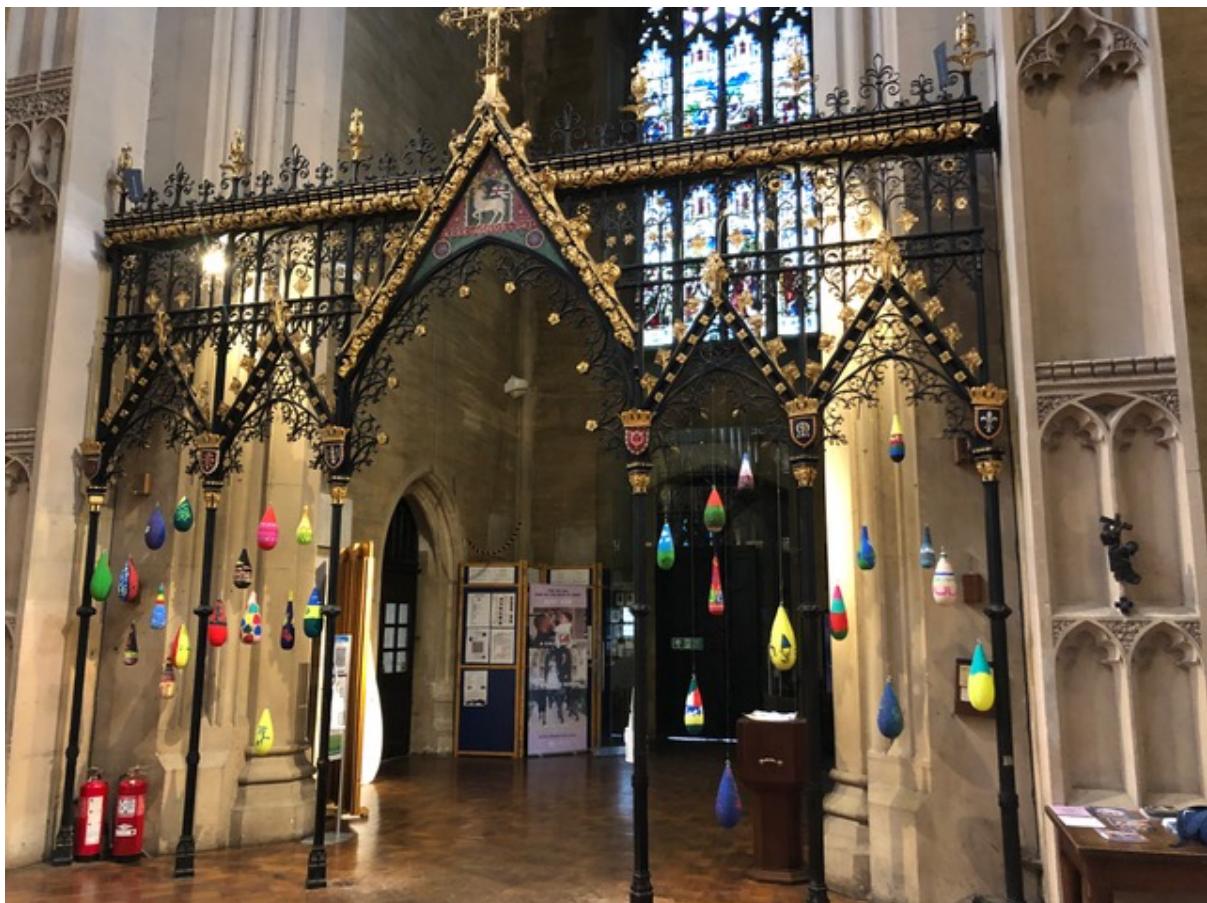


# FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH) CIO



"Teardrops exhibition" painted by refugees on display at St Mary's Church

# ANNUAL REPORT OF FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH) CIO FOR THE YEAR 2021

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity Number 1194005

### **Trustees 2021:**

Geoff Wilson (Treasurer)	Lia Deyal
Bryony Whitmarsh (Joint Chair)	Sharon Brooks
Veronica Dunne (Joint Chair)	Yenga Ikuse
Charles Leddy Owen (A to J)	
Coleen Le (Deputy Chair)	

## 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 Chair.

## 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 the education of the general public through the use of social media, and collaboration with the local press

## Chair's Report on 2021

A report on 2021, yet again leads with the impact of Covid -19. Fortunately, we had already learnt from the previous year how to adapt quickly at the beginning the year with the lockdowns, and so we resumed telephone befriending once more with the drop in closed for the foreseeable future. A number of our volunteers continued to support clients to improve their English with conversation classes on line. We already had in place weekly BACS payments for our most vulnerable and in addition we worked with PCC in order to get our street homeless clients housed.

