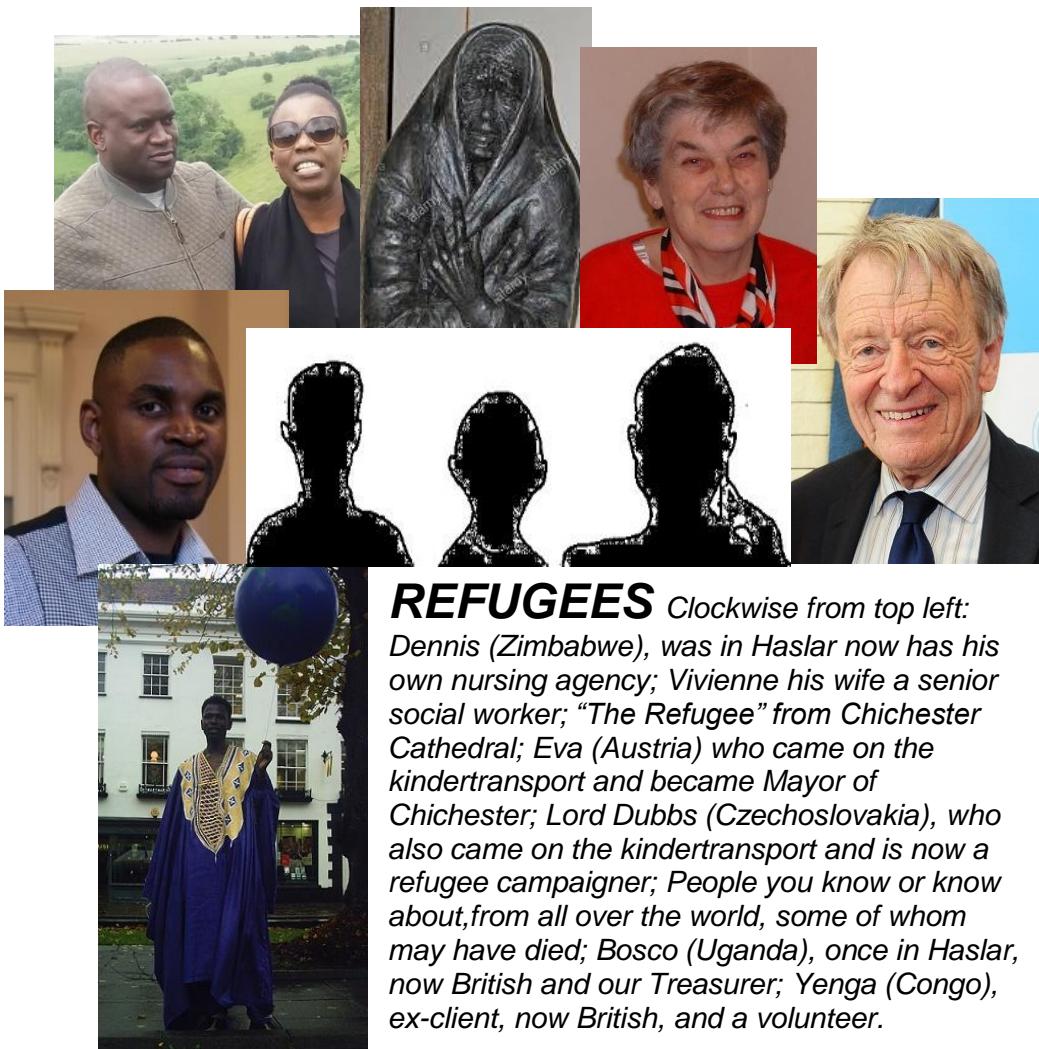


FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH)



Annual Report for the year 2017
Published April 2018

ANNUAL REPORT OF FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH) FOR THE YEAR 2017

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity number 1080187

Trustees 2017

Michael Woolley (Chairman)
Coleen Le (Deputy Chair)
John Bosco Nyombi (Treasurer)
Charles Leddy Owen (Access to Justice)
Alan Fair
Sue Adeyemo

Coordinators: Michael Woolley, Coleen Le.

