

# LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

## TRUSTEES' FIRST REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

25<sup>th</sup> June 2022

### Our mission

In 2021, we achieved the status of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). So Lichfield District City of Sanctuary is a charity affiliated to the national City of Sanctuary UK and registered with the Charity Commission. Our mission can be summarised as being:

- 1. To relieve the needs of refugees and asylum seekers resident in Lichfield by providing a network, services and support; and*
- 2. To promote equality and diversity in the public space, providing activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds and to deepen relationships between the host community, refugees and asylum seekers, and other marginalised people.*

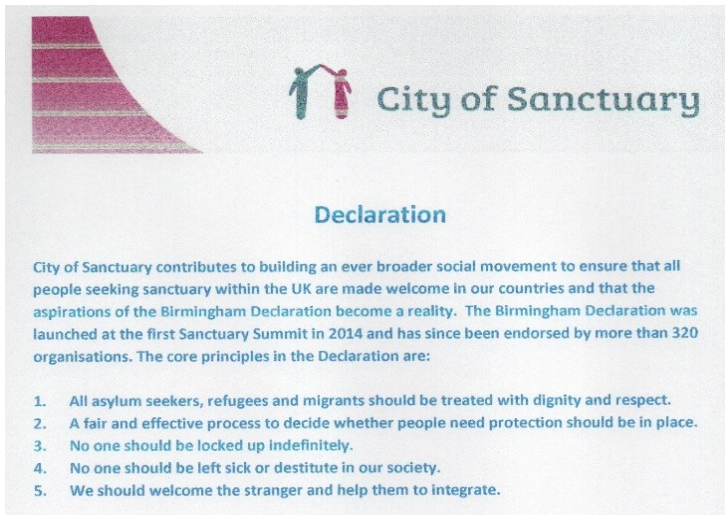
We were registered on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 with the Registered Charity Number 1194691

### Our history

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2019, a meeting organised by Lichfield Inter-Faith Forum attracted a wide range of people to Boley Park Community Hall interested in establishing Lichfield and district as a city of sanctuary. Founder of the City of Sanctuary movement, the Reverend Dr Inderjit Bhogal explained the background to its growth since 2005. At the end of the meeting, chaired by the Reverend Warren Bardsley, it was agreed to pursue the setting-up of a local group to be affiliated to the national network.

A further gathering on the 20<sup>th</sup> May brought regional organiser of City of Sanctuary UK Ben Margolis to Lichfield. At this meeting, guests were invited to commit to contribute to the initiative.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> September, Warren Bardsley and Cathy Wood led a workshop during which participants signed up to a declaration of principle.



Work on raising awareness of the new organisation throughout the district began, including a well-attended social occasion in January with catering provided by one of our Syrian families. Direct support was offered in the form of bedding for children, placement in a Garrick Theatre workshop, providing transport to hospitals and health clinics, and in partnership with Lichfield Re:Cycle, bicycles for adults and children.

However, plans for events and projects to be followed up in 2020 had to be postponed or abandoned in March and significantly slowed down development through into 2021.

The Board agreed to use the 'downtime' forced on us to prepare the organisation for an application for charitable status.

### **Forming the charity**

Work began in January 2021 in gathering together the information and structures we would need to apply to the Charities Commission. A Board of 6 trustees was formed in June and we were registered on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 with the Registered Charity Number 1194691. The first official Trust Board meeting took place, with all participants suitably PPE'd and socially distanced, on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, with Inderjit Bhogal Zooming an inspiring message to the trustees.

### **Our achievements**

Under our first object, we have continued to provide support to the Syrian families that have been in Lichfield since 2018. At the request of Lichfield Refugee Aid, we have merged with them and jointly deliver practical help in general settlement issues, supplementing the statutory provisions of Refugee Action and Spring Housing Association. The statutory provision provided through Staffordshire County Council is planned to be withdrawn gradually until next year, when the families will be assumed to be self-sufficient.

