

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN

(Registered Charity - Registration Number:- 1191436)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

Reference and Administrative Information

Trustees

M. Chowdhury
C. Harmer-Brown
L. Hickman
M. Kempton
Y. Mohammad
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Charity Correspondent and Principal Address

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The Refugee Buddy Project Hastings Rother and Wealden
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THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

The Trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the to 31st March 2022.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Refugee Buddy Project Hastings Rother and Wealden is constituted as a charitable incorporated organization whose only voting members are its Charity Trustees registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales in September 2020 under charity number 1191436. It is governed by a constitution last updated in September 2020.

Organisational structure

The Charity Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity.

The Trustees meet together as a body on a regular basis. Additionally the Trustees, in their various roles, are involved in the day to day activities of the Charity.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The existing Trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees. Potential trustees are identified from the volunteers and other individuals involved with the Charity. They are invited to attend Trustees' meetings as observers and are given more details of the charity's aims and activities and, if all agree, they are then proposed as new trustees at a subsequent Trustees' meeting. This process allows due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

Induction and training of trustees

Following appointment, new trustees are introduced to their new role and given copies of the trust deed and a guide to the policies and procedures adopted by our charity. A number of publications from the Charity Commission are also provided including the guidance on charities and public benefit and on the relief of hardship, promotion of social inclusion, preservation and protection of mental health and promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit. This ensures that new trustees are aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act. Initially, new trustees work with an existing Trustee assisting on particular activities and projects run by the charity.

Risk management

The Trustees have assessed the risks the Charity faces and have drawn up a risk matrix which identifies the major risks by area of activity, the nature of those risks, the likelihood of the risks happening and the measures taken to manage them. The Trustees review this risk matrix regularly at their meetings. The Trustees are satisfied that systems are in place, or arrangements are in hand, to manage the risks that have been identified. In particular, insurance cover is in place and the finances of the Charity are kept under review. Appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks, supported by regularly reviewed policies, are made for all staff and volunteers within the Charity.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Aims and objectives

The objectives of the Charity are set out in the Charity's trust deed and are summarised as follows:-

- To relieve financial hardship to those granted refugee status or seeking sanctuary by providing advice and guidance to enable them to become economically self-supporting on an ongoing basis
- The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers and are socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position
- To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of those granted refugee status or seeking sanctuary and their dependents.
- The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and social cohesion between people from different backgrounds.

Strategy and mission

The Buddy Project was set up by Rossana Leal in 2017 who initially worked with people arriving as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (VPRP) (formally the Syrian Resettlement Programme), under which the UK committed to accepting 20,000 people escaping war in Syria. East Sussex committed to resettling around 200 people as part of this programme and the first families arrived in Hastings in 2016.

Working in partnership with the Local Authority Resettlement Programme Caseworkers, The Refugee Buddy Project built a network of volunteers made up of local people who wanted to help those arriving in their town. Providing orientation assistance, informal English conversations, and a sense of community welcome, the Project was designed to reflect the kind of community welcome Rossana and her family received when they arrived from Chile in the 1970s escaping the Pinochet regime.

The Refugee Buddy Project has continued to grow and expanded to support the families arriving in neighbouring Bexhill and then Wealden Boroughs, and currently supports over 45 families across these three areas of East Sussex who arrived via the VPRP.

As well as welcoming people via the VPRP, Hastings is also part of the Home Office Asylum Dispersal System for people seeking asylum in the UK, along with other Local Authorities across the UK. Under this scheme Hastings has up to 106 people seeking asylum in the Borough at any one time, all of whom are unable to work due to their Immigration Status, and who survive on around £39.50 per week per person. The Refugee Buddy Project increasingly works with this community as well, providing buddying, financial assistance and casework support along with delivery of support for people on the Homes for Ukraine.

From 2017 to date, the organisation, which became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2020, has developed from connecting newly arriving people seeking refuge with local communities and individuals, to leading and campaigning around the issues encountered in the process of resettling and building a new life in the UK, in line with its charitable objects. This has included hearing the stories of the people we work with, our project participants, and putting these into reports for the decision makers. This has also involved developing partnerships and collaborative pledges with local arts and community organisations in order to ensure the voices of those seeking refuge are not only heard but can play a crucial role in leading the conversations on the issues relevant to their needs.

We provide support to explore their new town and begin a new life. We 'match' them with a Buddy to support people in getting to know their new community; to practice conversational English, Employment preparation support - computer skills, CV writing, and interview skills.

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The Charity offers space for ongoing facilitated conversation and reflective practice through regular training and support sessions for the buddies, thus building strong relationships in and across different communities. We act as a first point of call for the communities who are attached to our services and activities. We refer to existing specialist services, sometimes advocating on their behalf but mainly enabling people to access relevant support services. There is no other organisation that is also migrant and refugee led working closely with the refugee, migrant and BAME communities in this area doing this type of work. We refer to specialist mental health services and during the COVID19 pandemic we have referred to the local mutual aid volunteer led organisations. Hastings is officially a town of Sanctuary as ratified by Hastings Borough Council.

