

Yarl's Wood Befrienders



Trustees' Annual Report
for the year ended March 2019



Trustees' Annual Report



Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2019

The Trustees, who are Directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and income & expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Full name	Yarl's Wood Befrienders (YWB)
Registered charity number	1143160
Registered company number	07652500
Principal address	43 Bromham Road Bedford MK40 2AA

Trustees (Directors) 2018 – 2019	Barbara Conridge (Chair) Pauline Panter (Vice-Chair) Poonam Chand (Treasurer) Angela Huddart Jenni Jackson Juliet Jeater Nina Pavitt Joanne Vincett
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Independent Examiner	Rob Baxter
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Governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 31.05.2011. It has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £10.

Trustees are appointed on the basis of their commitment to the aims of the organisation and their willingness to devote both their time and talents to the cause. The Trustees are appointed at a board meeting following a formal application process.

Aims and objectives

The charity's objectives ('Objects') are specifically restricted to the charitable relief of those detained in, or leaving, Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre (YWIRC).

Trustee matters

Throughout the time I have been involved with Yarl's Wood, as a Befriender, Trustee and latterly as Chair of the Board, I have never failed to be impressed by the commitment that our trustees, volunteers and staff have to those detained in Yarl's Wood IRC, and our collective determination to do the very best for them.

Barbara Conridge, Chair of Trustees



Of course, many different tasks need to be done to enable us to be effective. They require a variety of skills and expertise; some of these we bring with us and others we learn and refine as we go along.

We all strive to do the best we can while adapting to changing circumstances, not only within our organisation but within Yarl's Wood IRC and to Government policy.

I would like to personally thank everyone: trustees, staff, volunteers, our generous funders and all who enable us to do our work. The lives of those detained in the Centre would be poorer and harder without your support. What you each contribute makes a huge difference.

Our staff are impressive individuals who make a formidable team – one which has held firm as both personnel and personal lives have changed.

In March we said a sad goodbye to Caroline Clark, our Director. Caroline, in her typically

organised and thoughtful way, helped us to prepare for a smooth transition in leadership so that when Rachel Mitchell, our Finance and Fundraising Officer, was appointed as interim director, she was able to slip almost seamlessly into her new role. This has allowed the Board time to take stock and review our next steps – a process we hope will be concluded over the summer.

At our first Annual Conference, we were able to thank Caroline publicly and to wish her well for the future.

Ali Brumfitt and Shirley McDonagh, who covered Co-ordinator Jess Anslow's maternity leave so ably, left us when Jess returned to work. YWB benefited hugely from their individual expertise and it is most gratifying that they are both still actively Befriending. Shortly after welcoming Jess back, we were delighted to be able to appoint Lou Armit as an additional Co-ordinator, a post funded by our National Lottery award. Katrina Allen, our highly efficient Administrator, completes

About our volunteers



Our Befrienders reported improving their skills, making new friends and increasing their knowledge of immigration as the main outcomes from volunteering with us over 2018/19.

18 people attended our Information Sessions, with **15** going on to attend a Training Day. **12** people went on to become volunteers.



The average time our Befrienders spent visiting one person was **38** days. The average number of people visited in a year by each of our Befrienders was just over **3**.

Our Befrienders speak **22** different languages between them.



our staff team; she has also developed her skills as super-shopper, using our funders' grants to buy clothing for detainees in need.

Throughout what could have been a period of staffing instability, the Trustees have worked hard to challenge and support staff as they continue to innovate and meet the needs of our volunteers and beneficiaries.

You can read more details about our highly successful January conference elsewhere, but this huge undertaking is just one example of how YWB has grown in stature. Much of this is due to the current financial security which has allowed us to concentrate on things other than making ends meet.

We continue to strive to make the Board as effective as possible and have embedded the Working Group model of strategic management into our way of working. Inevitably, the priority given to each group fluctuates according to current priorities, but there are constants.

The Finance and Fundraising group keeps a constant eye on our income, budget and future financial planning, reporting regularly to the Board of Trustees.

The HR group has reviewed all our staff and volunteer policies including confidentiality, safeguarding and expense claim procedures. Again, each element is ratified by the Board, an on-going process of review which ensures our documentation and processes are up to date and comply with current legislation.