In October, Lichfield became the first community in Staffordshire to receive Afghan families escaping the human disaster of the withdrawal of western troops from Afghanistan. The horrific scenes in Kabul and at Bagram Airport in the summer cannot have escaped anyone's notice. The UK agreed to take just 15,000 families, a tiny minority of those who had been working with the occupying armies and the government. Staffordshire has accepted 25 families. The Citizens' Resettlement scheme, announced in August, was not activated until many months later.

We already had in place a Response Team of experienced volunteers – Jude Killip & Janet Crews from Refugee Aid, Cathy Wood, and new recruits Neil Kemp and Ulla Stede, both of whom are hugely experienced ESOL teachers providing free face-to-face English teaching

tailored to the needs of the families. These 5, now joined by Pam Tomlinson and supported by other members, have been working extraordinarily hard to supplement the provision of the organisations contracted by Staffordshire CC. We are very grateful to many others who have stepped in to provide clothing, furnishings and other essentials. We also note the support of local groups – voluntary organisations such as Lichfield Life Church and Wade Street Church, Curborough Community Association, Lichfield Food Bank and OneLichfield – and local businesses such as ABD Carpets in Dam Street, M & I Domestic Appliances and Richer Sounds. Greenhill Health Centre, Lichfield Library and the local DWP staff have all stepped up to help the families to settle here in their new homes. The Afghan refugees are often at risk here, as well as their families remaining in the country, many in hiding, and the trauma of their departure will stay with them for a long time. Welcome to them all – and thank you to those of you who have been contributing in money or in personal support to them.

Our second object of presenting the culture of Lichfield and its surrounding villages as a diverse and welcoming community has been, necessarily, much affected by the pandemic. But we have developed excellent partnerships and understandings with The Hub at St Mary's, the Garrick Theatre, Curborough Community Centre, Wade Street Church, Lichfield Life Church, Lichfield Food Festival, Lichfield Library, One Lichfield, Lichfield Foodbank, and members of the three councils: Lichfield District Council, Lichfield City Council and Burntwood Town Council. With their support and others, we hope soon to gain official 'City of Sanctuary' status. But also we hope to begin a programme of events and campaigns that we have been keen to get to grips with since our foundation in late 2019.

We take our second objective seriously. This involves developing relationships with other organisations around the district and sharing our message with them. We have met groups and organisations throughout the last three years, such as Lichfield Garrick Theatre, South Staffordshire College, Rocklands School and Willows Primary School, Lichfield Churches Together, Pathway Project, Lichfield Cathedral, Places of Welcome, Lichfield Mosque, Burntwood Lions, Lichfield Sorooptimists, Lichfield Chamber of Commerce, Lichfield Cathedral School.

We see our role here as crucial to the cultural atmosphere of Lichfield and district. We have challenged the inadvertent exclusion of minorities of different kinds from publications, and the sadly frequent emergence of racist language and attitudes towards the travelling families that regularly traverse the district. As the pandemic restrictions ease, we can begin to plan events, exhibitions and shows that bring our work to the attention of more and more people.

### **Growing the organisation and taking the community with us**

Since our formal registration with the Charities Commission, we have

- Become an associate member of Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services and a member of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Recruited more than 40 local people and organisations as members who work diligently to provide support, welcome and sanctuary in the area
- Ensured that all members of the Response Group have Enhanced DBS certification status
- Organised events to welcome members and raise funds for small business 'start-ups' (Syrian Food in Lichfield) and additional ESOL provision
- Welcomed two Syrian refugees on to the charity's management group
- Welcomed Afghan families to Lichfield District

Lichfield District does not have many 'officially recognised' refugees – currently, 2 Syrian and 2 Afghan families – although we would like to welcome more. This does, however, mean that in the absence of a settled refugee community to receive newcomers, the need for significant and consistent support from members of the host community, especially during the early days, is crucial. We work hard to get the balance right between direct support, working alongside and promoting independence. With the fourth anniversary of the arrival of our Syrian families just past, LDCoS volunteers continue to support by, as required:

- Assisting with on-line forms – UC/Job Applications
- Assisting with food shopping – there is no Halal provider in Lichfield
- Providing transport to difficult-to-access medical appointments
- Providing practical support – testing, delivering food, throughout Covid infection
- Arranging leisure opportunities for children
- Supporting with ESOL tuition
- Fundraising to support business opportunities & enhanced ESOL provision