The Charity has gone from being run on a purely voluntary basis to securing informal self-employed funding arrangements 2/3 days a week, to more sustainable funding which will be presented in the 2021-2022 reporting period.

Use of volunteers

At the time of writing this report, The Refugee Buddy Project has 45 active buddy relationships and supports over 150 people seeking refuge at various stages of their immigration cases. The Charity also has over 200 local people in a close network of volunteers who provide support and engage with the Project and its aims in a variety of ways from buddying people seeking refuge to helping with fundraising and events.

When volunteers sign up to join the Charity they are asked to complete a Confidentiality Agreement and to have a referee provide a Character Reference. Volunteers then go through an Induction led by the Founder and Director, the Chair of Trustees and a current volunteer Buddy. This induction is an opportunity for new volunteers to learn about the ethos and values of the Charity as well as hear the experiences of current volunteers. It is also a crucial chance to learn about the expectations of volunteers, including the boundaries around volunteering with vulnerable people. The section on boundaries is delivered by the Chair of Trustees, Dr Mursheda Chowdhury, who has had a long career in the medical and medical education field and is well placed to deliver this type of training.

The recruitment of new Buddies and matching is ongoing and this will include referrals to the Together programme mentioned in Principal Funding Sources

Activities and achievements

2021-2022 was the first year of the lottery funding for project development. It involved the recruitment, appointment and supporting of new project of staff. The identification of office and café spaces. Ongoing community engagement and support. Ongoing development of participant led events and activities with special projects. Partnership and collaboration arrangements with referral and like minded local and national organisations. Ongoing fundraising. Strengthening of the Board of Trustees with a view to operation staff standing down. Embedding our unique refugee and migrant led ethos and approach towards working with people seeking refuge in the Hastings, Rother and Wealden areas of East Sussex.

Recruitment, appointment and training of staff:

Lottery funding secured three part-time staff and the AMIF funded project Together run jointly with Groundwork South secured a fourth part-time staff member. The Project Director and Operations Manager worked closely with the Board to develop the job descriptions to recruit and put in place a Buddy Coordinator and a Café Manager. Trustees ensured that relevant policies were adopted to support this employment in accordance with the law. The project moved from working from home during lock down to working in a shared office space

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Buddy Coordinator

The first person to be appointed as the Buddy Coordinator gave her notice in after 3 months which led to the need to recruit for a 2nd time. The role was advertised widely and we received 43 of applications, we interviewed 7 people, and gave the role to the most outstanding of them all. She is now in place having been successfully recruited in September 2021 and, with our support, has grown into the role, brought her expertise to the role and has recently been promoted to senior Buddy Coordinator.

The work of the Buddy Coordinator, which is central to the project, supports our participants in areas such as employment support and mentoring, English Language support and supporting people into further and higher education. We also coordinate support such as food bank vouchers, benefits advice, housing support and more.

Café Manager

A Café manager was recruited in September 2021. Without a Café, her role would be to find a café space and developed a business plan. Whilst looking for café space she would support the project participants into achieving their food hygiene certificates and organise pop up suppers. The aim of the pop-up suppers is to familiarise the project participants with all the elements involved in setting up a self-employed catering business. During this time the Café manager also contacted local businesses, retailers and had conversations about a setting up a community café for people seeking refuge. These conversations were impactful in that the café has received immense support from the local community. In the same ways the café manager began working with the refuge and migrant community to involve them in the development of the café plans.

Working closely with the project director, the café manager also began putting together all administrative and policies in place. These included volunteer inductions, health and safety and Induction and supporting new staff

With a café now in place, the project continues to support project participants who want to explore catering as a self-employment opportunity.

Whilst we could support with the practical elements such as logistics, planning, food hygiene and health & safety we quickly identified we could not provide financial expertise, with how to become self-employed and invoicing. We are developing referral relationships with organisations that can provide support with this element.

Project coordinator (outreach, finance and administration)

Funding was secured from ESCC to fund the role of a Project Coordinator carry out outreach and organise enrichment activities.

The coordinator had direct contact with the Project participant and the wider migrant and refugee community, encouraging them to take up the services and activities we deliver.

The fund covers the one hour per week, informal English language conversation sessions- weekly one to one matching meetings online, group or face to face between the local volunteer buddy and a recently arrived refugee or migrant. The coordinator administrated these sessions, which were around 42 per week during the period of this report.

The project coordinator also co-ordinated, promoted and organised one of our special projects Stitch for Change 2 (SFC) which was delivered in collaboration with Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. More information about SFC below.

All staff have completed a suite of mandatory training including Equality and Diversity in the Workplace; Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children; and GDPR Principles. In addition, team members have completed role-specific training such as food hygiene certificates and CPD training such as Community Interpreting.

