



SBC Family Life Centre, 67 Murray Place, Stirling FK8 1AU

Charity SC046404 (SCIO)

Website: <http://www.forthvalleywelcome.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ForthValleyWelcome>

Patrons: Mr Ayman Jarjour MMus: Sir George Reid PC FRSE

Supported by Robertson Trust, Impact Funding Partners, Corra Foundation, Lottery Community Fund.

## **ANNUAL REPORT, April 2018 – March 2019**

### **ABOUT FORTH VALLEY WELCOME**

Forth Valley Welcome (FVW) was established in September 2015, to support refugees being re-settled in Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire, and help them integrate into the local community.

We became a charity in March 2016. Originally known as Stirling Citizens for Sanctuary, we changed our name in March 2018 to Forth Valley Welcome. Our charity number, constitution, and other details remained unchanged.

Our initial focus was on Syrian refugees arriving through the UK government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (SVPR) scheme. We now also support refugees arriving from Sudan under a similar UK government scheme. These are mainly families who have fled violence and destruction in their country. Many have friends and family members who are still in Syria or Sudan, or in refugee camps, or relocated to other countries.

By the end of the year we were supporting 28 families, comprising 53 adults, 5 young adults, and 65 children. Of these, 21 of the families are in Clackmannanshire and 6 families and one single person household in Stirling. (123 individuals in total, up from 112 at the end of March 2018). The two Councils are gradually bringing more families to the area so these numbers will continue to increase gradually.

Support is provided through our two staff and 70 volunteers, supported by a Board of 7 trustees.

#### **Our Vision**

We are welcoming to people seeking sanctuary and support them towards a settled future within our communities

#### **Our Mission:**

To enable families to be welcomed and build their own networks and to become integrated within our communities

To work in partnership with stakeholders to provide support towards education, language learning and employment

To advocate on behalf of people seeking sanctuary for provision of comprehensive local and national services that meet their needs

## WHAT WE DO

### ***Home set-up and materials service***

When a family first arrives, they come with few personal goods. So we run a *home set-up project*, whereby we visit the family's house to help make it feel homely, with the addition of extra items for the house, adjusting curtains, toys for the children, nice curtains, etc. In the case of Stirling Council we receive advance notice of a family's arrival and can visit the house before the family arrives. In Clackmannanshire, we are able to do this soon after the family arrives.

We know from the joy on the faces of refugees and from their comments ("I cried when I came into the house") that the way we are able to make a house feel homely when a family arrives is hugely appreciated.

*Materials service:* Soon after the family arrives, we give them a material needs request form to request clothing, household items, and other needs. We take them to our store to choose items of for themselves, especially clothing, electrical goods, toys. We see from their expressions that this is also a valued service - not surprising considering that they arrive with only the suitcases they can carry.



This service is run by an enthusiastic team of volunteers led by one of the trustees. Through the generosity of a local benefactor we have the use of a storage facility in Dunblane.

*Computers and software:* We provide a refurbished laptop to each new family. We also provided several families with dual-language software for preparing for the driving theory test.

### ***Home visiting and befriending***

This is an important part of our support in the first few months after a family arrives. We link families with volunteer *home visitors*, who visit their assigned families regularly, introduce them to local services, help with transport to appointments, and go on social outings.

As at 31 March 2019, 14 households had at least 2 home visitors, which is our minimum desired number. Due to a shortage of local volunteers, 4 Clackmannanshire families had no home visitor, and a further 10 families there had only one home visitor.

*Transport and support for hospital appointments:* Home visitors and other volunteers regularly transport families to medical appointments at hospitals, dentist and GP surgeries, and the Job Centre. 55 such visits were arranged this year.



### ***'Snack and Chat'***

In 2018-19 we ran six *Snack and Chat* social events, which were well attended by refugee families and volunteers. The aim is to allow refugee families to get together with each other and with volunteers and other members of the community; and to provide sessions on topics like local services, and cultural differences between Scotland and their home countries.

At a consultation session with the refugees in January they asked for more help at *Snack and Chat* with language practice. So we now include English language games to help with

reading, writing, numbers, conversation, etc. Enjoy-a-Ball, face painting, and other activities for children are provided in a separate room to give the adults a break.

