

Hastings City of Sanctuary

Registered Charity Number 1200852

Annual Accounts

for the period

1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

Contents:

Organisational information
Trustees Annual Report
Receipts & Payments account
Statement of Assets & Liabilities
Notes
Independent Examiner's report
General ledger

Audit numbers including voided

Hastings Voluntary Action
Jackson Hall
Portland Place
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1QN

Hastings City of Sanctuary
Organisational information for the year ended 31 March 2025

Name of charity:	Hastings City of Sanctuary Registered Charity Number 1200852
Legal form:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Governing document:	Constitution (last amended 6 September 2022)
Address:	c/o Hastings voluntary Action Jackson Hall, Portland Place , Hastings TN34 1QN
Committee members:	Chair : Polly Gifford Treasurer : Julie Todd Olivia Cavanagh Jane Grimshaw Rachel Lowden
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank - PO Box 1000 Andover BX1 1LT
Independent Examiner:	Laura Dawson Finance Manager, Hastings Voluntary Action Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, TN34 1QN
Objects:	The objects of the CIO are to promote the following, for the public benefit: 1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and/or co-ordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community. 2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Hastings and surrounding areas by acting as an umbrella and resource for local refugee support services. 3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum. 4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.
Reserves policy:	Hastings City of Sanctuary aims to keep a sum in reserve to cover unforeseen debts or unrecoverable expenses. The current level deemed to be prudent is £1,500. This policy is reviewed annually.

Hastings City of Sanctuary

The Report of the Trustees

for the year ended 31st March 2025

Hastings City of Sanctuary Review of the Year 2024/25

Hastings City of Sanctuary (known locally as Hastings Community of Sanctuary / HCoS) is a volunteer-run Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) committed to building a culture of welcome for people seeking sanctuary and refuge in Hastings and surrounding area. We work to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum, run collections for essential items and raise funds to support local projects.

Our projects include the annual **Sanctuary Festival**, **The People's Boutique** and the **Sanctuary Awards**.

We campaign for a fair and humane asylum system, including more safe and legal routes for people to seek asylum in the UK. Once here, we believe that people should be housed and supported in local communities and be able to work and contribute to those communities, while their claims are assessed.

HCoS grew out of community group Hastings Supports Refugees and joined the national City of Sanctuary movement in 2017. Hastings Supports Refugees now sits under the umbrella of HCoS. We work closely with other voluntary sector organisations and agencies. Key partnerships include The Refugee Buddy Project Hastings, Rother & Wealden, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, East Sussex Library Service, Hastings Voluntary Action / Links Project, Hasting Borough Council and Community of Sanctuary UK.

Key Activities and Highlights for 2024/25

- **Sanctuary Festival 2024**

On 23 June we held the eighth edition of Sanctuary Festival and the fourth to be hosted by Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, with 2000 people attending over the course of the day. The festival supported 65 artists, including 20 with lived experience of the UK asylum system, 74 community participants, and 35 volunteers. 19 local groups and organisations had stalls at the event including The Refugee Buddy Project, Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Women's Voice and Freedom From Torture.

The music line-up included *Fol'klor Musiqaa*, a unique Syrian / Ukrainian collaboration between festival favourites Jamal & Alaa and duo Dina & Polina. Also *Sanctuary Sounds*, a new Hastings-based international group that came together specially for the festival. The international flavour continued with Shiva Nova's *Orchestra From Everywhere* and traditional Ukrainian folk music from *Culbaba Theatre* based in Bexhill.

[We were very excited to be working for a second year with Hear Me Out, who run music workshops with people in immigration detention centres, contingency accommodation and asylum hotels. Band from the Barracks are a group of musicians currently living in temporary accommodation at Napier Barracks in Folkestone, Kent who have been making music together in weekly workshops with Hear Me Out.](#)

With community choirs *Soundwaves* and *The Shady Pines* and singer/songwriter *Charlie Austen*, the *Fat Tuesday Second Line Youth Band*, the day closed with the fantastic drumming group YPPFDs.

