



Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees

Registered Charity No.1173570

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Overview

Respite Sanctuary Days

Full respite sanctuary days	14	
Small group respite sanctuary days	2	Talgarth Walking Festival & Hay Literary Festival
Farm short breaks	6	
Holiday cottage stays	6	At 2 different cottages
Others	1	Ireecha Celebration
	1	Bike Maintenance Day with Space4 & Drovers Bikes
	1	Small get together in Cardiff at The Table for young people seeking sanctuary in Cardiff and Newport and some locals

Attendance at respite sanctuary days by people seeking sanctuary¹

Between 30 and 90 people of all ages attended each full respite sanctuary day. Most are based in Swansea but several trips also involved people from Cardiff, and the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Schemes (VPRS) in Newport, Newtown and Ystradgynlais. The respite sanctuary day at The Pales, organised by local Quakers, involved people from Hereford VPRS. Several young people from Herefordshire have subsequently visited other days.

“Sanctuary breaks are an excellent way to connect asylum seekers and refugees with local people who wish to host them for a short period – a day, a weekend or even a week. These breaks provide very welcome respite for asylum seekers who are sometimes stuck for many years and are unable to travel, cannot afford any leisure activity or holidays and are unable to take a break from the city to which they have been dispersed. Activities that have brought hope and resilience to asylum seekers, enriched communities, enabled new friendships and support networks and made a real difference to the lives of all involved.”

—City of Sanctuary

Hardship fund

Established to meet emergency or one-off needs, HBTSR’s Hardship Fund benefitted several individuals and families.

The Hardship Fund has established a separate fund for babies’ nappies and feminine hygiene products administered by Maria Nicholas in Swansea.

Membership & support*

E-mail newsletter subscribers	424
Facebook group followers	452
Twitter followers	434

* as at 15 December 2017

¹ We use the term ‘people seeking sanctuary’ throughout this report as it embraces people who are refugees and/or seeking asylum and safety in our country.

Fundraising/awareness raising activities

Stalls	Brecon Library for Holocaust Memorial Day Brecon Women's Artisan Market Talgarth Walking Festival Hay Literary Festival Stalls (in 2 places over 3 days) Great Get Together in Brecon St Johns and Llangorse Big Skill weekend in Hay Brecon Prom Festival Hay Food Festival Hay Vintage Festival Talgarth Christmas Market Hay Fair Trade
Collections	Hay Festival – after several events Cor Meibion Talgarth concert Open evening in Brecon
Donations	Hay Festival Box Office (resold returned ticket proceeds)
Events	Joint Fundraising Evening with Brecon Volunteer Bureau in February Curry Evening and Quiz (September) HBTSR Grand Raffle (October – mid-December)

Events

HBTSR Open Evening, 19 October, Brecon

We heard inspiring talks from Joyce Watson AM (about human trafficking and modern day slavery), Kirsty Williams AM (about education changes that may benefit both children and adults seeking sanctuary) and Rebecca Scott (about Nation of Sanctuary).

We presented 22 Certificates of Commendation to local groups who have supported us since our inception.

Schools of Sanctuary

Two local schools achieved official School of Sanctuary status this year:

- Cradoc Community Primary School
- Ysgol Maesydderwen Secondary School, Ystradgynlais,

Respite Sanctuary Days

Fourteen full respite sanctuary days were held this year and many people benefitted from the experience, not only people seeking sanctuary but also the communities who host them.

We have certainly felt benefit from working together on a common goal and providing activities for local people as well as for people seeking sanctuary. Community cohesion and intergenerational working has brought added interest to many places that have been hosts.

Respite sanctuary days were held at:

Cradoc School twice, and at Penpont House; we re-visited Llangorse, Craig y Nos Country Park, Talgarth Sports Festival, Bronllys and Brecon (this time for the Jazz Festival); there were visits to Liz Matthews' farm in Crai, The Quaker meeting house at The Pales, Trefonnen Community School in Llandrindod Wells, Gwernyfed High School and Ystradgynlais Christmas Fayre.

Football: another first was the visit to Hereford United to see the football after stopping at Bronllys village hall for lunch. This was a very enjoyable day – all the more so for those of us who knew so little about football, and the supporters' welcome was warm. We again had a football match between UID's team of Swansea people seeking sanctuary against Talgarth Town team as part of the Talgarth Sports Festival.