Contact information: coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk
023 9283 9222 (answerphone only),
All Saints Church, Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO1 4BT

AIMS AND ORGANISATION

Purposes for which the charity is established:

Relief of immigrants or refugees who are suffering hardship or distress or are in need, with particular reference, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to those who are imprisoned or detained by the Immigration Services of the United Kingdom whether in Holding Centres, Detention Centres, Prisons or Police Stations. There have been no changes in the aims since the charity was registered.

Organisation: The charity is managed by an Executive Committee, consisting of the trustees, which meets every two months. Day to day management is by the coordinators

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The trustees have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on Public Benefit. a) Friends Without Borders has relieved poverty through the provision of payments to meet particular needs, granting allowances to destitute clients for limited periods and assistance with travelling expenses. b) Friends Without Borders has also provided free legal advice, regulated by the OISC, on immigration matters. c) Public Benefit has also been served by education of the general public through lectures, presentations and discussions.

Chairman's Report on 2017

Last year in Portsmouth

- 236 people were advised by FWB (sometimes many times) – many more helped indirectly;
- £22,036 given in destitution funding by FWB (up from £16,000 the year before);
- £26,784 spent in total (including destitution) on running the drop-in by FWB;
- Journeys Arts Festival was financed with a grant of £9,800 from the Big Lottery obtained by Friends Without Borders;
- Children's Corner was run by us;
- Access to Justice free legal advice service was run by us (one of only two free immigration legal advice services in the city).

Thank you for your part in all this! Friends Without Borders wouldn't exist without your support – we don't get any government help apart from the lottery grant for Journeys Festival.

Volunteers:

People sometimes ask how many volunteers we have but it's not an easy question to answer. People come and go. Some people are around all the time and clearly a part of the group, others only appear occasionally but may do really important jobs for us, like computer programming. There are 19 on the current drop-in team list but to those have to be added the wonderful woman who lives in London but does our Comms (website, Facebook etc) and the two dedicated volunteers who run Access to Justice, and three

trustees ... Next week someone new will volunteer and the numbers will change again – but very roughly speaking we're talking just over twenty people. Plus of course the asylum seekers themselves who help in all sorts of ways.



Supporters:

Everyone on our email list is counted as a supporter and there are 279 of those including over 60 regular subscribers, mainly from Portsmouth but also from all over southern England. We occasionally get financial help from people abroad (America and Germany). One-off financial help can sometimes come in unexpected ways – in 2017 one couple did a sponsored walk of the Clarendon Way and another supporter organised a concert "Funk on the Farm". Gift Aid from the Government can add considerably to this (over £4,000 last year) so we always ask taxpayers to sign a form.

Other Ways to Help:

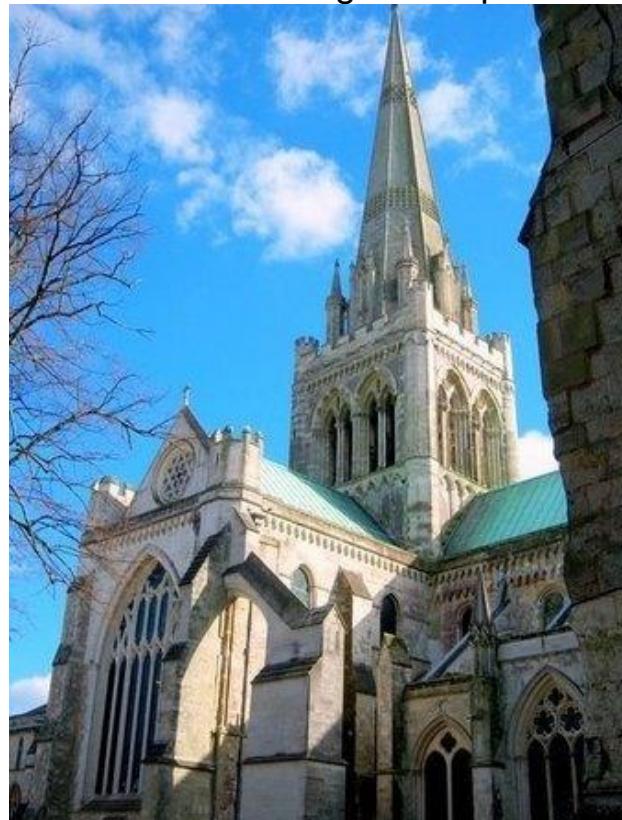
Sanctuary in Chichester has given wonderful support to one young homeless asylum seeker by providing him with accommodation.

