



# Churches Together in the Merseyside Region

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## **Support for Asylum Seekers** **CTMR – Churches Together in the Merseyside Region** Registered Charity Number 519061

Dear Friends,

### **Report – March 2019**

SAS has continued to deliver the destitution project with the help of collaborative initiatives with our local partner agencies, mainly Asylum Link Merseyside, Refugee Women Connect (RWC), Faiths4Change, and the Probation Service. Collectively we are providing much needed financial and practical support with humanitarian aid and wellbeing projects for destitute people seeking asylum and refuge.

The renovation work at St Anne's Centre is moving at a pace and the second floor is almost complete. Unfortunately the night Shelter Project has been deferred indefinitely for practical and funding reasons. Let's hope we can pick that up again in the future.

ALM organised an ESOL conference at LACE in November 2018 which was heralded as a major success with some further workshops planned in 2019.

Refugee Women Connect continued its vital work for destitute women and babies, at risk of street homelessness and domestic violence. Their plight must resonate with any rational person, so long may that work continue. SAS has managed to secure current levels of funding for WRC until June 2020.

Faiths4Change is supporting and delivering several excellent wellbeing projects, and planning on creating a small functional peace garden in 2019 especially for women attending the weekly allotments sessions.

As usual I hope you find this SAS report of interest but first the usual numbers.....

### **Financial Statements**

Attached is a summary statement of SAS financial activities for the 12 months to December 2018 with comparative figures for the year to December 2017, grouped under relevant headings of income and expenditure. This shows a small net deficit of £4,797. Despite the increasing requests for emergency support grants we have maintained the basic monthly grants to Asylum Link Merseyside [ALM] capped at £2,900.

Unfortunately since 1 October 2018 support grants for all our partner agencies [including Refugee Women Connect (formerly MRANG), Faiths4Change, Asylum Link Merseyside and Merseyside Probation Service] were subject to a 25% reduction, because SAS funds could not sustain the level of support we were providing in the earlier part of 2018. We will continue to monitor financial support levels on a regular basis in 2019.

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#### Presidents

The Most Rev'd Malcolm McMahon, The Archbishop of Liverpool  
The Right Rev'd Paul Bayes, The Bishop of Liverpool  
The Rev'd Dr Sheryl M Anderson, Chair of the Liverpool Methodist District  
The Rev'd Jacky Embrey, Moderator of the Mersey Synod of the United Reformed Church  
The Rev'd Phil Jump, Regional Minister, North West Baptist Association  
Major Roger Batt North West England & North Wales Divisional Commander, Salvation Army

*(Churches Together in the Merseyside Region is a registered charity, No.519061)*

In 2018 we have been greatly helped with grants from:

- John Moores Foundation £10,000 [3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 annual tranches]
- LCVS [Everyday Changes Fund] of £1,650
- Liverpool Cathedral £3,000
- Liverpool RC Archdiocese £21,350
- Lord Leverhulme's Charitable Trust £1,000
- Passionist Order – St Joseph's Province £6,000

32 loyal individual donors continued to support SAS by either standing orders or individual donations. SAS has continued to maintain a contribution on average of £230 per month to the fruit project at ALM and a widowed lady regularly donates £5 cash from her pension specifically for the fruit project. SAS contributed £32k for destitution support grants, which is more than double the amount for 2017.

Emergency accommodation of £20k is down compared to 2017. Two reasons were: (i) we had significant legal fees and renovations in 2017 in negotiating a lease of a former presbytery, and (ii) we had to cap monthly ALM support in 2018 in total, which fell mainly upon accommodation.

Support grants include both humanitarian aid and wellbeing projects delivered by ALM and other local agencies. SAS has also received personal referrals from local agency staff at foodbanks relating to asylum seekers who volunteer there [e.g. St Leonards Youth and Community Centre].

SAS emergency support grants to the Probation Service [£1,870] includes both asylum seekers out on licence who have no access to public funds, and also those on community payback schemes who cannot afford transport costs to their workplace, nor lunch while they are working.

### **Properties and Emergency Accommodation**

There are on average 250+ registered as destitute with ALM of which we are currently only able to provide emergency accommodation to 15 people.

We are now supporting 4 properties for emergency accommodation purposes– two accommodating 9 destitute women, and two properties for 6 destitute men.

The plan to operate a Night Shelter Scheme [based on the BOAS Model in Manchester of 7 different nightly venues] has been proving problematical in finding a suitable appointee as Co-ordinator and other practical issues at ALM have meant the project sadly has been deferred indefinitely. A grant already received is being re-directed for other destitution needs, with the approval of the grantor.

### **SAS Support via Other Agencies:**

#### **ALM**

ALM is the main agency delivering the bulk of the destitution project. ALM continues to provide breakfast [usually toast and porridge and a hot drink] and a hot meal five days a week for up to 250. The fruit project allows for one piece of fruit per person per day attending St Anne's Centre. Food parcels and toiletries are distributed each Friday to the destitute to support them over the weekend, and emergency rations and clothes are provided as and when required.

Work renovating the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor has substantially been completed. The next phase is to raise funds to reinstate a former truncated stairwell which is required to meet fire safety regulations. We can then populate the new offices and casework rooms on the second floor.

ALM organised in November 2018 a one day conference at LACE [Liverpool Archdiocese Centre for Evangelisation], spearheaded by Bridie Sharkey, and hosted by the Justice and Peace Group, and invited representatives from groups in the newly dispersed areas around Merseyside. SAS were happy to support and promote the conference which was a resounding success and will be followed up with smaller workshops – the first took place in February 2019 at ALM.

SAS was able to make a contribution to the completion of the new kitchen refurbishments at ALM in time for the Christmas lunch and celebrations.

SAS provides some funds towards the “Places to Go and things to do” initiative and as the weather improves in Spring there will be more opportunities for “days out” in and around Merseyside.

For those people granted permission to stay in UK, family reunion becomes the next major goal for them. This is an extremely costly and time consuming project which ALM undertakes. SAS has offered to assist with funding a limited number of DNA tests for those cases where only DNA results will guarantee proof of familial relationships.

## **Faiths4Change**

Annie Merry, CEO at Faiths4Change, has reported on some of their work which SAS has helped to fund:

“...Faiths4Change is most grateful to SAS for the continued financial support which has contributed to the following projects / staff salaries:

**Developing Roots** is our long standing partnership health and wellbeing project at the ALM allotments in Childwall, funded by Allen Lane Foundation and Support for Asylum Seekers. The project is led by Rosie, our Food and Wellbeing Coordinator and Donna, our Wellbeing Support Worker. Outdoor activity this month has been limited to a session at the plots with Phil, Donna and Caps covering all the growing areas with new weed retardant fabric. The fabric, along with new strawberry plants and a new mower, was purchased with a small grant from Merseyside Environmental Trust.

Covering the growing areas with fabric helps limit the light to the soil, reducing weed growth but also warming up the soil for seed planting.

Indoor activity has focused on planning for the new peaceful seating and sensory garden area, including undertaking an application for funding to make this a reality. Over the coming month we'll be renewing our contacts with Women Together and women using other asylum and refugee services in order to have women centred activities on the allotment this growing season, alongside the food growing focused work usually undertaken by men.

**Communities Together in Skelmersdale (Food +)** is in its second and final 6 months of activities developed and delivered mainly on Tan House estate to enable people from the settled and newly arrived communities to get to know each other. The work is led by Liz, our Arts & Well-being Coordinator with Donna, our Wellbeing Support Worker and Rosie and Food & Wellbeing Coordinator. The New Year sessions have got off to a great start with activities at the Oaks Church on 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

Seven local residents together made and ate roasted apple and parsnip soup & lemon drizzle cake and then rolled their sleeves up for a spot of pebble painting. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, nine residents made and ate a tasty lunch of flatbreads, salads and falafels and then sowed 6 varieties of tomato seeds including the tempting ‘Midnight Snack’.



Tomato ‘Midnight Snack’ variety

The seeds have been sown in small pots which have been popped into sealed freezer bags (to create mini greenhouses) and are currently soaking up the love, prayers and sunshine in the house church’s prayer room.

