

THE HARBOUR PROJECT

Annual Report

April 2021 – March 2022

The Harbour Project for Swindon Refugees and
Asylum Seekers Registered Charity (1171368)



SOME HEADLINE FACTS

As the world started to emerge from the pandemic, we turned our attention to rebuilding our organisation, recognising the enormity of impact on our staff, volunteers, Visitors and operational processes and activities.

There were positive learnings from remote working that we wanted to retain, whilst focusing upon re-establishing safe social contact beyond transactional interactions. In 2021/22 we also saw the opening of 2 Bridging Hotels (for Afghan guests) and 2 Hotels offering Initial Accommodation to male Asylum Seekers.

Over the course of the year **1037** asylum seekers and refugees from **57** countries were reached by our services either by accessing help and advice, or by participating in a class or event.

We welcomed **589** new Visitors, **2.5 x** more than we did in the previous year. New arrivals over the last year have been skewed by the opening of the IA hotels. **447** of our new arrivals were adult men.

The main countries of origin for new arrivals were Iran, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Ethiopia. **128** of our Visitors were granted Leave to Remain (or other form of protection), twice as many as in 2020/21 and almost returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Gradually more services returned to face-to-face delivery although we took care to limit volumes and retain safe social distances.

Overall, there were **9,617** individual onsite attendances, 5x more than in 2021/21 but still less than pre-pandemic volumes. With cautious planning through an appointment system and blended delivery, the volume of advice sessions increased by 8% over the year. With less reliance on **121** remote tutoring, we were able to increase learning opportunities which saw the volume of class attendances increase by **90%** on the previous year and **8%** on 2019/20

Supporting our staff team of **11**, Volunteers gave **8,977** hours of their time including **534** hours of translation provided by Visitor-Volunteers.

The Report records the objectives, activities, and achievements of The Harbour Project from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. It has been compiled with due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefits guidance.

The Harbour Project is committed to openness and transparency. Further information is available at St Luke's Hall, Broad Street, Swindon, SN1 2DS. www.harbourproject.org.uk 01793 611682.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Over the last year the Harbour Project, along with the rest of the world, gradually emerged from the restrictions imposed upon it by the COVID pandemic. Staff and Volunteers returned more regularly to onsite and in the Spring we restarted our Harbour Café on two days and face-to-face English classes.

The pandemic also meant that the Home Office was unable to make other than a few decisions on asylum claims creating a large backlog and this was exacerbated by the rise in small boat crossings. This resulted in an expansion of asylum support capacity to the extent that the number of Visitors registered with us doubled in 12 months.

In August we welcomed refugees from Afghanistan who were placed in hotels. In the autumn, 2 local hotels were designated as "Initial Accommodation" for male asylum seekers. Both these developments greatly increased demands for our services. Finally, the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February led to requests from host families for help with issues such as applying for Universal Credit and school places.

Earlier in the year, the organisation's effectiveness was evaluated independently (led by RMD Consulting). This allowed us to reflect upon our strategy and priorities going forwards and where best to place our energy and resources.

This was funded by the National Lottery as part of their 5 year grant to us. As a result of this, the Trustees agreed to enhance our Steps2Work programme (building employability skills, volunteering and education) as well as placing greater emphasis on dealing with mental wellbeing and doing more to promote cultural awareness of British society.

We have also been acutely aware that monies from two of our major funders, namely the National Community Lottery Fund and Swindon Borough Council were due to cease in the coming year. Consequently, we have spent time this year exploring the possibility of renewed funding from those organisations as well as identifying alternative sources of income.

Last year saw the introduction of the Borders and Immigration Bill into Parliament (signed into Law in April 2022). This has raised considerable concerns with us for the well-being of our Visitors. We have made our concerns known to our local MPs Sir Robert Buckland and Justin Tomlinson.

The past year has been one of substantial changes and nothing in the current economic or political outlook indicates that this is going to change anytime soon. The Harbour Project enters 2022/23 in a position of strength with a dedicated staff, committed and enthusiastic volunteers and a fully engaged Board of Trustees. Acknowledging Claire Garrett's contribution to society and local community, it is a matter of great pride for the organisation that she was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for Wiltshire in August 2021.

We could not have achieved what we did in the last year without the support of our major funders, patrons, civic leaders in Swindon and Wiltshire; the generosity of countless individuals, organisations, charities, and local businesses and of course, our Staff and 'Harbour family'. I formally record our thanks to everyone who helped us continue to provide such a vital and little understood service to people most marginalised in our society.

David Rowlands, Chair of Trustees

OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES

The Harbour Project is a registered charity in Swindon providing advice, support, practical help and friendship to asylum seekers and refugees in the town. Our mission is to be a family for every individual who seeks asylum or is granted refugee status in Swindon and to help them to rebuild their lives.

We hope that our Visitors have the best possible chance of a fair hearing, a fair outcome from their asylum claim, and a fair future in the UK.

Our Charitable Objects are:

- To provide relief for Asylum Seekers and Refugees and their dependents who are in conditions of hardship and distress
- To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- To provide facilities for Asylum Seekers and Refugees for education, recreation and other leisure time occupations with the object of improving their conditions of life and assisting their inclusion into the wider community

This year, funded by monies from the National Community Lottery Fund as part of their overall grant to us, we were able to work with an external consultant to complete a 360° assessment of the charity's effectiveness. The result was very positive with the evaluation reporting high satisfaction levels amongst staff, volunteers and Visitors with the services that we offer.

The final report suggested that alongside our other services the Trustees should consider enhanced ways of building employability skills, volunteering and education (our Steps2Work programme) as well as placing greater emphasis on dealing with mental health issues and doing more to promote awareness of cultural norms in British society.





