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of these financial statements to be reached.

Philip Angier
Lovaine House
Percy Terrace
Alnwick

10th December 2021

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY OF SANCTUARY

England & Wales - Charity number 1185663

Accounts

Charity registration number: 1185663

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

Wellway Accountants Limited
Borough Hall
Wellway
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 1BN

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

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Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	Ben Hopkinson John Stenhouse Lilian Nelson Hilton Dawson Linda Tooby Zara Galaeva Murtala Touray Wendy Bond
Secretary	Ben Hopkinson
Principal Office	11 Watershaugh Road Warkworth Morpeth Northumberland NE65 0TT
Charity Registration Number	1185663
Independent Examiner	Wellway Accountants Limited Borough Hall Wellway Morpeth Northumberland NE61 1BN

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

The trustees present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 September 2020.

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

Abbreviations: NCOS. = Northumberland County of Sanctuary; a/s = asylum seeker(s); LTR = people with leave to remain; SU = service user; RC = Red Cross. LE = Language Expert; NCC = Northumberland County Council; CoS = City of Sanctuary.

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1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, (including convention refugees, refugee communities, people with leave to remain, asylum seekers and ex-detainees), socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and/or co-ordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Northumberland by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services,
3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Objectives, strategies and activities

TRANSITION

The transition from the previous unincorporated organisation that NCOS had been to a CIO went very smoothly. At the first meeting of the foundation trustees 5 more trustees were appointed. (Details below, under Governance). The new organisation took on the financial structure of its predecessor and maintained the existing activities.

STATISTICS

These are important for understanding the size of the number of people covered by the activities of NCOS.

Summary - Northumberland County of Sanctuary.

All people listed are known to this voluntary project and are outside the County Council asylum & refugee programme.

395 people (145 children) known to Project since inception in Spring 2017

77 people (28) have gained leave to remain and moved away.

29 people (13) have gained leave to remain and remained in Northumberland

Altogether 106 (41) people have gained leave to remain – 26.8%

2 people (1) have gone missing before the settlement of their asylum claims.

1 person has voluntarily returned home.

23 (8) people have moved to different asylum addresses in other parts of UK

263 people (95 children) are still seeking asylum in Northumberland

292 people (108 children) are currently in Northumberland and currently residing in:

Ashington 168 people (61 children) 19(7) LTR

Blyth 83 people (30 children) 7(4) LTR

Bedlington Station 3(1)

Bedlington 10 (3)

Seaton Delaval 7 (2)

Stakeford 6(4) 3(2) LTR

Lynemouth 3(1)

Widdrington 4(0)

Haltwhistle 4(2)

Newbiggin 6(4)

ACTIVITIES

Towards meeting the Objects and the needs, felt and expressed by these people, NCOS has:

Established an Advisory Group, whose members are asylum seekers (a/s) or people with leave to remain (LTR).

The work of this body is to explore the wishes of NCOS service users (SUs). The covid-19 restrictions have inhibited their meeting face to face in recent months but the group is working as best it may virtually and keeping in touch with SUs by telephone. It has been most valuable in making suggestions for NCOS to follow.

Before covid-19 lockdown, NCOS activity centred on and expanded from 3 key activities.

Asylum advice in partnership with the Red Cross (RC) and funded by them. Asylum advice is given by a RC worker. The worker saw applicants face to face at the Drop-ins and was available on the telephone at other times. By arrangement with Mears, the company that holds the Home Office housing contract, she is informed when new a/s are dispersed to Northumberland, registers them, contacts them and offers advice on legal representation, financial support and other essential matters. If people are given LTR, she advises them of the necessary steps they should take and contacts the authorities about their housing.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Drop-in sessions. Once a week, drop-ins were held in Ashington and Blyth. Here a/s could meet each other and the NCOS volunteers could meet the a/s. People ceased to be a category and became people. Matters of concern were discussed and passed on where necessary and those attending were told about events and opportunities. If it was part of NCOS policy to help SUs, e.g. with necessary bus fares, this was done. Key points of life, like a child's (or adult's) birthday, the birth of a baby or someone receiving LTR were celebrated. A virtual drop-in was run by a volunteer for several weeks, which gave those with the requisite devices a welcome opportunity to talk with others. This was replaced by English lessons (see below).