Late spring, the Tomato plants will be potted on and moved outdoors into the community garden area, these love apples will be used in different summer recipes by folk attending the regular food + sessions at The Oaks.

<https://fruitguys.com/almanac/2011/09/06/the-love-apple>

**CEO Salary Contribution** means that some of the core work – such as income generation – is supported and in turn sustains and enables the charity to deliver on its objectives;

i) To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, and in particular to bring together faith communities to work towards improving the environment of disadvantaged communities within the North West of England. North West of England is the geographical area covering Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire & Greater & the city of Manchester.

ii) To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, particularly within disadvantaged communities in the North West of England.

In January SAS support enabled the CEO to write and submit a bid to the Community Foundation to deliver seasonal cook and share sessions with people living on the Northwood estate, Kirkby.....”

### **Refugee Women Connect [formerly MRANG]**

Alison Moore, RWC Director, has provided a recent report on their work in the period August to November 2018, supported by the SAS Destitution Project:

“.....This period has seen similar trends behind the need for destitute service users to be put on to the destitution fund.

Cases of domestic violence that see service users leave accommodation shared with an abusive partner are resulting in a quick deterioration in circumstances. Service users in these cases have limited options and are reliant on the asylum support system and Section 4 applications if they are to become financially independent from abusive partners. The turnaround in support applications is lengthy and means that service users are forced to use homeless shelters and foodbanks. During this period, the service users are exceptionally vulnerable to exploitation and gender-based violence. The destitution fund allows us to provide money for food to help bridge the gap between potential support they will receive via Section 4, etc., but it does not allow us to remove them from needing to use shelters or seek temporary insecure accommodation with friends. It is during this time that crisis casework is necessary to ensure that the service user has intensive support to attempt to prepare them for the dangers they may face during this period of homelessness and destitution and to find solutions to end it as quickly as possible.

Service users who are refused and become street homeless are continuing to struggle to gain sustainable funding. Once again, the destitution fund allows us a window to work with these service users to attempt to secure funding. This period must see intensive casework support as well as the destitution fund otherwise the circumstances of the service user will rarely change. Even with intensive casework, the lengthy time of application approvals is a massive hindrance and often sees us needing to place a service user on to a second round of destitution funding or risk them becoming dangerously vulnerable.

As can be seen, it is an incredibly difficult position to be in as a destitute asylum-seeker. The destitution fund is a vital intervention in attempting to improve their circumstances. Together with intensive casework, it does result in positive outcomes and continues to be essential in securing these outcomes.....”

### **Support for SAS/ALM**

As usual I would take this opportunity again to thank individuals, faith groups and other organisations for continuing to support the work of SAS and its local partner agencies with donations, fundraising activities, new and old clothes, donating specific food items, etc. You can obtain a full list of food items wanted and fundraising ideas for SAS from the CTMR administration office [[sas@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:sas@ctmr.org.uk) or tel: 0151 709 0125] or

directly from myself.

Cheques should be made payable to “Churches Together in the Merseyside Region S.A.S” or simply “CTMR SAS”.

We can provide a list of other ideas or suggestions for raising funds and supporting the work of SAS.

You can see from the testimonies from our local partner agencies of the positive support work and wellbeing activities that are being provided to arguably the most marginalised group in our community. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Please keep in your prayers the staff, volunteers and trustees of SAS and our local partner agencies.

May you and your families enjoy a wonderful Spring and Summer ahead and all the joy and hope those seasons represent.

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March 2019

**Ps If you prefer not to receive SAS newsletters in future please let me know. Neil**



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**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**for the 12 months period to 31 December 2018**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Grants from Organisations	43,001	57,844
Individual Donations	6,834	9,722
	49,934	67,566
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Accommodation	20,386	35,452
Destitution Support	32,376	14,560
Printing Expenses	-	1,524
Probation Grants for Asylum seekers	1,870	2,490
	54,632	54,026
<b>Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources</b>	<b>(4,797)</b>	<b>13,540</b>
<b>Fund Balances</b>		
At 31 December 2017	52,619	39,079
At 30 December 2018	47,822	52,619
<b>Represented By :</b>		
Bank Bal @ 31 December 2018	47,822	52,619