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Looking for an office and Café space:

We spent several months looking for a space which could accommodate a community café with confidential space, with no success. Rental prices have considerably risen locally post pandemic resulting in many spaces we looked at being unaffordable or being quickly snapped up by others offering more money. We therefore were forced to decide to take up two separate spaces to accommodate both our social and more confidential activities. This also meant we needed to secure additional funds to cover the costs of this new approach. We secured additional funding from Lottery £14,000 and from East Sussex County Council £15,000

Reviewing of administrative and financial monitoring in order to meet the needs of monitoring and accounting for allocated and unallocated funding. We have moved from using spreadsheets to record volunteer and project participant activities to using a database. In the same way we have moved from the using of spreadsheets to Quick Books.

The director of operations oversees and manages both of these with the assistance of the finance and administrative support.

Community engagement & support: Community led activities

Inductions are a key element and an ongoing activity for the Buddy Coordinators (BC) role and after shadowing the Project director the Buddy Coordinator is now developing and delivering these with the ongoing support of the Chair of Trustees. In doing the inductions the Buddy coordinator is able to know and see exactly who is coming into the organisation to become a buddy. Inductions happen on a monthly basis to meet the demand of our waiting list.

In 21/22 the project recruited and inducted 70 new buddies. The Buddy Coordinator continues to support the buddies by offering a 6-month reviews which offer project exit or continuing options, a minimum of one mandatory group Reflective Practices session with a qualified psychotherapist, ongoing support on a closed online platform and by offering an open-door policy for buddies to see her as and when they need additional support. In 21/22 we were supporting 42 matching relationships.

The Buddy Coordinator has direct ongoing contact with all the project participants. This direct contact has been crucial in our ethos towards being participant led. Ideas for activities, events and requests for ongoing support need to come from the project participants to the Buddy Coordinator, the Outreach Worker and the Café Manager. At the end of 21/22 we were supporting a total of 119 participants regularly.

Activity	Number of people engaged 21/22
Number of volunteers engaged	122
Number of Inductions	70
Number of matching relationships and informal English support	42
Number of participants supported (adults)	119
Number of attendees at events and activities*	749
Total number of people engaged in above categories**	1,102

*this number relates to activities in which attendee engagement is tracked;

** this number is a conservative estimate based on figures which are able to be accurately captured, it does not include estimates of other engagements outside these activities

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Participant led activities:

All of the following activities give both the buddies and the project participants a chance to volunteer in this way learning new skills and gaining confidence to practice and hear English in a safe and supported environment.

Community Welcome the Spring Equinox party a celebration with food, dancing, live music and lots of activities for the children fac paintings, child play and drumming. Attended by 300 people from refugee and migrant communities and the local buddies.

A collaboration with Hastings Museum & Art Gallery (HM&AG) involved the delivery of arts workshops by one of our project's participants in the lead up to the Lampedusa Cross exhibition. and led by Helen Dodaki, an artist with refugee experience. The museum hosted ten art workshops for local refugee and migrant families. These aspiring artists developed their practice and created work around the British Museum Spotlight loan of the Lampedusa Cross and Dark Water, Burning World. Their work was then featured in the Crossings: community and refuge exhibition at the museum. The participants saw their works on show and experience the process of creating and showing work. The workshops were carefully and skilfully delivered by one of our project participants with lived experience who also recruited the 20 participants who took part.

A film by fizzle and presented by Fatima Esailly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5MforzTTiw&feature=youtu.be>

Stitch for Change took place at HM&AG. Moving on from the exhibition at the De La Warr Pavillion the workshops leading up to an exhibition took place at HM&AG. Facilitated by community arts practitioners Jimena Pardo and Janey Moffatt around 30 people with refugee and migrant backgrounds and the buddies, explored their stories and created 20 individual patchwork stories which were then exhibited at the museum during Refugee Week 22. The Stitch for Change project also offers a space for participants to come together bi-weekly to sew and talk and practice English.

One highlight has been a 22 year old young Syrian man who arrived in the UK in summer 2021. He had been attending Stitch for Change and had improved his English significantly as well as his confidence. As part of the project the participants had to write a label for their piece of sewing to explain why they made it and what it meant to them. The young man wanted to try and write not only in Arabic but also in English, which he managed to successfully do. This would not have been possible when Stitch for Change started and, while the participant is also attending college classes, this opportunity to have an informal space in which to practise and improve his English language and also his confidence has been crucial to his development. See below a section of some of the labels written which also describe the types of stories the participants share.

"I lived in the same conditions before and after the war in Syria where everything was fine, and the war came to break and destroy my dreams and those of all young people and families. My parents bought a house for me and my brother to grow our families and live an easy, happy life. The house was destroyed, and my dreams were destroyed with it."

"We settled in Lebanon for 16 years. We ran away from one war and stumbled into another war of race and humiliation as the people of Lebanon did not want to accept us. Later, the July War started in Lebanon which was very hard for us, but we persevered. We applied for asylum from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were granted asylum here in England."

At long last, we have settled in Hastings, where we feel safe and secure."

