

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN

(Registered Charity - Registration Number:- 1191436)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023**

Reference and Administrative Information

Trustees

R. Correa
M. Kempton
B. Malaihollo
G. Miric
Y. Mohammad
I. S. Rubio

Charity Correspondent and Principal Address

Alex Kempton
The Refugee Buddy Project Hastings Rother and Wealden
Creative Media Centre
45 Robertson Street
HASTINGS
East Sussex TN34 1HL

Bankers

NatWest Bank plc

Independent Examiner

T. E. Reynolds FCA
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THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year to 31st March 2023

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.

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.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

Strategy and mission

The Refugee Buddy Project started in 2017, with the aim of creating a culture of welcome in Hastings and St Leonard's. In the last five years. We started as a community group welcoming people seeking refuge who had recently arrived in Hastings. Now, we are a refugee & migrant-led charity supporting families and individuals from refugee backgrounds with our buddy programme, advocacy, and financial & emotional support

Report on the activities for the year

We have continued to work to create a culture of welcome by recruiting, training and supporting volunteers to be buddies for people seeking refuge in the area. The buddies offer informal English conversation and support their partner to explore their new home and get involved in social activities. In the period covering this report we had 40 active local buddies matched with a person seeking refuge in the Hastings, Rother and Wealden areas, and a waiting list of volunteer buddies from the community, who are ready to be matched with someone seeking refuge.

We have built safe spaces for connection and community-building. The Dove Cafe is a warm, welcoming and communal space open to all that provides food and hot drinks on a pay-as-you-feel or free basis. At the cafe, we host a range of workshops and pop-up activities and showcase creative and artistic work exploring themes of refuge, migration, equity and justice. We also encourage participants to use the space to organise their own meetings, events and social activities, with the support of cafe staff.

We have created platforms for people to tell their own stories. For example, Stitch for Change (SFC) is a community sewing and patchwork storytelling project, inspired by the Chilean arpillera movement and through our extensive community engagement work throughout the year for Refugee Week in June. These projects allow people to share their personal stories of displacement and seeking refuge in a structured and supported environment and engage with the local community. Our project participants are encouraged to lead on developing their own activities, share their work with the community, through local exhibitions of the work produced. The project is currently engaged with participants from Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Hong Kong, Iraq and Honduras. The end of project shows have been attended by hundreds of people.

In 2022-2023 we engaged with 380 adult participants and 7 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children across Hastings Rother and Wealden from a variety of communities including the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Programme, and the Asylum Dispersal Area in Hastings.

We engaged with 144 active volunteers – these volunteers continued to be active from 2020-2021 or who registered, went through our clearing and induction process and then went on to be matched with a family and regularly buddied them, or volunteered at our social events and activities.

The total number of engagements across volunteers and participants is therefore 524, a number which is a significant achievement for our organisation especially as this number does not include people who have only come to events or are customers in the Community Café.

We continue to be a refugee and migrant led organisation; our activities are participant led with our Project staff playing a support and facilitation role. We continue to develop successful partnerships with EggTooth, the De La Warr Pavilion, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and are working for a second year with East Sussex County Council to deliver our programme for those people newly arrived on the Homes for Ukraine scheme as well as developing training for ESCC on the refugee experience and how it can inform practise across the corporation. We also continue to engage with other local service providers such as Seaview, Health in Mind and a variety of NHS providers who refer into our services, as well as national networks. We continue to develop our expertise in case work as part of the national Justice Together Program with a view to achieving a qualified OISC level 1 status.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

Community cohesion & Engagement

In November 2022 we launched The Dove Café. Having worked hard for several months to get the Community Café up and running, we were able to have an event which welcomed people from across the Community including local Councillors to celebrate the formal launch of this community space. Free Community Screening of Limbo Film May 2023 Stade Hall

Limbo is a 2020 British comedy-drama film, directed by Ben Sharrock. The film centres on four asylum seekers who are staying on a remote island in Scotland, and taking cultural awareness classes, while awaiting the processing of their refugee claims.

The film was followed with community buffet of traditional Syrian food, and an opportunity to socialise and discuss the film. People were asked to register online to reserve their ticket. It was a sold-out event with 40 people attending.

Community Fundraising events

In 2022 several of these were held to raise funds of our work in Hastings Rother and Wealden. Community donations received in 2021-2022 reached over £50,000.

“A Journey Home” was an evening of music & spoken word to raise funds for The Refugee Buddy Project.