There were lots of creative things to do throughout the day including activities from Radiator Arts, circus and drumming workshops and storytelling sessions. Our special project was the Sanctuary Fashion Show, created by a group of women from Sudan, Ukraine, Syria and Hastings with traditional and contemporary costume, some made specially for the event.

Inside the museum we collaborated with the team from Playing The Race Card, who created the *Black Joy! Up Close and Personal* in the main gallery, a thought-provoking exhibition that highlighted over 40 talented black artists from the Southeast. Curator Lorna Hamilton-Brown gave an exhibition tour and then chaired a discussion with some of the artists involved. Featuring Fatima Esayli, Gabrielle Anderson and Rahim Amartei, this insightful conversation explored how the migration backgrounds of these artists have influenced their artistic creations, and how the concept of 'our home' serves as a guiding force in their creative practice.

The second panel discussion explored what makes a place feel like home, and the role partnership between the community and institutions like museums and libraries in creating a culture of welcome. With Rossana Leal, Founder and Director of the Refugee Buddy Project, and Gill Caroe from Sanctuary Eastbourne, Chaired by Festival Organiser Polly Gifford.

We then had a special performance from the Hands Up Project called **Welcome to Earth**. For many years the Hands up Project has supported children in Gaza to create short plays in English which can be performed live online. We are presented two such plays: 'We will wait until they open the gate' and 'One world different stories' performed by children in Hastings, Directed by Ali Lane. Hands Up Project Founder & Artistic Coordinator Nick Bilbrough shared some of the incredible drama work that has been created by young people in Gaza in the past few months.

- **Hastings Museum & Art Gallery becomes a Museum of Sanctuary**

This year we supported our second local organisation to gain their Sanctuary Award. Offered through City of Sanctuary UK to encourage mainstream sectors to contribute to building a movement of welcome, the awards programme recognises and celebrates the organisations who go above and beyond to embed solidarity, compassion and inclusion within their work.

We have worked with Hastings Museum & Art Gallery for several years, as hosts of Sanctuary Festival. They also have a strong partnership with The Refugee Buddy Project, who were on the assessment panel for the award. The award itself was presented at the Sanctuary Comedy Night held at the Museum in November.

Ongoing Activities:

- Monthly volunteer meetings, supported by the White Rock Hotel
- Attending regional City of Sanctuary online meetings

Apr-24	HCoS volunteer attended a training session delivered by The Refugee Buddy Project with Library Service managers, as part of ongoing support for them as a Library of Sanctuary. Meeting held with Sanctuary Festival Advisory Group – the group decide to create a fashion show for Sanctuary Festival, with both traditional and modern costume from their home countries – Syria, Sudan and Ukraine. Trustees Meeting
May-24	Cllr Tony Collins, Green Party, attended our volunteers meeting to learn more about our work and how the (Green controlled) council can support. Restarted conversations about Hastings becoming a Council of Sanctuary. Information stall held at the Kings Road Marketing in St Leonards.
Jun-24	Sanctuary Festival 2024 at Hastings Museum (see above report)
Jul-24	Hastings Borough Council host a meeting for local refugee support organisation to share information and plans. Vigil held for lives lost in the Channel.
Aug-24	Stalls held in Hastings Town Centre and in St Leonards to show solidarity with refugees in the wake of the riots around the UK. HCoS volunteers join the parade for Hastings Pride. Trustees Meeting
Sep-24	HCoS planned outdoor film event for the We Are a Sea Festival is cancelled due to bad weather, but will be rescheduled.
Oct-24	Stall held at the No Place for Hate event supported by Sussex Police.
Nov-24	Sanctuary Comedy Night at Hastings Museum in partnership with Freedom From Torture East Sussex and Kamikaze Comedy. £1300 raised. Sanctuary Award presented to Hastings Museum.