BBC South East Politics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ovER0kHHSw&feature=youtu.be>

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2022 (continued)

Christmas Market and Christmas Lecture at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. In celebration of British Museum Spotlight Loan *Crossings: community and refuge*, the Refugee Buddy Project hosted its annual Christmas fair at the museum. The venue was filled with craft stalls, festival snacks, and plenty of cheer. The event was also a fund raiser in support of those seeking refuge in our community. The event also hosted a lecture by Syrian born, UK based artist Issam Kourbaj, whose work, *Dark Water, Burning World* hosted in Hastings as part of the Spotlight Loan. The lecture was attended by 60 people who were treated to Syrian food. This was also the last chance to see the Lampedusa Cross and *Dark Water, Burning World* before they continue their tour to other venues in the UK. This event was attended by 329 people.

Partnerships and collaborations:

To identify referral routes for our participants, to have conversations about future collaborations and coordinate our work with key stake holders in our area of work. Arts at the heart of how we work – communicate our message – rebuild our lives and tell our stories

Eggtooth: our ongoing collaboration with Eggtooth includes referrals from us for their art therapy support. We have referred NUMBER to them. These are people who expressed they need mental health support, who have not been supported by a GP. Our aim here is to support the participant by providing a safe personal space to work things out and be ready to ask for any further support if required. The referrals to Eggtooth are fast and tend to provide immediate support for the participants who present with anxiety and the notion that their request for support are not being met.

De la Warr Pavilion – We continue to collaborate with the De La Warr Pavilion. In 2021 we exhibited *All in the same storm, Pandemic Patchwork stories*. We began the year by co-hosting an online talk *Culture and Migrant Rights* which how the culture sector, including the artists, museums and art galleries can become meaningful participants on conversations and action around migrant rights. We kicked off Refugee week 21 with an online workshop about *Stitch for Change – Expression of Togetherness* - hosted by the De La Warr Pavilion.

Lo Recordings -

Hastings Contemporary – We were invited by Culture Shift to the Hastings Contemporary to see a Quentin Blake exhibition and have a conversation about what art means to us. We invited members of the refugee community to take part. This was an important initial discussion which led to us taking part in the first local Geocache adventure. See section on Refugee Week for more information.

Good Stuff invited us to take part in Painting the Prom summer project which involved decorating a stretch of "suntrap" booths on the lower promenade of St Leonards seafront with murals designed by local residents. We engaged a local artist Sarah Gomez Harris who worked with on during lock down on the develop the Myth Busting social media cards used the previous year to challenge negative and mainstream narratives around the issue of people seeking refuge. We chose one of the designs used in this campaign and matched artist Sarah Gomez Harris with one of our participants herself an artist who also facilitated the workshops at HM&AG. In this way the rest of the community we work with, with an interest in arts was able to feed in to the new collaboration. Our mural now sits alongside the murals of a number of other important community groups and artists who do important work with the Hastings communities. We continue to receive positive feedback form local people who feel it is important to express the narrative of welcome and solidarity to people seeking refuge in our town.

Local Authorities: we continue to develop these collaborations and partnerships in the boroughs of Hasting, Rother and Wealden. These began with our project playing a crucial role in the integration of newly arriving people seeking refuge through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, mainly Syrian people. This work has continued through the matching of people with buddies, delivery of social gatherings as described earlier. During 21/22 this collaboration transferred to and supporting the families arriving through the Afghan Resettlement Program (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Volunteers from our project helped to prepare 4 houses for the new families and they are now matched with buddies and are taking part in social gatherings.

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We continue to have direct contact with the case workers and programme coordinators in all three boroughs. We attended regular Task and Finish cross local authority partnership meetings with all the heads of services providing support for the newly arriving families. One particular outcome of attending these meetings is we were able to share our Education report with the person responsible for allocating school places for the newly arriving refugee children.

Sanctuary Festival: The project has a presence at Sanctuary Festival.

Special projects:

We have two special projects which have run a run in a yearly basis since we began. Both are participant led and our aim to platform refugee and migrant stories, talent and skills.

Refugee Week 21 was mainly held online due to lockdown. We supported 3 participants to create paintings for an online art exhibition. We provided the art materials, and the three participants were mentored by one of our volunteer buddies, also the education and engagements member of staff at the De L a Warr Pavilion. We asked a local shop in a busy area if we could use her window to display something celebrating refugee week. An installation was produced by one of our project participants, also a student of interior design and architecture and displayed during Refugee Week. we also worked with 2 more project participants who filmed themselves cooking their favourite Syrian meal and the recipe and how to film was share in our social media. During refugee week we also encouraged people to visit the mural on the seafront and take selfies.

Geocache – Culture Shift for Hastings Contemporary: We were one of six community groups invited to take part designing a geocache. The Refugee Buddy Project led by two group members, Leigh Malaihollo and Fatima Esayli, a young Sudanese Architecture and interior design student designed and installed geocache based on the mural on the seafront by Sarah Gomez Harris and Helen Dodaki. The geocache can be found at Country Park in Hastings.