We are now working closely with both Afghan families – one since October, the other since January – and are supporting by:

- Sourcing additional essential clothing, furniture and household items
- Raising funds for TV licences
- Supporting families with school and pre-school enrolment
- Introducing families to local services – playgroups/library/community groups/food bank/leisure venues
- Arranging ESOL classes with volunteer ESOL tutors
- Assisting with on-line forms
- Attending meetings with families
- Supporting adults to access Covid booster vaccinations and essential hospital appointments

Many local people – members and otherwise – have contributed to the resettlement of our Afghan families with gifts of time, goods, expertise and friendship. No-one that we have asked for help has ever refused. They are touching many lives – as our Syrian families continue to do.

We also found ourselves doing outreach into the Tamworth area where a family member of one of our Afghan adults was unceremoniously lodged by Solihull Borough Council one night, along with his wife, elderly mother-in-law and four children in a budget hotel with no meal provision and no recourse to funds. We succeeded in persuading the council to find suitable accommodation for them within two weeks, ensuring that they were fed and clothed in the meantime.

*Thank you to all the wonderful Response Team: Jude, Janet, Cathy, Pam, Neil & Uille.*

### **Offering a home to Ukrainian refugees**

We are all grateful to local people who have already managed to – or are about to – register their interest. Thank you so much for doing that. We have received a number of offers that we

have passed on where appropriate. This is nationally a problematic area, but we have been following the efforts of a dedicated group of local residents to work together to support hosts and refugees. We have set up a ring-fenced fund to provide ESOL and other fundamental needs for Ukrainian arrivals – mainly at the moment women and children. The Lichfield Garrick Theatre made a generous offer by putting on a variety show in May that dedicated all proceeds after expenses to the Ukrainian cause, shared between the UNHCR Emergency Fund and ourselves. At the time of writing, we have a dedicated fund of around £4,000 for this work.

### **Council recognition**

The advent of new refugees, and possibly more people from Ukraine, makes it all the more imperative that we work closely with the local authorities – the three councils that cover our district. We have now instituted regular meetings with Cllr Richard Cox, Cabinet Member for Community Issues, of Lichfield District Council.

Lichfield City Council has passed a resolution declaring “its support for the vision and principles of Lichfield District City of Sanctuary” and has appointed a cross-party group of representatives on the group. They are Cllrs Hugh Ashton, Deb Baker and Colin Ball. If you meet them, let them know you are a member!

We have already had talks with members of Burntwood Town Council and hope soon to set up a similar formal relationship with them.

### **Projects and events: Francis Barber**

Many of you will know that Francis Barber was a valued servant and friend to our own Dr Johnson. After the good doctor’s death, Barber came to Lichfield with his wife and children. He is, therefore, as far as we know the first named black man to seek refuge in Lichfield. Both the Birthplace Museum and the Johnson Society have worked for a number of years to set up a suitable memorial to him. Thanks to two of our members, Professor Ann Hughes and Pam Tomlinson, we have been able to put a proposal to other partners, including LCC, LDC, The Johnson Society, OneLichfield and Cedric Barber, many times great-grandson to Francis. We hope this will be supported and we can get this done reasonably soon. Barber set up a (sadly, not very successful school) in Burntwood and we hope to get the Town Council’s agreement to put a plaque somewhere there too.

### **Membership**

A membership scheme was introduced by the Board in October 2021 and we have now more than forty signed-up members. Organisations are invited to join with us as partners and OneLichfield, Wade Street Church, Lichfield ReCycle and Curborough Community Association have done so to date.

No subscription is necessary but commitment to our aims is required and donations are invited.

### **Finance**

From the summer of 2021, when local people were invited to support one of our Syrian families in a venture to rent a stall at Lichfield Food Festival, we have set up arrangements to maintain a financially viable organisation. Currently, every duty is conducted by volunteers, but our growth has been very rapid – growing in harmony with our ambitions to provide a worthwhile service – and there has now come a time when we need to engage some paid worker/s. This would depend on a guaranteed regular income through grants and standing order donations. The new Board will be addressing this as a priority.