From the spring to the autumn, we were able to open more freely, whilst initially opening for casework appointments only, and then once more fully open offering food, English classes and activities as well as the important socializing and listening ear. Confidence started to return and the “spirit” of the drop in slowly returned. We now average around 30 people per drop in seeking support in some way.

We have also been joined by Citizens Advice who are able to offer weekly asylum seekers advice and signposting where necessary. This has massively enhanced the service which we are able to offer. Our caseworkers are now dealing with far more complex issues. It has meant that we are able to link our clients up with a solicitor so that they are able to move their asylum application forwards and hopefully get out of the cycle of destitution. One client who has in the years in the UK never sought asylum, and did not know what to do and is now seeking asylum. Other clients are moving forwards with their applications for 20-year residency and can see some light at the end of a dark tunnel.

Our links with other agencies have developed over the past year, with social prescribers inviting us to meetings with refugees in order to explain what we can offer, or alternatively they are ringing asking our advice on how best to support one of their clients. The North End food pantry is kindly allowing some of our clients to shop there whilst waiving the £4 fee. Phones for refugees is kindly donating free phone top ups of £15 per month for our homeless clients.

Then autumn arrived along with Omicron and the repeat concerns of Covid-19 started once more. We kept our drop in open up till Christmas, when we closed for a week. Churches Homeless Action donated a number of £5 vouchers which we were able to distribute to our most needy, along with Arms Around the Child vouchers which went to families with children. The British Red Cross donated a number of gifts. All of this we distributed to our clients on the weekend before Christmas. Children came to the church and chose a gift for themselves, and even a present for their parent when they were not looking 😊. Friends Without Borders also gave £10 cash to every regular client. We can't achieve any of this without the generosity of our supporters, and for this we thank each and every one of you.

The sad news is that our joint chair Bryony Whitmarsh has stepped down from her position as trustee and joint chair, due to family reasons, and we thank her for all her hard work and contribution and look forward to welcoming her back when she is able to return.

**Veronica Dunne.  
Chair**

## CIO

Friends without Borders has now become incorporated. We are now known as **Friends without Borders (Portsmouth) CIO**. This means that we have a new charity number and bank account. So, if you have an existing standing order, we would appreciate if you could switch it over to our new bank account and the details are below:

**Lloyds Bank 30-98-97. Account Number 59923463. The new charity number is 1194005**

We will be contacting all our supporters in due course to advise them of the change of account over the next year so don't worry, no rush, as both accounts will remain open for quite a long time whilst this transition takes place. Thank you again for your continued support.

Veronica Dunne

## Under Greenwood Tree

Increasingly, Friends without Borders is enabling the people with whom we work to explore the city of Portsmouth and its surrounding area. One of the places we go to is Rushmere Farm near Hambleton. The Crossley family, who own the farm, are keen to serve the local community and, through George, have been supporting Friends without Borders in recent years. He is also having a fundraising event in aid of Friends without Borders on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at Rushmere Farm to which all are invited. It will be a chance to eat, drink and dance till the evening out in the beautiful countryside. It is listed on the Eventbrite site, if you would like to attend. Or just ask us and we can send you a link and more information.

So, we have become involved with a green wood working project. One day a month a group of people from varied backgrounds meet at the farm. We come from the Middle East, North Africa, Central America, South Asia and the UK. First, we lunch on home -made pizza or a specially prepared meal, sometimes cooked over an open campfire, then in the afternoon we walk to the woods where a green woodworking station has been set up under the expert guidance of Ivan Pigott.

Green woodworking is a form of wood craft that works freshly-felled, unseasoned timber into fashioned items. As green wood is much softer than season timber it is easier to shape with hand tools. The Friends without Borders group has been making stools – three-legged ones which don't wobble as four-legged ones might. There's talk of joining together in making benches, but we still have some basic skills to learn before we reach that stage.

There is something very satisfying about working as a cosmopolitan group on wood, under the tree cover, in a way that our common ancestors would have been doing from many centuries before.



Peter Cotton

## English teaching

Despite all the issues surrounding safety and covid at the drop in, we seem to be getting back towards something like the new normal!

The English teaching team is a really committed group, determined to give some language help to our remarkable clients from so many different parts of the world.

We now have a working group of teachers on Thursdays of about 6 and we are hoping to attract a few more volunteers in the near future.