Geocaching is a form of digital treasure hunt with uses GPS enabled technology to help people locate the hidden geocaches. People are asked to download the free app to start the adventures. People who find the hidden geocache are encouraged to give feedback and we still receive positive messages from people who find the geocache.

Stitch For Change is a textiles and embroidery project, hosted by The Refugee Buddy Project, which grew in response to the covid pandemic and lockdown. Our aim was to promote the meditative benefits of hand stitching and to provide a method of connection during a time of isolation and separation. The workshops provided a safe space for people to connect, converse in English, and tell their stories. The pandemic patchworks quilts were exhibited during refugee week 21. We held an online workshop to discuss the Stitch for Change project and community organising during lock down – <https://www.dlwp.com/event/stitch-for-change/>

All of the activities in refugee week 21 began conversations with local shops, community groups, artists and other local businesses which laid down the roots for Refugee Week 22.

Campaigns, communications and reports

Social media – We appointed a free-lance social media content manager. This work has made a huge difference on how we reach and engage with the various audiences who follow and take part in our work. This has been reflected in the growth of partnerships and collaborations, volunteers registering to be part of our work, donations and the huge reach of our campaigns. We are also able to reach national and international organisations doing the similar work.

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Community Welcome Pledge: We worked with the local refugee community and our national partners Migrants Organise to put together a pledge to be put to the local authority to discuss and take on as its approach to Hastings being a Community of Sanctuary. We were delighted that this pledge was accepted as a motion passed unanimously, and that the Council has restated its commitment to people seeking refuge especially given the national context of the Nationality and Borders Bill. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to improve and extend their services to ensure the three pledges are delivered effectively to all seeking refuge in our town”

<https://www.therefugeebuddyproject.org/blog/hastings-council-passes-pledge-for-hastings>

Education Report: Speaking and Listening: A report into the educational experiences of refugee families 2021

This year we have been conducting some research into the educational experiences of people seeking refuge in Hastings and the surrounding areas. In April we held a meeting for Buddies and supporters where we discussed the headline results of this report, which featured talks from the following people:

- Attiq Malik, Director of Liberty Law Solicitors and the solicitor for the family of Shukri Abdi;
- Vic Chechi, National Education Working Group on PREVENT;
- Nichelle Keheller, Hastings Rally Against Racism;
- Zo Oliver from Collective LDN
- Akram Salhab, Advocacy and Campaigns Officer at Migrants Organise.
-

We created Working Group of Buddies and supporters who are steered the Project as well as collaborating with other local organisations to design and deliver more CPD to local schools on how we can improve the educational outcomes for children of refugee backgrounds.

On Thursday 18th November we officially launched the report “Speaking and Listening: A report on the experiences of Refugee families in education”.

The result of months of work by our Operations and Campaigns Manager Alex Kempton, the report’s primary purpose is to raise the voices of project participants and their experiences in a way that may not be otherwise available to them. In doing this, our aim is to open a dialogue with local schools and educationalists about the experiences of those seeking refuge, and to find ways in which we can support the schools in improving these experiences.

The launch event was well attended with around 30 people attending and a mix of classroom teachers and members of Senior Leadership Teams, alongside educationalists from charities and consultancy organisations.

Since the launch of the report a collaboration has developed with Villiers Park Education Trust in which we are running a pilot project targeting six young people from the community we support to gain access to their Future Leaders programme which supports young people in Years 10 and 12 to reach their full potential through mentoring and coaching. We are applying for joint funding to expand this programme in the 23/24 school year.

We have also started a GCSE school for Year 10 and 11 pupils in the community we support, which is led by qualified teachers and educationalist in our volunteer network and supports the students with their GCSE homework providing general study skills and subject-specific support to raise the attainment levels of this cohort. This group has been meeting weekly since September 2022 and the feedback at the end of December 2022 was very positive from both the students and their families.

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The report is used as a resource by a Senior Lecturer in Childhood Education and Care at Canterbury Christ Church University and she has fed back the following: "This information about the Buddy Project, complete with case study examples was an excellent educational resource for me as I teach Early Years undergraduate students who examine the role of a 'children's champion'. The work you published was very useful as a teaching aid and it has helped consolidate concepts and policy for the students. The Working Together agenda (2018) makes a special point of inclusion for refugee children and also draws attention to the importance of safeguarding being everybody's business."

Patients not Passports: In October 2021 we asked CCG to encourage all GP surgeries to sign up to the safe surgeries initiative which works to ensure that the most vulnerable and most marginalised groups in society such as refugees, undocumented migrants, the homeless population and victims of trafficking are given access to health care at the point of need. We received a very encouraging response stating that CCG's already working with Doctors of the world and are aware of the issues.

#RefugeesWelcome: we continued to build on our social media campaign from 2021 by taking part in local project Paint the Prom in which we painted one of the key images from the campaign on the sea front in St Leonards on Sea. The mural was painted by the artist who designed it along with project participants, and has become a focal point for conversations around people seeking refuge in our town and a highly recognisable Charity image which is now used in various iterations.