Many asylum seekers become homeless at some point and we try to help them providing they're doing something to help themselves, trying to launch a fresh appeal for example. It isn't only Sanctuary which has helped with accommodation – Quarr Abbey, on the Isle of Wight took in one man for some weeks and we know of individuals (not members of our group) who are also putting people up. An ambition of our group is to provide more accommodation and as I write we are exploring the idea of working with one or two of the local Homelessness charities.

Vigils:

We are a secular charity but many of our volunteers are people of faith and during Refugee Week in 2018 Roger Pask as Chairman of 'Sanctuary in Chichester' and I as Chairman of 'Friends Without Borders' will be holding an all-day vigil which we invite people to join for as long or as little as they wish.

This year it will be in Chichester Cathedral on 18th June (Refugee Week) and lasts from Matins at 7:30am till Evensong at 5:30pm.



Though the Vigil is in a Christian Church it is hoped that people of all faiths will join us

Michael Woolley

Still Locking People Up

Friends Without Borders was originally formed to visit men in Haslar Removal Centre. That has now closed but we remain concerned, particularly as this is the only country in Europe with no time limit on immigration detention. This shocking article is from March 2018.

The Home Office is keeping torture victims in detention at Europe's largest immigration removal centre despite accepting clear evidence of their vulnerability, prison inspectors say.

An official inspection report into Harmondsworth immigration removal centre, near Heathrow, published on

Tuesday says that despite accepting evidence of torture in nine out of 10 sample cases, the Home Office continued to detain all but one of the people involved.

The chief inspector of prisons, Peter Clarke, says that some of the 537 detainees held in Harmondsworth at the time of the inspection last

October had been in detention for too long, with 23 held for more than a year pending their removal. One man had been held for more than four and a half years.

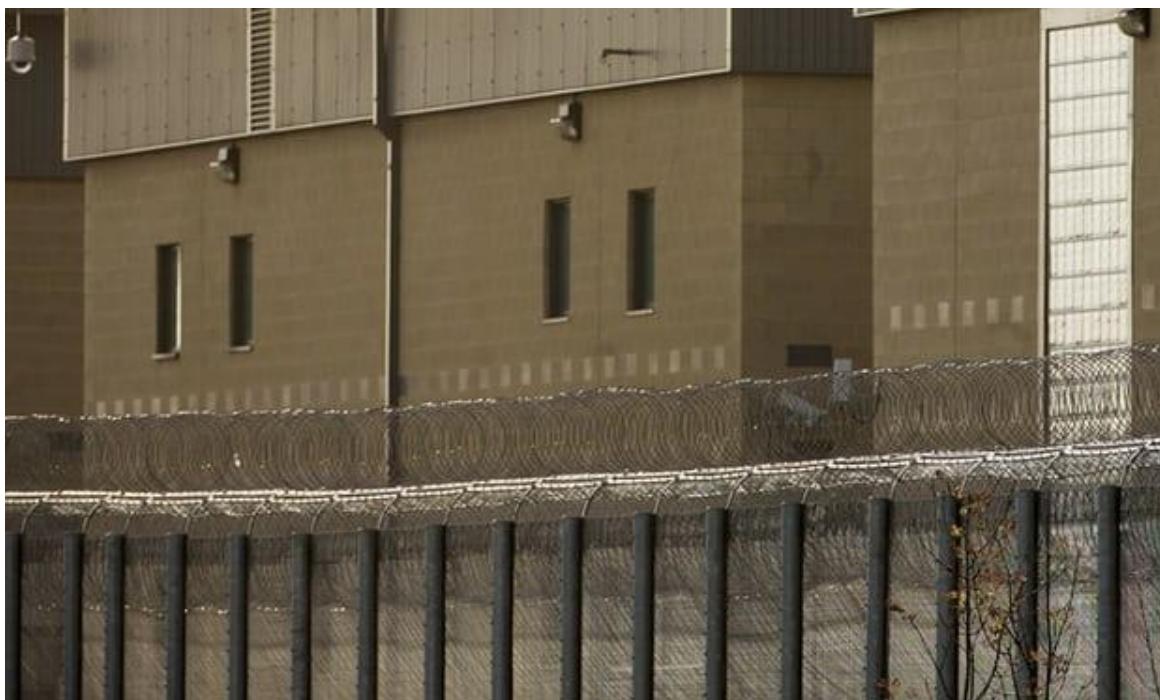
The chief inspector also highlights concerns about aspects of the security regime at the privately run immigration removal centre that he says would be out of place in a prison. Inspectors found detainees once again routinely being handcuffed when attending outside appointments, after revealing in 2013 that a terminally ill 84-year-old Canadian man had been kept in handcuffs as he died in hospital.

