



An Association Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Charity Number 1181855

Tony Toynton

Chair of trustees for Sanctuary in Chichester.

18th December 2020

Chair's annual report for the year 2019/2020

In 2019 Sanctuary in Chichester held its first AGM proper since attaining CIO status; the formal record of which is available for anyone who requires it.

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus restrictions the trustees have decided that there will not be a formal AGM in 2020 but that they will make this end-of-year report, together with audited accounts, available on the website and social media.

Introduction

This report must start, like many others, with a note acknowledging that 2020 has been a very unusual and for Sanctuary in Chichester, challenging year. Continuing the practical, social and pastoral care to those whom we support required some quick, agile and creative thinking on the part of our wonderful volunteers, many of whom have gone over and above all expectations to make 2020 a memorable year in such positive ways.

So the real beginning is to say a huge thank you to our English teachers, befrienders and the fabulous group of volunteers who stepped up to the challenge of moving practically everything we do online. Assisted by our communications and development manager Gemma Driver, Sanctuary volunteers have not only ensured that every family and individual, who need our help have continued to receive it during the long lockdown period but they designed and delivered really high quality 'virtual' learning, social interaction and often practical support in their daily lives.

The result of this dedication was a doubling of the number of hours dedicated to personal support and to English tutoring. Once all of the children were able to return to school a local head teacher commented "It's made a massive difference to (the) children's education. Well done to all the volunteers".

Thank you to the board of trustees who have continued to provide support as individuals, provided leadership to their areas of expertise and given me and Gemma, strong support to adapt so much of our business in the way we believed it would be beneficial.

Finally thank you to all of our donors without whom we could not provide the services that we do. I know that fundraising during 2020 took on a new complexion due to the urgency of need in the areas most affected by Covid and many charities have found it difficult to maintain funding. At Sanctuary in Chichester we are enormously grateful to the individuals, the local churches and groups and some larger Trusts all of whom have provided us with the cash needed to continue and thrive.

Lastly in this introduction I must mention three individuals: first Su Leeming who stepped down as a trustee in the latter part of 2020 due to other commitments. Su has been a trustee since the beginning and her contributions particularly on policy and supporting those involved with verification of age interviews have been very beneficial to us all. Thank you Su, we wish you and your family well for the future.

Second we welcomed Mark Stables as a co-opted trustee. Mark and his wife have been involved with Sanctuary for some time and we were very pleased that he agreed to step up as a new trustee when Su had to stand down.

Last but by no means least we welcomed a new member of staff, Rosie Edmondson who joined us half way through the year as a new volunteer coordinator and business manager. Rosie quickly settled in and has become an integral part of our day-to-day business.

The key elements of Sanctuary in Chichester are:

❖ Befriending

Each family or individual has allocated 'befrienders' who provide a regular, consistent link to enable people to understand and 'navigate' their new adopted community here in the Chichester area.

Active befriending has continued throughout this year, albeit the majority of contact has been via Zoom or similar 'virtual' interface.

❖ English tutoring for both adults and children

We are fortunate to have a strong cohort of qualified and experienced ESOL tutors who provide vital, additional, English language tutoring to both adults and children over and above the state provision some of them receive. Again this has continued throughout 2020, albeit the majority of contact has been via Zoom or similar 'virtual' interface.

NOTE that at the beginning of lockdown we provided a number of families each with a brand new tablet device to ensure they had the means to receive our support 'virtually'. Many of the families we support did not possess such a device so with the help of some generous donations we purchased and gifted them. These devices have been used extensively during the lockdown periods.

❖ Weekly Drop-In

Until the first lockdown we held a weekly drop-in centre one afternoon per week. This was extremely popular with everyone connected to SIC as it provided a 'touch-down' point for volunteers to share experience and best practice, some met with individuals for tutoring and everyone met more casually/socially often with a shared meal once the children arrived from school.

The Drop-In Christmas party was a fabulous affair with food and drink (non-alcoholic), games, singing and dancing. We were also able to give every child a Christmas present to take home thanks to a very generous donation of toys suitable for all ages from the Wave 105 FM toy appeal.

Clearly Drop-Ins had to be suspended with the first lockdown but after a few months of inactivity a weekly Zoom Drop-In started and is well attended.