Women's Group. The Group met weekly before lockdown and has been very important. It has enabled women asylum seekers and empowered them in many ways, allowing them to live fuller lives, despite the constraints of their situation. Several of the SUs are single mothers, and the Group has been especially important in helping to give them confidence. Many ideas came from the Group, enriching the activity of NCOS.

After lockdown and the ensuing restrictions that have been imposed:

Advice. This has continued, first by telephone, then by video link, which was set up initially through the help of another local charity, Being Woman, and then transferred to St. Andrew's Church Hall when it was opened up again. As beforehand, SUs are also able to contact the RC by phone. This has worked reasonably satisfactorily, but the benefits of face to face work are missed.

The drop-ins have been replaced by language groups. All SUs were contacted (new arrivals are also contacted) and invited to join a language group. These work in this way: Each group has one or two coordinators and a member of the group who can translate and interpret, known as language experts (LEs). The Chair sends a text weekly to the coordinators, who pass it on to the language experts, who translate it and forward it to group members. The coordinators and LEs collate any feedback that group members may give, and this is brought to the weekly Executive meetings.

The Women's Group began to meet again, with restricted numbers and it was clear how much it had been missed by its members and what an important role it plays.

Schools. A strong liaison has been built with the Northumberland County Council (NCC) education department to ensure that all a/s children of school age are given places. Many good stories about how well the children have settled in school and how well they perform have come from the teachers. When schools were closed during the first lockdown, NCOS and Being Woman collaborated in providing devices and data to families, so that children could follow on line learning. NCOS work with schools has been much helped by the Chaplain to the Duke's Secondary School, a Church Voluntary Aided Academy.

Clothing and household necessities. Large amounts of good quality clothing, bedding and household goods have been given to NCOS, which has been made available to a/s. Furniture has also been provided for people given leave to remain and moving to housing in the area. Towards the end of the period under review, a fund for children's school shoes has been set up, which has been very effective.

Learning English. Conversations with Northumberland College have resulted in their setting up a comprehensive ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) programme on the Ashington Campus and NCOS makes sure the SUs are informed and encouraged about this. Before the ESOL was established, the local Church of England Parishes in Ashington sponsored a LET (Learn English Together) scheme, based on a programme developed by the Action Foundation in Newcastle upon Tyne, with which NCOS collaborated. This has been very valuable, firstly because the college classes are only available to a/s who have at least 6 months residence in UK. In Blyth, Being Woman led English learning sessions at the Drop-ins. Being Woman has also begun precollege ESOL teaching, to which many SUs go, as well as to LET. These programmes have all been put on hold since the covid restrictions have been in force but it is planned that they should continue as soon as may be. During lockdown, English learning was held weekly for some time on Zoom, by a volunteer, and much valued. It had to stop when the volunteer ceased to be available.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

One of the benefits of LET is that it is less formal than the college course, giving rise to much conversational English, and leading to an increased knowledge between people, and friendship.

Other activities that have sprung from the above programmes. As needs and wishes have become known, so NCOS has tried to meet them. Clearly, some of these activities are suspended for the time being but, as they have shown their value, will be reintroduced when possible.

Bicycles. Providing bicycles has given SUs mobility and children much fun. A volunteer who runs the scheme has found what seems like an endless supply of bikes, paid for privately, given by people who no longer need them and from some very generous bicycle dealers. Furthermore, it has been possible to arrange training in bicycle safety, though full implementation awaits easier times.

Trips. Funds have been raised to hire minibuses to take SUs on trips to various parts of Northumberland and into Newcastle, so that they can break the narrow vision of what constitutes the place to which they have come, which is all they can see with the limitations on their lives as a/s. Individuals and organisations (e.g. the National Trust, Alnwick Garden, farmers and friends) have been enormously generous in providing welcome. The cost of this programme, and its enjoyment, has been hugely helped by the most generous gift of his time and resources by a volunteer who used his own minibus. Sad to say, this vehicle has irreparably aged and failed MOT, so has now joined the afterworld of minibuses.

Music Group. A group of talented people, instrumentalists and singers, who met regularly before lockdown. They were much encouraged by Sam Slatcher, the CoS Regional Organiser and promoter of Songs of Sanctuary. They performed at regional CoS gatherings.

Meet and Eat. Every few weeks before lockdown, a "Meet and Eat" evening was held for any SUs who cared to come. Food (international, of course) was shared and community grew.