Donations

The project continues to receive donations from the general public and local community. In 2021/22 we received a total of £16,526.23

Source	Amount
Fundraising sites	£ 2,132.72
Donations via charity website	£ 5,376.68
Direct Donations	£ 1,195.24
Donations from events	£ 2,908.59
Donations from partner organisations	£ 4,913.00
Total	£ 16,526.23

Donations come into to project through our ongoing website appeal and through activities organised by the local community. These bring in various amounts of money varying from £300 to £1000. The community activities also help to create awareness about our work.

Two key fundraising activities which took place in 21/22 are the Anthony Flaum opera at the Stables Theatre and a Charity Concert of classical music held at St Johns Church in St Leonards.

Summary

All of the activities in 2021/2022 have led to the has led to strengthening and embedding of the of the Refugee Buddy Project with our community. We are the first point of call for the communities we work with and are a trusted organisation to providing integration, advocacy and support for migrants and people seeking refuge.

In 22/23 The consolidation of an expert lead board of trustees has allowed us to make the structural changes needed to move forward. Rossana Leal and Alex Kempton stood down as trustees and are now CEO and Operations and Campaigns Director respectively.

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Attracting additional funding has been secured to expand our work with the Homes for Ukraine scheme and we look forward to

Café Dove Café - we now run a very busy community café offering cheap affordable and free food for those who need it and continue to apply this support with dignity and respect.

Development of our psychosocial, unique approach to working with people seeking refuge in the Hastings, Rother & Wealden areas.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Review of period

The attached accounts cover a twelve month period whilst the comparative figures cover the period from the formation of the Charity in September 2020 to the end of March 2021 – a period of less than six months.

These accounts reflect the significant increase in the activity of the Project in the year with the total income increasing to £175,976 from £18,451 and the total expenditure increasing to £107,080 from £24,903.

The Charity has been successful in a number of grant applications in the year and this success has enabled it to significantly increase its level of activities as set out more fully in the Review of Activities and Achievements in this section of the report.

In addition the Charity has been successful in increasing its level of donations from the public to support its activities outside of those that are grant funded.

At the end of the year the Charity had sufficient funds and resources to enable it to complete the various activities it has received grants for.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have reviewed the reserves of the charity. Their policy is to hold enough funds to meet three months' operating costs .

Principal funding sources/plans for the future

The Charity continues to be funded from Reaching Communities National Lottery until July 2024, which funds three part-time roles - 2 Developmental posts and a Café Manager, as well as covering 1 year's rent for a social space.

The Together Project, an EU AMIF funded project delivered in collaboration with Groundwork South was delivered in 21/22 to December 2022 and has received a one-year extension from AMIF at a reduced rate for delivery until December 2023.

We have successfully applied to the Justice Together Fund in partnership with Migrants Organise and POMOC to fund a part-time Caseworker who will train to become OISC qualified in immigration casework. This funding runs April 2022 – April 2024.

We received funding to deliver support for people arriving on the Homes for Ukraine scheme from ESCC delivering from July 2022 – July 2023.

The core buddying and volunteering work is funded through two small charitable trusts.

The Charity continues to receive donations from the general public which are used to fund the work we do with people on No Recourse to Public Funds.

Investment policy and objectives

The charity has no long-term investments. Our cash reserves are held current bank accounts.

Conflicts of interest

Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the other trustees and, in accordance with the Trust's policy, withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2022 (continued)

Trustees remuneration.

The Trustees bring a wealth of experience of refugee and migrant rights, charitable and community projects, financial and project oversight and strategy and more. They generously volunteer their time to oversee the Charity and no Trustee receives remuneration for their role as Trustee. Details of transactions in the year between the Trustees and the Charity are set out in Note 4 to these accounts

Reference and administrative information

The names of the Trustees throughout the period and at the date of this report along with other key information is set out on Page 1.

Dr Mursheda Chowdhury, Chair
Christine Harmer-Brown – a long term Buddy
Rossana Leal (resigned 13th June 2022) – Founder and Director
Alexandra Kempton (resigned 13th June 2022) – Operations and Campaigns Manager
Martin Kempton
Yaser Mohammed (appointed 14th June 2021) – a long-term Buddy
Lisa Hickman (appointed 12th April 2022)
Chantal Refahi (appointed 7th September 2022)

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

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

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each 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 the 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 judgments 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;
- 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 to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above

DR MURSHEDA CHOWDURY
Trustee and Chair

CHRISTINE HARMER-BROWN
Trustee

26th January 2023

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Project") for the year ended 31st March 2022, which are set out on pages 15 to 22

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 Project'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 2011 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 gives 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; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable 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.

