

Calais Light

Report and Financial Statements
for the period ended 31 March 2025
Charity number 1206481

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Reference and Administrative Information

Trustees

- M Stretch: Chair (appointed 13/7/2022)
- T Jorge: Operational Trustee (appointed 17/7/2024)
- K MacLeod: Marketing Lead (appointed 17/7/2024)
- I McDonald: Lead Admin Volunteer (appointed 27/9/2023)
- R Southgate: Safeguarding Lead & Strategy (appointed 27/9/2023)
- A Malhotra: Treasurer (appointed 27/9/2023, resigned 9/6/2025)
- C McCaffrey: Operational Trustee (appointed 27/9/2023)

Date of incorporation:

10th January 2024

Address:

194 High Street
Rickmansworth
Herts, WD3 1BD

Bank:

Lloyds Bank
PO Box 1000
Andover BX1 1LT

Accountants:

Delta Ash Licensed Accountants
194 High Street
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1BD

Independent Examiner:

Louise Alexander, ACMA
3 Upper High Street,
Ipswich IP1 3NE

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Calais Light first travelled to Calais in 2017 with convoys of volunteers to help grassroots charities, supporting them in their work with the refugee population in and around Calais. In January 2024, it became a CIO and extended its work to support Refugees based in Essex.

Calais Light has a board comprising 6 Trustees. Trustees are recruited via external volunteer recruitment portals including Reach volunteering and local community and church networks. Each prospective Trustees is interviewed by the CEO and another Trustee serving for a term of 3 years. All Trustees give up their time freely and none are remunerated.

Upon recruitment, all Trustees undertake online training on Data protection and Safeguarding.

Calais Light holds 4 Board meetings per year where trustees agree the broad strategy and areas for development including new initiatives, fundraising initiatives, and grant approval. The Trustee Board also assesses and agrees safeguarding policies. Board also reviews the quarterly Management Accounts & decides on future funding requirements.

There are sub working groups focused on Marketing and Safeguarding/Governance. These meet throughout the fiscal year. All major decisions are presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

AIMS

Initially, Calais Light started running weekend volunteering convoys to support grassroots NGOs, focusing on a process-light approach to appeal to people who might not normally volunteer due to work commitments. In 2023, we made a deliberate operational shift to focus on social inclusion in the UK, as enshrined in our charitable objectives. We expanded our strategic focus to include the refugee population closer to home, living in bridging hotels and detention centres in the UK, waiting to have their asylum claims processed.

Social integration and winning the hearts and minds of the British public towards refugees and asylum seekers inform all of Calais Light's operations.

OBJECTIVES

The Objectives of Calais Light are:

For the public benefit, to promote social inclusion among people who are refugees and asylum seekers who are socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position and to relieve the needs of refugees and asylum seekers who are in need by reason of their financial hardship and/or social and economic disadvantage by providing:

- I) Selected and trained volunteers and grants to assist those charities and organisations providing practical support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Northern France
- II) Food, good quality clothing and other items or services to meet the basic needs of refugees and asylum seekers, in the UK and Northern France
- III) A platform to advance the education of the public and/or promote public awareness about the issues relating to asylum seekers and refugees
- IV) Education and training in the English language and in vocational skills
- V) Social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.

CALAIS LIGHT FULFILS THESE OBJECTS BY:

- Sourcing and training volunteers: Organising 5 convoys of 150 weekend volunteers to Calais in 2024 and creating 2 unique UK based volunteer teams running a befriending hub and a social inclusion activity group in Clacton
- Providing 'on the ground grants' of up to £4,000 to NGOs in Calais, addressing immediate needs and shortfalls
- #CourtCommerce: Working with globally recognised brands to secure, brand-new age-appropriate clothing and footwear and enabling their distribution in bridging hotels in London and the Southeast
- Education and training in the English language and vocational skills: running 2 befriending/English language sessions per week hosted by up to 14 volunteers in Clacton. Providing a fully qualified ESOL teacher for the refugee lessons
- Providing a tutor, electric sewing machines, fabric and sewing accessories and running 15 weeks of tutored sewing course for refugees in Clacton
- Social and recreational events: creating new Volunteer social hub also in Clacton in Essex with 33 volunteers tasked with organising non-therapeutic social events in common civic spaces for refugees and asylum seekers living in local bridging hotels. Our aim is to normalise the local white population seeing groups of black and brown refugees mixing with and having fun with our primarily white volunteers – in what would traditionally be 'white' spaces. Our goal is to thus reduce endemic white fear of ethnicity, build local community and to foster social integration.