Sporting activity. Many SUs are very keen to take part in sports, particularly football and several informal games were organised. Many of the a/s children have shown great sporting talent, which has helped greatly with developing friendships. NCOS has received a generous grant from the RISE fund for sports capacity, though lockdown has prevented this from being used so far.

Christmas has been celebrated as an event open to all. The Community Police Squad, who have been most friendly and helpful throughout NCOS existence, have provided bags of children's presents, as have other donors.

Support has been given to SUs as needs have become clear, but especially prominent in the memory are times of crisis. The racist incidents (see below) are one example. Another example is the case of a young SU with two small children, who was seized from her house, late at night, by agents of the Home Office Border Force and taken to a detention centre at Gatwick, for deportation. This after she had been assured in a HO interview that such would not happen. NCOS raised the hue and cry and, through the offices of the Red Cross, the family were released and sent back. However, the HO police then brought a legal case against the a/s for resisting arrest and attempted bodily harm. NCOS ensured she had proper legal representation and accompanied her to court when possible. In the end, the case was dismissed as "no case to answer" but the hurt remains.

Racist incidents. For the first time since NCOS was founded there have, in the last few weeks of the period covered by this report, been a series of racist and anti immigrant incidents. Some have been very nasty with groups outside a house, yelling and breaking windows with stones. One group of a/s were evacuated to another location, others we have supported by contact and by meeting with the police and civic authorities. NCOS is also looking for ways to give publicity to the very great amount of good will that we know, from experience, exists in the communities where we work.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Public benefit

During this year we, Northumberland County of Sanctuary (NCOS), have supported various groups to come together and develop a community in a variety of situations. Coming together reduces enables engagement in British and Northumberland culture, reduces stresses and improves wellbeing.

The groups we have supported include the women's group whereby women meet and engage in activities such as sewing or felting. For the women's groups we have also supplied sewing equipment. We have also supported a meet and eat group whereby cooking is undertaken and the food from our different cultures shared within different groups.

We have provided basic extra needs for asylum seekers and refugees including school uniform and children's clothes. We have also enabled many of these asylum seekers and refugees to keep fit and healthy by providing access to sports including cycling and football.

NCOS has undertaken several visits using a local community bus company Watbus for days out to Newcastle a sports day to Blyth leisure centre and also a Christmas event to Warkworth pantomime.

We have helped many of the refugees and asylum seekers to become more connected to each other and to our culture and provide their children and parents with the opportunity to learn English. We have done this by providing televisions and providing connectivity to the internet.

Finally, we have helped them through the covid crisis by making them aware of what they need to do to stay safe and well, to look after each other and themselves.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Use of volunteers

At present, everyone active with NCOS is a volunteer. There are no paid staff. Pre-covid NCOS had between 17 and 21 volunteers. At that time, volunteers were contributing towards Red Cross drop-ins, Women's Group, sports matches, procurement and distribution of 'stuff', trips during school holidays and other unscheduled activities such as house-moving. During lockdown, some volunteers have elected to temporarily stop volunteering in light of the ongoing threat, while a core team of volunteers have been providing remote support via the language groups and weekly texts. We have had some interest from potential new volunteers, all of whom have asked to be notified when physical meetings are back up and running as they felt they couldn't help with remote support. In the committee, it has been expressed that our organisation cannot go back to how it used to run (due to a growing cohort of service users), but there is plenty of enthusiasm to begin rebuilding and starting new projects once it's safe to do so. Several of the volunteers are SUs.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

NCOS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are the trustees. It is governed by Constitution based on the Charity Commission's Foundation Model.

MANAGEMENT

NCOS is managed through meetings of the Executive Committee, which includes all trustees and other people whom the trustees appoint, up to a maximum of four non trustees. The committee was established in November 2019 and has executive powers. Should there be a dispute which cannot be solved by other means, the solution is decided by the trustees. The Committee meets as necessary and, since the covid-19 pandemic struck, has met weekly, virtually.

POLICIES

Policies for financial control, safeguarding, health and safety, confidentiality and risk management have been approved. Other policies are in the pipeline.