The teaching and interaction with our clients has always been very dynamic with different needs, backgrounds and abilities presenting a challenge to the teaching group. We meet and talk regularly about strategies, themes etc. based around practical need (e.g., language and grammar skills linked to everyday themes of food, transport, health etc.).

From our discussion and after observing other centres at work, our main focus at All Saints is to develop a '1 to 1' teaching strategy this year. With enough volunteers we will be able to achieve this and give each client a personal and very focussed language-learning experience based on individual need.

This also fits well with the fundamental 'befriending' ethos of Friends Without Borders.

We also intend to hold regular review and skill sharing meetings to support each other and give continuity to our approach.

## ART

We now have quite a collection of materials and equipment to give clients the opportunity to make art and craft. Card-making, collage and needlework are areas that we want to introduce as many people will already have craft and making skills. Drawing and painting is also an area we can develop.

The aim initially is to have a focussed art/craft table around holiday times and school half term. If we can build on this it may become a more regular feature at the drop in.

**Rob Johnston**





BREAKING BREAD  
BREAKING BOUNDARIES

## Loaves of Love

Loaves of Love was created out of a wish to help and support women asylum seekers and refugees in the local community, through bringing them together through the medium of baking bread, and in so doing help them to feel welcome and valued in the community. It is set up to help these women rebuild their confidence and self-esteem and to provide a safe environment to support the emotional needs of vulnerable women. Friends Without Borders, were delighted to be invited to be able to have our clients invited to attend this special workshop, which takes place every 2 weeks on a Friday afternoon at All Saints Church. It has been a wonderful experience for our clients and some delicious food was made.



Veronica Dunne

## Teardrops painting Article 12

Tears of Joy was an exhibition of original artwork in St Mary's church Fratton. Article 12 ran the creative workshops in partnership with Friends Without Borders and Portsmouth Sanctuary, to which asylum seekers and refugees were invited to paint wooden teardrops with them. The teardrops were hung as original artwork in St Mary's Church over Christmas and the New Year. It gave clients the opportunity to express themselves through painting. They were given free rein to paint anything that they would like to paint. Some of the comments included: "I like painting as when I am painting, I think about my country and being a child again. It was a nice idea"



Veronica Dunne

## Gardening project

At Friends without Borders, we offer two gardening activities which many clients participate in. I hope they offer them distraction/stress relief, exercise and fun.

The first activity is working on a community allotment at Moneyfields, Copnor. I run the community allotment as a volunteer. We invite local people, refugees, anyone who would like to join in. We grow vegetables and flowers and share our harvest. We meet every Wednesday morning. I am an amateur gardener so we all learn together as we go along, often from YouTube! We stop for tea and coffee and just enjoy being outside and chatting. As well as putting the world to rights (of course) we often talk about our different cultures and the way vegetables are used in different countries. For example, one of our allotment volunteers is from Sudan and she wanted to grow broad beans as in Sudan they are used to make hummus. So, we planted broad beans in October and she has offered to make the hummus for us all to enjoy when they have grown. Now it is Spring and we are getting ready for the new season. We have recently planted potatoes.



The Garden at All Saints Church

Our other gardening activity involves us maintaining the church garden at All Saints Church after the FWB drop in on Thursdays (which takes place inside the church). This garden is another outside space where clients and local people can enjoy the outdoors, chat and learn about each other, practice English and do gardening. At the moment the garden is full of daffodils and we are looking forward to beginning a new gardening year.

These spaces are very precious to all of us. I feel very passionate about keeping these places available for us all to learn and get to know each other, and to enjoy outside spaces. They improve all of our mental health.

As Monty Don says: We know gardening is good for you. It is a fantastic all-round exercise, and it creates a high level of well-being. Come and join us! For more information you are welcome to email me: [janprobert@hotmail.com](mailto:janprobert@hotmail.com)

**Jan Probert**



## Access to Justice

The Access to Justice project provides free basic advice on issues relating to immigration law. In 2021 we assisted with several EU applications, three citizenship applications, and some travel document and fee waiver applications.

Our services shrunk recently following the departure to London of Frances Pilling. Frances was one of the founders, along with John Bingham, of the project, and has helped innumerable migrants in the Portsmouth area. She is greatly missed by us all and we thank her for everything she did through Access to Justice (and beyond).

We are now left with a sole Level 1 adviser who is currently working towards the Level 2 qualification with support from Citizens Advice Portsmouth (CAP). Charles has been shadowing Sam Alves from CAP since autumn 2021 and hopes to undergo the Level 2 exam in autumn 2022, after which time (all being well!) we will be able to provide advice on more complex immigration cases once again. Thank you to Phil at CAP for setting this up, and particular thanks to Sam for his support.