The evening drew on the different cultural and musical influences, all related to a journey somewhere and finding a home to settle in. We All find refuge in our homes, should we be lucky to have one. Two, local, professional opera singers Chiara Vinci & Anthony Flaum & pianist Elizabeth Rowe took us on a musical journey from opera to music hall to jazz, interspersed with real-life images and stories from The Refugee Buddy Projects work.

Paris Grande Drag Bingo at The Nest

Organised by Paris Grande, this was an evening of bingo and drag performances which funds for The Refugee Buddy Project

Christmas Market 2022

Our Christmas Fair which was held again at Hastings Museum and Gallery in December 2022. There were 469 visitors at this event and increase of 167 from the previous year showing significant growth. There were 20 volunteers – six project participant and 14 volunteers – who helped throughout the day in various activities such as setting up, organising the stall holders and people management. There were also four project participants supported to sell goods on the day as stall holders. This engagement is again an increase on 2022 showing impressive growth year on year of our delivery.

We ran a variety of smaller events throughout the year including a repeat of the women's only Eid party we ran in Year 1 – run again as the women enjoyed it so much the previous year. This was again a big success with the women in our community who were able to come together in a private space and share food and dance together.

Over 40 local businesses and artists donated to our Christmas Raffle which this year made over £1000.

We had pop ups at the community café and have been able to engage with a number of participants who start off volunteering in the café, move on to become guest chef for the café, developing their employability skills and career options.

In total we have run five social events this year as well as our Refugee Week programme and have had four pop ups three by participants and one by a volunteer with refugee background, and have worked with four guest chefs in our participant pool.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

Thanks to the cost of living uplift we have been able to take on an additional member of staff in the café 18 hours a week to support our Community Café Development Manager who has been working hard to provide extra services to the community in this time of particular hardship.

In addition to the above thanks to an additional grant we have been able to secure our additional office space for longer, ensuring that we have a confidential office space in which to see and support our participants. This has been invaluable this year especially as a Home Office hotel was opened in Hastings in November 2022 and we were able to professionally and efficiently support the residents of this hotel with not only clothing and other necessities but also with applying for their financial support from the Home Office, which we would not have been able to do in such a professional manner were it not for this additional space.

We saw and supported 105 people who were placed in the hotel, completed individual needs assessments with each of them to ensure that their individual needs were met in a person centred and wholistic manner.

The Dove Community Café also provided a regular space for these residents to come and eat nutritious meals in a warm and friendly space.

Matching – Buddying

At the heart of what we do is the ongoing recruitment and training of local volunteers and matching with newly arriving people seeking refuge in Hastings, Rother and Wealden.

Volunteers are expected to meet with their refugee buddy a minimum of once a week and practice informal English conversation.

Number of matchings: 40

Number of informal English conversations taking place: 2000 hours

Once engaged through Matching participants have access to ongoing English language conversation through their 121 meetings with their buddy as well as through participating as volunteers or just attending the various community gatherings/events organised by the Refugee Buddy Project. Many of our project participants have also benefited from our partnership collaboration Together South with Groundwork South which offered employment preparation support and ESOL. We referred 44 people to this programme in 2022-2023

Case studies showing impact in:

1. Access to employment preparation opportunities: Adeel, Fatima, Emani
2. Improved confidence and ability in English language: Adeel, Haneen, Ulyana, Mila
3. General increased well being and self-confidence: Adeel, Haneen, Mila
4. Access to social activities and community: Fatima, Emani, Haneen, Ulyana, Mila

1. **Adeel** is a young Syrian photographer, who has been in the UK for the last three years. He joined the Refugee Buddy Project as he wanted to improve his English and develop his photography. Since joining the project and being matched with a buddy, his English skills and confidence have grown dramatically. He has gained the motivation and self-belief to pursue his photography and with the Support of a mentor has put on an exhibition of his work at a local cafe and at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery.
2. **Fatima** is originally from Sudan and lived in Lebanon for 16 years. She has been in the UK for three years with her husband and children. Since arriving, she has regularly attended The Refugee Buddy Project's social and cultural activities and begun cooking for events. With the support of the project, she has received 121 support in learning to read and write in English, regularly caters at events including Stitch for Change, and has hosted her own Sudanese lunch pop-up at a local cafe. The success of this led to a job offer from the cafe.
3. **Emani** is originally from Syria and lived in Egypt for seven years before coming to the UK two years ago. She joined The Refugee Buddy Project to improve her English and learn about self-employment in the UK. She has also taken Employment Preparation sessions, where she's learnt how to write a CV, how to look and apply for jobs and where to find official government guidance on self-employment. Through these sessions, Emani grew her confidence and gained the motivation to take the first steps towards starting her own catering business. Emani was also

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

involved in the Dove Cafe and with their support, completed several online training courses in food hygiene and allergens training, before planning a catering event in a local community kitchen. Her Syrian pop-up dinner served 40 customers.