Clarke says many areas of the detention centre run by Mitie were dirty, bedbugs were endemic, and some areas had infestations of mice. "The centre had failed to progress significantly since our last visit in 2015," he says. "For the third consecutive inspection, we found considerable failings in the areas of safety and respect.

"Detainees, many identified as vulnerable, were not being adequately safeguarded. Some were held for unacceptably long periods. Mental health needs were often not met. Detainees were subject to some disproportionate security restrictions and living conditions were below decent standards. It is time for the Home Office and contractors to think again about how to ensure that more substantial progress is made by the time we return."

The disclosure that more than 20 men have been held at Harmondsworth for more than a year will fuel the political and parliamentary campaign for a time limit to be set on the length of time that a detainee can be held pending their removal. The chief inspector repeats his endorsement of that demand in the report.

*By kind permission of
Alan Travis
Guardian March 2018*





Our Members of Parliament

Friends Without Borders is based in the constituency of Portsmouth South where we have recently been really fortunate in having MPs who are very supportive. Until the general election of 8th June 2017 we had the Conservative Flick Drummond MP. From then the Labour MP Stephen Morgan (who writes below) has been our representative.

The people who come to my constituency office with immigration or asylum issues are some of the most ostracised in society. They've often fled horrific conflicts in their home countries and are simply seeking a safer, more prosperous future for their families.



By the time they come to me for help, they've regularly spent an extended period waiting for Home Office decisions, many have begun to form a life here in the UK, develop personal relationships, friendships, and have the desire to support themselves, integrate, and enhance our society. Sadly, many of them find

themselves in debt to friends or family, relying on charities or food banks with no access to public services, right to work and live, freedom to travel, or even something as simple as a form of recognised ID.

Friends Without Borders consistently demonstrates the compassion and generosity that our country and city's reputation is built upon, frequently filling the gaps left by the state. At Christmas time last year, I shadowed a Friends Without Borders volunteer offering advice to people and more recently visited the centre again to witness first-hand what the team is faced with on a day-to-day basis. I saw a busy, welcoming, and supportive environment, achieved by the inimitable hard work and empathy of all those at the charity.

I'm working hard to support those seeking asylum in our great city in my capacity as an MP, it is a subject I feel passionately about. However, so impressed by the excellent work Friends Without Borders are doing, I was also delighted to be able to donate a portion of my Councillor's allowance to this brilliant charity.

It is so important that agencies, charities, and organisations work together to help people coming to our city in search of safety and support. Many of the people who come to me for help are at their wits end and are desperate for help with complex applications or even just getting a decision from the Home Office, simply exhausted by 'living in limbo'.

The UK has a proud history of helping people fleeing violence and persecution and we have both a moral and legal obligation to vulnerable people seeking asylum. However, more needs to be done to reunite families and I am concerned

about the efficiency of the processes in place for those who are entitled to join family in the UK, particularly children. As we know, unaccompanied migrant children are highly vulnerable to trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse. On this matter, I'll be working to ensure FWOB's efforts are supported by equally compassionate and effective action in Westminster.

Thank you to Michael and all the team for showing me around; I look forward to working closely with you all in the future.