Despite only providing Level 1 advice at present, we have been very busy! The start of the year was dominated by post-Brexit applications from EU citizens. We

particularly supported applications for clients lacking the correct documentation, English language skills and/or access to IT. The processing of applications made by our more socially marginalised clients were delayed for several months, with sensitive documents retained by the Home Office (presumably in some enormous pile of unopened post) for over 6 months. For two families this endangered their access to benefits and housing. As ever, support from the client's local MP, in this instance Stephen Morgan's office, was vital in eventually securing a response from the otherwise impossible-to-contact Home Office.

The majority of our other cases involved relatively straightforward citizenship or travel document applications. We have also recently worked on 'fee waiver' applications in support of CAP clients making human rights-based applications for further leave to remain. The fees from these applications run into the thousands (for one family a total of £9,600) and we were required to make a case that they would be plunged into destitution if forced to pay. Both applications were successful but only after exhaustively gathering evidence of income and outgoings.

Next year's report will detail the specific assistance Access to Justice has provided in 2022 for Ukrainian refugees and the hopelessly inefficient schemes the Home Office has set up as a response to the

crisis sparked by the Russian invasion. Nevertheless, the vast majority of our cases still involve those who have migrated from the Global South, and their children. For most of these clients, the UK's immigration rules (and many of its citizens) remain even less welcoming than they are for Ukrainians. Under the current

government things are likely to get considerably worse, but hopefully Access to Justice will be able to continue making a small contribution towards mitigating the misery.

**Charles Leddy-Owen**

## **Volunteering with Friends without borders.**



It is said that a volunteer generally benefits as much as those that they help. I have certainly found that to be the case. I have often been drawn to volunteering my time to work with groups that need support and after recently moving into the area I was searching again for a role that was engaging, fulfilling and above all, useful.

I have been a volunteer with friends without borders for several months. The work involves interfacing with colleagues, other organisations and often, vulnerable members of the public. For me it is that engagement with such range of people that makes it so fulfilling.

Essentially the work involves providing information, some advice and support and reassurance often to those who are extremely vulnerable and who may have suffered trauma and injury and who have been forced to flee persecution. Tact and

discretion are required and boundaries are crucial for the benefit of the client and the volunteer. The gift of a little time and of a listening ear can be such a valuable thing but the engagement with the clients benefits also the volunteer, the work is so valuable and nurturing, by supporting others in need we are contributing to the local Portsmouth and a wider UK and international society and network

FWB Volunteers are involved in case work relating to refugee/asylum seeker status, reception/triage and teaching English. We have a range of experiences amongst the volunteers and there is a role for anyone, training and shadowing of other volunteers is offered. We generally cannot solve the legal, immigration question or the trauma but we can offer a friendly face and salve the immediate need. Key to the work are: compassion, discretion some reassurance and company.

My involvement with FWB began before the current Ukraine crisis, but the issues that we see played out are a timely reminder of the issues and traumas that our clients experience when fleeing from persecution from scores of other countries. Sometimes the problems seem to be overwhelming on the personal and the political level, not to mention issues with the UK government policy in this area. My rationale here is to go back to

first principles for guidance and then make what little difference that I can.

A first principle .....what is our legal obligation in respect of those fleeing persecution??... *Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (international law applying to all nations and dating back to 1948 (informed by the horrors of the second world war), is very clear....

*"Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."*

When considering what we can do as individuals, I am reminded of the story of

the ('*Star Thrower*' by Loren C Eiseley). where a girl on a beach was seen throwing starfish back into the sea after they had been stranded by a storm. She was challenged that she could not hope to make a difference to the thousands of starfish. Her reply was that she had 'made a difference to that one' and so she continued finally being joined by many others and ultimately saving them all.

If you would like to volunteer contact:  
[coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk)

**Alison Hunt**

## **Financial Report 2021**

An Independent Examination has been carried out by Trevor James of our accounts. He has inspected, examined and signed off our accounts and again supported us with his wise counsel and for this we thank him.

We have been given several unique donations, one specifically worthy of mention which was a legacy of almost £35,000. The ever-present challenge of securing additional channels of donations has proved more difficult in the climate of the pandemic. However, our regular donors have grown in number and in many cases increased their donations and we are very grateful for their continued support. Portsmouth High School Sixth Form have chosen Friends without Borders as their main beneficiary of any fundraising activities which they are doing during this academic year, for which we are very thankful.

