



HAY, BRECON & TALGARTH SANCTUARY FOR REFUGEES

GROUP MEETING

Thursday 9th May 2016 18:30. Gwernyfed Rugby club in Talgarth.

1. Minutes and matters arising from group meeting April 27th 2016.

Minutes approved and Report received and approved. Report included below:

Lobbying - wrote to Mr Davies to express condolences. Congratulated Kirsty Williams upon her victory. Nation of Sanctuary group commented upon how the Liberal democrats had the most detailed, welcoming, policies for Refugees. Meeting planned with Rosemarie Harris.

Events - Sean attended a meeting with Abergavenny who are setting up a City Of Sanctuary branch. Also Llanarth near Raglan are holding a family fun day on June 18th from 2pm to 10am on the 19th to raise awareness and funds for refugees. They are calling it the Llanarth Jungle.

City of Sanctuary [COS] AGM (15th July) - Sean and Ailsa to attend

COS Newsletter highlights - Let Refugees learn campaign for better access to ESOL. Save Asylum Justice and Red Cross campaign for family reunion. Sign up for newsletters here - <https://cityofsanctuary.org/latest/newsletters/>

Need to still consider supportive letters in B&R.

Fundraising - Superb concert in St Mary's (Hay-on-Wye) raised £1400, Stall on African Market and refuge cafe raised money and really raised our profile and a small ad hoc street collection raised £175 suggesting that the people on the streets are in favour of welcoming refugees. Bucket collections at the festival were equally lucrative and Stalls on Brecon road and outside St Joseph's church raised awareness of our group and refugee issues. Much gratitude to Hay festival and to all our supporters who helped especially to Rachel and Virginia, Hilary and Eugene and most particularly to Meriel for dressing up as Paddington. To wear a fur coat and mask when the temperature is over 20°C seems like real dedication.

Respite days - A Very successful day at Elan Valley was enjoyed by over 60 people. Highlighted need for food to be available on arrival and departure as the generous picnic

lunch vanished very quickly. Thanks sent to Elan Valley trust and Severn Trent water authority. Andrew also thanked for arranging the day.

The proposed day at PGL was cancelled as the manager was seconded elsewhere.

Goods - Several loads have been taken down to Swansea by Mary, Trevor and Julia and Lawrence and Ailsa. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority donated 7 laptops which has made it possible for Unity in Diversity (UID) and Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group (SBASSG) to run an internet cafe. We need to take down some of our welcome boxes so they are available. Any further laptops may be given to refugees.

Ty Mawr and Brecon Beacons national parks are still storing our things and we are grateful.

Lib Dems and St Marys and still collecting. Need to decide what we still need - microwaveable dishes are popular, bedding and towels usually go and clothing can be recycled for cash.

Ystradgynlais – the Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) ran awareness sessions in May. Ailsa attended with Maggie and it was interesting but everyone else was from the statutory sector or organised voluntary groups e.g. food bank. The support group doesn't seem to have progressed.

Refugee Writers based in South Wales met with Wales PEN Cymru at the festival and there are plans for further collaboration and we may be able to help with venues, enthusiasm etc. <http://hbtsr.org.uk/2016/06/01/refugee-writers-project-and-wales-pen-cymru-meeting-at-hay-festival>

Stewards - Three men who are based in Swansea seeking refuge came to stay with one of our supporters and volunteered at Hay festival as stewards for 3 days. They really enjoyed the experience and have additional skills to add to their CV. Thanks to Jon and our volunteer drivers, Margaret, Melrose, Ceri, Mike and Maria for making this possible and thanks also to Pete, Jan and Peter Florence for agreeing that this could happen.

Destitute asylum seekers - Marilyn from Share Tawe placed a young man in our area as she could not find anywhere in Swansea for him. He has returned to Swansea for Ramadan having been warmly welcomed and looked after by a large number of people ranging from those who provided a roof and good food to those who found things that he could do and the English lesson provision. I'm not going to mention names but I know that we are all extremely grateful that we have been able to successfully cater for him and that we may be able to continue with short term stays of this kind. Well done to our Hosts and to all our other volunteers for making this so successful.