Stephen Morgan MP



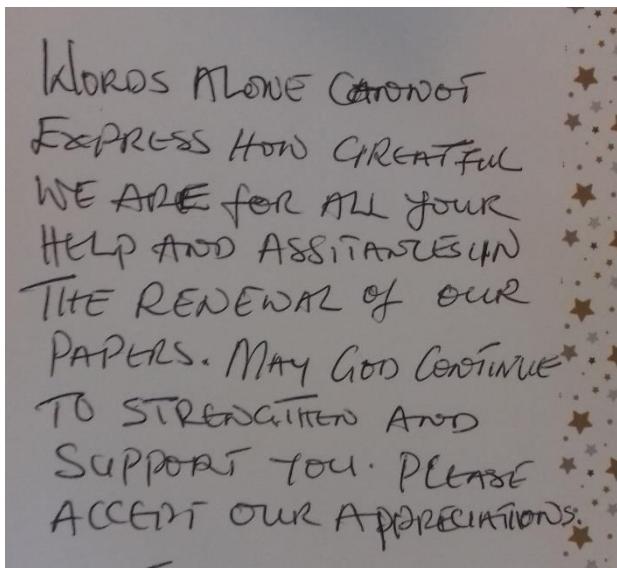
Above: Stephen Morgan MP visiting the drop-in in 2017

Right: Flick Drummond MP Visiting the drop-in In 2016



Access To Justice Report

Our Access to Justice project provides free advice on immigration law. Giving advice in this area is tightly regulated and requires experienced and qualified staff at various levels. We offer the most comprehensive free advice in the Portsmouth area and have done so



since 2014. This is a hugely important service due to the complexities of immigration law and the bureaucracy surrounding it, not least in relation to the lengthy and confusing application forms applicants are required to complete. The consequences of a failed application can be appalling, leading to family breakup, ruined lives and, at worst, physical danger.

The last year has been a difficult one for the Access to Justice team. Our mainstay, John Bingham, retired in April. John had been working two full days a week, managing the office and taking the lion's share of client appointments. Our other two

advisers, Frances and Charles, both have full-time jobs. Charles is only able to volunteer for half a day a week and is limited in what he can advise on due to his experience and qualification level. Initially following John's retirement all referrals to the drop-in were suspended. However, after a few months of re-grouping we began to accept new clients again in August, albeit with a more limited service.

Despite these various, unavoidable setbacks, Access to Justice has achieved a lot this year. We currently have 40 open files, 16 of which have been accepted since we reopened referrals. Further to this, in recent months our clients have had a remarkable run of success with their applications.



In the weeks prior to the AGM we received good news about a client who has been living in Britain for most of her life having been the victim of trafficking as a child. It was far from certain that her application would be accepted, and she still has another seven years (and to go

through the ordeal of two further application processes) before she can apply for indefinite leave to remain.

Another client of ours recently received good news after nearly 18 months of waiting for the result of his application, during which period he was unable to work or claim any benefits despite having a young family.

Our most successful case was a highly traumatised mother and victim of domestic violence who feared for her safety if she was to be removed from the UK.

In each of these cases the impact that Access to Justice's advice has had on the lives of clients and their families is something about which the charity and its supporters can be very proud.

Charles Leddy-Owen



A happy client gave Charles a voucher "for a superstar". It was a supermarket card generously charged with £50 which Charles then generously donated to Friends Without Borders. A very nice gesture by them both. Our clients and volunteers really are SUPERSTARS!

2017 Fees

INDEFINITE LEAVE TO REMAIN

£2,297

REGISTERING A CHILD AS BRITISH

£973

NATURALISATION

£1,202

FEES ARE PER PERSON FOR THE APPLICANT AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

New fees for immigration and nationality applications came into effect on 6 April 2017. The changes included an increase of 18% in settlement (ILR) applications to £2,297. Meanwhile, naturalisation fees have been held at "only" a 4% increase to £1,202, compared to a 25% increase last year.

This is all before the Immigration Health Surcharge is added to the cost of an application, which costs £200 per year per migrant for all limited leave visas other than visits (£120 for students).

Many suspect the Home Office makes a hefty profit on these fees. They are correct. The actual cost of processing an ILR application is £252 and a naturalisation application cost the Home Office £386. Most outrageous is the application fee for registering a child as British. The fee in 2017 is £973, which has just gone up yet again, but the actual cost was £386.