Also, our expenditure has decreased due to our expansion of services which we are now offering at the drop in and this has resulted in many clients being now able to receive Government support, or gain refugee status within the UK. Hence our destitution expenditure was lower in the latter part of the year and remains so. We have maintained a tight control of our

overheads, especially our rental costs, which were minimal when the drop in was closed due to Covid restrictions, and yet again this year, our staff costs were nil.

We still maintain our reserves policy of £8250 to cover 3 months of potential operating expenditure. The operating surplus for this year is £53,120 compared to a deficit of £4159 at the end of 2020. Current assets held are £78,942 compared to £22,601 in 2020. Due to the healthy financial situation, we are looking to expand what we offer our clients, provide extra support to our volunteers and trustees, plus continuing to look into to viable options for offering accommodation for our homeless clients.

**Geoff Wilson - Treasurer**

## Friends Without Borders

### Receipts and Payments Account for the Year to 31 December 2021

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	2020
<b>Income Receipts</b>	£	£	£	£
From Voluntary Sources				
Regular Donations	30,053	-	30,053	21,991
Unique Donations	9,332	-	9,332	12,974
Legacies and Major Donations	38,026	-	38,026	18,197
Gift Aid Tax Recovered	5,517	-	5,517	5,446
	<b>82,928</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,928</b>	<b>58,608</b>
Fund Raising				
	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Bank Interest	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>82,935</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,935</b>	<b>58,615</b>
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>				
Grants and Direct Support				
Destitute Asylum Seekers	17,454	-	17,454	44,746
Client Travel	791	-	791	3,529
Social Activities	1,103	-	1,103	-
Legal Fees	462	-	462	533
Laptops	-	-	-	6,070
	<b>19,810</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>54,878</b>
Other expenditure				
Staff Costs	-	-	-	-
Volunteer Travel and Expenses	1,238	-	1,238	1,379
Rent	3,244	-	3,244	3,663
Telephone and other administration costs	3,743	-	3,743	2,074
Independent Examiner's fee	400	-	400	-
Insurance	1,164	-	1,164	564
	<b>9,789</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,789</b>	<b>7,680</b>
Fund-raising costs				
Just Giving fees	216	-	216	216
	<b>216</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>216</b>
Other Payments				
Purchase of Equipment	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>29,815</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,815</b>	<b>62,774</b>
Net receipts for the year	<b>53,120</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53,120</b>	<b>(4,159)</b>

# Friends Without Borders

Registered Charity no 1194005

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

## Count me in as a Supporter

Please add me to your supporters list to receive the Occasional Newsletter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to be contacted by Friends Without Borders by post and email for fundraising purposes

I give consent to Friends Without Borders to keep my personal information (as above) for the purpose of administering our supporters mailing list, in accordance with our privacy policy.

I give consent to Friends Without Borders contacting me by post and email with, for example, the Occasional News and Annual Report.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting [coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk)

## Gift Aid Certificate

- Donations from UK 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 UK taxpayer paying tax at least equivalent to this claim and claim Gift Aid on this and all future donations to Friends Without Borders. I have given my address above and understand that this information will be kept by Friends Without Borders for 6 years, from the date of my last donation.

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 Bank, Sort code 30-98-97. Account number: 59923463.

Monthly amount in figures: £ \_\_\_\_\_ in words: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of first payment: \_\_\_\_\_ My bank: \_\_\_\_\_

My sort code: \_\_\_\_\_ My account number: \_\_\_\_\_

My account name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:  
Friends Without Borders, All Saints Church, Commercial Road, Portsmouth, PO1 4BT

# Friends Without Borders

We are a completely independent charity which has served asylum seekers and refugees in Portsmouth for the last 27 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](mailto:coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk) and we'll send you an occasional newsletter.

### Give Money for Grants

Asylum seekers still only get £39.63 a week – enough to live but any small emergency becomes a crisis.

### Make out a Standing Order

One of our strengths is a network of local supporters who pay small (whatever you like but £5 to £25 is typical) amounts each month - giving us staying power.

### Remember to add Gift Aid

Gift Aid adds 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 a legacy that came to us in 2021 of just over £30K. Legacies enable us to plan to plan for the future. They have helped us to run our drop in where we see typically 25-30 refugees requiring casework each week, as well as many who come for a coffee and sandwich, destitution money, a chat, or English lessons to name but a few activities.

### 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: [chair@friendswithoutborders.org.uk](mailto:chair@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!