Sadly, because of adverse weather conditions, we had to cancel the December Snack and Chat at short notice. Disappointing, because that festive season event has become a highlight of the year, with presents for the children, a visit from Santa, games, dancing, and food prepared by volunteers and refugees. Staff and volunteers rescued the situation by visiting every household and delivering the Christmas presents.

### ***'Walk and Talk'***

With volunteers from local organisations such as Scottish National Heritage (SNH) and Scottish Environmental Protecting Agency (SEPA) we run *Walk and Talk* outings, where small groups of refugees and volunteers go for a walk together and practise English, ending up in a café where conversation continues.

### ***Social Outings***

During the summer, we provided £50 grants for volunteers to go on outings with families to local attractions, such as Stirling Castle and the Safari Park. In November we organised a trip to the MacRobert pantomime for 30 people (refugees and volunteers) with tickets kindly donated by the MacRobert Arts Centre.

### ***Providing financial support to refugees***

Through our *Positive Activities fund* we provided help with activities that promote language learning, employability, and social integration. Examples include subscriptions for Girl Guides and Cub Scout troops, and contributions towards the cost of driving lessons. Some of the Syrian men have now gained full driving licenses, and several of the women have passed the theory test and are preparing for the practical test, with our support.

Through our *Crisis and Care fund* we provided help with one-off payments for unexpected costs, e.g. short term help to newly arriving refugees in cases where there was a delay in start-up of their benefits package.

### ***Awareness raising sessions for local schools and community organisations***

Through the year we gave presentations to many groups. These are an important part of the work, informing people in the community about the refugees' situation and the support provided. These sessions have also been useful in attracting donations, volunteers and offers of services.

## **STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS**

Forth Valley welcome has two staff: our Volunteer and Project Coordinator, Rebecca Dadge, and our Clackmannanshire Support Worker, Avril Hunter. Rebecca and Avril coordinate all of the services provided by our 70 volunteers.

They run quarterly volunteer induction and training sessions for potential new volunteers. With some volunteers stepping down during the year and new volunteers joining, our number of active volunteers has stayed fairly constant at around 70. Shortage of volunteers in Clackmannanshire remains a problem, and we continue our focus on volunteer recruitment there.

They ran four Volunteer Networking Meetings during the year. These provide an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other and staff and trustees; and for sharing of experience on what works well and any problems encountered, and for continual development of the services provided. When training opportunities arise, we make these known to our volunteers.

This year staff attended training provided by the Scottish Refugee Council and the Institute of Migration on refugee transition issues and good practice. Trustees also attended the training

run by the Institute of Migration and separate training on trustee responsibilities. Staff and trustees also participated in training and networking opportunities provided by Impact Funding Partners and Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise.

## **INTEGRATION PLANNING**

In the last quarter of the year, we designed and piloted an Integration Planning system. The purpose is to develop an integration plan for each family and family member, working with the family. Each plan is prepared by one of our staff, with the family and home visitor, assisted by an interpreter.

We will be rolling out this system over the next year to develop plans for all the families.

For each family, progress will be reviewed at intervals, with the family and home visitor and assisted an interpreter, and the plans updated appropriately.

## **PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

In Forth Valley region, we worked in liaison with many other organisations including: Stirling Council; Clackmannanshire Council; Scottish National Heritage (SNH); Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA); The Conservation Volunteers (TCV); Play Alloa; Stirling Baptist Church Family Life Centre; Allanpark South Church in Stirling; Alloa Ludgate Church; Stirling University Islamic Society; Macrobert Arts Centre; 9th Alloa Guides; Central Scotland Regional Equality Centre; and Scottish Refugee Council.

At national level, we are organisational members of the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and Scottish Befriending Network. We participate in one of the national working groups on implementation of the New Scots Strategy – the group on “New Scots Communities, Culture & Social Connections”, which is coordinated by the SRC. Our trustees maintain contact with Citizens-UK Refugee Welcome groups across Scotland and the UK through email mailing lists and social media. We also maintain links with City of Sanctuary groups across the UK.

We meet regularly with other charities in workshops and training run by Impact Funding Partners, one of our key funders.

## **FUNDING**

Details of income, donations and grants are provided in the Annual Accounts, which are provided in a separate report.