T. E. REYNOLDS FCA

23 Gillham Wood Road
BEXHILL-ON-SEA
East Sussex TN39 3BN

26th January 2023

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total funds September 2020 to March 2021 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Voluntary income	2(a)	16,929	4,100	21,029	928
Activities for generating funds	2(b)	-	-	-	70
Grants received	2(c)	5,000	149,948	154,948	17,453
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		21,929	154,048	175,977	18,451
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds	3(a)	737	1,418	2,155	1,250
Charitable activities	3(b)	22,016	81,910	103,926	23,653
Governance costs	3(c)	1,500	-	1,500	
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		24,252	83,328	107,581	24,903
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES		(2,324)	70,720	68,396	(6,452)
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	10	13,541	(13,541)		
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		11,217	57,179	68,396	(6,452)
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	10	678	26,719	27,397	33,849
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	10	£11,895	£83,898	£95,793	£27,397

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 17 to 22 form part of these accounts

**THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2022**

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	7	4,449	-
		<u>4,449</u>	<u>0</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	1,073	-
Short term deposits			-
Cash at bank and in hand		92,193	27,397
		<u>93,266</u>	<u>27,397</u>
CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year	9	(1,922)	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>91,344</u>	<u>27,397</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u><u>£95,793</u></u>	<u><u>£27,397</u></u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Unrestricted	10	11,895	14,219
Restricted	10	83,898	13,179
		<u><u>£95,793</u></u>	<u><u>£27,397</u></u>

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:-

Dr MURSHEDA CHOWDURY
Trustee and Chair

26th January 2023

CHRISTINE HARMER-BROWN
Trustee

The notes on pages 17 to 22 form part of these accounts

1 Accounting policies

1 (a) Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern

Charities registered in England and Wales that are not companies are allowed under Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 to prepare receipts and payments accounts provided the charity's gross income is less than £250,000. Whilst the accounts for the current year show a gross income of less than £250,000 the gross income for the year to 31st March 2023 is forecast to exceed £250,000. In view of this the Trustees have decided to prepare these accounts on an accruals basis. No adjustments necessary to convert the opening figures from a Receipts and Payments basis to an accruals basis.

These financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with FRS102(2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS102)).

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

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

1 (b) Funds structure

Unrestricted income funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objects. Unrestricted funds include designated funds where the trustees, at their discretion, have set aside resources for a specific purpose

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with the specific restrictions and terms imposed by the grant awarding organisation or by donors. Details of the funds are provided in Note 10 to the accounts.

1 (c) Incoming resources

Recognition

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:-

- the Charity becomes legally entitled to the benefit or use of the resources;
- and inflow of economic benefit is probable; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability

Grants

Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant

Grants where there are performance or service deliverables required by the terms of the grant, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to payment through its performance.

Events and trading activities

Funds raised from events and trading activities are reported gross - i.e. before any related costs have been deducted from the proceeds.

Gift Aid Tax claims

These and other tax claims are included in the accounts at the same time as the cash donations to which they relate.

Volunteer help

Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services donated by volunteers has not been included in these accounts, except where the services provided are in the nature of professional services where a fee would otherwise be charged, in which case the donated service is valued at their chargeable rate

Investment income

Investment income is included when receivable.

Charitable trading activity

Incoming resources from charitable trading activity is accounted for when earned.

1 (d) Resources expended

Liability recognition.

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category

Irrecoverable VAT

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it was incurred

Costs of generating funds

Costs of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, or incurred in trading activities undertaken to raise funds.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both direct pay and non-pay costs and support costs relating to those activities.

Governance costs

These include the costs of the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, the costs of trustee meetings and cost of any legal advice to the trustees on governance or constitutional matters.

1 (e) Tangible fixed assets for use by the Charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least £1,000. They are valued at cost or else, for gifts-in-kind, at a reasonable estimate of their open market value on receipt.

Depreciation is calculated to write off the capitalised cost of fixed assets less their currently anticipated residual fair value over their estimated useful lives as follows:-

- Furniture, fixtures and fittings 5 years
- Computing equipment 3 years

1 (f) Pensions

Employees of the Charity are entitled to join a defined contribution "money purchase" scheme. The Charity's contribution is restricted to the contributions disclosed in Note 6. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end

2 INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total funds September 2020 to March 2021 £
2 (a) Voluntary income				
- donations	£ 16,929	£ 4,100	£ 21,029	£ 928
2 (b) Activities for generating funds				
- events	-	-	-	-
- trading income	-	-	-	70
	-	-	-	£ 70
2 (c) Incoming resources from charitable activities				
- grants receivable	£ 5,000	£ 149,948	£ 154,948	£ 17,453