YWB is very fortunate to have such a dedicated Board and I would like to thank them all for the support they have given me and for their integrity and thoughtfulness. Thanks especially to Poonam Chand and Nina Pavitt who have stepped down from the Board this year but who both continue to support YWB in other ways. ■

Challenges and achievements

To summarise the past year for our Annual Report is always a daunting task and this year is no exception. Reviewing the year's events, it is astonishing to see just how much has been achieved.

*Rachel Mitchell, Interim Director
and Finance & Fundraising Officer*



This last year, of course, we have benefited significantly from our funding from The National Lottery Community Fund which we secured towards the end of 2017. This gave us a level of financial security we have never before experienced.

The funding allowed us to recruit new staff members and volunteers, and to develop our existing ones, as well as to move into a larger office within the CVS Building.

Movement of personnel has been something of a challenge this year, however, with a number of staff joining or leaving us – not least our Director, Caroline Clark, who left at the end of February after nearly four years.

Caroline's legacy is evident and she has left a hole, both in the organisation and in our hearts.

Time does not stand still though, and nor does the demand for our services, and we are honoured to continue to help the many women we meet in detention every year

with our practical and emotional support programmes, all made possible through our committed volunteers, staff, funders and external partners.

Staff and volunteers

We started the year with 55 volunteer Befrienders and a small but dedicated contingent of office volunteers.

Having generally had enough English-speaking volunteers, our focus this year was to increase the number of different languages we can offer. We now have eight new volunteers who, between them, speak Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu and Yoruba. We were also able to visit people in Amharic, Fanti, French, Italian, Spanish, Swahili and Twee.

It is a constant challenge to find people who are both willing and suitable to befriend vulnerable people and who also have the languages spoken by those in detention. For example, having a number of Polish

Participants gather at the end of our first Annual Conference held in January 2019



speakers being detained, we recruited and trained a Polish speaker – only to find there was suddenly no longer a need for one...

We have introduced a system of requesting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all our volunteers. From June 2018, new volunteers must have completed checks before the end of their initial training.

We also set up a pilot mentoring scheme for Befrienders to support their well-being, since Befriending can be emotionally draining. This will be rolled out to all new Befrienders, as well as current volunteers who wish to have a mentor.

New beginnings

The first of what we intend to become an annual event was held at the Marston Forest Centre in January 2019. It brought together our team of volunteers, as well as staff and external partners who work with detainees in Yarl's Wood, such as charities, solicitors and detention staff members.

Training sessions were led by people from Wilson LLP, Medical Justice, the Modern Slavery and Trafficking Unit of Bedfordshire Police, and members of the Welfare team in Yarl's Wood IRC.

Other new beginnings this year concerned our staff and Board. We were pleased to welcome our new Administrator, Katrina Allen, and our new Treasurer, Poonam Chand (ACA). For most of the year we had eight trustees, all active as Befrienders, working group members, office volunteers, and/or mentors to new Befrienders.

Services and events

The major change this year was the dramatic and unexpected drop in the number of people detained at Yarl's Wood IRC – apparent across the whole of the detention estate.

The steady decline in numbers detained began in the wake of the Windrush scandal and, as at the end of our financial year (March 2019), the average occupancy was

About the people we visit

We befriended people from all around the world in 2018/19, mostly...



- Nigeria
- Jamaica
- Ghana
- the Philippines
- Poland
- Kenya
- India
- Cameroon
- Lithuania
- Albania
- Bangladesh
- Democratic Republic of the Congo

"I have been here for 4 months, my only visitor is from the Befrienders."

"Thank you for your visits, I have made another friend."



The average days the people we befriended were detained for was **84 days**. The longest time visiting one detained person was **250 days**.

Of the **77** people who requested a language other than English, we managed to visit **16** in their own language.



around 34.4% of the Centre's maximum capacity of 410 beds.¹ Nevertheless, our key activities continued as planned.

The decrease in the number of detained people was particularly apparent at the annual Summer Fete when we estimated an attendance of 70 to 80 people in contrast with 200 the previous year. Nevertheless, we received positive reviews from those who did attend and completed our feedback forms.

