



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,

SAS Report – November 2021

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well.

There is a lot to be covered in this November newsletter so I suggest you curl up in a quiet corner with a large beverage of your liking and enjoy the contents. As always we try to cover the positive and inspirational work that SAS supports via our local Network Partners, whose usual reports to SAS are included.

ALM, one of our Partners, has been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service plus a commendation for their support work during the COVID crisis. What a fantastic, well earned and long overdue award. Congratulations to all ALM volunteers past and present.

The Afghan crisis has been prominent in recent months. We include a piece showing how our local partners have instinctively responded in practical ways to welcome and support our most recent Afghani refugees.

Sometimes in looking at overall numbers of people seeking asylum and refuge we lose sight of the individual stories, many of them harrowing and frustrating. So we have included Grace's Story which gives a simple example of the practical and protracted problems faced by people trying to make a life for themselves and their families. It also shows how such people are being helped in many ways sometimes financed by SAS but delivered by our local Partners.

The reports from MRSN [Merseyside Refugee Support Network] and RWC [Refugee Women Connect] are detailed. I would recommend you read these line by line as they show the diverse stories and desperate positions people find themselves in. These people seeking asylum and refuge are being provided with welcome, advocacy, financial support and understanding of their plight.

Let us start with a fantastic award ceremony for ALM held at the Liverpool Town Hall on 22nd September 2021.

ALM receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services



Bill Chambers & Sr Kathleen Ashurst
Photo: HASHEM KARIMI

Sister Kathleen Ashurst was a founder member of Asylum Link Merseyside in 2001. So it was more than appropriate that she was asked by the ALM Chair Bill Chambers to receive the Queen's Award on behalf of the whole ALM family – trustees, staff and volunteers past and present.

It was a wonderful evening and a chance for friends and colleagues to meet up again and recount their experiences over the years at St Anne's Centre.

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
Rev Geoff Felton, The Mersey Synod of the United Reformed Church
The Rev'd Phil Jump, Regional Minister, North West Baptist Association
Major Tavid Taylor, North West England & North Wales Divisional Commander, Salvation Army

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

The official photographer Hashem Karimi has kindly allowed me to include some photos of the night.



There is also a link on the ALM website to the official video of the evening. Well worth watching. Congratulations to ALM Volunteers for the incredible and selfless work you have done over the last 20 years

Left: some of the ALM trustees. Right: Some of the jubilant ALM Staff and Volunteers. Both photos: HASHEM KARIMI

Grace's Story

This is a typical scenario giving an insight into the practical ways SAS can help via one of our Partner Agencies who asked for financial assistance for one of their service users.

SAS were asked by one of our Partner Agencies if we could help Grace [not her real name].

"... Following from our telephone conversation this morning, I write to seek your support on the case of Grace who came to the UK in 1989. She is now 69 years old and lives with her daughter and grand children living in Manchester, and all except Grace have legal status. The Home Office had refused her asylum case in a decision letter of January 2020, but we believe she is entitled to a form of leave to remain in the UK based on her 20 years long residence in the UK. However, Grace's appeal could not be successful without a strong legal representative. If her appeal fails this would almost certainly lead to long time destitution and a possible deportation. I will appreciate whatever support you can give..."

SAS was able to contribute to the cost of Grace's appeal and was successful, to a point.

".....The hearing was on the 18th August and the final outcome was what we expected. The Home Office Presenting Officer (HOPO) and the Judge apologised to Grace for taking her through the trouble of appearing at the tribunal. The HOPO has conceded to the demand in our two previous letters to grant her a status in the UK based on her private life of 20 years illegal stay in the UK. Before inviting Grace into the court, the Judge, the HOPO, and Grace's barrister have agreed on granting her leave to remain (LR) in the UK for 2.5 years and renewable. This was confirmed to Grace without any formal hearing, with a proviso that she has no criminal record. Of course, we had already confirmed that she has no criminal record....."

".....I am indeed grateful for your support, otherwise, the outcome would have been difficult. Having arrived in the UK since 1989, it was a relief for her to get a status, as previous attempts have failed."

Grace will have to request for extension of her leave after 2.5 years...."