Financial Report 2017

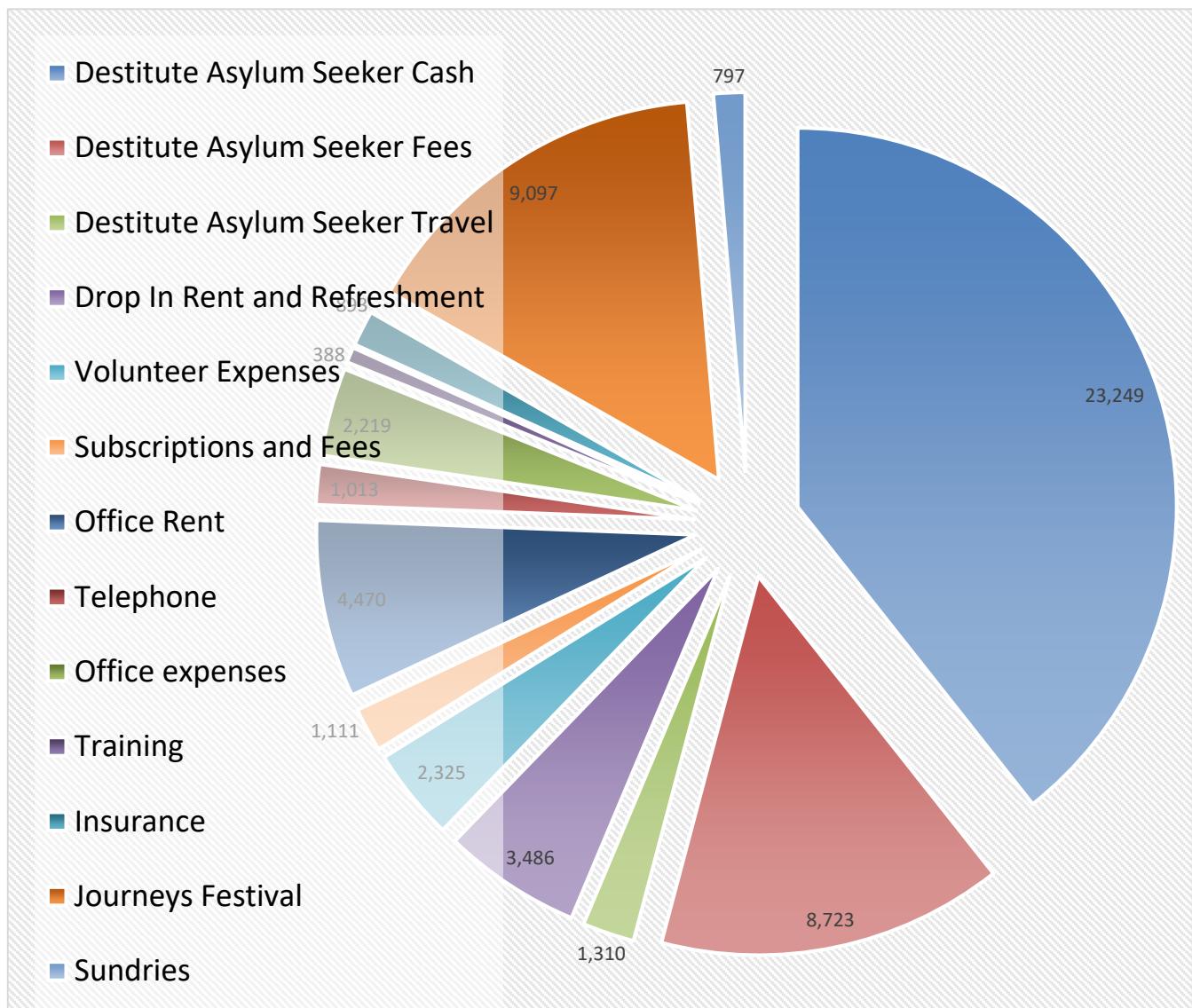
INCOME	2017	2016
Supporters	36,621	36,976
Trust Funds	16,240	6000
Gift Aid	12,619	0
TOTAL INCOME	65,480	41,882
EXPENDITURE		
DROP-IN COSTS		
Destitution cash and travel	24,559	16,817
Destitution legal fees	8,723	0
Drop-in rent and refreshment	3,486	3,500
Volunteer Expenses	2,325	1,999
	39,093	22,316
ACCESS TO JUSTICE COSTS		
Office expenses, Rent, Training	10,094	10,002
JOURNEYS FESTIVAL AND SUNDAY	9,097	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	58,284	36,318
Added to reserves	7,254	6,658
Bank accounts at end of year	29,816	22,612

The above figures are a summary, we would be happy to provide a copy of the certified accounts on request.