With the smaller population in the Centre continuing, we adjusted plans accordingly for our annual Christmas event, holding it in the Visits Hall rather than in the Sports Hall. This allowed a more intimate atmosphere for detainees at a difficult time of year for people separated from families and friends.

This year we have participated in the Diversity Roadshow, the Stakeholder Event and the International Women's Day event organised by the Centre and plan to be involved in these annual activities again.

The smaller overall number of detainees has affected all aspects of our work, with the average number of people with a Befriender now at about 25 each week, compared to around 40 last year.

Visitors to our drop-in sessions were also lower, averaging about 20 per week instead of 35 last year. Considering the occupancy was around 50% lower than the previous year, however, we actually supported a higher percentage of the total number of people detained in the Centre this year.

Even with fewer detainees, people continued to attend our drop-in sessions, many on a regular basis. This encouraged us to resume plans for another drop-in session, offering two opportunities a week to join in mindful activities and interact with people from outside the walls of detention.

The first new sessions were run as focus groups, to learn what the women wanted the sessions to look like. Based on their feedback, a more peaceful session was the

Impact of Befriending



227 people were referred for a Befriender in 2018/19,
with **165** going on to be visited.

77% of people we surveyed felt
more connected to the outside world
after a visit from a Befriender.



Drop-in attendance was **937** over the year.

176 Drop-in attendees requested a Befriender there.



97% of people surveyed at Drop-in
said it made them feel happier.

model we adopted. We continue to gain regular feedback so that we can adapt the sessions to the needs of the women. A team of some ten volunteers and staff now run the sessions on a rota basis.

Both sessions are now up and running and proving very popular with the detained women.

Working with the Centre

We continue to have a strong working relationship with the Centre management, particularly Welfare and Religious Affairs, as well as Kaleidoscope, which delivers well-being services for detainees.

These strong links were evidenced by the Centre management's willingness to deliver workshops at our Annual Conference in January. Their very well-received sessions helped explain to volunteers the services they provided for detainees. They also gave volunteers the opportunity to directly ask questions about the Centre.

Finally, Serco management provided us with a space to store our clothing stocks in a designated room inside the Centre. We are grateful to them for this chance to move our growing stock of practical goods out of our office. This not only gave us back some valuable office space but, more importantly, enabled us to deliver clothing and shoes to detainees within a much shorter time frame than we have been able to in the past.

We continue to meet quarterly with Centre management – meetings at which we are able to update each other on our services as well as raise questions and concerns that have been brought to our attention by Befrienders and the women we support. ■

' Figures provided by Serco

I was so happy the first time I met Befrienders. When you are feeling depressed, lonely and low and you see the phone call from Befrienders you feel blessed and better.

Fundraising matters...

In 2018–2019, YWB exceeded its fundraising target with a total of £161,890. This was 38% more than the previous year and the highest amount of incoming resources we have experienced as a charity.

Joanne Vincett, Trustee and Finance & Fundraising working group member



This success was, of course, mostly due to the securing of a three-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund (formerly 'Big Lottery Reaching Communities') in December 2017.

The past year was the first 12 months of the grant, and we are very grateful for the National Lottery's support, both for our core operations and for the development of our programme of activities for detained people in Yarl's Wood IRC.

The grant has enabled us to add another 'drop-in' session to reach more women who may not know of our Befriending services, for example. It has also allowed us to hire a part-time administrator and to provide more skills training for our volunteers and staff.

All that said, we could not have reached a steady and stable financial situation without the thoughtful support from individuals who donated through their online shopping (via The Giving Machine), Gift Aid, monthly

payroll, CAF accounts or Charities Trust. Their charitable giving, whether regular or one-off – such as at our quiz nights, Annual General Meeting and other events – makes a positive difference to us and, therefore, to the detained women we support.

Likewise, donations we received from individuals and organisations in the form of clothing, shoes and suitcases have not just lifted the spirits of detainees – they have also restored their human dignity.

Lastly, our heartfelt gratitude is extended to those who have given their time and energy to emotionally support the women confined in Yarl's Wood IRC, to help with the various administrative tasks in our office, or to spread the word about our work. Your contribution in the intangible form of time is priceless. ■

Finance matters...