Continuing grants were received from Robertson Trust and Impact Funding Partners towards staff costs and overheads. Corra Foundation provided a start-up grant to enable us to recruit our support worker earlier than would otherwise have been possible. The Big Lottery Community Fund provided the first instalment of a three year grant which they awarded towards staff costs and some additional running costs, especially for Clackmannanshire.

Fundraising activities undertaken during the reporting period include an online Christmas Appeal set up through BT MyDonate. Donations were received from individuals throughout the year via our webpage and Facebook site; and from individuals and organisations who donated funds from events or talks run by them.

Our policy is to meet staffing and running costs from grants from trusts, and to use funds received from donations and fund raising events for services that directly benefit the refugees.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Responsibility for governance rests with our Board of 7 trustees. The Board meets 8 times a year. The names of trustees are given in the appendix.

We maintain a set of policies to guide our work and maintain consistent standards across all our operations. All our policies are available to view on our website. This year we implemented our new Data Protection Policy, as part of the introduction of GDPR in May 2018.

Monitoring and evaluation of activities is carried out through regular review by the Board of the records maintained by staff of activities, materials provided, on-going feedback received from home visitors and other volunteers, and any issues that arise. Information is circulated to Board members from any meetings with the Councils and from publicity about refugees or refugee issues in the local press.

We continue to refine the methods used for assessing the outcomes of our work for service users, and this year received support on this from Evaluation Support Scotland.

## **THANKS!**

The trustees are delighted to record here our appreciation of the work carried out by our two staff, for their unstinting efforts to provide the best possible services to our service users through their own work and through their recruitment and training and coordination of the work of volunteers.

Huge thanks are due to our 70 volunteers for the time and energy they devote to all of our activities, and for the immense contribution they make to meeting the needs of service users.

We are extremely grateful to our four funders, whose grants meet the cost of employing our two staff and contribute to other running costs. This enables us to use the income received from events and from individuals and organisations for services that directly benefit our service users.

We also wish here to say thank you to the two Councils and their staffs for the immense amount of work they do in receiving and resettling refugees and providing continuous support to them.

Many thanks also to our two patrons, Sir George Reid and Mr Ayman Jarjour, who support us in many different ways; and to all of our partner organisations at local and national level.

And finally, we pay tribute to all of our refugees, for the work they put in to their own resettlement, for their participation in activities run by Forth Valley Welcome, for their involvement in their communities, and for the diversity they bring to our communities.

## **DECLARATION**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:



Full Name: Savitri Maharaj

Position: Chair

Date: 17 Dec 2019

## STATUTORY INFORMATION

## Charity trustees

Trustee Name	Office (if any)	Dates acted (if not for full year)	Person/ body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
Donald Black	Secretary		OSCR
Sang Cha [1]		Joined after 31 Mar 2019	FVW Trustees
Jean Evans			FVW Trustees
Hugh Grant	Treasurer		OSCR
Alan Howes			FVW Trustees
Savitri Maharaj	Chair		OSCR
Susan Mitchell [2]		01 Mar 2018 to 25 Dec 2018	FVW Trustees
Abigail Moriarty			FVW Trustees

**Notes:**

[1] Sang Cha was appointed in March 2019 but did not join as a trustee until 21 May 2019.

[2] Trustee Susan Mitchell retired from the Board on 25 December 2018 so was no longer a trustee on the date of approval of this report.

**Type of governing document:** Constitution

**Trustee recruitment and appointment:** The board may at any time appoint any person to be a charity trustee - by way of a resolution passed by majority vote at a board meeting. (Constitution, article 18.)

**Charitable Purposes** (Constitution, article 4)

The purposes of Forth Valley Welcome are:

1. the relief of unemployment among refugees through (a) support towards employment, such as with job seeking, sourcing training, work placements etc., (b) support such as with language (Arabic speakers are among our volunteers), social and emotional support, mentoring and coaching within a Social Enterprise context.
2. the advancement of citizenship or community development through (a) social inclusion and awareness raising events & sponsored events within the communities where the refugees settle.(b) seeking opportunities for the refugees to contribute to their communities and (c) through successfully integrating into the local economy.
3. the relief of those in need by/through providing a befriending service and activities promoting inclusion and raising awareness.

**Summary of the charity's policy on reserves:** FVW aims to maintain sufficient reserves to allow operation for six months.

**Details of any deficit:** None.

**Donated facilities and services (if any):** None