What these Figures Mean

- Income from supporters is being maintained
- Income from Trust Funds has increased largely because of the Big Lottery Grant we got for Journeys Festival
- Gift Aid has increased markedly but includes two years of back payments which we will not get again.
- Destitution support has increased markedly.
- Other expenses haven't changed much.
- Journeys Festival cost us over £9,000 but this was off-set by a Lottery grant.
- We now have substantial reserves (partly because of a substantial anonymous donation in late 2017) which need to be spent!

*John Bosco Nyombi
Treasurer*



A Note on Reserves

We would need about £7,000 to close the charity in an orderly way but our reserves are now much higher. People don't give us their hard-earned money for us to just stash it away. Trustees are thinking how to spend it.

Possibilities include:

- 1) increasing the destitution money from £15 to £20 a week - with our present client load that would cost about £7,000 a year.
- 2) Giving more help to people with big Home Office fees to pay. Last year we spent nearly £9,000 on this.
- 3) Renting some accommodation for the homeless – two rooms in Portsmouth would cost about £8,000 a year.

*Journeys Festival
was funded by a
Big Lottery Fund
Grant*



NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED

Working in the Community

Part of our work is the “education of the general public through lectures, presentations and discussions”. Charles, Coleen, Michael, Moses, Sue and other volunteers have all helped with these events.

Visit by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth



St Thomas's Cathedral	21 st January 2017	Illustrated talk
Funk the Borders	10 th February	Music Fundraiser
Transition Chichester	6 th March 2017	Illustrated talk
St Thomas's Cathedral	14 th March 2017	Multi-faith Vigil
Portsmouth Quakers	26 th March 2017	Post Meeting Talk
All Saints Portsmouth	24 th April 2017	Visit by Lord Mayor
All Saints Portsmouth	3 rd May 2017	Refugee play and AGM
Worthing Quakers	28 th May 2017	Post Meeting Talk
All Saints Portsmouth	6 th July 2017	Visit by PG School
All Saints Portsmouth	26 th July 2017	Visit by Rev Mark Payne
Quarr Abbey	27 th September	Asylum Seeker Visit
All Saints Portsmouth	28 th September	Visit Stephen Morgan MP
All Saints Portsmouth	5 th October 2017	2 nd Visit S Morgan MP
Apex Gallery Portsmouth	19 th October 2017	Journey's Festival launch
House of Bethany	6 th December	Advent Address
St Mary's Portsmouth	15 th December	Homeless Action Carols



If you know of an organisation which would be interested in having a speaker or hosting an exhibition, or know of a public figure who would like to visit the drop-in please let us know. We like to help – there is no charge though we would appreciate the chance to make an appeal.

Asylum seekers at Quarr Abbey in September

A Very Successful Festival

Friends Without Borders partnered Art Reach to bring an Arts Festival to Portsmouth for a second year.

Portsmouth Journeys Festival brought the refugee experience to the people of Portsmouth with a series of diverse and high quality cultural events across the city from 18th to 28th October. Refugee and asylum-seeking artists, a number from Friends Without Borders, played a leading part.

Friends Without Borders supported the festival with a successful National Lottery “Awards for All” bid. The resulting project “Journeys to Portsmouth” paired five refugees and asylum seekers with five established migrants living in Portsmouth to explore their respective experiences of moving into the city and making it their home.



A series of videos of conversations between the pairs are available online (www.journeysfestival.com) and the audios were displayed in the Container Project exhibition space outside Portsmouth Cathedral for four days over the festival. The project was incredibly well received by festival audiences and has the potential to be developed further through development of a theatre piece based on elements of the conversations.

The wider festival programme presented ten days of cross art-form events in a variety of venues across the city. This year ArtReach commissioned a contemporary dance piece entitled #JeSuis, a dance piece by Aakash Odedra Company, performed at New Theatre Royal with positive comments received from audience members. A small reception was also held by the theatre for members of the refugee and asylum seeker community, which was well attended and enjoyed by those who went.

Look Up also returned with artworks by Majid Dhana and Natalia Michalska, featuring portraits of members of the refugee and asylum seeker community. The local connection within this strand was a particularly positive feature of the festival. Other highlights at the festival include a series of three Coffee Shop Conversations, a rehearsed reading of new writing by

refugee and asylum seekers, a seminar at University of Portsmouth and a choir performance at Portsmouth Cathedral.

The Journeys Festival International team are looking forward to bringing the Festival back to the city of Portsmouth from 19 – 28th October 2018 (get the dates in your diary!) and continuing to develop our relationship with Friends Without Borders.

Claire Woollard

John Bingham 1929 – 2017

Commander John Bingham passed away in 27th September 2017. He became involved with refugees in 1994 when he heard about a Congolese man being held in HMP Haslar near to Portsmouth. John and Patricia (John's wife) went to visit. There were other immigrants held there and so the idea of organising visitors for them was born. **Haslar Visitors Group** was formed that year, recruited a number of local people and started the regular visiting of men who otherwise would have had no link with the outside world.



Detention was quite arbitrary at that time but bail was possible from the local magistrates. Realising that these hearings normally took place in empty court-rooms without any public scrutiny John and Patricia organised the **Havant Court Monitoring Project**. Monitoring the

courts is today done by **Bail for Immigration Detainees** and that's become a well-known national charity but used to have an office in Portsmouth. John and Patricia Bingham not only set up the office but also helped run the project. John was a trustee of BID for some years.

He was also still the Chairman of Haslar Visitors Group and in the 2005 received an urgent request to help a drop-in whose funding had ended. It was a big ask for a small charity but John was supportive and Haslar Visitors Group ran the **All Saints Drop-in** alone for a year or two until the Red Cross came in.

BID suffered a setback when BID London closed the provincial offices to focus on national campaigning. John then started an **Access to Justice Project**, as part of our group and became a volunteer himself. Shortly afterwards IRC Haslar closed, and the 'Visitors Group' became **'Friends Without Borders'**.

John Bingham ended a distinguished career by playing a very large and honourable part serving local asylum seekers and refugees. We are all deeply grateful to have known him.

Friends Without Borders

Registered Charity no 1080187

This is a multi-purpose form. Please fill in such parts as are relevant.

Count me as a Supporter

Please add me to your supporters.

Name: _____

Email for news: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone number: _____

Gift Aid Certificate

- Donations from taxpayers are supplemented by a grant from the Treasury
- Our Treasurer will make the claim, the only thing needed of the donor is their **address** and **signature** below that they are paying income tax

I am a taxpayer paying tax at least equivalent to this claim and claim Gift Aid on this and all future donations. I have given my address above.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Standing Order

To the Manager: Please pay **Friends Without Borders** the sum below by standing order until further notice. Friends Without Borders account is with Lloyds, Waterlooville.

Sort code: 30-99-20. Account number: 00985875

Monthly amount in figures: £ _____ in words: _____

Date of first payment: _____ My bank: _____

My sort code: _____ My account number: _____

My account name: _____

Signed: _____

Please return this form to:

**Friends Without Borders,
All Saints Church, Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO1 4BT**

FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS

a completely independent, all-volunteer charity which has served asylum seekers and refugees in Portsmouth for the last 24 years. We have NO Government contracts (which means we can challenge Government) and rely almost entirely for support on the contributions of local people.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Become a Supporter

Email: coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk and we'll send you an occasional newsletter.

Give Money for Grants

Asylum seekers only get £37.75 a week – enough to live but any small emergency such as a hole in a shoe or a trip to a hospital becomes a crisis. We pay over £400 a week in small grants to needy asylum seekers.

Make out a Standing Order

One of our strengths is a network of local supporters who pay small (whatever you like but £5 to £20 is typical) amounts each month giving us staying power.

Remember to add Gift Aid

Gift Aid adds a 25p to every £1 you give so anybody who pays income tax and donates should sign the form overleaf.

Leave a Legacy

One of our supporters left us £5,000 in 2017. This is the second legacy we have received and hopefully not the last. It puts us on the road to securing one or two hostel beds for homeless asylum seekers.

Volunteer Yourself

We need volunteer case workers. We also need volunteers to do various other jobs. The asylum-seekers themselves do much of the hum-drum work but it's good to have a team of steady volunteers. Email:

chairman@friendswithoutborders.org.uk

And finally to all those of you supporting the work already be assured that we will spend your money wisely and

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!