2. **Youth / schools** - Jeff sent his apologies but reported that he had met with Emma Taylor at Christ College to discuss the September Away Day. Date set for 25th September. Further meetings to be planned to determine numbers. They will provide minibus transport and

food and activities but would prefer to mainly have younger people who might relate well to their pupils. Gwernyfed, Crickhowell and Brecon high schools: No further info. Dylan Moore based in Newport runs a schools project and may be available to speak to our high schools if wanted.

3. **Lobbying** - Meeting planned with Cllr Rosemarie Harris. Arranged by Mike and agreed that Sean, Ailsa, Mike, Maggie and William will attend if possible.
4. **Stalls** - No need for further stalls at present as we did considerable awareness raising at Hay Festival. This can be discussed at the next meeting.
5. **Publicity (Twitter, website, Facebook, press)** - We now have 214 members on Facebook, 206 on Twitter and 257 on our mailing list with some overlap between these groups. The website is regularly updated with news items by Jo and now also Sian. Jo regularly tweets and there is a feed to Twitter on the website and the Facebook page has regular updates. We are investigating whether we can also have a Facebook link on the website. The Hay festival activities are on the website and were sent to the B&R. Agreed: Continue to seek press coverage of our activities
6. **Respite days** - A successful day was hosted at the Elan valley on 15th May. It can be read about on the website (<http://hbtsr.org.uk/2016/05/18/sunshine-and-friendship-at-the-elan-valley><http://hbtsr.org.uk/2016/05/18/sunshine-and-friendship-at-the-elan-valley>) and thanks have been sent to the organisers and funders. Only learning was that there really is a need for several meals to be provided as on the whole people are hungry. The planned day at Tregoyd was cancelled as the organiser was seconded elsewhere.

Future dates

- **July 10th (Llangors)** - 53 visitors and possibly a minibus from Newport. The group have plans, similar to the Llanfihangel day but the trip will start at Ty Mawr and the bird hide with a possible walk around lake. Later start and finish envisaged. Coach booked. Good numbers of helpers recruited locally
 - **July 30th (Talgarth)** - 53 visitors. It will be on the Saturday, 2nd day of the Talgarth sports festival. Plans progressing well. Rugby club will be main venue. Envisage some walks around town as well as sports. Will value extra volunteers from group. Bus booked.
 - **August 12th (near Talgarth)** - a women's and children's day on 12th August for about 30 women and children at a small holding near Talgarth.
 - **August 21st (Brilley)** - 25 visitors or possibly less (Carrie & Jo). Aimed at families (as with Llangenny). Incl. visit to farm. Details awaited.
 - **September 25th (Christ's College)** – mainly young people. Jeffrey liaising about date and details. We would plan to be involved.
 - **October 9th (Bronllys)** – 35 visitors (Sue). Focusing on the theme of harvest but football, spinning, singing and walks arranged.
- *Also offer of away day with Landmark trust and Coleg Trefecca*

- NB Brecon Foodbank will donate food for distribution at away days and Aldi will give surplus short dated food on Saturday evening if contacted
- No Issues for Listener at last away day.

Action - We need offers for further respite days from November onwards please. There will be plenty of help and experience to aid anyone thinking about being an organiser.

7. Safeguarding policies, code of conduct and Guidelines -

Were approved and will be placed on website so they can be referred to and downloaded by away day organisers. The website will also feature organisers' tips for away days. Aideen gave a brief child protection session for attendees. She emphasized that away days were about fun and welcome but that all volunteers need to protect themselves by not being alone with children whenever possible and certainly not in any potentially compromising situation such as going to toilet with child. We should flag up any concerns with the Listener (generally Ailsa) and any ongoing concerns can be shared with Aideen by Ailsa. Concerns might include inappropriate behaviour by volunteers or parents and visitors such as excessive punishment. Our responsibility as citizens is to avoid any significant harm happening to a child or vulnerable adult and raise any concerns we may have with Aideen via Ailsa

- 8. Finance and expenditure -** £5907 was raised at Hay Festival with concerts, stalls and collections. Thanks has been sent to the Festival (Peter, Pete and Penny) and Rachel and Virginia were thanked for all their hard work. Meriel was thanked for being Paddington.

