

# **Conversation Club Leeds**

## **Trustees' Report**

**Year to 31st March 2023**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1189217**

**ADDRESS: 16 BEECH GROVE TERRACE, GARFORTH, LEEDS LS25 1EG**

**TRUSTEES:**

**DOROTHY READ (CHAIRPERSON)**

**ELIZABETH MARY CATHERINE THOMAS**

**WAQAS SAAD SHAKIR AL BAJJARI**

**SUSAN CLOUGH**

### **STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT**

Conversation Club Leeds is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), governed by a Constitution. It has voting members other than trustees; volunteers can become members but there is no obligation to do so. Volunteers who are not members cannot vote.

The Constitution states that there must be at least three trustees. Trustees are usually recruited from the volunteers by invitation from the existing trustees.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Objectives**

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers who are socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by providing:

- (1) education and training in the English language and in vocational skills;
- (2) social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.

### **Activities**

Conversation Club's main activities are undertaken in order to fulfil these objectives.

They are:

- providing a welcoming and safe place for our asylum seeker and refugee 'guests' to meet and socialise with British people, and with other people in similar situations - this happens at our twice-weekly meetings at Mill Hill Chapel and the Holbeck Social Club;
- providing an opportunity for guests to practise speaking English through semi-structured English lessons and informal conversation with native-speaker volunteers;
- helping guests with tasks such as applying for college English courses, navigating the Home Office and Social Security systems; making health appointments etc;
- providing free bus tickets to enable them to attend meetings (this is our major expenditure); also providing some mobile phone 'top-up' vouchers to enable access to the internet and keeping contact with family.
- organising visits to museums, other places of interest, and day trips to the countryside, to give guests a wider view of British culture and, we hope, encourage integration.

### **Contribution made by volunteers**

Without volunteers, Conversation Club wouldn't exist. It is only through their efforts and dedication that we are able to host so many individuals and families at our meetings each week, and to provide them with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Several volunteers give their time outside meetings to organise events and outings, to undertake fundraising and to provide extra support when needed by individual guests.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW - FINANCIAL POSITION AT END OF PERIOD**

### **1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

Opening funds	9,261.83
Total income	8,099.74
Total expenditure	10,865.91
Closing funds	6495.66

### **Main sources of income**

Successful funding applications:	2980.00
Funding for Healthy Eating campaign:	710.29
Donations:	3436.95:
Newly-acquired 'Just Giving' page:	684.31
Gift Aid (registered in August):	131.13

### **Main expenditure**

Bus tickets for guests:	5316.80
Mobile phone 'top-ups':	1720.00
Donation to the Holbeck for venue use:	600.00

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

In the year commencing April 2022, the organisation has been slowly returning to its pre-pandemic normality, with guest numbers increasing steadily at both venues, but more markedly at Mill Hill Chapel, where 50+ guests is now the norm. At the Holbeck meeting, the numbers have grown from just a few immediately post-pandemic, to currently around 20 or more.

We give free day bus tickets to our asylum seeker guests, otherwise they would not be able to attend meetings. Every week we see many of the same people, which presumably means they are happy to participate, at least for the chance to socialise

with others in the same situation, or from the same region or country. We know from their comments that they appreciate the contact with others to relieve their isolation.

In the past, we have given mobile phone 'top-ups' to a few people, to enable them to use the internet or stay in contact with family, but this had to be restricted because of the expense. Over the last few months however, we applied for and received a large number of free SIM cards from Vodafone, which has resulted in most of our guests being able to access the internet. This has made studying, accessing statutory agencies and keeping in touch with family much easier.

### **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023**



14th June - Trip to Ilkley by train - 20+ guests enjoyed a day trip to Ilkley.

15th June 2022 - 'Musicultural Conversations' began - an 8-week course by Nicky Bray, for guests to learn English through song.



20th June - Little Amal: a group of volunteers and guests went to see the giant puppet, representing an 8-year-old asylum seeker child, when she visited Leeds





23rd June - Refugee Week 'Love Chain' event - guests and volunteers made a huge paper chain with welcoming messages from schoolchildren and members of the public, and displayed it outside Mill Hill Chapel.



31st August - Day trip by train to Skipton, including a visit to the historic castle.



Oct - Nov - Healthy Eating campaign: a 7-week programme designed by two volunteers with guidance and funding from Leeds Community Champions (NHS), to encourage guests to understand and choose a healthy diet.

14th October - Leeds Light Night event - guests and volunteers enjoyed the vivid light installations

15th December - Christmas party for guests, with food, singing and dancing.

December - monthly volunteer lunch meetings initiated, to encourage socialising, discussion and exchange of ideas among volunteers.

January - April - 'Threadbear Theatre' drama company started working with a small group of guests each week, to produce short 'playback theatre' improvisation pieces, which were performed at a festival at Fell Edge Farm, Addingham, in April.