Dec-24	
Jan-25	Trustees Meeting
Feb-25	Valentine's Day action – cards sent to local MP Helena Dollimore Donations made to Warming Up the Homeless who are providing halal meals to a small group of refugees, Calais Kitchen and the Wood Shed.
Mar-25	HCoS hosts the first Refugee Support Network event at Hastings Museum, for groups and organisations who support refugees and people seeking sanctuary as part of their wider work in our community. 10 organisations attended with strong enthusiasm to formalise the network at meet regularly. Ramadan packs made up and distributed at the Links Project.

Hastings City of Sanctuary

Receipts & Payments Account

for the period

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

	Notes	Current Year				2023-2024
		Restricted funds	Designated funds	Unrestricted funds	Total funds	
<u>Receipts</u>						
Donations and legacies		-	1,399.00	2,203.00	3,602.00	3,500.60
Income from charitable activities		-	-	4,195.18	4,195.18	46,189.66
Other income		150.00	53.73	812.69	1,016.42	2,302.84
Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Total Receipts		150.00	1,452.73	7,210.87	8,813.60	51,993.10
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Expenditure on charitable activities		21,588.00	6,450.00	5,689.95	33,727.95	40,707.05
Other expenditure		-	49.35	521.22	570.57	1,895.72
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure		21,588.00	6,499.35	6,211.17	34,298.52	42,602.77
Net surplus (deficit)		(21,438.00)	(5,046.62)	999.70	(25,484.92)	9,390.33
Movement in funds		-	-	-	-	
Funds brought forward	31/3/24	9,373.19	4,633.76	17,470.14	31,477.09	22,086.76
Funds carried forward	31/3/25	(12,064.81)	(412.86)	18,469.84	5,992.17	31,477.09

Hastings City of Sanctuary
Statement of Assets & Liabilities
as at
31 March 2025

					2023-2024
					Total
		Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total
Current assets					
HCOS Account @ 31/03/24		-	1,882.66	3,219.45	5,102.11
HSR Account @ 31/03/24		-	-	787.07	787.07
Paypal Account @ 31/03/24		-	33.79	69.20	102.99
		-	1,916.45	4,075.72	5,992.17
					31,477.09
Current liabilities					
		-	1,916.45	4,075.72	5,992.17
					31,477.09

Charity Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which comply with the regulations set out in the Charities Act 1993. The trustess have elected to take advantage of the provisions that apply to small charities and have prepared a Receipts and Payments account and Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed on their behalf by

_____ Chair : Polly Gifford

_____ Treasurer : Julie Todd

Hastings City of Sanctuary

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

1 Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts are statements that summarise the movement of cash into and out of the charity during the financial year. In this context "cash" includes cash equivalents, for example, bank accounts where cash can be readily withdrawn to pay for debt as they become due.

2 Premises & staff

The organisation has no premises.
The organisation has no employees.

3 Trustees' remuneration

2 of our trustees received remuneration in the year. Polly Gifford was paid £2500 for managing the sanctuary festival. This was discussed among the trustees by email and it was felt that Polly with her arts management experience and close involvement with the agencies supporting refugees in Hastings would be the most appropriate person.

Rachel Lowden was paid £600 for organising the volunteers for the Sanctuary Festival. Again this was agreed and confirmed by other trustees in Rachel's absence. It was felt that Rachel's ongoing connection and links with our volunteers made her the most appropriate person to undertake this work.

4 There were no related party transactions during the period.

5 Previous period comparison

The previous period's figures have been included for comparison.

6 Glossary of terms

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

Designated funds: These are funds, not subject to any specific restrictions, but which the charity has decided to set aside for a specific purpose. In this case, the purpose is to earmark online fundraising to support work with refugees.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Committee of Hastings City of Sanctuary

I report on the accounts of Hastings City of Sanctuary for the twelve month period ended 31 March 2025 which are set out on the previous pages.

Respective responsibilities of committee & examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act), and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility:

- to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the supporting documentation presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Acthave not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Laura Dawson
Finance Manager, Hastings Voluntary Action
Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, TN34 1QN

Dated: