

Scottish Action for Refugees

Annual General Meeting

28th November 2019

Present: Claire Macaulay (Chairperson) Batool Hasan (Secretary)
Alex Short (Treasurer) Lauran King (Trustee)
Ellanor King (Trustee) Fiona Noble
Ron McKechnie Pat Davies
Helen Calder Audrey Ferrie
Marian Wallace Vincent Parker
John Wallace Fionnlagh Ballantine

1. Apologies

Richard Curran, Uzma Mir-Young, Hayley Street, Nicola Gritton, Mahdi Hasan, Lisa Breslin, Matt Noam & Moutaz Hamdan

2. Minutes of the Last AGM

The minutes were agreed. The Annual Report was circulated, thanks to Fionnlagh Ballantine for designing it.

3. SAFR Space (Claire Macaulay)

SAFR Space continued to open up to 3 days a week with a core group of volunteers. The trustees recently looked at whether the Space was the most effective use of volunteers and resources. There had been a discussion with Maslows about SAFR taking this under its umbrella, but this plan did not go ahead. This may have been a way forward for the Space but after much deliberation it was decided to close the hub. Unfortunately the trustees did not have the time or resources to develop the hub given their other commitments. This was not an easy decision but it was felt there could be better use of volunteer time and resources.

However, this does free us up to look at different ways of providing local services. We are exploring possibilities of getting a space to do something for refugees in Glasgow and twin this with our campaigns abroad. Volunteers, as always, would be crucial to this plan.

There was discussion around this idea. A suggestion was made to provide more practical activities such as arts & crafts or sewing, something that people could get involved in to bring them in. It was agreed we don't want to duplicate provision, for example there are a number of English classes in Govan with many under-subscribed. One focus could be on providing practical assistance in partnership with other organisations, such as a winter coat drive for people in Glasgow. It was agreed we should explore ways of involving refugees in volunteering.

4. Collections (Batool Hasan)

This year saw the launch of "Love from Scotland". We again worked with Hand in Hand for Aid and Development to send winter supplies to Syria. There were 4 main events held roughly in the 4 corners of the city. The first event in Cranhill was quiet and we continue to struggle to find contacts in the east of the city to help promote one of our events. The other 3 were busy, especially as many local collections dropped off here. It was arguably the local collections that increased the amount of donations provided and we easily filled a container which we have struggled to do for the last couple of years. This suggests the public is still keen to donate, but we need to explore ways **of facilitating** this. Developing local collections was one aspect. In addition, we linked in with other organisations such as Massive Outpouring of Love (MOOL) in Dumfries who brought a van load of items and Soap Aid who again gave us 2 pallets of soap. There **were** also a large number of walking aids from Forth Valley NHS.

One project within the campaign was "Travelling Teds" where we fundraised and bought teddy bears and attached messages of hope & love, which were translated **into Arabic** by Scottish Syrian Association for Integration and Relief. These will be given to children undergoing physical therapy as a source of comfort.

We shipped earlier this year and the container arrived in Syria in September. The items are being distributed in Idlib in a shop style distribution centre.

5. Financial Report (Alex Short)

The audited accounts available at this meeting are for the year 2018/19 and this year's audited accounts will be available in the new year.

The financial year ends on 30th November, currently the balance is £6399.18

A total of £7100 was raised through SAFR events/collections fundraising, supporters' events, donations (including regular donations), Teddy fundraiser and Facebook fundraisers/donations. Expenditure included SAFR Space running costs, Love from Scotland

campaign costs and donation to Eastwood Refugee Aid for their Calais trip. Further details are in the Annual Report.

Ron updated the meeting that the van sent over to Calais (known locally as “The Scottish Van”) is going strong. They used part of our donation to buy clothing in bulk and will be taking this to Calais tomorrow.

We are to be one of the recipients of fundraising by the Green Brigade who estimate a donation of £7,500. This, along with the balance carried over, puts us in a strong position to be able to take plans forward. Fundraising will continue, however, starting with a quiz night early in the new year.

6. Trustees 2019/20

Gavin resigned earlier in the year due to work commitments abroad. All remaining trustees agreed to continue. We also welcomed Fiona Noble to the board of trustees (proposed by Batool Hasan and seconded by Claire Macaulay and unanimously agreed). Claire will update OSCR with the changes.

As per the constitution, Batool Hasan resigned and will be re-instated at the next trustees meeting.

7. Proposed Plan 2019/20

As collections are to be the main focus for SAFR, the trustees and the collections sub-group have drawn up a strategic plan to take things forward. This consists of a Vision, Mission, Values and Goals (attached).

We will continue to build partnerships and we are keen to share resources and expertise with other groups who share our values. Empathy is a key value and includes the willingness to listen to other people and try to understand their perspective. We have good existing links and are keen to develop new links.

As outlined, it has been agreed that a container will again be shipped to Syria in conjunction with Hand in Hand for Aid and Development. Alongside this we will explore sending smaller shipments to other areas such as Greece and build links there, particularly with a view to supporting a specific project.

Securing storage/premises is a priority and we are in a better position as we have the means to pay a nominal rent which should increase our options. We are keen to make a provision in Glasgow and will explore ways of doing this. It was agreed a focus group to direct this

would be important. There was also discussion around fundraising to buy items in bulk at cost.

Volunteers are our biggest resource and we will continue to look after them. Although we are in a strong financial position, we will continue to fundraise and explore other avenues such as commercial partnership and merchandising.

We will develop a more robust social media plan, consolidate branding and develop our website.

8. AOB

It was highlighted that there are some volunteers who are not on social media and trustees will explore methods of updating them. Suggestions included a quarterly newsletter at key dates and an email distribution list.

Uzma Mir-Young asked to feedback that the GFT plan mentioned last year is no longer possible. However she has an idea for a fundraising night which some comedian friends would like to get involved with. Trustees will take this forward.