Our strategic priorities for 2021-2022 were:

- Continue to meet the ongoing and changing needs of Visitors. Keeping our Visitors safe through proactive safeguarding policies and practices embedded in everything that we do.
- Focus on the mental well-being of Visitors and ensure appropriate resources and partnerships are put in place. We do so much more than merely responding to basic and immediate human needs.
- Extend (through resource, structure and relationships) our programme to support Visitors in building employability skills, seeking and securing suitable employment, and training and volunteering opportunities.
- Diversify and build our funding base to ensure our ongoing stability and success well into the future.
- Ensure that our structure, staffing and operational processes remain fit for purpose for a growing organisation, building on new ways of working introduced during lockdowns.
- Continue to attract, retain and value volunteers, ensuring that the experience they have with us is fulfilling and makes best use of their skills and experience.
- Continue to meet charitable governance best practice as we grow and develop.
- Remodel (or identify alternative) premises to meet the needs and wellbeing of our Visitors, volunteers and staff.
- Work actively and with other agencies and influencers to promote the value of our work and how this benefits our Visitors, the town and the broader community.

Our Values:

Visitor-focused: We prioritise the interests of our Visitors in the decisions that we make, and recognise the importance of their involvement in decisions that may affect them. We take a strengths-based approach to help people to rebuild their lives.

Inclusive & Egalitarian: We are non-judgemental and accepting. We seek to provide equality of opportunity to allow Visitors to access the help and advice that they need, specific to their circumstances.

We do not probe or ask detailed questions about events leading up to someone making a claim for asylum unless the Visitor chooses to share this with us.

We value our diverse Board of Trustees and Staff team, and welcome Volunteers from throughout the community, making use of their myriad of skills.

We build connections and work in partnership with other organisations wherever possible.

We actively engage with stakeholders in our management and planning to ensure that our provision remains relevant, valuable and appropriate.



Warm & Welcoming: We are proud of our warm, family-like atmosphere. We are informal and friendly, and aim to provide a safe, comforting environment for our Visitors to enable Visitors to integrate into Swindon life in ways that are beneficial for everyone in the community.

Underpinning the informality and friendship, we also pride ourselves on the effectiveness, professionalism, integrity, depth and breadth of the services and advice that we offer.



“

*I arrived in Swindon...,
I am from Eritrea and knew no one.*

*It was strange and I felt strange, but my English was
good and I made myself visit the Harbour but did not
know what it was.*

*I helped at the Harbour and helped with translation as I
wanted the other people to feel that they had been
heard and they could tell Harbour their concerns.'*

”



A YEAR OF CHANGE FROM EVERY PERSPECTIVE

So many things in the world changed during 2021/22, and the outlook seems to be that the rate of change and frequency of 'once-in-a-lifetime' events, seems to be accelerating.

In many respects, what happens at The Harbour Project is a microcosm of world events – we feel the ripples through our doors and constantly look for ways of improving what we do and responding to evolving needs.

2021/22 wasn't the end of Covid. Whilst 2020/21 bore the biggest impact of lockdown and everything that this brought (such as food poverty, digital exclusion, and isolation), we spent this year constantly adjusting our practices in response to Government guidance, gradually re-introducing face-to-face activities in a socially distanced way.

We offered coffee and conversation sessions in limited form from May, and soon realised that this needed more facilitation than had been required pre-Covid.

By this point, many of our Visitors were new to Swindon and new to Harbour, so had no understanding of how we used to work and likely knew very few people as they had had no opportunity to build new friendships. The Omicron variant came along in December which meant that our café closed once more, not reopening until March 2022.

It was apparent that the Home Office's rate of decisions slowed dramatically in 2020 and 2021 to half it had been in the previous year. People have continued to arrive and claim asylum in the UK and this has meant that the capacity of asylum support accommodation in Swindon (and many other towns) has had to increase.



As well as more shared housing, a number of hotels opened in Swindon this year: two Bridging Hotels for Refugees from Afghanistan, and two Initial Accommodation Hotels for people claiming asylum.

With this backdrop, first readings of the Borders and Immigration Bill were published for consultation in May. We expressed our concerns about this directly to local MP's and many of our volunteers made similar approaches to their elected representatives.

Poverty, and food poverty in particular, has been a very real challenge for our Visitors over the last year and likely to continue in 2022 and beyond as the cost of living soars. We distributed food parcels during Ramadan provided by the Swindon Masjid Mosque.

We were also fortunate in being the recipient of many harvest festival collections as well as food donated as part of the RunVember Challenge. Toiletries, clothing, phones and SIM Cards have been in big demand, especially for people living in hotels.



We were able to continue to fund Wi-Fi and purchase additional mini-routers, funded by the Swindon Outbreak Management Fund. This allowed our Visitors to stay connected with the world and to continue to access education.

Our largest source of income, from the National Community Lottery Fund, is due to end in June 2022, and our Commissioned work from Swindon Borough Council is also due for re-tender and award in April 2022.

This presented considerable work for the team in working with existing and prospective funders to assure the future of the Charity.

In our fifth year with NCLF, we were granted additional money to complete an external assessment of our performance and strategy.

We also received Enhance Services from Lloyds Bank Foundation which allowed us to consider our document repository system and subsequent move to Google Drive.



In parallel, we saw changes in our staff, volunteer and trustee cohorts, as well as embedding learnings from Covid into day-to-day practices.

As we enter 2022/23, change seems to be the only constant. We continue to adapt, absorb and transform as an organisation so that our Visitors are better equipped with the skills and resilience needed to lead safe and thriving lives in the UK.

PROVIDING HELP & ADVICE REMAINS AT THE CORE OF WHAT WE DO

Providing help and advice remained our most essential service and was delivered uninterrupted throughout the year.

Technical advice on asylum procedures was given by our operational team who are all accredited to OISC L1 (Office of Immigration Services Commissioner).

The main topics of advice related to:

health appointments and GP registrations (934 times);
liaison with solicitors (754 times);
working with DWP (466 times);
liaison with schools and education (390 times);
liaison with Migrant Help (218 times);
and helping to resolve issues with Aspen Cards (144 times).

934

**GP Registrations
completed up by Staff
& Volunteers**

754

**Appointments to liaise
with Solicitors**

466

**Setting up online DWP
access and further
support**

390

**Setting up Education
and ongoing support
needs**

218

**Appointments to liaise
with Migrant Help**

144

**Appointments to
resolve Aspen Card
issues**

The vast majority of our advice sessions were provided face-to-face this year. This offers a more satisfactory experience for the Visitor and helper. We have retained the appointment system first introduced in Covid times whilst trying to retain some appointment-free days for emergency help requests.