Calais Light confirms that its Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024 & JANUARY – MARCH 2025

- 23,086 hours of volunteering delivered in the UK and in Northern France
- 4120 items of #courtcommerce new clothing and footwear distributed in UK & France with a value of £91,362
- £53,550 fundraising via volunteers and convoy support via Peoples Platform fundraising
- Secured £10,000 National Lottery Grant to fund Education & social inclusion activities
- Organised 5 Convoys to Calais providing over 150 volunteers to local NGO in France
- Recruitment of 38 UK volunteers in 2024 and first 3 months of 2025
- Organised 11 Social integration events with refugees and local volunteers in 2024 and the first 3 months of 2025 with volunteers supplying 598 hours of support
- Twice weekly, 2-hour Clacton befriending hub, volunteers supplying 2,264 hours of support
- Funded and delivered 15 weeks sewing classes with a local Essex tutor and refugees with volunteers providing 99 hours of support
- Organised and facilitated translation and enrolment of 11 of our former student Clacton based refugees into more Advanced English language and Digital skills courses run by the Adult Learning College (ACL) in Clacton
- We organised 2 Corporate Volunteering Days in a Croydon bridging accommodation hotel for asylum seekers & a church with our brand sponsor GAP, the fashion retail brand. GAP sent a few of their managers to assist. One DAY was a 'Magic for Smiles' magic show with a magician, who is expert with traumatised children, who entertained 100 children and parents in a bridging hotel, with goodie bags and a 2-hour children's art & crafts activity

- For the second Social Day GAP managers cooked and served lunch for 100 refugees in a space in Kingston upon Thames during Refugee Week, with goodie bags for everyone. This was a great opportunity for refugees to relax, to be spoilt and served by people that they didn't know but who wanted to overtly show them empathy and kindness. This helps support their wellbeing and offers them real hope for the future. It was funded by GAP – but fully organised by Calais Light.

IMPACT ON REFUGEES

Sourcing and training volunteers both for convoys to northern France and in the UK for UK based initiatives, has provided extra and much-needed physical volunteering manpower and support to NGOs operating there on a regular basis. It has also provided ordinary British people who become Calais Light volunteers the opportunity to not only deliver concrete, hands-on humanitarian help but also to genuinely champion and advocate about refugees with their peers on their return to their homes here, spreading the truth about their plight and suffering. Our convoys prove to displaced people on the move at or borders that there are indeed many British people who sympathise greatly, are willing to make the effort to help them and will support and offer welcome if they manage to reach the UK and claim asylum.

The Clacton befriending hub run by the UK based volunteers helps refugees improve their basic English skills, gain social confidence via situational English, and also meet UK citizens supportive of their circumstances. Our FREE regular, reliable, high quality English lessons taught to as many as 20 different nationalities via ESOL techniques, are a lifeline for refugees who are desperate to take part in the host society and to gain skills that could lead to work. Our teaching offers Clacton-based refugees a concrete way of meeting their asylum expectations fully though language acquisition while providing refugees with an outlet for their intelligence and aspirations and the help they desperately need to navigate and be accepted by British society. Continuous language lessons are invaluable as the lack of ability to speak English is a key barrier to Social Integration.

In the UK, Calais Light has funded the purchase of sewing machines and repair of donated sewing machines and the funding of a tutor to enable a sewing course for refugees. It has also provided very high-quality reading and teaching materials to help with English language teaching in the twice weekly befriending hub. These textual and visual resources were expressly chosen by three language teachers as specifically relevant to the conversational and daily needs of adult refugees rather than school children.

