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Charity No: 1160553

ANNUAL REVIEW

for the period 16.5.18 – 12.6.19



City of Sanctuary UK holds the vision that our nations will be welcoming places of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. In order to realise this vision, City of Sanctuary UK supports a network of groups (112 to date), which includes villages, towns, cities and regions across the UK, and others engaged in Streams of Sanctuary, Sanctuary Awards and activities intended to welcome people seeking sanctuary.

Locally we seek to: encourage practical support from individuals and organisations; create opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to participate more widely in the life of the city; enable recognition of their gifts, abilities and cultures; challenge the negative stereotypes and sometimes deliberate misrepresentation of the issue of 'asylum' in the public domain.

FROM THE CHAIR ...

Against a national backdrop of increasing antagonism to migrants (*I shall not mention the 'B' word ...*) and ever more frustrations experienced by those trying to negotiate their way through the asylum process, we continue to be hugely encouraged by the generosity of local people and institutions as they dedicate time, money and creativity in ensuring that Bradford truly remains a City of Sanctuary.

It has been a busy and productive year for Bradford City of Sanctuary (BCoS), with the sad departure of Mary Blacka, who so capably developed and for six years ran our **Schools of Sanctuary** project, and the appointment in January of Sarah Cartin who has already achieved great things – see her report below.

As well as managing much of our day to day communication, our Coordinator Sarli Nana has led on developing our Help into Volunteering project and hugely increased our social media reach – see his report below.

In October we celebrated our **10th Anniversary** with a wonderful event at the ever-welcoming Kala Sangam. Nationally acclaimed poet Ian Duhig brought his powerful poetry; the Lord Mayor, the Leader of the Council and senior colleague Zahra Niazi brought messages affirming Bradford's ongoing commitment to being a City of Sanctuary and congratulating us on our work; Moein Ebrahimi-Louyeh very capably M.C-ed and fabulous food was served by a Sri Lankan asylum seeking couple and friends, while we listened to live music from Zimbabwe.



Photo: Mike Bedford

At the event we launched the fantastic **Voices film** (watch it at <https://youtube/HfTv2QBT-HM>), the inspired idea of trustee Mandy Oates, who then supported the producer Jacqui Griffin in recruiting and supporting the interviewees. The film records the voices of many local sanctuary seekers, workers and others – including the Chief Executive of Bradford Council – on their experience of Bradford as a City of Sanctuary.

We held two successful and well attended **Open Meetings** during the year. These aim to educate and equip ourselves and others in local networks to be more effective in achieving the aims of the CoS movement. At the first meeting in September, Mary Brandon from Asylum Matters (<https://asylummatters.org/>) spoke on Political Engagement and Advocacy. The second in March launched our Help into Volunteering project – see Sarli's report below.

Integration Strategy report. In March 2018 the government launched its Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper and Bradford agreed to become one of five local 'Integration Areas'. The government launched a consultation on the content of the paper and invited individuals, communities and organisations to share their thoughts on the most effective ways to addressing integration challenges. Bradford Council asked BCoS to consult with local sanctuary seekers and those working to support them to produce a report identifying key issues impacting on their ability to integrate into the city. We then commissioned Chapel St Studios and worked closely with them to produce the report.

Nationally there are a number of 'Streams of Sanctuary' in addition to the now familiar Schools of Sanctuary. These include **Shops of Sanctuary** and we are very grateful for the work that Mary Blacka, our previous Schools Worker, has been carrying out locally with Oxfam to enable their two shops to become the first Shops of Sanctuary in the city.

Having no office base of our own, it has been very useful to be able to rent **hot desking** space over the past year for our two employees Sarli and Sarah, initially at Assembly Bradford and now at the wonderful Bread & Roses café and co-working space (<https://thebreadandroses.coop/>) in North Parade - we now also hold our monthly meetings there.

We recently joined the rapidly growing **Lift the Ban** coalition (<http://lifttheban.co.uk/>) of more than 150 organisations, campaigning to overcome the injustice that prevents those

seeking asylum from working. We were delighted to hear that the campaign recently won the Best Coalition Campaign at the National Campaigner Awards Ceremony organised by the Sheila McKechnie Foundation.

Will Sutcliffe

June 2019

SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY (SoS) REPORT

It has been a year of change for the Schools of Sanctuary project.

In August 2018, Mary Blacka, who has been the face and momentum of Schools of Sanctuary in Bradford for six years, retired from the post of Schools Co-ordinator. Mary's dedicated work launched Schools of Sanctuary in Bradford and ensured seven schools achieved the award during that time, with many others benefitting from her knowledge and experience.

Fortunately for Bradford, Mary will still be involved in the work, programming the Art Exhibition for Refugee Week and offering her support to the local and regional schools work.