The triaging role of our Advice Coordinator became even more vital in ensuring the smooth flow of people through our Centre and in ensuring that the most important issues are attended to with consistency and continuity. Screens were used throughout the year, and numbers of people in the Advice Room were kept to a minimum by trying to encourage people to leave once their appointment was finished.

This also gave a level of comfort and reassurance to our staff and volunteers that we were taking appropriate steps to keep everyone safe. All staff were testing weekly for Covid during the winter months. With these steps in place, we managed to avoid an outbreak of the virus within the team.



In May 2021, the Home Office changed the provider of the Aspen Card – the card used by people claiming Asylum to access their financial support.

In the first 3 months of the year we helped people 79 times – helping to activate new cards, understanding pin numbers, tracking down lost cards sent to erroneous addresses, and ensuring credit balances were transferred.

Yet again, we have absorbed increased demand whilst maintaining our relaxed and informal exterior. We continue to reflect on our processes and look to ways to improve our knowledge and depth of understanding.

This has been helped by having roles specifically aligned to cohorts of Visitors. For example, the appointment of our IA Liaison Officer has strengthened our understanding of ASF processes and Section 98 Support (both uniquely applicable to people who are new Asylum claimants).



LEARNING ENGLISH & MATHS IS KEY TO FUTURE INDEPENDENT & SELF RELIANT LIFE IN THE UK

Covid had massively disrupted our English and Maths classes so we were especially keen this year to reinstate face-to-face learning in a group environment.

Almost all of our teaching in 2020 had been via Zoom or WhatsApp, typically in very small groups or one-on-one. Whilst some people relished this style of learning (and have continued to have 121 tutoring this year), others missed the social aspects of being in a classroom, and feedback from others (especially those with very little English), is that they found it to be an intense experience.

Our teachers also missed meeting their students and had to grapple with many and various connectivity issues each time they had a scheduled session.

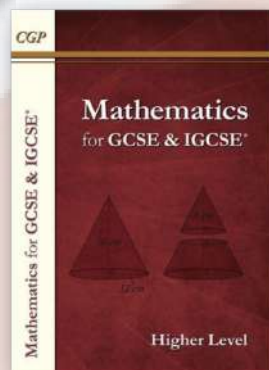
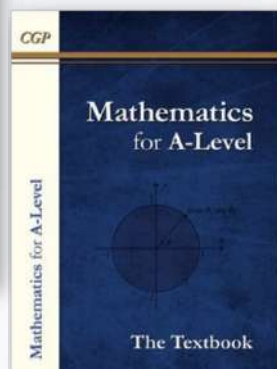
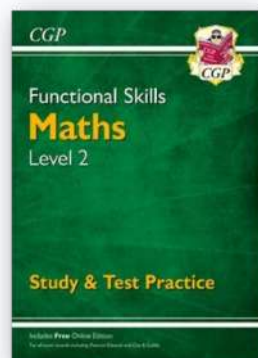
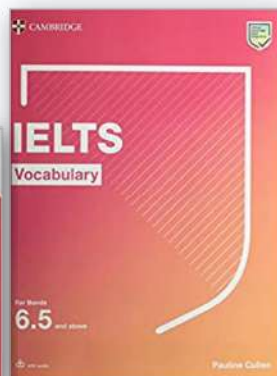
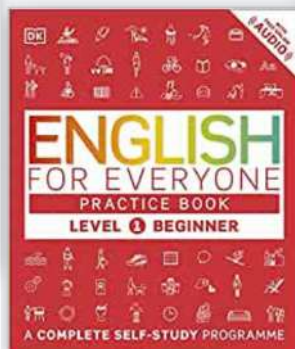
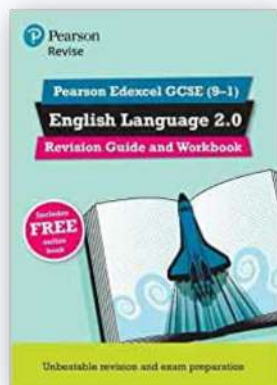


Face-to-face classes resumed on site in April 2021. Numbers were limited and attendance was by invitation only. Desks were positioned at a distance and each student was equipped with their own resources which were stored in individual folders in the classroom. This limited the amount of handling of books and other equipment between multiple people.



Importantly, we also respected any concerns that our volunteer teachers may have had about returning to in-person teaching.

Remote learning was something that worked especially well for some of our volunteers and Visitors. Some volunteers live a distance from Harbour or may work full-time, but are still able to offer sessions at times that work for them. Equally, learning from home works better for some Visitors, particularly people with caring responsibilities. There were 335 one-to-one remote teaching sessions delivered by our volunteer teachers.



When the two IA Hotels opened in the autumn, we initially struggled with capacity in our classes. Our new arrivals were keen to learn and we were determined to find a way to meet the demand.

By November, we had classes 5 days a week in the hotels, all delivered by newly recruited volunteer teachers. Over time, we also created 'drop-in' classes at Harbour specifically for people living in the hotels.

Feedback from our Visitors was that they welcomed the opportunity to learn, but preferred to be away from the hotel. This model has also been effective in that there is a high churn rate of people in IA so managing groups of people by invitation creates unnecessary work for everyone.

Maths tuition has also continued successfully this year with 3 x more students than last year. Many of our Visitors have aspirations to go to Higher Education with Engineering being a recurring theme. People understand the need to have a solid base in maths to improve their chances of getting to University.

4315

**English Class
attendances by 537
students with 32 teachers**

155

**Maths attendances by
28 students with 2
teachers.**

OUR Steps2Work INITIATIVE HELPS BUILD CONFIDENCE & SKILLS TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO THRIVE

Our Steps2Work project helps refugees find employment by providing help with CVs, job applications and interviews, and provides volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers whilst they are awaiting their decision.

Funding from the ESFA and European Social Fund allowed us to run a separate employability project (Stepping Forward) between September 2020 to August 2021.

On this, we worked one-to-one with a small cohort of Visitors, with the aim of eventually securing employment or finding full-time educational routes for them. This focused on 'upskilling' through enrolment on vocational courses, attending Intensive English classes, engaging mentors, and improving confidence.