Calais Light wants to acknowledge the identities of traumatised refugees in our work. One of the loudest complaints of refugees whose loss of agency and personal identity leads to them feeling even more dehumanised by UK Immigration systems and British people is: *'No-one ever asks us what we would like'*. In response to this valid plea our social integration activities are designed by the refugees themselves. This consideration of their psychological and adult needs is more than a courtesy. Choice massively affects their mental health and wellbeing. Via posters and surveys we ask the question: *What did you like to do, back home before you became a refugee?* We turn refugee answers into group activities and from the enthusiastically large response we have received we can be quite certain this attention to their true needs is creating community and speaking to their hearts. We then facilitate these events in Clacton. Most of the refugees we support are disabled so we accompany them and help them with access and participations - as friends. We have subsidised social integration events in Clacton including the outdoor theatre event, 10 pin bowling, and a Summer Party with selected local residents and

refugees to interact on an equal basis. The key goal and outcome is to normalise often hostile and racist residents with seeing groups of black and brown refugees mixing and socialising happily in traditionally white civic spaces, alongside them. This should ultimately reduce tension on the part of the refugees and lower the social and racist temperature of the residents – proving to both sides that interracial harmony is desirable, positive, and already happening. Our events provide place for UK volunteers, members of the local community and refugees to interact as equals, enjoying activities and getting to know each other. This clearly addresses the object of promoting social inclusion.

Working with corporate sponsors, Calais Light's delivery of brand new, age-appropriate clothing and footwear to residents in bridging hotels for asylum in London benefits refugees by giving them high quality, stylish clothes appropriate to their age and sizes. Second-hand, hastily repaired clothes in inappropriate sizes are often distributed to refugees. This marks them out as different and can lead to 'othering' and attacks since their skin colour and features make them extremely visible and therefore vulnerable to aggressive factions e.g. July 2024 Race Riots. Wearing new brand donated clothing that fits helps them blend in and look like any other British resident and further affords dignity and gives them something that is both new and is theirs. It removes one visible barrier of difference so that refugees are not targeted as different in the UK.

GRANT MAKING POLICY

Calais Light strives for a zero-hoarding approach to donations. It holds a balance of c.£17k to fulfil the operational funding of the charity and reserves. In consultation with the rest of the Trustees, the CEO makes recommendations to offer 'on the ground' grants of funding to address shortfalls witnessed as part of the volunteer convoys in Northern France. These grants are increasingly important as the UK cost of living crisis deepens and household purses are stretched to breaking point. This includes the provision of sundries to help the NGOs supporting the refugees there, for example tea bags, bike oil, toiletries, cups, utensils. Calais Light has also made cash grant contributions to supporting NGO operating requirements, vehicle repair and mobile water container damage. £7,281 in cash grants was granted to NGOs in France in the 15 months to 31 March 2025.

In the UK, Calais Light has funded the purchase of sewing machines and repair of donated sewing machines, fabric and accessories and the funding of a tutor to enable a sewing course for refugees. It has also funded reading and teaching materials to help with English language teaching in the twice weekly befriending hub. It has subsidised the social events in Clacton including the outdoor theatre event, 10-pin bowling and a Summer Party with selected local residents and refugees to interact on an equal basis. It provided a place for UK volunteers, members of the local community and refugees to interact as equal citizens of Clacton, enjoying activities in common civic spaces and getting to know each other. This addresses the objective of promoting social inclusion.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During the 15 months to 31 March 2025, the charity raised a total income of £53,550 through donations, grants, and fundraising activities. After accounting for expenditure, the charity reported a cash surplus of £19,958, reflecting prudent financial management and continued support from fundraising and our supporters. Of this surplus, £3,659 is restricted to the Clacton teaching project funded by the National Lottery. The remaining balance contributes to the Charity's reserves, supporting our ongoing operational needs and ensuring financial stability for the year ahead.

RESERVES POLICY

Calais Light holds a balance of c.£17k to fulfil the operational funding of the charity and ensure the continuity of our day-to-day operations. This reserve level has been set to cover essential running costs, including forward travel planning (prebooking ferries and accommodation for the convoys) and essential costs associated with running the organisation. The reserves equate to funding for a minimum period of three months in case of an unexpected shortfall in income. Maintaining this reserve allows the charity to respond to unforeseen circumstances without immediate disruption to our beneficiaries or services. The policy is reviewed annually by the Trustees to ensure that the level of reserves remains appropriate in relation to the charity's size, risk profile, and financial obligations.