4. **Haneen** was born in Syria and has lived in the UK since 2013. She joined the Refugee Buddy Project to improve her English and attended both one to one and group sessions. She has been matched with two buddies that she practices informal English with. Since joining the project, Haneen's English has improved and she has gained confidence in herself and her language ability. She has also been volunteering at social events and encouraged others to learn English and engage in local opportunities. Most recently, she has begun volunteering at our The Dove Community Cafe, where she is continuing to improve her English.
5. **Ulyana** is from Ukraine and came to the UK as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. She joined The Refugee Buddy Project to improve her English, while she was waiting to be able to enrol at college. She didn't speak English when she first came to the UK, but after meeting with her buddy weekly, she is now able to form simple sentences. She is very self-motivated and the introduction to English language has given her the confidence to supplement her own learning using online websites and apps. She has enjoyed getting to know her neighbourhood and has explored Hastings Old Town with her buddy.
6. **Mila** is a young woman from Ukraine, who was referred to us by another organisation. She was living in emergency accommodation after a hosting arrangement fell through. She felt very isolated there and didn't have any means of cooking, or even access to a kettle. She was also keen to improve her English and find work as soon as possible. With support from the project, she was referred for some online ESOL and employability classes with Together South. We also provided an emergency food package and toiletries, along with a kettle and cooking facilities. We were able to match Mila with one of our volunteers who lived locally who was a similar age, to help with English practise and settling into the area. Mila has now been here for several months and is much more confident in her English and ability to find work.

Refugee Week 2022

This year, Refugee Week (June 20th - 26th) saw a unique series of creative actions and events taking place in multiple locations across Hastings & St Leonards and beyond, which highlight and value the migrant experience, promoting the Refugee Week 2022 theme *healing through creativity and conversations*.

Over 18 organisations, 15 artists and dozens of local volunteers generously created and supported activities and events in locations across the town. All of these actions were coordinated by the Refugee Buddy Project.

Many events were free, though some did require reservations, with any profits from sales going to The Refugee Buddy Project. Activities included a pub quiz at The St Leonard, artists' talks and exhibitions at Stella Dore and The Big Yin galleries, films at Kino Teatr, creative drawing, photography, reading and clay work with Picnic, Black Butterfly, Afri-Co-Lab, St Leonards Ceramics and Suzie Zamit, and work from children at Ore Village Primary Academy was displayed at Project 78 galleries. There was also a film showing of Ukrainian film *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange* (with English subtitles) at The Electric Palace Cinema to celebrate the new Ukrainian arrivals in our town.

The Refugee Buddy Project organised five main events and encouraged other local organisations to highlight the plight of people seeking refuge through their social media channels as well as in organising events or taking part in the activities we delivered.

Mr Gay Syria Free Film Screening and Panel Discussion

To Celebrate Refugee Week and June PRIDE Month, which falls in June we worked with Hastings Museum & Art Gallery to offer an evening at the cinema with some marvellous traditional Syrian food. We screened Mr. Gay Syria a documentary which follows two gay Syrian refugees who are trying to rebuild their lives.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

The screening was followed by a panel discussion hosted by Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, and included Laura Clarke, co-Founder and Director of EggTooth as well as one of our project participants who has direct experience of the themes of film.

Stitch for Change ran fortnightly workshops on Friday afternoons starting in February and we each created a patchwork square featuring an object or image which tells part of our individual story. The resulting patchwork squares from this exhibition, displayed in the museum over the summer.

'Where are you really from?', Stitch For Change Patchwork Story Telling Exhibition at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery.

The exhibition explored our roots, stories and sense of identity. This project invited members of the community to come together to share and sew. People were asked to bring an image or object to use in their sewing and final piece to represent a memory or experience of their past.

This project was a collaboration between Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and The Refugee Buddy Project, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund.

The work was on display for Refugee Week 2022 and the Sanctuary Festival, which takes place in the museum grounds on Sunday 26 June.

