

Trustees of Furness Refugee Support Annual Report For the year ending 31 December 2024

Registered Charity Number 1201677

Registered Office

5 Ainslie Street
Ulverston
LA12 7JE

Trustees

Kim Farr, Chair from 1/1/23
Linda Wood, Vice Chair from 1/1/23
Liz Hill, Secretary from 1/1/23 to 31/12/24
John Brice, from 1/1/23, Treasurer from 1/1/23 to 31/12/23
Frankie Baker, incoming Treasurer from 1/1/24
Pamela Harper from 1/1/24
Matthew Burden from 8/9/25
Akram Aljouri from 8/9/25

Trustees meet every two months and volunteers have a monthly planning meeting. The charity has due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit. Furness Refugee Support is a CIO with a constitution dated January 9th 2023 and the AGM is held in February.

Furness Refugee Support has been running since 2015 but only registered as a charity in 2023 due to a dramatic increase in workload following the standing up of two asylum hotels in Barrow by the Home Office. This meant we had to raise very much more money each month and so could no longer operate as a "Small Charity". The original four trustees of the charity have been involved since the very early days of the group and were obvious choices to be trustees of the registered charity. Frankie Baker and Pamela Harper had been involved as volunteers for some time before becoming trustees. We need a minimum of three trustees, but In 2025 we have looked for and appointed two new trustees from September 8th 2025. We wanted one with charity experience outside Furness Refugee Support, advertised for that on facebook and have been fortunate to find Matthew Burden who is the manager of Barrow Food Bank. We also wanted one trustee with lived experience of the support provided by Furness Refugee Support, wrote to a number of longstanding refugees still living locally and were fortunate to be joined by Akram Al Jouri who came from Syria, via Lebanon with his family in March 2020.

Bankers

Barclays Bank, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ.

We opened an account with CAF Bank Ltd because they would allow us to make electronic payments. We maintain the Barclays account for un-ringfenced monies and some direct debits coming from online concerts during Covid for whom we do not have contact details.

The objects of the CIO are:

- To advance the education and training of asylum seekers, those granted refugee status and those fleeing conflict and persecution and their dependents in need thereof so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within and contribute to a new community.
- To provide opportunities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, immigration status or social and economic circumstances.
- To support the physical and mental health of those granted refugee status and their dependants, asylum seekers and those fleeing conflict and persecution
- To relieve financial hardship amongst asylum seekers, those fleeing conflict and persecution and those granted refugee status and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in the Furness area.
- To relieve the challenge of unemployment (immediately or in the future) of those granted refugee status, those fleeing conflict and persecution and those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom, and in particular in the Furness area, by the provision of vocational and skills training, advice and support.
- To advance the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

Achievements

This year has shown very clearly how important it is for us to work in collaboration/partnership with a wide range of organisations to enable us to deliver varied and high quality support to an increasing number of people of all ages and

nationalities. Our key delivery partners are Furness Multicultural Community Forum (FMCCF) and the Salvation Army. We also work closely with Art Gene, Signal Film and Media, Lakes & Mountains with Matt, Barrow Library, Westmorland and Furness Council, The Wordsworth Trust, the Hope & Anchor, Barrow Community Garage, CVS and latterly Cumbria Wildlife Trust. We are now supporting resettled families, Ukrainian guests (mostly women and children), asylum seekers (men on their own, women on their own and families in dispersal accommodation) and asylum seekers who have gained refugee status and stayed in the Barrow area (individuals and families). We use WhatsApp groups, our facebook pages and regular texts and emails for communicating and we have also updated our website.

We started the year with a Welcome party for the thirteen new families seeking asylum which included all the resettled families, volunteers and staff from Furness Multicultural Community Forum.