REVIEWING MANAGEMENT

How to manage to enable growth in the effectiveness of the work of NCOS is a question always before the organisation. It underlies the agenda at Executive meetings. To this end, an Away Day, professionally led, was held on 15th November 2019. A draft Strategic

Plan was drawn up. This was to be reviewed early in 2020 at another gathering but the covid-19 restrictions have prevented this happening. However, it is very much on the agenda to work on this further, as soon as possible. Meanwhile, NCOS has managed imaginatively and effectively to meet the needs of SUs during the pandemic crisis.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Three trustees were appointed as the First Charity Trustees by the Charity Commission on registering the charity in November 2019. They are, with the length of their appointment:

Hilton Dawson, 4 years.

Anne Murray. 3 years.

Benjamin Hopkinson 2 years

The Constitution states: "Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity."

The following people were appointed trustees, each for a term of three years, on 5th November 2019:

Wendy Bond

Anne Lowry

Lilian Nelson

Linda Tooby

Murtala Touray

The maximum number of trustees is twelve. The officers of the charity are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. They are appointed at a meeting of the trustees. Apart from the Chair, the other officers do not have to be trustees.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Finance Report

NCOS Treasurer's comments on annual accounts 2019-20

An explanation of the accounts as follows:

Income- Individual donations represents the main of what we have received. Donations range from between £5 and £500 and we are enormously grateful for all of this and to everyone who has committed to us. The total is very similar to what we have received the previous year and represents the main of our unallocated funds to ensure we do the essential work we do smoothly.

We have received funds from various groups who are again very generous. It seems to me that the way many groups are pointed in our direction is through word of mouth and due to people who are enthusiastic about our cause rather than through a larger county wide awareness of what we do (please do correct me if I'm wrong though as this is just my impression). Talking about what we are doing and pointing sympathetic generous people in our direction clearly has a strong effect.

We have received grants for various projects which we will continue with in the new year. This is higher than last year and means we can offer more, and we are grateful for the work that goes into grant funding which can often be frustrating and there are no necessary guarantees of success. Extra work we can and will offer include sports, cycle training and visits especially which are of enormous benefit to enrich and connect our groups with wider Northumberland and the communities there.

Expenditure- St Andrews room hire offers value for money and a comfortable and safe place for everyone to meet for various activities.

We have paid for some school uniforms and this will continue into the following financial year.

The petty cash funds have enabled both Linda Tooby and Anne Murray to help everyone as various essential needs emerge.

We offered many days out though this has been cut short by covid restrictions. Days out we did offer included a visit to a pantomime for the children and a sports day to Blyth leisure centre.

Essential fees we did have to pay included charities insurance and funds to ensure that any volunteers had adequate DBS checks.

Due to covid we had to change our direction to help everyone. This included connecting many families and young children to ensure that they had adequate connectivity for their educational needs.

We have also been able to offer football membership for some young men to become involved in various football clubs as well as organising some football events for everyone to get together.

I'm sure everyone will agree that what NCOS offers is an essential service and these accounts show only a brief impression of the work that we are doing. I offer a financial thanks from my perspective to everyone involved.

Comment from the Secretary

These accounts have been prepared by Wellway Chartered Accountants, to whom we are most grateful. Strictly speaking, it was not legally necessary, with an income as low as NCOS', to have accounts prepared in this way, but as these are the first annual accounts of the charity, the Trustees thought we should have them properly prepared and presented. Furthermore, if, as is likely, NCOS needs to do major fundraising, then to be able to show full accounts will be important.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Trustees' Report

Thank You

NCOS is very, very grateful for all the help it has received since its inauguration. Much of this has been financial, both private giving and from trusts and organisations, without which NCOS could not have continued. However, much else has come in voluntary, sometimes unsought and unexpected, help from people who have raised funds or provided help in all sorts of ways, which has made a tremendous difference to our effectiveness. Thank you all, very much indeed.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 28 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Ben Hopkinson
Secretary and Trustee

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 28 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Ben Hopkinson
Secretary and Trustee

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Northumberland County of Sanctuary

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30 September 2020 which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees of Northumberland County of Sanctuary 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 Northumberland County of Sanctuary'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 Northumberland County of Sanctuary as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

.....