Agreed:

- *Reserve:* keep enough funds for 3 away days in our account at all times
- *English teaching:* accreditation Mac sent a report about accreditation and we supported sending £1000 to help Cardiff achieve this.
- *ShelterBox:* have an appeal specifically for high quality tents and equipment to go to Syria. Jo had asked that we consider supporting this. Pat Blake is well aware of this charity as the Rotary support them and supported wholeheartedly. We agreed to send £600 but to see if Brecon Rotary might match fund this. Money from fundraising concert at the globe may contribute towards this.
- *Newport drop-in centre -* £200 for table football table.
- *Asylum Justice -* £1000.
- Sean asked if individuals would consider standing orders to Unity in Diversity as they aspire to having a monthly income of £500 in standing orders which would help them to run smoothly.
Their bank details are Sort Code 77-65-17
Account No 06668660
- *Agreed a £1000 'hardship' Fund.* Mike and Richard agreed to consider the details of how this might work and criteria to apply. Lawrence to assist and to be on the group.
- *Agreed* would consider transport funding requests for neighbouring cities.
- *Agreed* would look at possible donation to buy goods for Calais.
- *Agreed* to consider further expenditure next meeting.

9. Fundraising

- Concert at the Globe on 17th June will also have raffles and donation boxes. Action - prizes are requested and posters to be put up. Please buy tickets.
- Catering at the film festival - amount raised still awaited but it did raise our profile.
- Concert at Cathedral on 16th July seeking help with stewarding, selling raffle tickets etc. Pat, Margaret and Hilary agreed to help. We would be given proceeds from the raffle. Prizes and additional help requested. Responses to me please.
- Apply to City Of Sanctuary for the grant they want to make to all groups

10. Goods collection points –

- Remain at St Mary's Church in Hay and the Lib Dems office in Brecon. We have 2 storage areas in Brecon thanks to Ty Mawr and the National Parks. Ailsa has a stock list of items that are in the store.
- Food & toiletries ongoing need for away days and to send to Swansea
- Laptops - if further laptops are available, Wayne hopes to have some to loan to people in need.
- **Agreed –**
 - We will try to take down welcome boxes to Swansea food bank so they are in place for people in need. Virginia, Neil, Mike and Sally agreed to help with this.
 - Also need to update items to be requested list.
 - Need to look through Calais goods and see if any are ready to send.
 - Pat has pens and pencils that will be very useful for next few away days.

11. Arrival of Syrian families/ Ystradgynlais - to be discussed next week. We will emphasise our concerns about the delay, offer help as needed and ask about community sponsorship opportunities. Schools have had some useful training and Ailsa and Maggie attended EYST training on Syria and Islam.

12. Groups -

- **Therapies** - Hilary was going to let the group know that the statutory bodies would be providing for the Syrian refugees and that their expertise may be requested for destitute asylum seekers who are placed locally if this seems appropriate.
- **English** - Some ESOL lessons were provided for the asylum seeker placed locally and may be needed again.
- **Arts** will continue to be involved in Away days.

13. Any other business -

- **Agreed** we will explore becoming affiliated also to Refugees welcome.
- **Agreed** we would discuss whether to register as a charity at the next meeting.
- Sean and Ailsa to attend City of Sanctuary AGM and also a training day to report upon our activities.
- Neil emphasized that he and Cate were very happy to design posters and publicity materials for us.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13th July at Gwernyfed rugby club 6.30

Commonly used abbreviations:

- B and R - Brecon and Radnor Express. Newspaper
- BBNPA - Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority
- COS - City of Sanctuary
- ESOL English for Speakers of Other languages
- EYST - Ethnic Youth Support Team providing training and support to Ystradgynlais.
- HBTSR - Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees
- PAVO - Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations
- PGL - PGL an activities provider with bases in this area
- SBASSG - Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group another Swansea drop in
- UID - Unity In Diversity (Swansea) drop in centre
- Wales PEN Cymru- the Welsh branch of PEN international which promotes literature and freedom of expression