Following Mary's retirement, a full review and evaluation was undertaken of the Schools of Sanctuary project, identifying the need for the work to continue in Bradford and key areas of development. From the findings of this evaluation, the Schools Co-ordinator post was advertised and I began in post in January 2019.

I come from a background of campaigning and organising and am a school governor in a School of Sanctuary.

Over the past four months I have been working with new and existing schools and am busy planning for Refugee Week in June.

Developing the findings of the project evaluation, my core priorities will focus on:

- Developing a strategic plan for Schools of Sanctuary in Bradford – linking up with regional and national work in reviewing the role and remit of the Schools of Sanctuary stream.
- Developing localised and accessible resources for new and existing schools.

- Developing the role of the Schools of Sanctuary steering group to provide specialist knowledge and resources to education professionals.
- Developing funding opportunities to support all aspects of the project work.

Following up on Mary's work, I have been supporting Lapage Primary school in Bradford, who have been doing fantastic work across the school and are set to receive their School of Sanctuary award during Refugee Week. Lapage have demonstrated a whole school approach to building knowledge and understanding of experiences faced by refugees and those seeking asylum, whilst simultaneously developing an advanced commitment to the school values of tolerance, understanding and diversity. Work from the core School of Sanctuary principles of Learn, Embed and Share has been incorporated across all curriculum subjects, as well as parental and staff events and children have showcased examples of their work in a fantastic book, to be used as a visual display in school.

"Applying for the Schools of Sanctuary award has helped us develop some really focused work in our school. We have used curriculum topics and wider learning to understand the causes of migration and the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers. Working with the Schools project officer, we were able to meet local groups who are supporting those seeking asylum in Bradford. Working for the award has helped embed our school values of understanding others and celebrating diversity, and we know this work will continue in the future." Mariya Mobeen and Sara Shah - Lapage Primary School, May 2019.

I have also supported national work currently underway to review the remit and resources for Schools of Sanctuary across the country. Through participation in a regional discussion forum and facilitating a workshop at the City of Sanctuary AGM, Bradford is strongly represented with one of the only funded project worker posts in the UK.

Any education professionals who are interested in finding out more about the Schools of Sanctuary work are warmly invited to get in touch via the website, or by emailing me on schools@bradford.cityofsanctuary.org.uk

Sarah Cartin

Schools of Sanctuary Project Coordinator

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

I am now in my second year in post. The past twelve months have been busy in Bradford City of Sanctuary (BCoS) with progress made in welcoming and supporting those seeking sanctuary in Bradford. We have seen an increase in the capacity of local services and this reflects positively on our work. The following are some highlights:

Help into Volunteering

Based on my own experience and discussions with sanctuary seekers, a need for more support into volunteering was identified. I have developed the Help into Volunteering project in partnership with the Bradford Volunteer Centre. The aim of the project is to provide introductory sessions on volunteering to sanctuary seekers. The launch in March was very successful and we delivered our first session in April.



Photo: Sarah Cartin

Our second session is planned for June. During the sessions we cover the meaning, benefits and nuts and bolts of volunteering as well as key policies and procedures. As part of the sessions we invite current volunteers who are sanctuary seekers to share their experience of volunteering: two shared at our first session which, based on feedback from the participants, was successful. After a few sessions, we will review and adjust the service accordingly.

Integration research study

BCoS commissioned Chapel Street Studios to carry out a study on integration of sanctuary seekers in Bradford during this period (*see also Chair's report*). I supported the three researchers and helped in providing information. Bradford Council funded the report and it has been used to inform Bradford's new Integration Strategy.

Newsletter

I have developed an electronic newsletter for BCoS which I produce quarterly to provide brief information to supporters, partners and stakeholders. Feedback has been very positive.

Refugee Week 2018

I was part of the Bradford Refugee Week planning group, managing the Facebook and Twitter accounts and manning BCoS' stand with Will Sutcliffe at the Finale. I also supported the Art Exhibition set up by Deborah Mullins and Mary Blacka.

Engagement with stakeholders

I have engaged successfully with a wide range of stakeholders during this period, ranging from funders to Bradford Council, the media and refugee sector partners.

Media outreach

During our 10th anniversary in October I prepared a press release and contacted the BBC, Telegraph & Argus, BCB Radio, Sunshine Radio and other media outlets.

Open Meetings and events

In March I publicised, facilitated and led our Open Meeting on the theme of volunteering. This meeting launched our new volunteering project. I support our monthly meetings as well as one off events such as our 10th anniversary event in October.

Strategic meetings

I continue to attend strategic meetings on behalf of BCoS, including the ASRROG multi-agency meeting on sanctuary seekers facilitated by the Council. I also attend the Bradford University of Sanctuary Working Group.

Talks

This year I have delivered two talks to Social Work students at Bradford University, both of which were well received and raised the profile of our work.