Borough Hall
Wellway
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 1BN

28 July 2021

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2020 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies		4,466	5,505	9,971
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities		<u>(2,829)</u>	<u>(619)</u>	<u>(3,448)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(2,829)</u>	<u>(619)</u>	<u>(3,448)</u>
Net movement in funds		<u>1,637</u>	<u>4,886</u>	<u>6,523</u>
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds carried forward	7	<u><u>1,637</u></u>	<u><u>4,886</u></u>	<u><u>6,523</u></u>
			Note	Total 2019 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Expenditure on:				
Total expenditure				<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds				<u>-</u>
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds carried forward			7	<u><u>-</u></u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.
The funds breakdown for 2019 is shown in note 7.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

**(Registration number: 1185663)
Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2020**

	Note	2020 £
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>6,523</u>
Funds of the charity:		
Restricted funds		4,886
Unrestricted income funds		
Unrestricted funds		<u>1,637</u>
Total funds	7	<u>6,523</u>

The financial statements on pages 12 to 17 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 28 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

.....
Ben Hopkinson
Secretary and Trustee

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

1 Accounting policies

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis of preparation

Northumberland County of Sanctuary meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charity opted to early adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

Grants receivable

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees's discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020
	General	funds	2020
	£	£	£
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	2,197	-	2,197
Donations from community groups	2,269	221	2,490
Grants, including capital grants;			
Grants from companies	-	5,284	5,284
	<u>4,466</u>	<u>5,505</u>	<u>9,971</u>

3 Analysis of governance and support costs

Governance costs

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020
	General	funds	2020
	£	£	£
Other governance costs	<u>2,829</u>	<u>619</u>	<u>3,448</u>
	<u>2,829</u>	<u>619</u>	<u>3,448</u>

4 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

5 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

6 Financial guarantee contracts

The trustees confirm, in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012, that at the year end the CIO did not have any outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on assets of the CIO.

The amount of the financial guarantee contract is £-.

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

7 Funds

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 30 September 2020 £
Unrestricted funds			
General	(4,466)	2,829	(1,637)
Restricted funds	(5,505)	619	(4,886)
Total funds	(9,971)	3,448	(6,523)

Unrestricted funds

8 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	1,638	4,885	6,523

9 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 October 2019 £	Cash flow £	At 30 September 2020 £
Cash at bank and in hand	-	6,523	6,523
Net debt	-	6,523	6,523
	At 1 October 2018 £	Cash flow £	At 30 September 2019 £
Net debt	-	-	-

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Statement of Financial Activities by fund for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

	Total Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Unrestricted funds 2019 £
Income and Endowments from:		
Donations and legacies	4,466	-
Total income	4,466	-
Expenditure on:		
Charitable activities	(2,829)	-
Total expenditure	(2,829)	-
Net income	1,637	-
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds carried forward	1,637	-

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Statement of Financial Activities by fund for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

	Total Restricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2019 £
Income and Endowments from:		
Donations and legacies	<u>5,505</u>	<u>-</u>
Total income	<u>5,505</u>	<u>-</u>
Expenditure on:		
Charitable activities	<u>(619)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total expenditure	<u>(619)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net income	<u>4,886</u>	<u>-</u>
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds carried forward	<u><u>4,886</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Income and Endowments from:		
Donations and legacies (analysed below)	<u>9,971</u>	<u>-</u>
Total income	<u>9,971</u>	<u>-</u>
Expenditure on:		
Charitable activities (analysed below)	<u>(3,448)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total expenditure	<u>(3,448)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net income	<u>6,523</u>	<u>-</u>
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds carried forward	<u><u>6,523</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2020

	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
<i>Donations and legacies</i>		
Donations from individuals - Unrestricted	2,197	-
Donations from groups - Practical Items for Women's Group	221	-
Donations from groups - Unrestricted	2,269	-
Grants - Visits and Sports Costs	500	-
Grants - Sports Events and Cycle Training	4,304	-
Grants - Coordination Costs	480	-
	9,971	-
	9,971	-
<i>Charitable activities</i>		
Room hire - Coordination Costs	(40)	-
Room hire - Unrestricted	(493)	-
Clothing - Unrestricted	(74)	-
Drop in days - Unrestricted	(340)	-
Insurance - Unrestricted	(252)	-
Sewing equipment - Practical Items for Women's Group	(60)	-
Computer and connectivity costs - Coordination Costs	(144)	-
Computer and connectivity costs - Unrestricted	(1,226)	-
Sports - Visits and Sports Costs	(225)	-
Facilitator costs - Coordination Costs	(150)	-
Travel and days out - Unrestricted	(444)	-
	(3,448)	-
	(3,448)	-