



Our group came into being in late August 2015, in response to the shocking images on our TV screens of the drowning of the young Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, attempting to escape the destruction of his homeland.

Our membership in our predominantly rural area grew rapidly as we held public meetings, press and social media campaigns and street stalls. There has been amazing and heartening public support for our project from the outset.

While we knew that there were few people seeking refuge or asylum in our area, we knew that we could support those in the nearby cities, Swansea, Cardiff and Newport. We decided to join City of Sanctuary (CoS), a broad social movement committed to building a culture of hospitality and welcome, especially for people seeking sanctuary from war and persecution and which now has over 60 groups throughout the UK. We also linked up with existing groups, including Swansea CoS, Unity in Diversity (UID), Share Tawe, Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group, Swansea Humanitarian Aid Response Project, Swansea Asylum Refugee Matters, Sanctuary Newport and Oasis Cardiff.

We operate as a hub to garner and coordinate local support for people seeking asylum and refuge in the UK, Europe and the wider world and to demonstrate that, given the chance, the great majority of people will respond warmly and humanely to a crisis affecting others.

To date our activities have included the following:

- Petitioning and meeting with our MP, AM and Powys County Council to report to them on the tremendous amount of local support for people seeking refuge and asylum and to press for positive action by governments, both national and local.
- Arranging monthly Respite Days to our beautiful area for groups of up to 70 people of all ages seeking refuge/asylum based in cities in South Wales. To date, respite days have been hosted by Hay, Brecon, Llanfihangel Talyllyn, Craig-y-Nos Country Park (2), Elan Valley, Llangenny, Talgarth (2), Llangorse, Christ College Brecon, Bronllys, Brillley, Llanthony Valley, Penpont House, Hereford FC and Cradoc School. As well as two visits to a digital art prize exhibition at Caerphilly Castle. These Respite Days are enjoyed so much by both our guests and the hosts that large numbers of refugees want to come on them and villages are queuing up to host them. We've found that many people living locally have really enjoyed the opportunity to meet people from around the world and have asked to join our group.
- We have started trips for individuals to have a few days away, staying with group members, enjoying the peace of our countryside and participating in day to day life.

- We collected donated laptop and desktop computers which greatly enhance the English language classes at UID (a group working in Swansea) and helped to welcome Syrian families resettled in Powys.
- We have started trips for individuals to have a few days away, staying with group members, enjoying the peace of our countryside and participating in day to day life.
- We have collected and sorted a substantial amount of clothing and household goods, which have been distributed in South Wales as well as being sent to Europe and Jordan.
- We supported a number of individuals going to Calais, helping them with publicity, goods to deliver and donating money to groups working there.
- We are working with our local primary and secondary schools, encouraging them to raise awareness of issues about people seeking asylum/refuge and to help host our days.
- We have an art and photographic project with a group based in Swansea, and are collaborating with a writers' group and PEN Cymru.
- We have supported a women's asylum-seekers support group in Swansea with resources including sewing machines.
- We have helped to welcome the first 6 Syrian families to a nearby Powys community by provision of information, English language conversation and goods.
- During the 2016 Hay Literary Festival we raised nearly £6,000 in collections, through a choir concert and children's activity day. We helped PEN Cymru organise a workshop for refugee-authors, and arranged for three Swansea asylum seekers to be volunteer stewards at the Festival.
- We helped to fund the accreditation process for English as a Second Language Course in Cardiff, so that students can use their course credit immediately and one of our group members runs an IELTS course in Swansea.
- We helped organise a 'Music for Syria' event which raised money for ShelterBox 'ShelterKits' for delivery to people caught up in the conflict in Syria.
- We have made a substantial donations to Asylum Justice, a South Wales charity, which provides legal support for asylum seekers to prepare their cases and appeals and to Share Tawe who help with destitute asylum seekers. We have also made donations to other supportive groups.
- We have set up a "hardship fund", so that we can quickly make small awards to people seeking asylum/refuge for emergency purposes.
- There's so much to do and we have so many keen and able supporters anxious to get more involved. As a civil society group, we have the flexibility to change and adapt when we need to. PLEASE JOIN US - now more than ever people need our welcome.



Website: hbtsr.org.uk

Email: hbts4refugees@gmail.com

Donations to: Barclays Bank - Sort Code: 20-39-64 Acc. no. 83085120. Please make cheques payable to HBTSR

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