15 people took part in the project which helped 5 people gain employment and 1 person to enrol on a Level 3 Access to HE Course. All participants reported an increase in confidence and employability skills.

One of the highlights of the year was an Enterprise Course over 4 sessions, looking at everything from managing finances to generating customers. This gave a number of the attendees the confidence to set up their own businesses afterwards.

Some local employers now contact Harbour and share details of job vacancies with us. We have been able to place a number of people into roles as a result of these connections.

“

You feel like there's a lot of potential that you can give when you come to the UK. Like you want to get a job and move on with your life. But you're stuck in this asylum process. And when it takes months and months of the Home Office to get back to you, I took a lot of tips from the Step2Work programme that helped me with my job interview. They helped with writing a CV and how to be interviewed and what job sites to look at. It was great and now I am in full time work

”

241

**Steps2Work
Advice Sessions**

84

Job Applications

52

CV's writtern

SPOTLIGHTING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILIES & YOUNG PEOPLE

As our numbers grow, it is vitally important to treat everyone as an individual and ensure that their Voice is heard.

Our Female Visitor Engagement Lead established a Forum of other local agencies who also support Vulnerable Women. The contacts established through this Forum have proved invaluable for when we support women with complex and inter-sectional needs – for example, with Swindon Women's Aid for instances of Domestic Abuse and Medaille Trust for Victims of Trafficking.

Funded by the Fore, our Female Visitor Engagement Lead is the first point of contact for newly arriving Asylum Seeking women, and she is also developing a broad understanding of issues (and potential routes for resolution) impacting migrant women.

In the spring, we worked with Swindon Womens Aid (SWA) and delivered some workshops for our female Visitors to better understand Healthy Relationships. This work was funded by the Probation Service.

A highlight of our year with our Female Visitors was an art project entitled 'Here I am'.



Funded by The Ashley Family Foundation, we had 6 visiting artists over 12 weeks who each focused on a different art technique.

The female participants went to Roche Court where they learned about how to curate and present their work. The project culminated with a 'Here I am' exhibition at The Wyvern Theatre in Swindon.



“ I have found a hidden talent
in art.
I can see myself trying
things I wouldn't normally do

“ I thought this was just to
keep my kids busy, I didn't
realise that I would
benefit too

“ I didn't know I was
capable of this





“

I never thought of myself as being artistic, I never tried it before, I found that I was relaxed and felt energised and I was able to tackle any problems I might have later

”

“

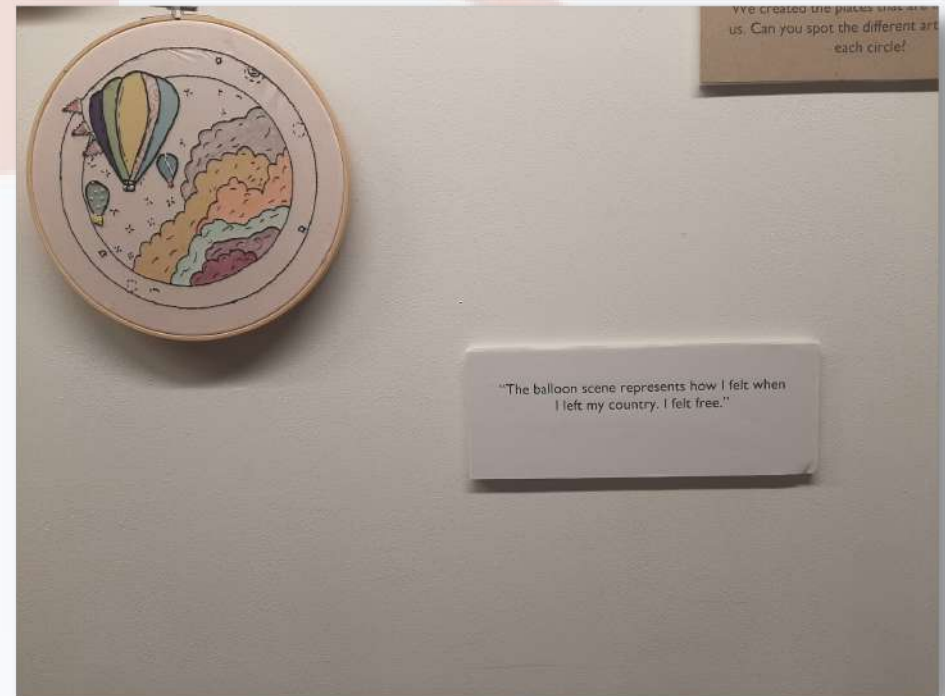
Harbour Project is not just a community, we also learn new skills and this helps our minds

”

“

Spending time together without disturbances was important

”



The work and expertise of our Young Visitor Engagement Lead has been fully tested this year. In addition to running a weekly evening Youth Group, our YVEL has developed strong relationships with Social Work teams in Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Council, as well as the housing providers who support UASC's (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children).

Our understanding of Age Assessments was put to the test with the opening of the IA hotels when many of the residents informed us that they were under 18. We work closely with Public Law Solicitors (as well as Immigration Solicitors) to make sure that young asylum seekers have access to the advice and support that they are entitled to.



Our Homework Club also met during the year and we arranged a number of holiday activities for children and families. Two visits by 'mini-police' were a highlight for many.

Figures 31st March 2022;

161 women/ 178 children/ 104 families/ 55 UASCs

26

Sessions of Homework Club

59

Women's' Group MeetUps

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING NEEDS OF OUR VISITORS

As demand for our services has grown, we could easily fall into being a transactional organisation. One of the outputs from our Strategy Review with RMD Consulting, was to create a new role in the team – our Mental Wellbeing Coordinator. Our Female Visitor Engagement Lead took on the dual-role and extended her hours to full-time employment in September 2021.

Having someone in the team who has the time to think about ‘the whole person’ and how we are best able to attend to their social, physical and mental wellbeing needs has been vital over the last year. With a year of higher than ever arrivals, delayed decisions from the Home Office, and issues with Asylum Support such as a change to a new Aspen Card (Payment card) provider, has meant that our Advice team has been exceptionally stretched.