So despite her age and the number of years she has lived in UK Grace will still have to re-apply for extended leave to stay in two and a half years' time. Her mental anguish will continue until she is given permanent leave to stay.

The Fallout following the Afghanistan Crisis

"Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain are crossing borders. Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, quitting, flying, fleeing----- to all over, to countries near and far, to countries unheard of, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce. They are leaving in droves....."

From "We Need New Names" by NoViolet Bulawayo

So how should we respond when confronted with such an influx of strangers in our midst?

We can pray! Certainly but what do we pray for: that these people will somehow pick themselves up and help themselves in a strange environment. Do we pray that others will help them, more adept, more experienced than we are? Or do we pray that we can have the courage and determination to do

“something” to help in whatever way we can. Only we as individuals can decide for ourselves what that “something” can be, given our own unique circumstances and issues.

As the saying goes “doing nothing is not really a Christian option”.

We must all have seen the harrowing daily scenes during the fall of Kabul. How do we respond to that locally in anticipation of the certain influx of people over the coming months and years from Afghanistan, as well as from other humanitarian disaster countries? In September 2021 Phil Jump, our CTMR Chair, was interviewed on Radio Merseyside to try to answer that, at least in part. To assist him SAS asked our usual partner agencies how they were starting to prepare for a sudden surge of Afghani people into our community. Below are extracts from some of their responses:

Response of local charities to expected Afghani refugees coming to Merseyside

Seana Roberts, Director, Merseyside Refugee Support Network

“Hello Neil, Phil and colleagues,

Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN) have for several weeks been accepting and collating volunteer requests to support new Afghan refugees (as well as all those from around the world that we already work with).

We have been overjoyed and overwhelmed by the offers coming through and our aim will be to match volunteers across the Network as required.

We've passed on copious donation requests to Asylum Link Merseyside too.

All in all an amazing positive response from local people across the city region wanting to help. And reinforcing that our Liverpool City of Sanctuary is welcoming to all.

On a practical basis the council are managing arrivals for the first 3 months to enable time and resources to be put in place following COVID isolation and move on from hotels.

Across the MRSN network the local asylum and refugee support groups will, I'm sure, work together to help meet the challenges and needs of folk coming through, without forgetting our existing clients throughout the asylum system.

MRSN are able to help with applications for Universal credit (housing if needed) and other benefits, employability support and wider integration advocacy.

Both Ewan and I have historically been involved in such interventions since the original Sangatte resettlement programme back in 2001/2002 (post 9/11), Basra resettlement in 2008 (post withdrawal from Iraq) and Darfur/Sudan, Rwanda, DRC, Syria, Eritrea, Iran tragedies along the way...

This morning MRSN joined Asylum Link Merseyside colleagues to meet with the independent immigration inspector to discuss many of the ongoing issues with the asylum and refugee move "system"... Perhaps the immigration bill can still be amended?!

Meanwhile, this afternoon I was sending more info and evidence to the FCO Afghan/UK case unit in the hope to help repatriate family members with an existing client here

No two days the same, but we search for hope as we go.....”

Alison Moore, CEO, Refugee Women Connect

“Hi Neil,

From our side we know that Afghan nationals will be arriving this week and will be housed in a hotel. We don't have any information around women and children yet and for us at Refugee Women Connect that is who we would offer support to so we are just waiting for details. Our front line early action team have been meeting to see how they can offer additional support to any women that arrive and I am meeting with their manager on Monday to discuss plans. Our aim would be the same as with all new arrivals and we would want to offer access to all the support we offer. It is challenging as we are already stretched but whilst some of the specific projects we run have caps on numbers our early action team never turn anyone away and will always register new women and get them connected to our services and to the

other great services in the area that can help them. Therefore, we will be planning to offer the same welcome and support to our Afghan friends and will support any women and child in need of our help.....”

Annie Merry, Director, Faiths4Change

“Hi Neil, Phil and all

We're offering a new 12 week programme at the Roots in the City garden, St Michael's church - Nature for Health.

It's not specifically for Afghan Refugees but we would love to welcome any who would like to come, Refugees and Asylum Seekers are very welcome.

Tuesdays 1 - 3, starting 14th September the programme offers a gentle, calm space in the city centre to listen to and connect with nature. From a quiet space with a cuppa to seed sowing, food growing and nature craft (indoors if wet).

Just email me to book, fully funded programme, tools and materials provided, can pay bus / train fares.

Perhaps a conversation Alison? Would love to welcome women and children, happy to create something specific too.....”

Ewan Roberts, General Manager, Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM)

“Hello Neil and Phil – a lot of the activity will focus on the hotel where the Afghans are temporarily housed and so they’ll need a bit of peace and quiet to come to terms with things as much as they’ll need the practical things like clothes and other items. The donations that people have been bringing are staggering and I think the organisations involved in the collection and distribution are only just coping. Similarly with people offering to volunteer, there are actually more offers than we know what to do with. With COVID still very much an issue, it will be difficult and so I think many services will have to be delivered at the hotel – where ever that might be.

One of the things we’ll do when the people have had a bit more time to adjust is go and see what activities they might want to get involved in on the Action Asylum project – gardening, beach cleans, cycle rides - all the outdoors stuff. The Afghans are, more or less, in a holding pattern until their permanent housing gets sorted and that could be anywhere in the UK so a lot of what’s going on will just be providing meaningful activities and the items they need for what is hopefully a short term solution.

One thing you might contemplate Phil is asking people (and schools – as there are a lot of families) to send messages of welcome which could then be taken to people or posted on a website. I think it’s important to capture the positive mood in Merseyside as we all know how quickly the tide can turn. It’s also important given the immigration bill that’s going through Parliament to show not all the UK is anti-refugee.....”

Reports to SAS from Local Partners

Ewan Roberts, General Manager of ALM

Destitution Update

“During the pandemic our main focus was to get as many people as possible into Statutory Accommodation as possible and as a result of this many people went on to access Section 4 Accommodation. The down side of this is, now the Governments “everyone in” policy has come to an end, people are getting back in contact as eviction and termination letters are issued. Two things mitigate against this. The first is a willingness by the Home Office not to issue these letters in a block but to allow a slower process of making people homeless. This was partially our Council becoming involved and pointing out the catastrophic effects of making hundreds of people homeless at the same time. The second is the number of errors in the Home Office paperwork, their lack of attention to people having ongoing appeals or further submissions which leads to many of their decisions being challenged.

The Home Office decision rate has slowed to a trickle. This means that the numbers in Asylum Support,

swelled by those who were living independently contacting them through the lockdowns, has left 70,000 people in the system waiting for decisions. The Home Office seeks to blame this on the Asylum Seekers themselves, when, in fact it is as a direct result of Home Office policy on decision making.....”

COVID Update

“We’re still not fully open but the signs are beginning to point in the right direction and it won’t be long now. <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/interactive-map/cases> Liverpool’s rate is falling very slowly, from 340/100k in September to 287/100k this week. It’s the lowest in our area with other places ranging from 531 in Halton to 352 in Wigan. The rate nationally is also coming down but seems far more erratic.

So plans for throwing open the doors are still on hold which is disappointing but we’re being realistic about the effect of getting infection in the building and everything going backwards. The feeling at the moment is what we are doing is working, even if it isn’t perfect (I suppose that’s the motto by which we live....”

“So at present, the centre is still accessed by appointment or invitation. English classes have started face to face with small numbers after the break in the summer. New Students go through the casework team to Gareth who books people in with the teachers. Access to the clothes Store, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, is again booked in via the caseworkers, and is becoming better used as time goes on. The kitchen team cooks most days of the week for the people in the centre but it’s not the huge volumes yet for obvious reasons. The bike mechanics are in on a Tuesday (accessing them is a bit more random via the back gate) and bikes are slowly being given out after a rush in September.

Sami’s bike club is running on a Monday afternoon but Emma’s activities actionasylum@asylumlink.org.uk are best got straight from her – there’s the Climbing Hanger (third Wed every month), the allotments on Wednesday afternoons, (which will soon close for the winter) Katumba Drumming on Tuesday evenings and a lot of one offs/days out, including, get ready, a Christmas Roller Disco #2 and the Invisible Wind Factory. The Choir is meeting on a Thursday from 1 and has a concert for the Afghans in progress. At some point this will shift to Tuesday and the Women’s Group will take over the Thursday Slot (sewing/dress making – with machines). The date for this is still to be arranged. At the moment Ian has a guitar class from 12 -1 on Thursday in front of the Choir session. There are also the Football activities facilitated by Wendy. Casework is still mostly over the phone but appointments can be booked. In the coming weeks sessions with MPs will begin on a Thursday with Paula Barker (Wavertree) and Kim Johnson (Riverside) alternating...

Faiths4Change

Annie Merry, Director, Faiths4Change

SAS Report August & September 2021



Another fine August harvest! Caps with our first turnips, courgettes & marrows, beetroots, tomatoes & runner beans in crates ready to go; tomatoes & calendula in adjacent tubs.

We’ve been adding extra raised beds here and there in corners of the garden this year as we attempt to grow more fresh food for hungry people without compromising our wild areas and spaces for people to relax with a cuppa.

Caps had the idea of growing runner beans up strings that he tied to the fence props, seemed like it was worth a try! Not much else was going to grow in such small areas of ground and the fence props provided a climbing post for those voracious climbers – runner beans.

Success – the runner beans have been our “runaway” success of the summer along with our cabbages & turnips. So far we’ve harvested a whopping 15kg of runner beans! Growing below....



August & September Harvests!

We’ve harvested an amazing total of 140kg of delicious organic veg including runner beans, spinach, peas, beetroots, turnips, carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, chillies, courgettes, tomatoes, kale, swede and mixed salad.

Our vegetables, herbs and fruit go from the garden to the table for people to take home in just 4 hours, beautifully fresh and nutritious. In October we’ll be harvesting borlotti beans, squash, kale, cabbage and much more.

Elsewhere in the Roots Garden

Our young peoples’ garden & growing area has attracted lots of new gardeners! Some are students at college and University in the City, others live here and work for organisations as diverse as Fare Share and the Open Eye Gallery.

Andy from Open Eye came to talk about a tree and climate project he was doing initially. He came back to take photos of our foodbank harvest, joined the young peoples gardening group on Thursday evenings and gave everyone a camera to record their gardening journey.

Andy has created an exhibition of the photos the new gardeners have taken, they will feature on a banner to be displayed on Thursday 30 September. A sneak preview below...



Creating a vertical pollinator planter using a pallet, weed retardant material & compost soil mix.

We grow so many of our own veg plants from seed in our polytunnel, greenhouse and by direct sowing into the soil. We make as much compost on site as possible for the purpose, our gardeners contribute too by

bringing their organic waste to add to the community composting scheme.

We still need to bulk buy soil compost mix though, and SAS support pays for a whopping 4 tonnes of this lovely rich stuff to get our seedlings off to the best start. We only buy peat free naturally!

At times we’ve produced so many seedlings that we’ve run out of raised beds to grow them in. So we’ve improvised like all good gardeners. Sandra planted out tomato seedlings in pots and stacked them on a pallet in the car park and kept them well watered!



Watering the surplus tomato plants in the car park.

We’ve also started a plant stall, cut flowers and small veg box sales once a month at the joint church services in the Parish. It’s a way to share our bounty and grow income to pay for things we need such as new hand tools for new gardeners.

Refugee Women Connect

Alison Moore, CEO of Refugee Women Connect

Destitution Fund Report, July - September 2021

As our last report covered information on the destitute fund from April - June 2021, this report will cover the total spent on destitution fund from July to September 2021. The report will include the total spent per service user on the destitution fund within this time.

Initials of service user	Reason for application	Dates for funds in this monthly period	Reason for multiple application	Dates for multiple funds received	Total spent for this period
NW - 2285	Service user has not been able to gather enough evidence to make a fresh claim and there have been delays with her case due to Covid-19 Lockdowns. Still waiting for support with section 4 application. Has been staying with friends as she is homeless, reliant on destitution fund for financial support. Has very complex mental health issues.	11/08/2021	SU is still trying to collect evidence for her claim, however this is in Eritrea and proving to be very difficult.	11/08/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments received at once due to COVID 19) £75
MMG - 1995	Case was refused, had no financial support. Solicitors unable to take her case, has fresh evidence which she is waiting to submit herself.	4/08/2021 20/07/2021	Service user is destitute and living in a safe house, depends solely on our support. SU has submitted her fresh claim and applied for section 4 support. SU has not heard anything back and will inform us once that comes through.	04/08/2021 20/07/2021	6 weeks (multiple payments received at once due to COVID 19) £150
GG - 4107	Case was refused, has no financial support, and is now gathering new evidence to appeal her case. Has very complex mental health issues.	3/08/2021	This was the final instalment as service user's situation has now improved since.	3/08/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments given due to COVID 19) £75
COE - 4311	Service user had issues providing proof of address to Migrant Help in order to progress her section 95 application, had no access to funds in this time and so would have been destitute	19/07/2021	Section 95 was still being processed at the time the payment was made.	19/07/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments given at once due to COVID 19) £75
SO - 3296	SU is working with XX to submit a section 4 support application.	13/09/2021	Application is still ongoing and has taken longer than anticipated	13/09/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments

	Particularly vulnerable as has no access to financial support whilst this application is processing		S4 application still in progress, SU had a meeting with solicitor YY on 21st September		received at once due to COVID 19) £75
VP - 4362	SU now granted permission by the HO to put in a new asylum application so is waiting for an appointment with her solicitor to do that and after that, XX(solicitor) is going to help her make a new support application. Although it could be a slightly complicated case.	30/09/2021 07/09/2021 11/08/2021 23/07/2021 08/07/2021	Fresh claim has been submitted but has not been processed yet. ZZ (Caseworker) is still working with service user on this.	30/09/2021 07/09/2021 11/08/2021 23/07/2021 08/07/2021	16 weeks (multiple payments received at once due to COVID restrictions) £375
RMMR - 4423	SU is chasing up her screening interview and is not yet eligible for Asylum Support	18/08/2021	N/A	18/08/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments received at once due to COVID restrictions) £75
MAK - 3566	One-off payment to support as SU had moved house with her three children and her ASPEN card wasn't working. Money to support the family with subsistence until a longer term solution was found	16/07/2021	N/A	16/07/2021	3 weeks (multiple payments received at once due to COVID restrictions) £75

Emma Leaper

Action Asylum Project Lead / Asylum Link Social Worker



“On Thursday 14th October, a group of people seeking asylum travelled by coach from Liverpool to North Wales to spend the day volunteering with the North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT). 43 people from countries such as Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria and Iraq amongst many other countries, joined the NWWT on a project to restore an ancient hedgerow on the Offa’s Dyke Path near the village of Tremeirchion in Denbighshire.

We were joined by around 15 Welsh locals as well as volunteers from the Wildlife Trust. As part of the Woodlands for Water Project, NWWT and Action Asylum (ALM) teamed up to remove scrubby vegetation and plant over 200 native trees to improve wildlife habitat and enhance this spectacular section of the Offa’s Dyke Path, in celebration of its 50th anniversary year.





It was wonderful to be out in nature doing something positive together, and for a lot of our volunteers it was their first time visiting Wales! I would like to say a huge thank you to SAS for the kind donation towards conservation tools and safety gloves & equipment for the day. We have

been invited back to do more conservation volunteering in North Wales in 2022...! Join us if you like."



Seana Roberts

Manager of Merseyside Refuge Support Network

SAS Fund Report November 2021

Client id	Client issues	Date of start of support	Context	Support offered	Total £s SAS support given in period
Fa from Yemen	Lack of benefits	April 21	After years apart, client was joined by wife and children. Such change of circumstances leads to stop of existing benefits for dad and a joint claim being required. Generally taking 6-8 weeks to go to payment	Emergency cash support to help with crisis. Help to access public funds delayed. Help to get children placed in school Housing advocacy	£100
Sa from Kuwait	Victim of domestic violence [dv]	April 21	Client had been relocated to London, but lacked support there. Returned to Liverpool without any housing or money	Emergency cash payment given for food whilst housing crisis averted and relocation to a women's refuge	£50
Sm from Iran	Vulnerable client unable to manage utilities payments	April 21- June 21	Longstanding client had moved from all-in rent payments inc utilities to a self-contained flat. Due to many and various ailments he needed help to pay for extra heating until he could manage his benefits	Emergency cash for food, heating and electricity. Ongoing benefits, housing advocacy support	£175 Over 3 months
Da from Pakistan	Very vulnerable family Child with life changing illness	April 21	Delays in family benefits and special disability benefits for poorly child In middle of all this the family had to move house	Emergency cash support as no statutory funds could be accessed in the period	£100
Fa	Highly	April	Complex case with v vulnerable	Emergency cash	£100

from Kuwait	vulnerable client and baby	-Oct 21	victim and baby, possibly victim of coercive control. Severe delays in benefit	support and help via ALM for clothes and baby clothes and food	
Pt from Iran	Lack of funds/family reunion	May -July 21	Family reunion – no funds for food or clothes whilst awaiting delayed benefits	Emergency cash support for food and clothing/large family Delays with id almost meant longer than usual delays/lack of statutory support	£300
Yb from Eritrea	Impact of sudden death	June -July 21	Sudden death of long standing client left 10yr old son at risk, whilst estranged father was found	Emergency cash and support to support family whilst dealing with life changing trauma	£200
Na from Eritrea	No money for gas/electricity	June 21	Benefit delay meant young lady left with no money for heating/lighting or food over weekend	Chased benefits and offered emergency cash until payment from benefits	£30
Sk from Iran	Lack of funds after family reunion	July/Aug. 21	Yet another example of severe impact of benefit delays for a large family when they should be celebrating reunion after many years	Supported benefits claim and ongoing advocacy to get this sorted for family as quickly as possible Housing advocacy work included	£300
Aw from Iraq	Food crisis - lack of funds	Jul /Aug 21	Benefit delays and support with housing crisis	Delayed benefits, client had no money for food for family	£100
Zs from Iraq	Destitute Expired leave to remain	Ongoing	Await home office decision other help via alm colleagues	No recourse to public funds; ltr lapsed in lockdown	£75
Pr from Sri Lanka	Significant change to income due to lockdown/rent arrears	Ongoing	Bullying new landlord causing great stress and anxiety due to rent arrears after change of income and illness	One off payment to contribute to rents whilst other housing advocacy to help get family moved	£100
Tm from Lebanon	Highly vulnerable and disabled client/ Long delays with benefits	Ongoing	Severely disabled man; virtually no mobility, delayed benefits due to id checks – social services involved in principle but not much evidence of action	Client is malnourished and very disabled as well as having PTSD House visits on weekly basis ongoing whilst chasing social worker	£150
Hh from Sudan	Threat of eviction	Aug/ sept	Landlords behaving badly after change in post lockdown rules Benefit delays/issues and health meant client had no capacity to act	Emergency contribution towards rent payment	£250

Mt from Eritrea	Changing entitlement to benefits	Sept 21/ongoing	Change of circumstances has led to DWP delaying regular payments and single mum not coping well	Emergency contribution to gas, electricity and food for family	£150
As – from Iran	Family reunion/loss of benefits and delays on new claim	Sept	As above impact of family arriving caused stop and change of benefit entitlements for family	Emergency cash support for food, clothes and upfront contribution to new house/rent	£251
Rs from Kuwait	Long delays on pension credit application	Ongoing	Elderly client with various health issues was without pension benefits for over 4 months and all statutory entitlements had been accessed	Could no longer borrow money from community/needed emergency cash for food and medical related toiletries	£170
Sg from Iraq	Dv client Emergency phone	Ongoing	Whilst social services were arranging safe accommodation the issue of a “safe phone” was resolved with purchase of a cheap android phone for client to apply and access benefits	Safe phone and top up purchased	£49

Support for SAS/ALM

Finally, I have attached the usual Finance Report and statement of SAS financial activities for the 9 months to September 2021.

I would as always like to thank all contributors to this November newsletter which I hope you have found informative and interesting. I would like to thank also again the 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 or Tel: 0151 709 0125] or directly to myself.

[NB please note at present ALM are open to receive physical donations on Wednesday and Thursday]

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

Donations can alternatively be made directly to:
Churches Together in the Merseyside Region S.A.S
HSBC, 40-29-28
Account 61156144

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

It never ceases to amaze me the quality and quantity of humanitarian work and wellbeing activities and the professionalism of our SAS partners provided in the most difficult circumstances to people on the margins of our community. A big thank you to all SAS colleagues.

The impending lifting of restrictions will on the one hand make service delivery easier. On the other hand there will be a large increase in people requiring help. The Home Office is currently reviewing how early they can start evicting people from hotels and hostels and the potential numbers are in the thousands. The funding for that will only increase substantially.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Please keep in your prayers the staff, volunteers and trustees of SAS and our local partner agencies. Additionally, remember those colleagues with confirmed

COVID symptoms and all people self-isolating and /or working from home.

I hope you and your families have a healthy and happy Advent and Christmas time.

My best regards as always

Neil

Neil Cunningham
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November 2021 *PS: If you prefer not to receive SAS newsletters in future please let me know. Neil*

SAS Finance Update

Below is a summary statement of financial activities for the 9 months to September 2021 with comparative figures for the full year to December 2020. This shows a small net deficit of £318 and a closing fund of £41,748.

Following a funding review in September 2020 and projection for the following 12 months period, we reduced the basic total monthly cap for all four of our partner agencies. This resulted in an overall monthly total outlay on grants of £3,000 until September 2021. However individual ad hoc emergency support grants were always considered and, as funds allowed, were covered in addition to this cap.

Starting January 2021, we arranged for monthly standing order payments to the partner agencies. This reduced the admin involved in preparing cheques, arranging signing and trips to the post office.

It also helped the partner agencies in unnecessary trips to their offices and their banks to present cheques. Most partner offices are closed to the public and staff are mostly still working from home.

We will continue to monitor support levels on a regular monthly basis over the next 12 months.

After a further review in August 2021, as the admin has been reduced drastically, we will continue monthly standing orders for the next 12 month period i.e. October 2021 to September 2022 inclusive.

We have received grants of £21,178 being:

- £1,000 from the Lord Leverhulme Foundation Trust
- £3,450 via the LCVS from the Everyday Changes Fund [incorporating the former Fred Freeman Fund]
- £6,728 from Liverpool Archdiocese – re Lenten Alms 2020
- £10,000 John Moores Foundation [2nd of two Annual Tranches]

We have also received ad hoc and standing order donations from 25 loyal individuals totalling £5,504.

SAS contributed £27k for accommodation and emergency support grants to September 2021. This is less than the level of support in 2020 mainly because of restricted access and communication with service users as a result of COVID.

Support grants usually include both humanitarian aid and wellbeing projects delivered by ALM and other local agencies including RWC [Refugee Women Connect], Merseyside Refugee Network Support [MRSN] and Faiths4Change. SAS have also supported, via Action Asylum, two wellbeing projects for tree planting and a beach cleaning day at Crosby. The latest tree planting day was at St Asaph in October 2021.

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Funding

The Archdiocese grant for the 2020 Lenten Alms funding of £6,728 is, as expected, a much lower amount than 2019 [£18k] because of the church closures during the pandemic. We expect a similarly much reduced amount for 2021 Lenten Alms.

SAS does not have any outstanding grant applications in place but early in the New Year we hope to make

some fresh applications. If any supporters of SAS have any suggested sources of funding for SAS that would be very welcome.

Properties

Since the last update a similar situation prevails regarding emergency accommodation.

Pre-COVID there were on average 250+ registered as destitute with ALM of which we are were only able to provide emergency accommodation for between 15 and 20 people.

We are still supporting 3 properties for emergency accommodation purposes– two former presbyteries with one accommodating destitute women, and the other for men, and one other property for destitute men. Following COVID some people have been moved out without being replaced for health and safety reasons.

As COVID restrictions are eased and the Government starts releasing homeless people from hostels and hotels and evictions begin, we can expect a surge of demand for destitute clients – our ALM accommodation is limited but we will need to start taking more people back into our houses.

Neil Cunningham, November 2021

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

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the nine months to 30 September 2021**

	2021	2020
Incoming Resources		
Grants from Organisations	21,178	44,625
Individual Donations	5,504	8,066
	26,682	52,691
Resources Expended		
Accommodation	14,862	22,742
Destitution Support	12,138	23,404
	27,000	46,146
Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources	-318	6,545
Fund Balances		
At 31 December 2020	42,066	35,521
At 30 September 2021	41,748	42,066
Represented By :		
Bank Bal @ 30 September 2021	41,748	42,066