Grant income is treated as "Restricted" as it has been given to fund specific items of expenditure. If there is an underspend on a grant then any surplus will be, with the agreement of the granting body, transferred to Unrestricted Funds.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total funds September 2020 to March 2021 £
3 (a) Costs of generating funds				
Premises costs				
- Equipment	5	48	53	
- Licences and fees	-	38	38	
- Rent	353	1,332	1,685	1,070
	<u>358</u>	<u>1,418</u>	<u>1,776</u>	<u>1,070</u>
- Trading expenses	-	-	-	-
- Fund raising costs	379	-	379	180
Total costs of generating funds	<u>£ 737</u>	<u>£ 1,418</u>	<u>£ 2,155</u>	<u>£ 1,250</u>
3 (b) Charitable activities				
General administration				
- Insurances	689	147	836	-
- Office rent	-	7,662	7,662	-
- Professional fees	1,940	862	2,802	-
- Phone and internet costs	15	10	25	-
- Equipment costs	21	1,786	1,807	-
- Stationery and office costs	1	117	117	776
	<u>2,665</u>	<u>10,583</u>	<u>13,248</u>	<u>776</u>
Project and activity costs				
-activities	1,339	-	1,339	-
- advertising and promotion	100	530	630	-
- event costs	140	6,458	6,598	-
- family expenses	7,192	1,475	8,667	-
- licences	1,300	928	2,228	5,118
	<u>10,071</u>	<u>9,392</u>	<u>19,463</u>	<u>5,118</u>
Staff and volunteer costs				
- staff salaries including pension and NIC	6,390	56,217	62,607	17,759
- staff expenses	-	297	297	-
- sub-contractors	2,890	3,853	6,743	-
- staff training	-	719	719	-
- volunteer costs and expenses	-	849	849	-
	<u>9,280</u>	<u>61,935</u>	<u>71,214</u>	<u>17,759</u>
Total cost of charitable activities	<u>£ 22,016</u>	<u>£ 81,910</u>	<u>£ 103,925</u>	<u>£ 23,653</u>
3 (c) Governance costs				
- Independent examiners fees	<u>£ 1,500</u>	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ 1,500</u>	<u>£ -</u>

4 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS AND TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION

During the year payments were made to the following Trustees for specific grant funded part time roles independent of their roles as Trustees of the charity:-

- Alex Kempton £13,406 (2021 - £4,200) for her role as Operations and Campaigns Manager with responsibility for the administration of the charity
- Rossana Leal £14,396 (2021 - £5,320) for her role as Project Development Officer with responsibility for the development of the Project

These payments have been fully funded from grants made specifically for the purpose of funding these roles and so none of the Unrestricted Funds of the charity have been used for the purpose of making these payments.

Alex Kempton and Rossana Leal both resigned as Trustees on 13th June 2022 but continue to support the Charity in their administrative roles.

No payments have been made to these individuals or to any other Trustees for their roles as Trustees of the Charity.

5 CORPORATION TAX

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

6 STAFF COSTS

	2022	September 2020
	£	to March 2021
		£
Wages and salaries	57,259	17,759
Social security costs	3,578	
Pension costs	1,770	
	<u>£62,607</u>	<u>£17,759</u>

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year was 4 (2021 - 2)

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

7 FIXED ASSETS

	Furniture & Fittings	Office Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
As at 1 April 2021	-	-	-
Additions in year	2,982	1,467	4,449
As at 31 March 2022	<u>2,982</u>	<u>1,467</u>	<u>4,449</u>
Depreciation			
As at 1 April 2021			
Charge for the year			
As at 31 March 2022	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2021	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ -</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2022	<u>£ 2,982</u>	<u>£ 1,467</u>	<u>£ 4,449</u>

8 DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Grants receivable	744	-
Sundry debtors	329	-
	<u>£1,073</u>	<u>£0</u>

9 CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Unrestricted Funds		
Independent examiners fees	1,500	-
Sundry creditors	-	-
	<u>1,500</u>	<u>-</u>
Restricted Funds		
Sundry creditors	422	-
	<u>£1,922</u>	<u>£0</u>

10 SUMMARY OF FUND MOVEMENTS

	Balance at 01-Apr-21 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers In/(out) £	Balance at 31-Mar-22 £
Restricted funds					
AB Charitable Trust	10,000	-	-	(10,000)	-
National Lottery Fund:-					
- Awards for All	(6,441)	-	(1,192)	7,633	-
- Reaching Communities	-	68,550	(38,596)	-	29,954
East Sussex County Council	-	25,000	(9,860)	-	15,140
Respond and Adapt	(1,293)			1,293	
EU AMIF - Together	1,387	24,882	(22,157)	(1,387)	2,725
Vulnerable Persons	17,596	15,087	(9,701)	(10,327)	12,655
Resettlement Program					
Sundry grant funded projects	5,470	20,529	(1,824)	(751)	23,424
	<u>26,719</u>	<u>154,048</u>	<u>(83,328)</u>	<u>(13,541)</u>	<u>83,898</u>
Unrestricted funds	678	21,929	(24,252)	13,541	11,895
	<u>£27,397</u>	<u>£175,976</u>	<u>£(107,580)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>£95,793</u>

11 SUMMARY OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets		4,449	4,449	-
Current assets	13,589	79,677	93,266	27,397
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	(1,694)	(228)	(1,922)	
Amounts falling due after one year			-	
	11,895	79,449	91,344	27,397
	£11,895	£83,898	£95,793	£27,397

12 MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE CHARITY AS A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION

The Trustees confirm that:-

- the charity has not given any financial guarantees to another organisation
- there are no debts outstanding at the year-end that represent a charge on the assets of the charity.