69

Counselling Sessions

Our 2 professional counsellors have also continued to see people throughout the year. Our counselling, art and yoga were made possible by money from the Postcode Community Trust.

In addition the EMBSR Greatwood course was the first of its kind in the UK, bringing people and horses together to promote mental health and reduce stress. Over the 8 weeks participants groomed, mucked out and observed horses while also engaging in mindfulness practices.

Volumes of Safeguarding concerns continue to rise in parallel. Levels of stress along with feelings of abandonment are at an all-time high and this year we have supported many Visitors through significant life traumas such as family breakdown, domestic abuse, self-harm and substance abuse.

Our network of relationships with other agencies grows in diversity and strength as we work in partnership to support our Visitors as best we can.



Highlights of the year have included trips to Avebury and Cotswold Wildlife Park, work with Twigs Community Garden, art classes, 12 weeks of yoga, and an 8 week course on Equine Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (EMBSR) with Greatwood.



799

Football Sessions



“

Our body always feels senses but we forget to listen to it. If I am concentrating on my body I feel something, but listening is intangible.

Sometimes it is difficult to explain how you feel, but if you understand the feelings in your body it helps you solve it. Listening to our body is good

”

Football has been a beacon of hope and positivity throughout the year – it is such an international language.

The number of people attending has increased 3 fold over the year. Our weekly football sessions have been made possible with grants from The National Probation, Sports England and Magic Little Grants.

CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY TO MAKE BEST USE OF COLLECTIVE SKILLS AND RESOURCE

At The Harbour Project we see ourselves as being part of a local system and know that we cannot meet the breadth and depth of Visitor needs as a stand-alone entity. Our network is a mix of civic agencies; statutory teams such as the Police; Probation Services; and the DWP; health providers; Immigration and Public Law solicitors and other Refugees and Asylum Seeker support organisations such as Migrant Help; Housing Providers, voluntary sector organisations such as Citizens Advice, Voluntary Action Swindon and Swindon MIND and we're part of a network of local charities who re-distribute food surpluses.

In addition, we receive invaluable support from the local community including schools who help us raise awareness of the issues facing asylum seekers and refugees and in return, we have received many harvest festival donations. Many different faith groups support us in a multitude of ways. And we interface with employers, employment agencies and business groups as part of our Steps2Work Project.

“

I have to admit I would be fascinated to talk to the people you help about where they come from, but I can see that in many ways you rise above that and accept everyone regardless without intruding or asking too many questions. Giving every person, young or old, a fair hearing and then a fair chance is a great basic philosophy to follow.

Sir Charles Hobhouse following his visit to us

”



Our connections with Swindon Borough Council (SBC) have strengthened this year, stemming from the arrival of guests in the town from Afghanistan and Ukraine as well as increased provision of asylum support accommodation. All agencies involved want to avoid duplication and competition, making best use of everyone's limited resources by focussing on what they do best, and making space for others to play to their strengths. This also helps to knit together local activities and build connections between different communities.



The plight of refugees from all quarters of the world has been ever-present in our news channels this year. We are increasingly sought out for our opinion on current topics, being seen as an organisation with hand-on experience of the human impact of forced migration. BBC Points West filmed with us in August and we have spoken on BBC Wiltshire on a number of times. Our CEO was invited to be part of a small cohort of charity representatives to meet Andrew Bailey, The Governor of the Bank of England when he visited the county in February.

Highlights this year have included a stall at Swindon Pride selling products made by our Visitors; being selected by RUNVember as one of their charity partners, helping to raise funds, awareness and in-kind donations, a Christmas meal organised for us by Nationwide with Christmas decorations put up by volunteers from Zurich, a meal for 100 of our Visitors provided by Gateway Church, and hosting the National Benevolent Charity's launch of their Swindon and Wiltshire funding programme in July.

We are grateful to Swindon Mayor Garry Perkins for choosing us as one of his charitable causes during his term of office, and for the support of Sir Charles Hobhouse, High Sheriff of Wiltshire for 21/22.

HOW WE WORK

In the context of significant growth, ever-changing risk levels of Covid, media and public interest generated by arrivals from Afghanistan and Ukraine, we remain committed to our unique formula of being welcoming, accepting and non-judgemental, underpinned with sound professionalism and structure. We earn the trust of our Visitors by responding quickly and effectively to their individual and often complex needs.



The covid years have tested almost all of our operational processes and we have incorporated many of these learnings into our day to day practices. Our Advice team has been able to ramp up the number of advice sessions, the appointment has been retained, and we have clear expectations and boundaries about our areas of expertise and value. Being flexible, replicable and scalable have been vital to our success this year.



Our OISC Accreditation was renewed in October.

We were also able to access free consultancy support from Lloyds Bank Foundation to look at our Data Repository system.

Through working with the Dot Project, we successfully migrated and streamlined our management of shared documents, migrating from Livedrive to GoogleDocs.

VOLUNTEERS

The Harbour Project could not function without its Volunteers who bring with them a diverse range of experiences, skills and mountains of energy.

Each is appointed after completing an application process, an interview and after a DBS check. Some Volunteers were reluctant to return after Covid: nervousness about the virus combined with changes to peoples' priorities. We issued a survey to gauge the likelihood of people returning to volunteer with us which helped us to shape further recruitment to fill any gaps.

We held a training event for new Volunteers in January. We keep in touch through occasional Volunteer get-togethers and a regular newsletter.



MEASURING THE IMPACT OF WHAT WE DO

The impact of our work is palpable in day to day interactions with our Visitors. Pre-Covid we had regular and informal interactions with Visitors which helped us to adapt our services to evolving needs.

With more footfall into our centre, it has been important to bring more structure into how we gather feedback from our Visitors. Our 'Visitor in the Lead' events take place every 6 to 8 weeks and are a great means of finding out how we could grow or develop our support.

Visitors in the Lead sessions are always supported by Visitor-Volunteers, ensuring that everyone can have their say. Our Groups also allow for informal conversations to find out what is of most value. We constantly listen, adapt and tweak our activities as the Visitor cohort churns and needs evolve.



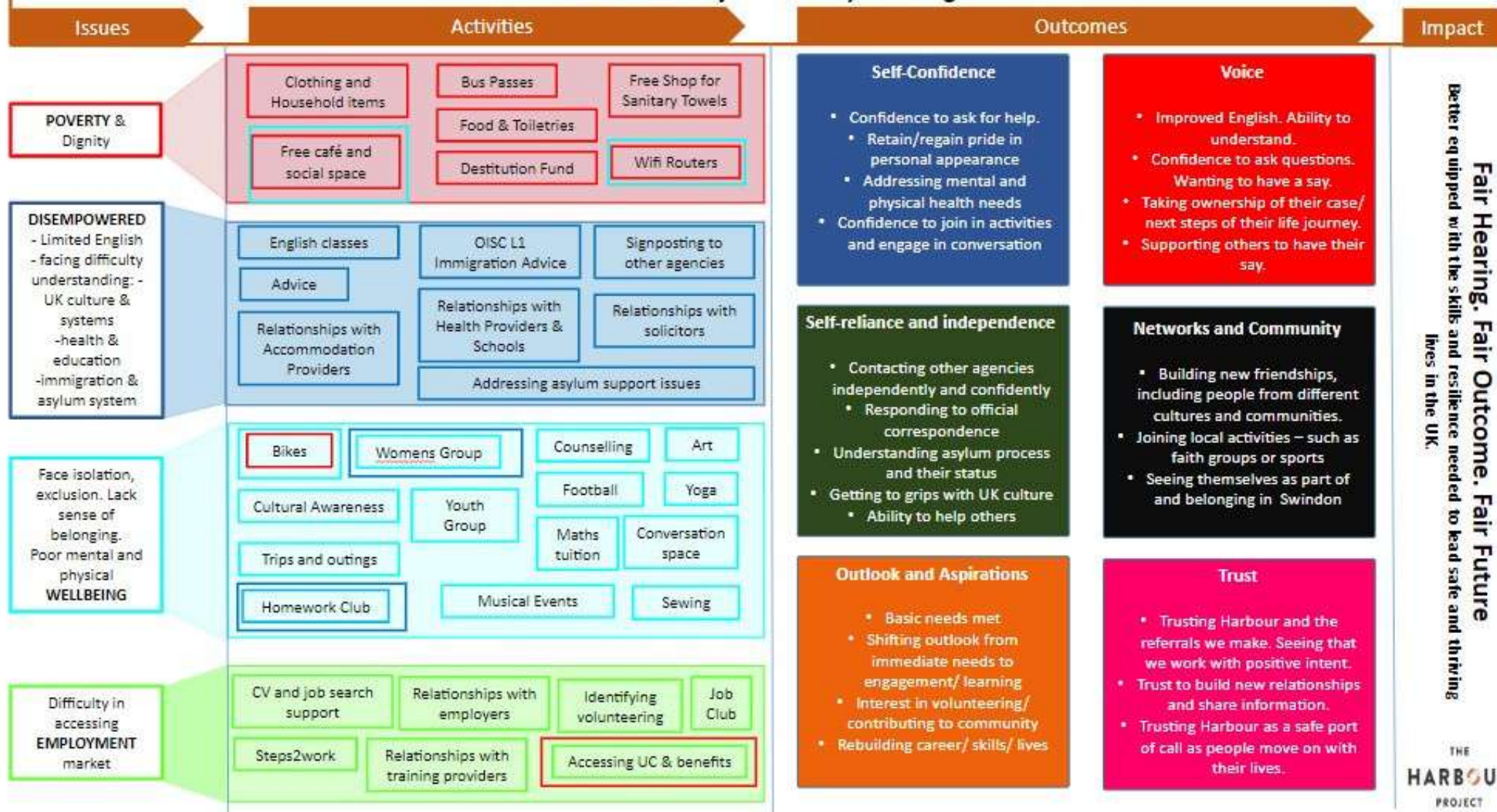
Airtable, our main reporting tool records every interaction with Visitors – attendance, help requests and classes, allowing us to track changes in demographic mix and engagement, triggering us to re-evaluate aspects of our delivery.

This year we have introduced an 'Outcome Wheel', adapted from the Warwick-Edinburgh model. The outcome wheel is completed observationally at Day 1, Month 1, Month 6 and Month 12 and creates a rolling case-study of the impact of our intervention as we support people on their journey to a new life.

Our Outcome Wheel fits within our 'Theory of Change'. This schematic bringing together the issues we are trying to address, the activities we deliver to support this, our outcomes (in line with the Outcome Wheel), and overall impact. This model has helped us to better articulate how specific activities that we deliver are components in a journey helping to equip our Visitors with the skills and resilience needed to lead safe and thriving lives in the UK.

WE USE THE THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL TO SUPPORT OUR VISITORS

The Harbour Project – Theory of Change



THE OUTCOME WHEEL

Harbour Project – Outcome Wheel

Voice

- English language skills. Ability to understand/ articulate questions/ ask if not understanding.
- Confidence to ask questions.
- Wanting to have a say. Confidence to express an opinion and offer feedback and ideas.
- Taking active ownership of their own case.
- Prepared to support others in having their say.

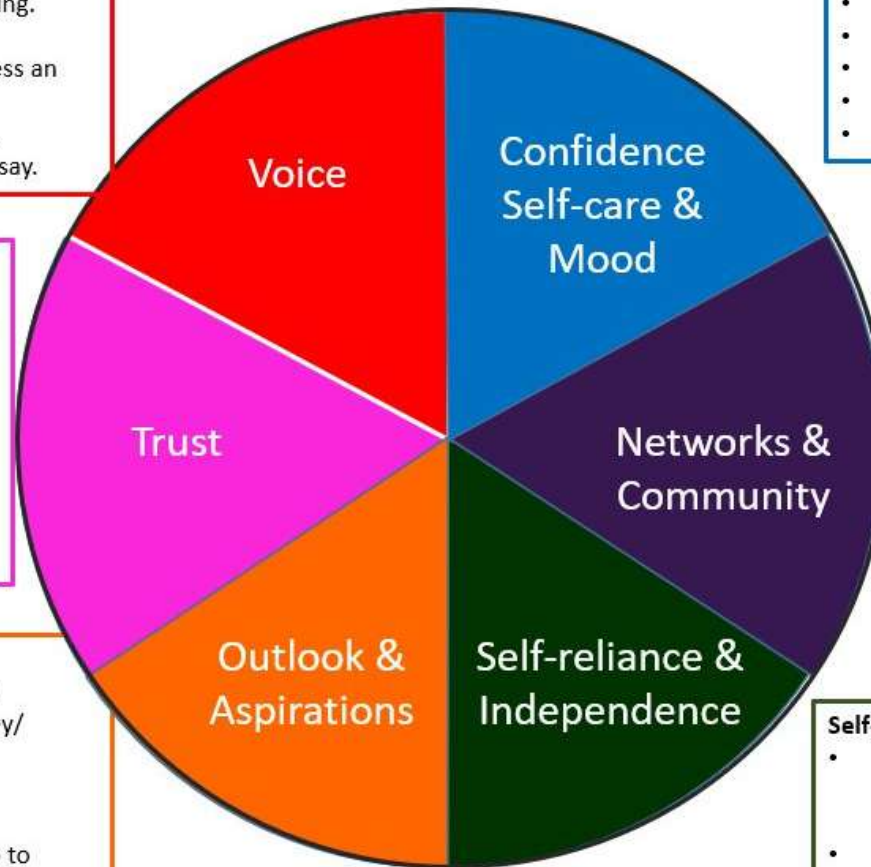
Trust

- Trusting Harbour, who we are as people.
- Trusting that we work with positive intent – no agendas, favouritism or sharing information.
- Trust to share their story and information with us.
- Recognition of expertise of Harbour - seeking us out based on experience.
- Who they turn to at a time of need.

Outlook & Aspirations

Time horizon of need & valuation of self-worth

- short-term = food/ accommodation/ money/ health
- Short/ medium term = wanting to learn/ engagement in activities
- Medium = 'I'm bored' – can I volunteer/ go to college/ get involved in something new/ worthwhile
- Longer term = rebuilding careers/ lives/ new skills



Confidence, Self-care & Mood

- Confidence to contact Harbour and ask for help
- Confidence to engage in conversation
- Confidence to join in activities
- Personal presentation
- Interest in physical & emotional wellbeing.
- Anxiety/ stress/ anger/ concentration.

Networks & Community

- Do they have friends? How many people do they know in Swindon?
- Have they been able to build a local support network – sport/ church & faith groups/ education.
- Are they learning to navigate the town and find people & places?
- Do they feel part of the community?
- Do they see themselves settling in Swindon?
- Have they been able to make friends from cultures/ communities different to their own?

Self-reliance & Independence

- Do they know what other agencies to contact for help & how to find information? (eg, Housing Teams/ Migrant Help). Could they do this without our help?
- Do they understand official correspondence?
- Understanding asylum/ refugee process and their status
- Understanding of UK culture, protocols, legal system
- Ability/ confidence/ willingness to help others.

THE UNSUITABILITY OF OUR PREMISES BECAME EVEN MORE APPARENT

As volumes of people have grown along with a greater awareness of the need to keep safe social distances as part of daily life, the need to address the suitability of our premises has become front and centre of our operations and future plans. As Covid restrictions started to ease, the architect employed by St Luke's was re-engaged and permissions were sought from the Diocese. During the year, contractors started to visit the site to measure up and produce more detailed costings. During the process of seeking temporary accommodation to allow for the building work, we identified an alternative location which could potentially meet our needs over a larger footprint.

Moving to a new site potentially creates less disruption for the organisation.

As this Annual Report goes to print, we are on the verge of moving to new premises and are very excited to create something afresh that better meets all of our needs.

St Luke's has served us well over the last 22 years and we owe an enormous amount of gratitude to Father Toby and his team for being such accommodating landlords.

Covid has changed the way we work and how we use our space. Gone are the days of one multi-purpose room where our Advisors and volunteers worked shoulder to shoulder and Visitors helped themselves to tea and coffee. Our 'Drop-in' room has become our 'Advice Room', and the majority of help requests are now met via a scheduled appointment. We have moved more of our social activities into the main hall at St. Luke's – a previously under-utilised space. Whilst these changes have definitely helped, we have no further room to grow – no room for people to work, for confidential conversations, or for classes or activities.



We continue to make use of Gateway Church at West Swindon on an outreach basis once a week.

Gateway Church is a convenient location for of our Visitors and has proven to be a great facility for us.

With the opening of Initial Accommodation, our IA Liaison Officer, is sometimes based in one of the hotels as a means of reaching more people.

THE ENDURING COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION OF OUR PEOPLE IS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS HARBOUR TOGETHER

The Harbour Project Trustees met six times during the year. Trustees make an annual declaration of interests; and declare any pecuniary interests in any agenda item at each meeting. Meeting agendas are managed on an annual cycle, with standing items such as risk and financial updates at each meeting.

As in the previous year, a recurring theme of discussions was around our response to the ever changing Covid situation. In addition, the Trustees have been focussed upon future fundraising strategy as our awards from our two major funders (NCLF and SBC) were coming to an end, progress on Strategic Plan and Business Plan objectives and recommendations of the RMD Consultants External Evaluation, absorption of ever increasing numbers of Visitors, and Safeguarding of everyone involved in the charity.

Compliance with the Charity Governance Code was addressed at the March 2022 meeting. All policies are reviewed annually on a rolling cycle. Trustees reflect a diverse range of experience and expertise, and are appointed following application, references, DBS and interview. The CEO and Operations Manager attend Trustees' meetings in a non-voting capacity.



Funding from the Fore enabled the creation of a new post: Female Visitor Engagement Lead. Additional funding from Swindon Borough Council was used to create another new role: IA Liaison Officer. Also, additional funds from Blagrove allowed us to create a new role as Youth Worker (4 hours a week). The role holder has 'Lived Experience' of the asylum system, having come to the UK as an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child some years ago.

In recognition of the stresses for the team in working through such challenging times, we were awarded a £400 'Well-being grant' from Blagrove which allowed us to arrange some much deserved and guilt-free Christmas celebrations.

Following the conclusion of the Strategic Review with RMD Associates, the Trustees decided to invest in additional roles to develop our expertise and specialism in Steps2Work and Mental Wellbeing.

With such significant growth in Visitor volumes and the associated breadth of support needs that comes with this, we have been able to create roles aligned to specific cohorts of Visitors, thus ensuring that no single voice is lost in the noise and that we can continue to fine tune services and support for different groups.



| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| Patrons | Lord Wills | |
| | Nicky Alberry DL | |
| Trustees | David Rowlands | Chair of Trustees |
| | Ian Robertson | Treasurer |
| | Monica Potter | |
| | Kirsty Johnson | Resigned 28/01/2022 |
| | Heather Redington | Resigned 25/10/2021 |
| | Hadiza Mahuta | |
| | Basel Esleem | |
| | Faisal Nawaf Mayed | |
| | Neda Krishnan | |
| | Housam Al-Housami | Appointed 10/02/2022 |
| | Mari Williams | Appointed 29/3/2022 Secretary to Trustees |



| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Staff | Claire Garrett | CEO | |
| | Nan Bains | Operations Manager | |
| | Sophie Boyce | Business Manager | Resigned 24/09/21 |
| | Jaz Sumal | Business Manager | Appointed 27/09/21 |
| | Giles Matthews | Advice Manager | |
| | Mindy Sandhu | Deputy Advice Manager | |
| | Ann Meeus | Advice Coordinator | |
| | Holly Grey | Young Visitor Engagement Lead | |
| | Sophie Peart | Female Visitor Engagement Lead | Resigned 11/06/21 |
| | Mia O'Sullivan | Female Visitor Engagement Lead | Appointed 21/06/21 |
| | Mia O'Sullivan | Mental Well-being Coordinator | Appointed 03/09/21 |
| | Tom Bain | IA Liaison Officer | Appointed 08/11/21 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Stella Mortazavi | Steps2Work Lead | Appointed 01/09/21 |
| | Monty Maneeus | Youth Worker | Appointed 15/11/21 |
| Freelance Support | Lisa Blaine | Mental Health Counsellor | |
| | Stella Mortazavi | Steps2Work Lead | Converted to paid staff 01/09/21 |
| | Rachael Taylor | Bookkeeper | |

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2021-22

2021-22 saw us resuming classes and activities for our Visitors. We continued to fund a limited number of mobile routers but the distortion of spend from previous years around food and wifi mostly ended.

Costs increased by 13% year on year, a significant achievement given that we have grown the staff team and responded to doubling of Visitor numbers. Pay costs increased by 25% with the addition of new roles relating to Female Visitors, Mental Wellbeing, S2W, IA Liaison and our Youth Worker. We were able to secure new funding to create these new roles aligned to particular groups and areas of need.

It's been reassuring to see re-emergence of donations (financial and in-kind) from schools, churches and other organisations – an area of income that has suffered during Covid. We were also able to host a couple of fundraising events for the first time in 2 years.

We always knew that 2021-22 was going to be a big year for us – rebuilding the organisation after Covid, planning for a move to new premises (along the disruption of building work in the meantime), as well as approaching the end-dates for a number of our major awards – most notably National Lottery Community Fund and recommissioning of our services with Swindon Borough Council.

With focus and hard work over a number of months, we are delighted to report that we have secured a new 5 year grant from NLCF and were recommissioned in Q1 2022-23 for a further 5 years by SBC. In total, these represent around 25% of our income and have given us renewed confidence to finally move to more suitable premises, knowing that a proportion of our costs are covered for the medium term. These awards are also potential leverage with other prospective funders.

The Trustees are grateful to Ian Robertson and Rachael Taylor, and Independent Examiner Robert Raynes for preparing and examining the Accounts respectively.

| | Income | Expenditure |
|---------|---------|-------------|
| 2020-20 | 271,862 | 262,122 |
| 2021-22 | 334,871 | 297,061 |

| Grants & Awards | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Swan Mountain | Postcode Community Trust |
| Wiltshire Council | Oakfield Community Response |
| Hilden Charitable Trust | Tesco's Bags of Help |
| National Probation Service | Jack Lane Charitable Trust |
| Ashley Family Foundation | Walter Guinness |
| Sports England | Fulmer Charitable Trust |

| Major Funders | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| National Lottery Community Fund | 73,356 | 64,976 |
| Swindon Borough Council | 33,000 | 48,939 |
| Lloyds Bank Foundation | 40,853 | 34,215 |
| Blagrove Trust | 8,003 | 32,415 |
| Integrated Care Alliance | 0 | 15,000 |
| ESFA | 3,422 | 10,019 |
| Wiltshire Community Foundation | 8,854 | 8,978 |
| The Fore | 0 | 7,338 |
| Integrated Care Alliance | 0 | 15,000 |
| VAS Outbreak Fund | 0 | 7,129 |
| Swindon Borough Council (DEFRA) Food | 10,100` | 2,411 |
| Barrow Cadbury Trust | 20,000 | 0 |

| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Staff Costs | 154,889 | 194,073 |
| Premises & Rent | 17,550 | 18,670 |
| IT & Telephony | 7,115 | 13,762 |
| Overheads | 6,905 | 11,683 |
| Visitor Classes & Activities | 14,415 | 36,232 |
| Destitution & Visitor Travel | 2,837 | 6,107 |
| Food & Cleaning | 1,880 | 2,747 |
| Covid – Food Parcels | 19,432 | 0 |
| Covid – Routers & Devices | 16,357 | 0 |
| Accountancy & Consultancy | 18,126 | 9,891 |
| Travel, Training & Volunteer Costs | 1,886 | 1,766 |
| Fundraising & Publicity | 730 | 2,130 |

| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Major Funders | 197,588 | 231,420 |
| Gifts & Donations | 20,673 | 43,401 |
| Smaller Grants | 41,062 | 48,235 |
| GiftAid Donations | 10,337 | 8,012 |
| Events | 0 | 3,733 |
| Other Income | 2,202 | 70 |

**St Luke's Hall, Broad Street
Swindon SN1 2DS**

**Office hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 3pm
Advice hours: Mon-Fri 11am to 2pm**

Tel: 01793 611682

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🌐 **www.harbourproject.org.uk**

f **The Harbour Project**

🐦 **@swindonharbour**

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