We have benefited from a strong financial position this year – the result of our grant for core costs from the National Lottery Community Fund and the generosity of the other donors identified.

With the increase in funding at the start of the financial year came a decrease in spending. The lower number of detainees in Yarl's Wood IRC was a factor, together with changes to our staffing.

This was a year for taking safeguarding measures for YWB, given an uncertain political climate that impacts on immigration detention policies. After ring-fencing £20K for the unlikely event of our closure, we ended the financial year with a net movement in reserves of £2.5K.

After staffing, our detainee support costs remain our largest expense. Fortunately, we were invited to apply for an unsolicited grant by a charitable trust. This has enabled us to expand our mobile phone provision and offer phone credit to detainees arriving with less than £50 in their account.

The decision to ring-fence £20K for closure costs was a result of the Trustees' strategic planning in the light of uncertainty regarding the future of immigration removal centres. Should closure become necessary due to circumstances relating to Yarl's Wood IRC, this provision will make sure that we are in a position to respond appropriately.

We appreciate the healthy financial standing we are in as we move forward into 2019–2020.

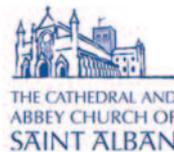
Income & expenditure

Total 2018		Unrestricted 2019	Restricted 2019	Total 2019
	Incoming Resources			
116,654	Grants & Donations	151,289	4,850	156,139
878	Fundraising Events	749	-	749
-	Building Capabilities Fund	-	5,000	5,000
£117,533	Total Incoming Resources	152,038	9,850	£161,888
	Resources Expended			
84,547	Wages, NI & pensions	98,459		98,459
7,597	Personnel Costs	462		462
3,900	Office Expenses	4,254		4,254
6,291	Rent & rates	7,618		7,618
1,163	Marketing & Publicity	1,754		1,754
15,369	Detainee Support	6,786	6,850	13,636
2,716	Volunteer expenses	117	3,000	3,117
567	Training	4,021		4,021
403	Insurance	401		401
	Building Capabilities	-	4,835	4,835
1,198	Professional Fees	815		815
£123,751	Total Resources Expended	124,687	14,685	£139,372
£-6,218	Net Income/(-) Expenditure	27,351	-4,835	£22,516
62,112	Total Funds brought forward	50,894	5,000	55,894
£55,894	Total Funds Carried Forward	78,245	165	£78,410
	Provision for closure costs			£20,000
	Net movement on reserves in the year after provision			£2,516

Our grateful thanks...

...to all who have made our work possible through donations, fundraising events and grants, particularly to these organisations which were generous enough to donate £250 or more:

- Anonymous Charitable Trust
- Beatrice Hankey Foundation
- Bromley Trust
- The Cathedral & Abbey Church of St Alban
- The Harpur Trust
- The House of Industry Estate Trust
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Odin Charitable Trust
- Rosmarinum Charitable Trusts
- St Mary's Church, Oakley
- St Peter's Church, Bedford
- Swan Mountain Trust



Breakdown of income

Fundraising Events	
AGM 2018 & film ticket sales	462
Postcard sales	22
Pub quiz on 01/11/18	265
	£749
Unrestricted Income	
Bromley Trust	15,000
The Cathedral & Abbey Church of St Alban	1,000
Donations	5,347
House of Industry	7,549
National Lottery Community Fund	119,893
Odin Charitable Trust	2,000
Rosmarinum Charitable Trusts	500
	£151,289
	£152,038
Restricted Income	
Anonymous Charitable Trust	1,600
Beatrice Hankey Foundation	250
Building Capabilities Fund	5,000
Swan Mountain Trust	3,000
	£9,850
Total Incoming Resources	£161,888



Yarl's Wood Befrienders



Our mission

We offer befriending support to people held in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, aiming to reduce their isolation, reinforce their self-esteem, and affirm their human dignity.

What we stand for

Human dignity – we listen with empathy and act with compassion

Acceptance – we listen without judgement and act with respect

Impartiality – we listen in confidence and act independently,
of both the Centre management and of the UK Home Office