Organisation: each respite sanctuary day requires careful planning in close partnership with the the drop-in centres and support organisations in the cities, in particular Unity in Diversity (UID)

and Swansea Asylum Seekers Support (SASS, previously called SBASSG). We rely in particular with those individuals and support workers familiar with their local communities of people seeking sanctuary: Wayne and Maria in Swansea and Eva, Rina, Stuart, Sam, Sarah and Mark in other places. The uncertain lives of those seeking sanctuary, their dispersion and lack of transport, makes gathering the group to take the coach a difficult process

We rely also on a source of reliable transport and have been fortunate to have found Bluebird Coaches who not only submitted the cheapest tender, but have also been very accommodating and friendly.

In our own communities, we rely on a steadily growing band of people prepared to host, arrange activities and provide food and gifts.

Each of these visits with quotes and comments are written up on our website and all the wonderful hosts and their teams have been thanked.

No untoward incidents have been reported other than a slight misunderstanding at a festival about what was free (within the HBTSR event) and what needed to be paid for (in the public festival). This was quickly resolved and we have since ensured that we have a briefing from the organizer and have instituted the role of Welcomer to welcome people, ensure people know the main points of the safeguarding policy and to tell them the details about the day.

Future Plans

- Continue this activity.
- Make a shorter and easier form based on our Safeguarding Guidance for people to see the main assembly points.
- Continue to encourage local young people to join in with respite sanctuary days as this is a direct and enjoyable way for them to learn about the lives of people seeking sanctuary.

Other respite sanctuary activities

Farmstay

Several people have been hosted by Sarah and Chris and in turn brought others who were interested in farming and the countryside. This is described as a wonderful break and a chance to sleep well. The hosts are very happy to continue this activity, but it does rely upon a person seeking sanctuary helping others to come via public transport and several people have either moved on or are too anxious about their future to contemplate changes.

Future Plans

Continue and promote the opportunities further via the volunteers at the drop-in centres.

Holiday homes

We were offered 10 homes to use for free during 'down time'. Having very carefully considered these wonderfully generous offers, we concluded that at present we can really only find enough support to cope with placements in towns with enough rooms to cater for a family or two small families. The guests arrive on public transport and we feel that if we used some of the stunningly beautiful accommodation we have been offered in isolated places then the guests might feel abandoned. We have thus been able to take up the kind offers of Anna and Rowland in Talgarth and Brecon respectively. A team of Lynne in our area [with a team of selected volunteers who have the equivalent of DBS and are aware of lone working practice] and Thanu, Maria, Wayne and Naeema in Swansea coordinates the selection of guests and the arrangements. Bus fares and money for food are provided. Currently we have only accepted families or mothers and children.

Future Plans

- Continue as we are able.
- Review safeguarding policy for holiday home stays and write a lone-worker policy.

- Write guidelines for accommodation and support

Short breaks for small groups

Talgarth walking festival

This was a successful break for 6 people seeking sanctuary and a number of volunteers. The accommodation in Talgarth was appreciated and the people who came enjoyed the experience.

Future Plans

- Repeat if there is demand

Hay Festival

As before, the Festival offered a number of places to people seeking sanctuary to work as volunteer stewards in return for free entry to events. It seemed harder this year to communicate the concept and find volunteers. A number of people were able to stay thanks to Sarah and Chris and also to Jonathan who transported and supported them. One person volunteered as a steward and enjoyed the experience and several others were able to attend many events and the PEN Cymru Conference.

Future Plans

- Ask this year's volunteer steward to explain to others what is involved
- Ask a Swansea-based volunteer to help recruit people who can undertake 6 sessions of stewarding (3 days of 2 sessions or more days with fewer sessions per day).

Get togethers

Cardiff Table hosted a small gathering of Newport and Cardiff young people. We may try to repeat this as part of our grant activity.

Bicycles

We have previously transported old, donated bikes to Swansea 'Recycle' but Drovers cycles, Hay, offered to host a day for people to refurbish a bike each. This was offered to Space4U Cardiff at Wayne's suggestion as Swansea has two centres that let people have bikes in return for volunteering there. We have since learnt that Oasis (Cardiff) hold a bike maintenance session on Thursdays.