Mailing lists

We communicate regularly with about 400 contacts in our mailing lists, which I keep up to date. Early in the year I ensured that we were GDPR compliant.

Social media and website

My role includes maintenance of our website and Facebook and Twitter accounts. The website had 6,090 views in the past 12 months of which 69% were new visitors; 1,313 people follow us on our Facebook and Twitter. Our Local Services Directory for sanctuary seekers is an important part of the information we offer and is regularly updated: we are aware that it is frequently used and receive much positive feedback.

Charity Commission

I continue to keep BCoS details and annual returns up to date with the Charity Commission.

Engaging with our Supporters

In addition to regular news updates, I have started following up all 176 signatories of our Resolution of Support, reminding each of their commitment to 'welcome and include sanctuary seekers in their activities' and updating them with our activities.

Funding

During the past year I have carried out funding searches and prepared applications. We were delighted to secure repeat funding from the Allen Lane Foundation for part of the Coordinator's salary. I have also prepared and submitted monitoring and evaluation reports to our funders for the past year: the Allen Lane Foundation, The Scurrah Wainwright Charity and The Brelms Trust.

Sarli Nana
Coordinator

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

- We continue to attend and contribute to the quarterly multi-agency **Asylum Seekers and Recent Refugees Operations Group** facilitated by the Council.
- We contributed to the drafting and implementation of the Council's **Anti Poverty Strategy**.
- We have participated in voluntary sector engagement regarding the new regional **asylum advice (AIRE) and housing contracts**.

TALKS AND DISPLAYS

As always, we gave a number of awareness-raising talks during the year and provided displays at various events, including:

- The **Refugee Week Launch** and the **Refugee Week Festival** in conjunction with the Windrush celebrations in City Park in June
- The **Carnival of Cultures** in July, organised by the City Council as a continuation of the Windrush 70th anniversary celebrations.
- **'Welcoming the Stranger'** – an evening prayer vigil with talks on the 7th October, organised by Welfare Reform in Bradford (WRIB) at Bradford Cathedral.
- **Faiths in Action** – a very well attended follow up in November to the successful 2017 event organised in partnership with our friends at The Faith Centre.
- Bradford's magnificent **Peace Fair** in November and a Peace Fair Extra in July.
- **Shipley Labour Group** in November.
- Leeds Catholic Diocese's very successful **Refugee Response** event in February.

FUNDING

We are very grateful to the following grant funders for their support of our work over the past year: Big Lottery Awards for All; Scurrah Wainwright Charity; The Brelms Trust, Allen Lane Foundation and Bradford Council (Controlling Migration Fund), as well as a number of generous individual donations.

We continue to be very grateful to Touchstone Methodist Centre (<https://www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk/>) for their invaluable goodwill and support-in-kind.

FUTURE PLANS

Welcome to Bradford

We are working with Enable2, the Council and Refugee Action with the hope of identifying funding to develop a web-based resource listing vital information for migrants to Bradford (similar to the excellent <https://newtoleeds.org/> website). This would be more accessible and easier to update than our current Local Resources list (<https://bradford.cityofsanctuary.org/local-resources>).

OPEN MEETINGS

Following the success of the two Open Meetings in the past year, we will be running an **Access to Healthcare** meeting on 10th July, with the aim of clarifying what asylum seekers are and are not entitled to. In November the theme will be **Free things to see and do in Bradford**, aimed at encouraging more participation from sanctuary seekers.

TRUSTEES for the year:

- Chair: Will Sutcliffe
- Treasurer: Ian McIver from 15.05.2013 until 25.3.19*; Phil Lawler from 25.3.19
- Secretary: Avril Barker – from 15.5.19
- Pastor Ben Ayesu – until 11.7.18
- Victoria Elahi – until 11.7.18
- Revd. Joe Batt – until 14.11.18
- Christy Bischoff – until 19.12.18
- Roger Cowell - since 18.04.2018
- Kay Holden – since 18.04.2018
- Mandy Oates - since 18.04.2018

There have been significant changes in our board of trustees over the year, with Pastor Ben Ayesu moving to work in Africa and Victoria Elahi and Ala Sirreyeh also standing

down, having each left Bradford for work elsewhere. We are immensely grateful to each for all they have contributed to our work over the years. Likewise, all the contributions since the very early days of the group of Christy Bischoff, who stood down due to work and family commitments, and Joe Batt who has taken a very well earned retirement. Christy provided line management to our previous schools worker; Joe was particularly active in our early years in trying to engage with local higher education institutions.

We have been extremely grateful to Ian McIver* who has stood down as treasurer, a role he has held since 2011; we are very happy that Ian is remaining a trustee. Phil Lawler brings considerable experience to the role, both in industry and the voluntary sector so we are very confident that our finances remain in safe hands!

June 2019