❖ Nations United

Nations united is our football project aimed at bringing the Unaccompanied asylum Seeking young people supported by West Sussex County Council together to learn football skills. We are fortunate to have support from Chichester University who provide facilities and coaches. We are equally fortunate to have three-year financial support from Sussex Community Fund which buys equipment, kit (including laundry) and some financial help with team management. As a result of this wonderful assistance we have been able to extend the offering beyond the playing aspect to help the young attendees develop wider skills that they can hopefully add to their CV for the future.

This year under new leadership from our trustee Duncan Barratt the whole project has grown in strength and depth. When restrictions allowed we entered two teams in a local six-a-side league with at least one team and often both playing competitively each Wednesday followed by all-comers attending the weekly coaching session on a Thursday.

❖ Pathways to Work

Launched at the last AGM this project has made some small steps to identifying ways that individuals can work towards the employment of their choice. Indeed some individuals have been helped to gain employment but it remains 'early days'. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes, but this will take time to come to fruition.

The two biggest challenges this project faced has been the disruptions (and reduced employment opportunities) brought about by Covid restrictions together with the ongoing challenge of individuals needing to learn English to the standard required by employers.

❖ Support to ARE

Some refugees are left for years waiting for the Home Office to deal with their claims and others have claims rejected for spurious reasons. They are left entirely without support and deprived of the right to work. SiC has supported a small number of such asylum-seekers.

One has recently been granted asylum by the courts but still has not received the permit confirming his right to remain – 9 months after his decision. SiC launched a special appeal when he and his partner and baby girl were offered a flat. The response was amazingly generous enabling them to fully equip, furnish and decorate their new flat. His education after 10 years of deprivation has now resumed with help from WSCC and massive support from SiC

There are other similar cases where SiC is proving a lifeline from destitution, including one who has waited more than 7 years. His second claim was put in in mid-2018 and the Home Office has taken 2.5 years even to allocate it to a case officer. This work by SiC is an absolute life-saver and everyone who has helped these particular folk have proved the potential of human beings for empathy, compassion and action. Thank you so much.

❖ Other developments

SIC now has two paid employees (a total of 4 days each week) without whom the support we have been able to provide refugees and asylum seekers during this year would not have been possible. Grants from the National Lottery and from SCF made this possible and to whom we remain hugely thankful.

SIC now has the use of a small office space within the offices of Chichester District Council who kindly provide it on very favourable terms. This has allowed us to expand our workforce (as above) and hold the sometimes sensitive meetings we have in a private, professional space. We are enormously grateful to The Henry Smith Trust whose generous grant allowed this to happen.

At this point I should also extend a huge thank you to Chichester Cathedral, St. Paul's Church, Chichester and Midhurst Methodist community all of whom have made very generous donations in the past year. St. Paul's church also allows us free use of their wonderful parish centre that we use for our weekly drop-in and monthly board meetings.

❖ Finances

The annual accounts have been independently audited as required by the charity commission and will be made available for inspection on request via email to tonytoynton@sanctuaryinchichester.org

My thanks as Chair of Trustees go to Maggie Medhurst who generously gives her time and skills to ensure the accounts are properly kept.

As with many small charities fundraising is an ongoing issue especially when it comes to raising funds to provide that regular, day-to-day management and administration of the charity. As this report and our annual accounts demonstrate we have received many generous and vital donations but we have to continue our efforts to maintain an inflow of cash without which we will not survive.

Anyone wishing to make a donation is invited to visit our website www.sanctuaryinchichester.org or our Facebook page and follow the links.

❖ In conclusion

Whilst 2020 has been an 'unusual' year for everyone I believe this end of year report demonstrates that Sanctuary in Chichester has not only provided ongoing support to refugees and asylum seekers but has extended and improved in spite of the challenges and I end as I started with a massive thank you to our donors, to my fellow trustees, to Gemma and Rosie and of course to all of our wonderful volunteers.

I end this report as I would close a formal AGM, with wishing everyone connected to Sanctuary in Chichester a happy and peaceful festive period and a safe and prosperous 2021

Tony Toynton

Chair of trustees

Sanctuary in Chichester