20th February - the 'Winter Outings' programme began - a series of trips to places of interest, for which we obtained funding. First trip - Kirkstall Abbey House Museum.

6th March - visit to Museum of Science and Media, Bradford.

15th March - visit to National Railway Museum, York.



22nd March - tree planting event in Nidderdale - a group of volunteers and guests planted over 200 trees in an event organised by Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## **ORGANISATIONS WE HAVE WORKED WITH DURING THE YEAR**

Grateful thanks for support and advice given, all of which has made our job easier.

*Asylum Matters*

*Christchurch, Ilkley*

*Community Champions*

*Fell Edge Farm*

*Harmony Choir*

*LASSN*

*LEDAS*

*Leeds libraries*

*Leeds Migration Partnership*

*Leeds Playhouse*

*Nicky Bray - Community Music Worker*

*Nidderdale AONB*

*Opera North*

*Red Cross*

*Slung Low Theatre*

*Threadbear Theatre*

*Wheeler Hall (Leeds Cathedral)*

## **FUNDERS**

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations for funds awarded to us during the year. Without this income, Conversation Club would not have been able to carry on the work of supporting asylum seekers and refugees to the same extent.

Allen Lane Foundation

Arts Together

Community Champions

Dales Millennium Trust

GivTo

Mid Counties Cooperative

## THANKS

Finally, but most importantly, I would like to thank each and every Conversation Club volunteer who has given their time and energy to help people facing enormous difficulties. They have done it all with unfailing enthusiasm, cheerfulness and a lot of humour. Several of them have taken on specific roles such as fundraising, organising volunteers, organising trips and liaising with outside groups such as theatres etc, all of which has been of enormous help.

In particular, I would like to give special thanks to the three other trustees, Liz, Waqas and Sue, who have taken on the job of guiding the organisation, with all the extra time and effort which it entails; and Phil, our treasurer, who has provided a continuous expert overview of our finances. Their support has been vital. Thank you all.

Dorothy Read,

Chair

8<sup>th</sup> April 2023



**CONVERSATION CLUB LEEDS**

ACCOUNTS FOR

1st APRIL 2022 TO 31st MARCH 2023

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>Unrestricted Breilms</b>	<b>Unrestricted Uchoose Funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted General Funds</b>	<b>Wades Restricted Bus fares/ equipment</b>
<b>INCOME</b>					
Donations	3,436.95			3,436.95	
Grants	2,980.00			2,980.00	
Just Giving	634.81			634.81	
Events	200.00			200.00	
Bank Interest	6.56			6.56	
Gift Aid tax rebate	131.13			131.13	
Healthy Eating	710.29			710.29	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	8,099.74	0.00	0.00	8,099.74	0.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Phone top-ups	1,875.00	768.94		1,106.06	
Bank charges	72.00			72.00	
Bus tickets usage	5,316.80			4,087.16	1,229.64
Bus fares	63.00			63.00	
Train fares	123.20			123.20	
Holbeck	600.00			600.00	
Holbeck food	7.15			7.15	
Wheeler Hall	100.00			100.00	
Insurance	285.63			285.63	
Website Cost	0.00			0.00	
N Bray workshops	150.00		94.67	55.33	
Miscellaneous costs	188.62		28.41	160.21	
Ikley trip	340.51			89.41	251.10
Love Chain event	126.00			126.00	
Fell Edge transport	434.40			226.00	208.40
Skipton trip	810.86			0.00	810.86
Christmas party	156.74			156.74	
Just Giving	216.00			216.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	10,865.91	768.94	123.08	7,473.89	2,500.00
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	(2,766.17)	(768.94)	(123.08)	625.85	(2,500.00)
<b><u>BALANCE SHEET</u></b>					
<b>at 31st MARCH 2023</b>					
<b>OPENING FUNDS</b>	9,261.83	768.94	123.08	5,869.81	2,500.00
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	(2,766.17)	(768.94)	(123.08)	625.85	(2,500.00)
<b>CLOSING FUNDS</b>	6,495.66	0.00	0.00	6,495.66	0.00
<b>Represented by:</b>					
STOCK OF BUS TICKETS	717.60				
PETTY CASH	62.54				
CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE	5,715.52				
	6,495.66				

## **Independent examiners report to the trustees of Conversation Club Leeds**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st of March 2023.

### **Responsibilities and basis of the report**

As the charity 's trustees you all 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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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, which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act, or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

The accounts I reviewed provided greater detail than that required for the form and content of the account set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. I have not considered whether the accounts give a "true and fair view" as this 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.

Signed



Date

29<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Name

Matthew A Thornfield

Address

20 Moss Gardens, Leeds, LS17 7BH

Qualification or body Previous member of the Association of Corporate Treasurers