

## **Objectives and activities**

The object of the CIO is

1. to relieve financial hardship, advance education and promote social inclusion amongst those seeking asylum and those granted refugee status particularly by assisting with the resettlement and integration of families and by any other means as the trustees in their discretion shall determine;
2. to preserve and protecting the physical and mental health of those granted refugee status and their dependants
3. to assist those granted refugee status in their search for employment
4. to promote community co-operation between individuals and organisations such as faith-based and voluntary bodies, university, schools and colleges, local authorities and businesses in pursuit of the above objects
5. to promote social cohesion through the education of the public about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum, and about the benefits of refugee community sponsorship for wider community.

Croeso Menai was set up in July 2018 with the aim of welcoming a refugee family to the area under the Community Sponsorship scheme. Fundraising began in the autumn of 2018 and carried on through 2019 with a target of £9,000 as required by the Home Office; finding, securing and equipping a house; and preparing to welcome and take responsibility for the family assigned by the Home Office. During the fundraising and consciousness raising events (including public meetings, concerts and buffet meals) that were held. Croeso Menai engaged with the local community about responses to the global refugee crisis.

The Trustees have all been actively involved in Croeso Menai's activities and have sought to implement the guidance from the Charity Commission.

During 2019 we applied for recognition as a charity and this was granted on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

## **Structure**

Croeso Menai has the following structure:

- Four trustees
- A core team of approximately 12 volunteers (including the Trustees). The core team met on a fortnightly basis throughout 2019 and often more frequently in order to complete the application to the Home Office and make the practical arrangements for the resettlement of a family. Sub-groups were set up to deal with the different aspects of the project (such as fund-raising, housing, communications, etc.). Croeso Menai is run entirely by volunteers.
- Croeso Menai has a wider "membership": people who have expressed an interest in supporting the organisation through donations, disseminating information, future volunteering, etc. Regular updates are sent out to the membership by the core team.

## **Achievements**

In 2019 Croeso Menai applied for membership of Citizens UK (Cymru), who then became Croeso Menai's lead sponsor for the Home Office. Through Citizens, Croeso Menai volunteers have participated in national and local events, both to receive training and also to share experience with other community groups. Training and support continued from Citizens Cymru and Sponsor Refugees throughout lockdown.

Croeso Menai won an award for the best new community sponsorship group at the national Sponsor Refugees Community Sponsorship Awards (October 2019).

Croeso Menai volunteers are also involved in support of the local community of families already resettled in the area via the Government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. During the lockdown Croeso Menai provided online conversation classes for Syrian family members.

Croeso Menai succeeded by the end of 2019 in fulfilling the Home Office conditions for the Community Sponsorship scheme. By March 2020 Croeso Menai was ready to welcome the family. The house was ready. A small team of five volunteers were organised to provide the day-to-day support for the family for the initial period after arrival in the UK. The group had all the necessary information about the family. An arrival date was fixed. Everything was ready. At this point, one day before the arrival date, the authorities in Jordan, from where the family was due to fly, closed the airports because of the coronavirus, and the family's resettlement was indefinitely postponed.

Covid-19 stopped the team meeting face to face, instead meetings were held using Zoom. A decision was quickly taken to cancel the house and to move the furniture out and into storage, free of charge in a church hall in Holyhead.

When the Home Office announced that the Sponsorship Scheme was active again and we would be able to welcome the same family as before the group began looking for suitable premises, and a property near a local primary school was found. The landlord's agents were in the process of redecorating and the house would be ready by end of January 2021.

During January and early February 2021 the furniture was moved into the house, and as much as possible done to make the house ready for the family to settle in, knowing that they would have to remain in isolation for 14 days to comply with Covid regulations. This involved our interpreters making short videos in Arabic on how to use the various items of equipment in the house, about recycling, and a short tour of the area the house is in, and provision of a laptop to view the videos and hold Zoom calls with the family. Contact was made with the school and places arranged for the children. Contact was also made with members of the local community who proved to be very welcoming once the family had arrived, which they did in the last week of February.

Once family quarantine was over there was a flurry of activity in setting up doctor and dental arrangements, banking, job centre contact and organising universal credit, and making a start on ESOL lessons. Support of the family is ongoing.

## **Finance**

Croeso Menai exceeded its fundraising target in 2019 of £9,000 by £3600. Depending on how much the organisation would need to spend in supporting its first family, money could be made available for supporting further families or new Community Sponsorship groups. During International Refugee Week in 2020, a virtual public meeting was held to raise awareness of refugees and their needs and to encourage the formation of other community groups in North Wales.

No fundraising activities were held after March 2022 due to Covid-19 restrictions but some donations continued to be made by supporters of the group.

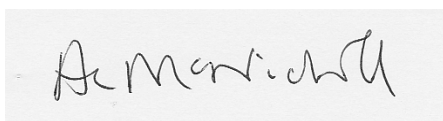
**Croeso Menai accounts 14 Nov 2019 – 30 Apr 2021**

<b>Opening balance</b>		<b>£11636</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	5239	
Refunds <sup>(1)</sup>	4078	
Collection for Refugee4refugees	3730	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13047</b>	
		<b>£24683</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
General expenses	884	
Citizens Membership	500	
Rent	4821	
Utilities	567	
Furnishings	1450	
Family costs	3206	
Translating	936	
DBS Checks	127	
Vehicle Hire <sup>(2)</sup>	541	
Donation to Refugee4Refugees	3730	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16762</b>	
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>£7921</b>

Notes.

(1) Refunds are from cancelled housing costs plus Home Office void costs refund when planned family resettlement cancelled due to Covid 19 in 2020.

(2) Vehicle hire covers moving furniture into storage in 2020 after family transfer cancelled, plus moving it out again in 2021 to new house, plus collecting family from Manchester airport.



Treasurer, Croeso Menai.