Faith, Family, Community and Home - an exhibition at The Nest.
Photos capturing life in his new home by young Syrian photographer Nour Alezou.

This exhibition presented the work of Nour Alezou and was the result of a mentoring programme run by The Refugee Buddy Project. This mentoring programme saw Shannon Ghannam of Magnum Photos working with Nour over the course of several months to explore themes around faith, family, community and home.

All Refugees Welcome - a look at dominant media narratives and the creation of public attitudes towards refugees and migrants.

Held in the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill on Sea, this panel discussion sought to ask questions about the role images have played in our understanding of migration and asylum seeking in the UK, the dominant narratives that prevail and the counter narratives that emerge. Most importantly we will discussed the impact these narratives have on individuals, families and communities settling in the United Kingdom.

This panel discussion was for anyone interested in this subject but particularly will look at visual strategies for those working in refugee support services or the media reporting on these issues. Speaking at this panel were: Jess Crombie, Amak Mahmoodian, Daniel Trilling, Maz Saleem, Shannon Ghannam and Rossana Leal.

Community Bike Ride and Picnic

This was sea-front bike ride from the Labyrinth Bike Project at Goat Ledge to our new Dove Cafe, where we enjoyed a free community feast cooked by Palestinian-Syrian chef Momo

People were asked to bring their own bikes or borrow one for the ride from the Labyrinth Project.

Justice Together Partnership

This partnership funds 1x part time Case Worker role offering case work support of the local refugee and migrant community. This person is working towards achieve level 1 OISC qualification which would qualify them to give Level 1 immigration advice. Our aim is to get most of our staff qualified to this level so we can provide this advice locally. There are currently 2 qualified OISC level 4 persons in the Hastings Rother and Wealden areas.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

In this period the Caseworker took on 72 cases with the following breakdown:

- 21 immigration
- 22 housing
- 6 welfare benefits assistance
- 3 education
- 8 health-related
- 11 other including 1 divorce and applying for driving licenses and Blue Badges.

Chatsworth Hotel

In November 2022 we were alerted the arrival of 81 asylum seeking men being accommodated at a local hotel on Hastings seafront. We immediately visited the hotel with our team and community language interpreters.

We registered many of them and conducted initial needs assessments. We established all of the men were in need of legal representation, at least 3 men need urgent medical appointments, including one with concerning mental health issues. Many did not have mobile phones and reported these had been taken from them upon arrival in the UK by authorities. We were able to give the men mobile phones, access to legal support, support with filling in the S95 forms so they can access the financial support to which they are entitled, GP and dentist appointments, appointments at opticians and buying of glasses, access to interpreters.

Our individual needs assessments also established all the men needed warm clothes, including shoes as many of them were still wearing flip flops, they needed personal hygiene supplies and telephones. None appeared to be in receipt of financial support from the Home Office - despite being to entitled to this in hotels prior to dispersal - which meant they have absolutely no money.

We also established that there were some young people there who ages had been assessed by the Home Office as in their 20s, but they told us that that they are under 18. We referred these young people to East Sussex County Council and they were removed from the hotel having undergone age assessments.

We invited the men to our café where they could eat for free and have a warm place to socialise.

We took part in the Emergency Hotels meetings coordinated by East Sussex Migration Partnership attended by all the heads of services and were able to update and coordinate our support.

We have since coordinated huge local community support for these men including offers of free hot drinks in local cafes near the hotel, free kitchen space so the men can cook for themselves ingredients funded by our project funds and a collection of perishables and snacks. Many of the men have volunteered in the Dove Café and at our events.

GCSE School

In September of 2022 we started GCSE school in our new offices. Run by volunteers on a Wednesday afternoon GCSE school is student led and a support session for children doing their GCSE. Nine students attended regularly and were supported in English writing, sciences and maths. GCSE school was started as a direct result of our Listening and Speaking Report carried out last year.

Summary

Our many social activities, meetings and The Dove Café continue to be supported by the local community. We continue to have a waiting list of local volunteers who want to be buddies to newly arriving people seeking refuge. We brought in over £50,000 in community donations in this period.

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Review of period

The accounts reflect the significant increase in the activity of the Project in the year with the total income increasing to £411,944 from £175,977 and the total expenditure increasing to £333,239 from £107,080.

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 has been expanded to now fund four part-time roles – 2 Developmental posts, a Café Manager and a Café Assistant 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 received a one-year extension from AMIF at a reduced rate for delivery until December 2023. This programme has now come to an end.

We have successfully applied to the Justice Together Fund in partnership with Migrants Organise and POMOC for continuation funding for our part-time Caseworker who will train to become OISC qualified in immigration casework. This funding now runs April 2022 – April 2026.

We received further funding to deliver support for people arriving on the Homes for Ukraine scheme from ESCC delivering from July 2023 – July 2024.

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

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

THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 (continued)

Reference and administrative information

In June 2022 both Rossana Leal and Alex Kempton stood down from the Board of Trustees. Rossana Leal as the founder of the project with the support of Alex Kempton both ran the project and were responsible for recruiting a board of Trustees. Once this was achieved it was felt the right time for both to step down in order to lead on the strategy and delivery of the project. Rossana Leal is now the CEO and Alex Kempton is the Director of Operations and Campaigns. We also have additional staff and our new organisational structure can be found below

The names of the Trustees throughout the period and at the date of this report were as follows:-

Dr Mursheda Chowdhury (resigned 1st June 2023)
Rodrigo Correa (appointed 8th September 2023)
Christine Harmer-Brown (resigned 1st June 2023)
Lisa Hickman (resigned 17th August 2023)
Alexandra Kempton (resigned 13th June 2022)
Martin Kempton
Rossana Leal (resigned 13th June 2022)
Barbara Malaihollo (appointed 8th September 2023)
Geraldine Miric (appointed 18 September 2023)
Yaser Mohammed
Chantal Refahi (resigned 8th September 2023)
Irene Zarza Rubio (appointed 8th September 2023)

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

Y. M. MOHMMAD
Trustee and Chair

M. KEMPTON
Trustee

28th January 2024

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 2023

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Project") for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out on pages 12 to 19

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

28th January 2024

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Voluntary income	2(a)	36,775	1,200	37,975	21,029
Activities for generating funds	2(b)	12,614	-	12,614	-
Grants received	2(c)	30,000	331,354	361,354	154,948
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		79,389	332,554	411,943	175,977
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds	3(a)	8,400	17,983	26,383	2,155
Charitable activities	3(b)	59,271	246,310	305,581	103,926
Governance costs	3(c)	1,275	-	1,275	1,500
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		68,946	264,293	333,239	107,581
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES		10,443	68,261	78,704	68,396
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	10	2,941	(2,941)		-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		13,384	65,320	78,704	68,396
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	10	11,895	83,899	95,794	27,397
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	10	£25,279	£149,219	£174,498	£95,793

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 14 to 19 form part of these accounts

**THE REFUGEE BUDDY PROJECT HASTINGS ROTHER AND WEALDEN
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2023**

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	7	7,348	4,449
		<u>7,348</u>	<u>4,449</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	2,017	1,073
Short term deposits		-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		182,665	92,193
		<u>184,682</u>	<u>93,266</u>
CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year	9	(17,532)	(1,922)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>167,150</u>	<u>91,344</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>£174,498</u>	<u>£95,793</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Unrestricted	10	25,279	11,895
Restricted	10	149,219	83,898
		<u>£174,498</u>	<u>£95,793</u>

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

Y. M. MOHMMAD
Trustee and Chair

28th January 2024

M. KEMPTON
Trustee

The notes on pages 14 to 19 form part of these accounts

1 Accounting policies

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

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 10 years
- Computing and office equipment 5 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 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
2 (a) Voluntary income				
- donations	£ 36,775	£ 1,200	£ 37,975	£ 21,029
2 (b) Activities for generating funds				
- events	-	-	-	-
- The Dove Café income	12,614	-	12,614	-
	<u>12,614</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,614</u>	<u>£ -</u>
2 (c) Incoming resources from charitable activities				
- grants receivable	£ 30,000	£ 331,354	£ 361,354	£ 154,948

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.

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
3 (a) Costs of generating funds				
The Dove Café - costs	8,111	16,754	24,865	1,776
Other fund raising costs	289	1,229	1,518	379
Total costs of generating funds	<u>£ 8,400</u>	<u>£ 17,983</u>	<u>£ 26,383</u>	<u>£ 2,155</u>
3 (b) Charitable activities				
General administration				
- Insurances	642	-	642	836
- Office rent	4,491	21,493	25,984	7,662
- Professional fees	2,166	1,007	3,173	2,802
- Phone and internet costs	292	724	1,016	25
- Equipment costs	967	3,259	4,226	1,807
- Stationery and office costs	1,194	1,571	2,766	117
- Depreciation	775	-	776	-
	<u>10,528</u>	<u>28,055</u>	<u>38,583</u>	<u>13,249</u>
Project and activity costs				
- activities	18,406	15,371	33,776	1,339
- advertising and promotion	636	3,491	4,127	630
- event costs	399	8,912	9,311	6,598
- family expenses	18,169	8,809	26,978	8,667
- licences	149	3,639	3,789	2,228
	<u>37,759</u>	<u>40,222</u>	<u>77,981</u>	<u>19,462</u>
Staff and volunteer costs				
- staff salaries including pension and NIC	6,694	153,950	160,644	62,607
- staff expenses	491	6,928	7,419	297
- sub-contractors	3,675	11,005	14,680	6,743
- staff training	-	2,808	2,808	719
- volunteer costs and expenses	124	3,341	3,465	849
	<u>10,984</u>	<u>178,033</u>	<u>189,017</u>	<u>71,215</u>
Total cost of charitable activities	<u>£ 59,271</u>	<u>£ 246,310</u>	<u>£ 305,581</u>	<u>£ 103,926</u>
3 (c) Governance costs				
- Independent examiners fees	<u>£ 1,275</u>	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ 1,275</u>	<u>£ 1,500</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 £7,138 (2022 - £13,406) for her role as Operations and Campaigns Manager with responsibility for the administration of the charity

- Rossana Leal £7,138 (2022 - £14,396) 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 during the year.

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

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	149,470	57,259
Social security costs	7,931	3,578
Pension costs	3,243	1,770
	<u>£160,644</u>	<u>£62,607</u>

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year was 5 (2022 - 4)

7 FIXED ASSETS

	Furniture & Fittings	Office Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
As at 1 April 2021	2,982	1,467	4,449
Additions in year	3,674	0	3,674
As at 31 March 2022	<u>6,656</u>	<u>1,467</u>	<u>8,123</u>
Depreciation			
As at 1 April 2021	-	-	-
Charge for the year	(482)	(293)	(775)
As at 31 March 2022	<u>(482)</u>	<u>(293)</u>	<u>(775)</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2022	<u>£ 2,982</u>	<u>£ 1,467</u>	<u>£ 4,449</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2023	<u>£ 6,174</u>	<u>£ 1,174</u>	<u>£ 7,348</u>

8 DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Grants receivable	1,761	744
Sundry debtors	256	329
	<u>£2,017</u>	<u>£1,073</u>

9 CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Unrestricted Funds		
Independent examiners fees	2,775	1,500
Sundry creditors	1,848	194
	<u>4,623</u>	<u>1,694</u>
Restricted Funds		
Sundry creditors	12,910	228
	<u>£17,532</u>	<u>£1,922</u>

10 SUMMARY OF FUND MOVEMENTS

	Balance at 01-Apr-22 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers In/(out) £	Balance at 31-Mar-23 £
Restricted funds					
Arts Council - Refugee Week					
2023	-	27,000	(4,147)	-	22,853
Blue Thread	-	20,000	(5,464)	-	14,536
East Sussex County Council	15,140	114,956	(95,685)	15,992	50,404
Sussex Community Council	-	10,000	(1,183)	-	8,817
National Lottery	29,954	107,627	(94,810)	-	42,771
Ground Works/Together	2,725	21,303	(22,736)	-	1,291
Vulnerable Persons					
Resettlement Program	12,655	(744)	(9,602)	89	2,398
Sundry grant funded projects	23,424	32,413	(30,666)	(19,022)	6,149
	<u>83,898</u>	<u>332,555</u>	<u>(264,293)</u>	<u>(2,941)</u>	<u>149,219</u>
Unrestricted funds	<u>11,895</u>	<u>79,389</u>	<u>(68,946)</u>	<u>2,941</u>	<u>25,279</u>
	<u>£95,793</u>	<u>£411,944</u>	<u>£(333,239)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>£174,498</u>

11 OTHER FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Total future minimum payments under non-cancellable operating leases

	2023 £	2022 £
Leasehold property - leases expiring within 2 - 5 years	<u>£18,921</u>	<u>-</u>

12 SUMMARY OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	7,348	-	7,348	4,449
Current assets	22,553	162,129	184,682	93,266
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	(4,623)	(12,910)	(17,532)	(1,922)
Amounts falling due after one year			-	
	17,931	149,219	167,150	91,344
	£25,279	£149,219	£174,498	£95,793

13 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.