English Language/Education/Training Support

For two years, since the asylum hotels were opened, we had offered an English class every week to the men from the hotels. Once the hotels closed and all the community houses were established we started offering a weekly English class to women. This was in addition to the classes run by FMCCF and the Council, but it was felt that a women only class, in addition to the mixed classes run by other organisations, would be of benefit. The English class, of between 12 and 15 learners, is planned and delivered by volunteers, the majority of whom are teachers. We also deliver a weekly Coffee & Chat session which gives opportunities for conversation between volunteers and refugees and asylum seekers. This is attended by up to 12 volunteers and up to 50 refugees and asylum seekers and is also an opportunity for buying bikes from the Salvation Army and new clothing distribution. In addition, there is a monthly meal (Culture Cafe) with food cooked by refugees and asylum seekers, a monthly "Free Jumble Sale" to distribute donated kitchenware, clothes, toys and bedding and a monthly visit from a member of staff from Cumbria CVS. We help refugees and asylum seekers to access both English classes and other courses offered by the Council, Furness College, Adult learning and PHX training and work with organisations such as Signal Film and Media to put on some courses especially around photography, textiles and film making. To support the mental and physical health of asylum seekers we offer forty 24/7 gym memberships. We also support refugees settled in Barrow to learn to drive by paying for provisional licences, driving theory tests and some practical driving lessons. In addition we support resettled families with regular visits for conversation and targeted support for children by both volunteers who are experienced teachers and professional English tutors as required. We have also worked alongside the Library to provide laptops and tablets where helpful, especially for children at High School. The Ukrainian guests have been supported with monthly networking meetings at the Hope & Anchor in

Ulverston and targeted supply of online English tutoring (for struggling teenagers), online Maths tutoring for a struggling A level student, exam costs (for a mother taking UK Accountancy courses to add to her Ukrainian qualifications) and laptops where appropriate.

Volunteering/Community Integration

We feel that by involving people in volunteering and Community events it helps a sense of belonging, English acquisition and community integration. The Festival of Colours in March was a good example and everyone embraced the music and workshops and the opportunities to dress up! Eid is always a great time to celebrate with the local community, refugees and asylum seekers all together!

The Unity Festival is organised by FMCCF and supported by us and involves everyone in a parade , stewarding, music and an International Food Stall with contributions from Ukraine, Pakistan, Brazil, Albania, Syria, Spain etc and even some local Sticky Toffee Pudding!

The Lantern Parade in Ulverston in September offered an opportunity to both make some lanterns and take part in the event which a group of asylum seekers did and really enjoyed!

In addition to volunteering and participating in Community events, many people volunteered for a range of organisations and projects. We worked with Art Gene for a second year in connection with their Community Allotment on Walney Island. We purchased wellingtons and coats and paid bus transport costs to remove any barriers to volunteering, particularly for asylum seekers. As a result over 200 volunteering days were spent on Fridays between March and November and this additional manpower allowed the community allotment to carry out a number of land management projects that would not otherwise have happened. The volunteers really enjoyed the work and sociable break with refreshments and the chance to take a share of the produce.

We also arranged for people to volunteer with Cancer Care and the Salvation Army and Barrow Community Garage which has led to a refugee being offered a job as a mechanic.

Recently we have developed a partnership with Cumbria Wildlife Trust concerning beach cleans, marine surveys and habitat improvements and once again covered the travel costs to remove any barriers to volunteering. Even in the cold winter weather we have had good turnouts!

Support for Children

We like to support children in many ways. Outside of helping directly with English and IT we pay for sports clubs, school trips, gym memberships and holiday schemes and arrange holiday activities and trips including a February half term showing of Wonka at Signal Films with all the snacks! Fifty of us attended the London Science Museum Live at the Forum in Barrow and an Autumn half term workshop to make Wild Books after a trip to Barrow Park and a trip to the cinema were all popular.

Trips and Events

Trips and events can be just treats, but they often introduce people to the local area and culture as well. It is good for people to understand where they are living and maybe understand the history, geography and cultural activities that are usual for people in the UK. In February a group of asylum seekers was invited by The Wordsworth Trust and The Quakers to spend two days in Grasmere walking and learning about Wordsworth poetry. They were very engaged by the experience and enjoyed the short holiday and great food!

In May we organised a group visit to Muncaster castle for the Ukrainians which was a big success despite the rain!