SUMMARY

Calais Light is a light touch, 100% volunteer run charity with a focus on fostering social inclusion with its work with UK volunteers. Social integration, winning the hearts and minds and increased acceptance of all refugees by the British public is our declared goal and informs all our operations. Even convoys: as you cannot accept and care for displaced people here if you are afraid of displaced people over there in Northern France. This is further enabled by its work with corporate brands in the UK and the sourcing, training and deployment of UK based volunteers.

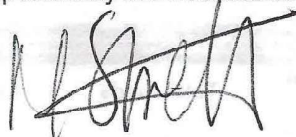
Calais Light's experience via supplying temporary volunteers to NGOs based in Northern France both addresses an immediate need for resource there but also fosters important dialogue about refugees. Calais Light volunteers become committed champions and regular advocates for refugees. We encourage our Convoy volunteers to return home and have difficult conversations with their networks, friends, and colleagues about what they have seen; the goal being to shift public opinion of refugees from hostility to compassion.

The Befriending hubs held twice weekly in Clacton with the provision of basic English lessons, helps enable integration into the UK and day to day living. The hubs and the volunteers who have given 2264 hours of support also provide an important social outlet and sense of community and belonging to refugees new to the UK. It dials down racist hostility in an area with high anti-refugee and sentiment.

Calais Light's work is helped enormously with the support of corporate sponsors and the sourcing of clothing, toiletries, and footwear to supply to bridging hotels in the UK. In the last 4 years we have delivered £710,353 of beautiful, correctly sized new clothes into selected bridging hotels for asylum seekers to help them cope with changing seasons and to blend seamlessly into their local communities. As well as respecting the dignity of refugees, who may have arrived owning only one set of clothes, the provision of new clothes may reduce the likelihood of standing out and being a target of people with hostile intentions. The distribution of 4,120 new, top quality clothing items in 2024 alone removes one physical, psychological, and racist barrier to refugee integration in the UK. The new team of UK Social Volunteers, organising social events on an equal footing in Clacton – the UK heartland of anti-immigrant sentiment - also enables greater social integration for refugees in a very deprived town & area. The success of the first ten events reflects this need. There have been no incidents – only warmth. The premise is working.

Calais Light remains committed to enabling and fostering social inclusion.

Approved by the trustees on23/7/25..... and signed on their behalf by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stretch', written over a horizontal line.

Mary Stretch, Chair of the Board of Trustees



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Calais Light

Charity registration no 1206481

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period
from

Period start date
10/01/2024

To

Period end date
31/03/2025

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 from individuals	19,935	-	-	19,935	-
Corporate donations	6,887	-	-	6,887	-
National Lottery grant	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
Charitable Activities	16,728	-	-	16,728	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	43,550	10,000	-	53,550	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	43,550	10,000	-	53,550	-
A3 Payments					
Convoy trips	14,895	-	-	14,895	-
Community Events	115	2,850	-	2,965	-
Sewing project for refugees	295	1,162	-	1,457	-
English Teaching Resources	18	921	-	939	-
Emergency grants to Refugee NGOs	7,654	-	-	7,654	-
Donor events	572	-	-	572	-
Storage	14	222	-	236	-
Travel	2,454	244	-	2,698	-
Software	1,470	285	-	1,755	-
Subscriptions	77	657	-	734	-
Telephone	1,017	-	-	1,017	-
Administration	587	-	-	587	-
Sub total	29,168	6,341	-	35,509	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	29,168	6,341	-	35,509	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	14,382	3,659	-	18,041	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,917	-	-	1,917	-
Cash funds this year end	16,299	3,659	-	19,958	-

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	Unrestricted cash	16,299	-	-
	Unspent Lottery grant	-	3,659	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	16,299	3,659	-

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

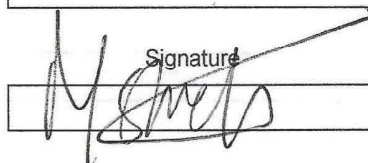
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

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

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature



Print Name

Mary Stretch

Date of approval

23/07/2025



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Calais Light

On accounts for the
period ended

31st March 2025

Charity no

1206481

Set out on pages

1 - 9

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the period ended 31/03/2025.

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 Trust'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 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.

Signed:

Date:

28th July 2025

Name:

Louise Alexander, ACMA

Relevant professional
qualification or body:

Member in Practice of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

Address:

3 Upper High Street

Ipswich IP1 3NE