The first set of accounts prepared by our invaluable new administrative worker, Rosemary Bishop, is attached. The format meets Charities Commission requirements for small charities. With the experience of six months of donations and expenditure, the finance team is working on the preparation of an outline budget for 2022-23.

## **Legal status**

The Board has approved the following policies for the organisation:

- Data Protection
- Disclosure and Barring Service certification for volunteers
- Equality
- Health and Safety (including Risk Assessment)
- Safeguarding
- Trustees Code of Conduct

These are available on request from the secretary. Some further policies are needed – see below. The Board has taken out Public and Employee Liability with an experienced specialist insurance company with local offices.

To ensure common and safe practices, the Board will need to prepare, in consultation with the Response Team, a Volunteer Policy and Code of Conduct for volunteers.

## **The future**

We thank the original trustees who took up their places in June 2021, Warren Bardsley, Helen Barton, Laura Evans, Shalim Kharim and Anthony Wilson. Margaret Barratt was co-opted in March 2020. Regulations require that all the first trustees stand down at the first Annual General Meeting.

The following have, at the time of writing, agreed to be nominated or renominated:

Warren Bardsley, Margaret Barratt, Rosemary Bishop, Laura Evans, Shalim Kharim, Paula Knight, Sue Smith. Others are being approached.

The Board will seek to ensure that refugees, asylum-seekers and other incomers to the district play key roles in the trusteeship, leadership and management of the charity. It will encourage all members to become actively involved in its work.

The Board will continue to develop the membership of the charity and encourage local organisations to enter into partnership with them. They will ensure that awareness of the charity's role continues to grow throughout the district and beyond.

The Board will develop clear decision-making structures including a Leadership Group with decision-making capacity and will empower the elected Action Group to manage the day-to-day running of the organisation.

The Board will hope to engage a paid part-time advocacy worker/lead manager, and a paid part-time administrator/book-keeper to ensure the smooth and efficient management and development of the charity.

The Board will, when appropriate, apply for full membership of City of Sanctuary UK.

The Board will encourage and work with the three local councils of Lichfield District, Lichfield City and Burntwood Town to be recognised as local authorities of sanctuary.

The Board will seek to develop local organisations into membership of local and national streams of sanctuary, including faith centres, schools, health centres, theatres, libraries and museums, colleges and universities, arts, shops.

## **Conclusion**

Lichfield District City of Sanctuary believes in nurturing a culture of welcome and a vision of the richness of diversity. We believe that social cohesiveness can be enhanced by cultural fluidity. We believe in a safe environment where all have rights and responsibilities. There are now more than 100 million people in the world who have been forcibly displaced from their homes – whose homes have become, in the words of refugee poet Warsan Shire, “the mouth of a shark”. We believe such people are entitled to risk-free passage to a safe environment where a welcome awaits that accords dignity and respect to all. We look forward to continuing our work locally and nationally to achieve this vision.

## **Trustees**

The following trustees were appointed on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021:

Warren Bardsley  
Helen Barton (resigned 6.3.2022)  
Laura Evans  
Shalim Kharim  
Anthony Wilson  
Margaret Barratt (appointed 24.3.2022)

The trustees stand down at this first Annual General Meeting, as required by the Constitution (Para 13 [1])





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Lichfield District City of Sanctuary

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## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

Period start date  
06/04/2021

To

Period end date  
05/04/2022

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	1,251	-	-	1,251	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising Events	-	-	-	-	-
Bank interest/dividend(s)	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	1,251	-	-	1,251	-
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	1,251	-	-	1,251	-
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Refugee Support	325	-	-	325	-
Bank Charges	2	-	-	2	-
Cost of Fundraising Events	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	327	-	-	327	-
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	327	-	-	327	-
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	924	-	-	924	-
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	924	-	-	924	-



## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Fusion Credit Union	863	-	-
	Petty Cash	61	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

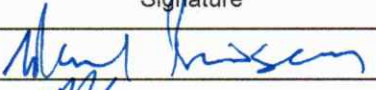

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	WARREN R BARDREY	23/5/22
	LAURA M EVANS	23/5/22