All through the year we arranged walks in the local countryside. If they were low level walks then volunteers guided the walks and train travel was often used. If they were higher level walks we used walk leaders from Lakes and Mountains with Matt. These walks were very popular, good for mental and physical health and a great introduction to our area.

We were given free tickets to The Lakes International Comic Art Festival and we paid for the bus tickets to allow 10 asylum seekers to attend.

We worked with the Music Links charity to put on an international music workshop which 30 people attended.

We worked with the Ukrainians to put on an Independence Day Party, an Epiphany Party and a trip to the Winter Lights at Sizergh castle

And we wrapped up 2024 with a New Year Party for all the FMCCF families, resettled families and asylum families with lots of food, crafts and a wonderful magician!

Volunteers

We have about 28 regular volunteers who visit families, move furniture, help English classes, take families to the International Supermarket in Preston, organise day trips and parties and walks, accompany people to DWP interviews and hospital visits,

support the coffee and chat sessions, fundraise, apply for grants, attend meetings and much much more. We signpost them to training delivered by others, organise training days ourselves and have regular volunteer social events. Volunteers meet up monthly to plan delivery and communicate through facebook groups.

Financial Review

Income is from a range of grants from Westmorland and Furness Council and other grant making bodies in addition to fundraising activities such as concerts, talks, market stalls, sponsored walks and regular donations.

The charity had £12,959 in the bank at the start of the year and £50,996 at the end of the year. Our main grant from Westmorland and Furness Council comes in May/June so we had sufficient reserves. The board recognises the importance of ensuring that sufficient reserves are retained to maintain the activities and support for those in need. Furness Refugee Support has no staff and when the balance in the bank drops to circa £10,000 this triggers additional fundraising activities. As part of our risk management strategy we have identified the figure of £10,000 as the point at which we have sufficient funds to continue providing a minimal service to beneficiaries for 6 months. We have no control over the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the area and having a reasonable reserve allows us to respond to demand. We can then initiate fund raising activities and consider a temporary scaling back of some provision. We know from experience that this time frame allows us to organise events and contact key supporters. We apply regularly for grants as we are made aware of opportunities by Cumbria CVS and other organisations. All invoices and expenses are sent to the Treasurer and electronic payments are made weekly and verified by the Chair or Vice Chair. The trustees review the risks associated with running the charity and have established policies and procedures to mitigate the risks, such as carrying out DBS checks on volunteers, having risk assessments, taking out insurance and offering training opportunities for volunteers and trustees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Farr', is written over a faint, circular official stamp. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kim Farr
Chair



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

FURNESS REUGEE SUPPORT

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 DECEMBER 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1201677

Set out on pages

3 - 4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

P Hornby

Date:

21.10.2025

Name:

PAUL HORNBY FCA

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Address:

J F HORNBY & CO

THE TOWER, DALTONAGTE BUSINESS CENTER

ULVERSTON LA12 7AJ

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

FURNESS REFUGEE SUPPORT

1201677

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01.01.2024

To

31.12.2024

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 £
A1 Receipts					
DONATIONS AND GRANTS	8,251	72,795	-	81,046	44,494
FUNDRAISING	1,210	-	-	1,210	4,537
REFUNDS	192	-	-	192	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	9,653	72,795	-	82,448	49,031
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
BANK INTEREST	40	-	-	40	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	40	-	-	40	-
Total receipts	9,693	72,795	-	82,488	49,031
A3 Payments					
GRANTS AND DONATIONS PAID	250	-	-	250	715
INSURANCE	-	431	-	431	431
OFFICE COSTS	-	139	-	139	366
TRAINING	24	72	-	96	99
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	284	43,221	-	43,505	41,276
BANK CHARGES	56	5	-	61	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	614	43,868	-	44,482	42,887
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	614	43,868	-	44,482	42,887
Net of receipts/(payments)	9,079	28,927	-	38,006	6,144
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	12,959	-	-	12,959	-
Cash funds this year end	22,038	28,927	-	50,965	6,144

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 £
B1 Cash funds	BANK ACCOUNTS	22,038	28,927	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	22,038	28,927	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	K Farr	Kim Farr	21.10.2025	