A very successful day was held at Drovers and there are plans to repeat this for Newport The Gap.

Future Plans

Continue activities as above

English language tuition

Mac visits UID most Tuesdays and teaches an IELTS course. In addition he takes donated goods down from our store at Ty Mawr Lime that are of use to people visiting the drop in.

Schools of Sanctuary

We have been delighted to support 2 local schools in achieving the status of School of Sanctuary. We hope that over the next year others will also want to be recognized as a school that is committed to being a safe and welcoming place for all.

A School of Sanctuary is a school that helps its students, staff and wider community understand what it means to be seeking sanctuary and to extend a welcome to everyone as equal, valued members of the school community. It is a school that is proud to be a place of safety and inclusion for all.

Well done Cradoc and Maesydderwen. We were proud to be at the presentation of the Sanctuary award to Cradoc Community School with Kirsty Williams AM and Rebecca Scott Nation of Sanctuary Lead.

Friendship

Individual HBTSR members have become friends and offer support and sometimes short stays. Some people have accompanied people to court or to appointments.

Caring for carers

We have been offered a holiday home for use twice a year for volunteers in Swansea or elsewhere to have a respite weekend.

Hardship Fund

This fund was established to deal with requests for sums of up to £250 that can be dealt with confidentially at the discretion of the Hardship group made up of 2 elected members and the treasurer. Currently Mike and Lynne are the elected members. The expenditure is reported at group meetings.

Goods

Supermarkets

There have been some changes in the pattern as local managers come and go and headquarters policies and local practices vary.

- Aldi has given us a letter that enables us to attend on a Saturday as needed to collect surplus or short-dated vegetables and fruit.
- Morrisons are in negotiation with us about what they might provide.
- The Co-op will provide for occasional events.

Virginia continues to coordinate this on our behalf and is greatly to be thanked for her perseverance.

Other Goods

Huge numbers of individuals have been very generous in providing a wide variety of goods useful to our client community of people seeking sanctuary. We are very grateful to everyone.

Brecon Rotary offered all the surplus from their Caledonian market this year to SHARP and Oranges and Lemons.

Drop-off points are provided by at the Liberal Democrat office in Brecon, Talgarth Library and St. Mary's Church Hay. We are very grateful to all of these.

Store: Ty Mawr Lime has been very generous in providing us with an ample, warm and secure storage facility, without which we could not operate.

Stores Group: Sue, Brenda, Erica, Carola and Ailsa collect goods from the drop-off points, transport it to the Store and then sort, check and package it.

Transport Group: Colin, Jonnie, Sally, Trevor, Lawrence and Mac provide regular help with transporting the goods to and from the stores and their destinations

Destinations for goods: Sorted goods are taken to:

- UID for people seeking asylum in Swansea
- SHARP who take clothing, blankets and medicines for people in need in Swansea or to send to Greece, Calais or Syria
- Oranges & Lemons household items for people in need in Swansea

Christmas presents

Brecon Lions and Black Mountain Lions donated £100 each for Christmas presents and supporters also gave items and or wrapped presents. Sue, Erica, Carola and Hilary wrapped many presents. We were able to give presents to children attending Ystradgynlais respite sanctuary day; to all at

the UID Christmas party; to the children at Swansea Asylum Seekers Support and to Newport The Gap. We also gave sacks of soft toys to UID and The Gap.

Fundraising

We have held a number of fundraising events and our collection buckets at various events have also increased our funds. The joint event with the Brecon Volunteer bureau at the Muse was successful and we will try to do another. The curry and quiz evening in Clyro was both enjoyable and successful and encouraged supporters to get together. Cor Mebion Talgarth kindly held a concert for our group.

We have successfully used crowd funding to help to pay for a citizenship application and are exploring ways to do this if we have future requests.

Hay Festival has again been very supportive and raised large sums of money for us as well as hosting volunteer stewards and providing tickets to events.

