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Charity Registration No: 1160553

ANNUAL REVIEW

for the period 13.5.15 - 17.5.16



City of Sanctuary is a rapidly growing national movement to build a culture of welcome, hospitality and inclusion for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Its goal is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the UK which are proud to be places of safety, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities. A 'City of Sanctuary' is a place where a broad range of local organisations, community groups and faith communities, as well as local government, are publicly committed to welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary.

Locally we aim to challenge the negative stereotypes and sometimes deliberate misrepresentation of the issue of 'asylum' in the public domain. We seek to encourage practical responses from local people and organisations; to create opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to be able to participate much more widely in the life of the city and for recognition of their gifts, abilities and cultures.

INTRODUCTION

This has been a very significant year for the Bradford City of Sanctuary (BCoS) group. We have received an unprecedented level of enquiries from national and local media, as well as acting as a 'broker' for many offers of practical support for refugees from the general public. The 'Refugee Crisis' has clearly challenged many people to examine their attitudes towards those seeking sanctuary in the UK

This has been a year of breakthrough for our Sanctuary in Schools project as Mary Blacka's report below illustrates. We are greatly encouraged too by developments at Bradford University and in so many other spheres as local institutions, groups and individuals consider how they can play their part in making Bradford a city of welcome, hospitality and inclusion.

On a very different level, our local profile has been greatly enhanced by the design of a new logo, publicity leaflet and pop-up banner for use at events – many thanks to Ian our Treasurer and Lee Goater the designer.

SANCTUARY IN SCHOOLS (SiS) PROJECT

Mary Blacka, Sanctuary in Schools Development Worker

Over the last year there has been greater interest in SiS and a significant increase in the number of schools involved. We were very grateful to receive a two-year grant from the Tudor Trust, which means that funding for the project is secure until Summer 2017.

The award of School of Sanctuary was made to Carlton Bolling College in Refugee Week 2015. We anticipate that several more schools will receive the award in Refugee Week 2016 – Dixons City Academy, Grange Technology College, Oasis Academy Lister Park, St Cuthbert and the First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, St Matthew's Catholic Primary School and possibly Lapage Primary School. This will mean that seven, or possibly eight Bradford schools will be designated Schools of Sanctuary! There are a number of other schools which are still signed up to work towards the award. For the first time during the project's existence, we have found schools approaching us asking to become involved.

The 2015 Refugee Week Art Exhibition, with the theme of *Common Ground/Shared Dreams*, held at Kala Sangam, had some wonderful work from schools. Fagley

Primary School submitted the Dove of Peace 'cover picture' and other arresting images. There were a couple of stunning installations in suitcases, produced by new-to-English students from Carlton Bolling College. *Messages from the Camp*, words written by Syrian children in a refugee camp in the Lebanon, superimposed on photographs of the camp, exhibited by Bashar Farahat, moved many people to tears. Planning is well underway for the 20-25 June 2016 exhibition, with the theme of *Welcome*, in a pop-up gallery in an empty shop at 5 John Street.

In 2015 the Refugee Week launch and the exhibition opening were merged into one event at Kala Sangam. Carlton Bolling College was well represented, with performances by the College choir and poetry reading by senior students.



Created by Class 5 at Fagley Primary School

After a long search, the huge 'What is home?' patchwork has been found a permanent home in a corridor, in a semi-public area of City Hall. Heartfelt thanks are due to Rizwan Rehman, Strategy and Engagement Officer at Bradford Council, for his persistence in trying to find a suitable location. There was a small celebration on 19th April, attended by Cllr David Green, Leader of the Council and Kersten England, Chief Executive. The event was also attended by staff and children from Horton Grange Primary School and Grange Technology College. Niela Ahmed, Horton Grange, was presented with a bouquet, in recognition of her pivotal role in the creation of the patchwork.

An innovation for 2014/15 was the one-week Summer School, run by Global Sanctuary Education Network, our partnership project with Global Community Outreach. The summer school was open to all young people between the ages of 11 and 15, living in the Bradford district. The aim was to give young people the opportunity to mix and work with others from very different backgrounds, including asylum seekers and refugees. We were very pleased to welcome participant helpers from the Catholic Leeds Diocesan Youth Service, who were on a week-long residential at St Bede's and St Joseph's College. Despite some minor local difficulties - it was a steep learning curve for all the organisers - the Summer School was great success. Participants gave it a ringing endorsement in the YouTube video made by Jenny Eells of BBC MyBradford – <https://youtu.be/g-tUIXAnfAs>. We are planning a second Summer School for 2016.

At a conference In November 2015 organised by School Improvement Liverpool, designed to encourage schools in the city to aim at the School of Sanctuary award, I spoke briefly on our schools work in Bradford. The *Messages from the Camp* photographs were exhibited at the same conference. We are grateful to Rose McCarthy from National City of Sanctuary for facilitating our involvement at this event.

EVENTS

Sanctuary in Bradford – Making it Happen: 22nd September

The frustrating delays during the planning of this event, which took place in the Banqueting Suite at City Hall, proved to be fortuitous as it coincided with huge coverage of the 'Refugee Crisis' in the media. 150 people attended to hear inspiring stories of how some of the city's faith communities are supporting asylum seekers and refugees, some local impacts of recent and planned changes to immigration policy, inspiring first hand testimony from three sanctuary seekers - as well as poetry, networking and food. We are still hearing reports of positive developments in the city that followed from this event – in particular the networking that took place. The event would not have been possible without the practical support and goodwill once again of Rizwan Rehman from Bradford Council.