Lobbying, awareness raising and Education

- We met with Brecon & Radnor MP Chris Davies in January to discuss some of our concerns and both as a group and individually corresponded with him throughout the year.
- We successfully lobbied the council to take more Syrian families.
- We have helped to campaign for an inquiry into the tragic death of a young asylum-seeking man known to many of us.
- We have had a presence at a number of festivals and raised money with our Teddies-in-need-of-homes and sales of Refugee writings (monies given to Hafan books- a branch of Swansea Asylum Seekers Support). We have a rucksack containing the items a person forced to flee might take with them and folders of photos to illustrate their journey.
- We have revised our information leaflet several times during the year.
- Several people are trained as Amnesty speakers and others have also helped to talk to schools about refugee issues.
- Our Open Evening was informative and interesting and offered the opportunity to highlight the campaign Dignity Not Destitution and against detention without limits. It was a good opportunity to hear 3 good speakers and to publicly thank many groups who have helped us.
- We also attended both Sanctuary in Parliament and Sanctuary in Senedd and reported the main issues back to members. We spoke at Sanctuary in Senedd and at the Nation of Sanctuary meeting and the City of Sanctuary AGM. Many who heard us expressed interest in our respite sanctuary days.

Website and Social Media

We have devised a Social Media Policy and Press Policy which we hope are helpful and supportive. Copies can be found on our Website.

Our Webmaster has moved on and despite helping from great distances on several occasions it makes sense to have someone nearer home. Thanks to Jo for her help over the last two years. Welcome to Paul. The Website is the repository of all our newsletters/emails and write-ups about activities and policies.

Facebook remains a public group with posts approved by Steve or Ailsa

Twitter was maintained by Jo until she moved on and now we welcome Maria.

Neil and Cate still help design all our leaflets, posters and our striking new standing banner. They ensure we maintain a consistent, recognisable and effective visual presence.

Expenditure

Detail is provided in the separate Finance Report but we have used our monies to support Unity in Diversity, Swansea Asylum Sseekers Support group, ShareTawe, Swansea Humanitarian Aid Response Project and Asylum Justice. We have made small amounts available to individuals in need and also to supply bus fares and food for Holiday stays. We paid transport costs so that UID's football team could take part in an all-Wales competition in Cardiff which they won! We have established a Nappy and Women's products fund administered by Maria in Swansea. Most of our money has been spent on transport for respite sanctuary days and some on food or hire of venues. Most food, gifts and venues have been provided for free for which we are extremely grateful. Long may this last!

Future Plans

Continue to share our supporters generosity with groups who need support to help people seeking sanctuary.

Administration

We achieved Charitable status this year in June and have devised a Grant Giving Policy, a policy for a Hardship Fund and a policy for Press and Social Media. All are on our website

We have a membership of over 400 (see details on p.1, above), who subscribe to our newsletters and/or follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Members are notified of our Group Meetings (usually monthly) and AGM.

Group Meetings hear reports of recent activities and agree plans for future work. They also receive a financial report from the Treasurer including details of donations and other income; grants made or proposed; and disbursements from the Hardship Fund.

Officers and Trustees are appointed at the AGM, with the Trustees able to co-opt new trustees at a Trustees Meeting between AGMs. Trustees meetings are held approximately twice per annum.

We were awarded a grant from City of Sanctuary to run **Project Get Together** in 2018 with the aim of bringing young people together to have a fun weekend at PGL and learn about each other and report upon the experience.

Future Plans

Draw up policies for holiday stays and any safeguarding issues that could arise there. We need to review our Child Protection Guidance used at respite sanctuary days.

Post Holders

<i>Post</i>	<i>Holder</i>
Chair	Margaret Blake
Vice Chair	Sally McColl
Treasurer	Lawrence Duffy
Secretary	Ailsa Dunn
Trustees	Margaret Blake* Lawrence Duffy* Ailsa Dunn* Mike Gatehouse* Sean O'Donoghue* (resigned 08.2017) Melrose East (appointed 12.2017) Sally McColl (appointed 12.2017) * Appointed 06.2017 when charity established
Policies	Mike Gatehouse

<i>Post</i>	<i>Holder</i>
Hardship Fund Committee	Mike Gatehouse, Lawrence Duffy and Lynne Rogers
Fundraising Coordinator	Rachel Giaccone
Respite Sanctuary Day Welcomer	Philip Oliver
Supermarket Liaison	Virginia Brown
Store User-Group	Sue Richards, Carola Tipton, Erica McCarthy, Brenda Charlwood, Ailsa Dunn
Webmaster	Paul Funnell
Facebook Admin	Steve Buzza
Twitter Lead	Maria Duggan