Sanctuary in Parliament: 1st December

Three members of the group joined nearly 200 others from across the UK for the second 'Sanctuary in Parliament' event, attended by 40 MP's as well as Peers and other influential people. It was encouraging to witness expressions of support and solidarity from representatives of the three main political parties. With some irony, the event coincided with the 3rd reading in the House of Commons of the Immigration Bill, which many believe will further encourage those seeking to create a 'hostile environment' for those seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Bradford University of Sanctuary; the story so far: 22nd April

Building on the inspirational and internationally recognized work of Dr Mel Cooper and colleagues at the University's School of Health Studies, the University now has a working group looking at how it can work towards a 'University of Sanctuary' award. We participated in a well-attended event on 22nd April at which Professor Paul Rogers described some of the wider context, while Kate Karban, Senior Lecturer in Social Work outlined what has already been achieved in the university – as well as future plans, which include the intention to provide 'Article 26' scholarships for asylum seekers.

TALKS AND DISPLAYS

In addition to the above, we provided displays at a number of events, including:

- **Refugee Week Festival** in June at Carlton Bolling College (a School of Sanctuary)
- **Bradford College** Refugee Awareness Event in November
- Bradford's annual and very wonderful **Peace Fair** in November
- Wellsprings Bradford's **Hope on the Edge** Prayer Vigil at Bradford Cathedral and subsequent conference in October
- **U3A Peace Study Day** at the Peace Museum in March
- **Keighley Rotary Club** in April
- **Bradford University's Re-freshers' Fair** in January.

BRADFORD REFUGEE FORUM (BRF)

Many cities with large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees have active refugee forums who advocate behalf of their communities, support local refugee community organisations and provide training and other services to their members. Bradford had an active forum until funding ceased for its Coordinator about five years ago, since when a dedicated few have struggled to keep the flame alight.

We (BCoS) have been aware for some time now that the lack of a vibrant local refugee forum represents a very significant gap in support for newly arrived refugees and those established in the city, and so at the end of last year we offered our support to BRF to help them become re-established.

Working with Wellington Moyo and Ben Mussanzi from the group, we organised two very successful and well attended open meetings in February and April. Since then we have secured the support of Georgia Mariani from SkillsBridge (<http://www.skills-bridge.org/>) to help a revived committee develop the infrastructure needed to enable it to employ a development worker, as well as a promise of funding from a local trust for her work *and* the first 12 months of the post itself. We are optimistic for the future of BRF!

ENGAGEMENT

- We continue to attend and contribute to the quarterly multi-agency **Asylum Seekers and Recent Refugees Operations Group** (sic), facilitated by the Council.
- For the past six months we have been meeting with **Bradford Council of Mosques**, following an offer to work with us to establish practical ways in which they can support asylum seekers and refugees locally. Progress has been slow but sure and we are optimistic that their goodwill will translate into some very valuable help. One outcome of our meetings has been the drafting of a joint statement of solidarity and support for those seeking sanctuary in the city, signed by representatives of the city's major faith communities. A launch event for this is currently being planned.

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Skipton.** John Launder, our Secretary who lives in Skipton, has been instrumental in setting up **Craven Refugee Network** (*visit their Facebook page*) which, in a very short space of time, has achieved a huge amount. This included organising a wonderful weekend in March where local households hosted a group of asylum seekers and refugees – both hosts and guests are still talking about it and lasting relationships are being established.
- We were very grateful to Liz Firth (Wellsprings Bradford/Two:28) for facilitating a really excellent **Away Day** in July, and to Skipton Quakers for their hospitality (and for arranging glorious sunshine!)
- **Resolutions of Support.** These now stand at a remarkable 169 local organisations, groups, places of worship and businesses. We are continually encouraged by inspiring and creative ways that these groups are turning their pledges into practical actions. Bradford certainly continues to deserve its title of a 'City of Sanctuary'.
- **Social Media.** Thanks to the efforts of Meg Fenton and now Kate Ashton, we now have a **Twitter** account – do check it out at [@BradfordCoS](#). Likewise our **Facebook** page ('*City of Sanctuary Bradford*'). With no paid staff, other than our Schools Worker, we struggle to keep our **website** as up-to-date as we would like, but there is plenty there for those who want to find out more about what we do: <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/bradford>.

In addition to all the above, we are involved in daily networking, information sharing and resourcing other organisations and individuals. We see putting people together as one of the key benefits of what we do.

FUNDING

It was a huge encouragement – and an endorsement of Mary's great work - when the Tudor Trust followed up their initial 12 months' funding for the Sanctuary in Schools project with a further two years. Likewise we are very grateful for generous donations from the Lord Mayor's Fund, St Clements Church in BD3, Beckfoot School and a number of other kind individuals. We continue to be very grateful to Touchstone Methodist Centre for their invaluable goodwill and support-in-kind.

TRUSTEES

Chair: Will Sutcliffe

Secretary: John Launder

Treasurer: Ian McIver

Joe Batt

Christy Bischoff

Victoria Elahi

Ala Sirriyeh

A number of others have regularly attended our monthly meetings and make very significant contributions to our work.

Will Sutcliffe, Chair

May 2016

City of Sanctuary Bradford

Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016

To follow