

**Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting of
Suffolk Refugee Support
Thursday 11th October at 7.00pm, Methodist Church, Museum
Street**

Attendees

Julie	Adams	Clare Baptist Church
Nadia	Akshibani	Service user
Hayder	Al Akraa	Service user
Fatima	Al Hamadi	Volunteer
Ali	Al Hamadi	Member
Rasha	Al Shalabi	Staff
Zinah	Alabboodi	Service user
Brenda	Assing	Volunteer
Stephen	Atkinson	Rattlesden Benefice Refugee Sponsorship Group
Ammar	Awtani	Singer
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sarah Barber		
Maggie	Barradell	Trustee
Danny	Bevan	United Edge
Alan	Blackshaw	Trustee
Ionela	Bobaru	Staff
Joyce	Boorman	Soroptimist International Ipswich & District
Barbara	Boynes	Volunteer
Jutta	Brueck	Volunteer & representative of Bishop Mike Harrison
Matt	Butt	Volunteer
Rev Marian	Carter	Volunteer
Lindah	Chimetai	Speaker
Yvonne	Chisyana	Volunteer
Caroline	Coleby	One Life Suffolk
Allison	Coleman	SCC
Catherine	Costello	Staff
Rebecca	Crerar	Staff
David	Davies	Ipswich & District Citizens Advice Bureau
Heidi	Dix	University of Suffolk
Greg	Dodds	Orwell Housing
Zainab	Ebrahim	Member
Abdul Karim	Ebrahim	Member
Nick	Feldman	Trustee
Ken	Fichew	Volunteer
Mark	Fookes	University of Suffolk
Michelle	Francis	Staff
Michaela	Freeman	Staff
Cllr Julian	Gibbs	Councillor
Cathy	Gonzalez	Staff
Louise	Gooch	EELGA
Michael	Green	Member
Andy	Hewett	Refugee council

Mary	Hope	Psychoanalytic psychotherapist
Mike	Hope	Supporter
Gillian	Johnson	Clare Baptist Church
Hugh	Jolly	Member
Lucy	Kerry	Trustee
Fatima	Khan	Staff
Yacine	Khiat-Selfe	Staff
Matt	Kletzing	United Edge
Cllr Colin	Kreidelwolf	Councillor
Barbara	Lamberton	St Felix Church Felixstowe
Izzy	Lane	Member
Pauline	Lane	Trustee
Marian	Lanyan	Trustee
Christine	Laverock	Member
Karen	Lawson	Staff
Ray	Le Couteur	Volunteer
Cllr Inga	Lockington	Councillor
Zeid	Mahrat	Staff
Andrei	Majidian	Volunteer
Sandy	Martin	MP
Louise	McCarthy	Member
Cllr Sophie	Meudec	Councillor
Cath	Minchin	Staff
Michael	Morrow	Supporter
Kate	O'Driscoll	Trustee
Ed	Packard	Member
Jodi	Peck	Staff
Sue	Raychaudri	University of Suffolk
Ellie	Roberts	Staff
Melanie	Selfe	Member and Volunteer
Ginnie	Shoemith	Suffolk Constabulary
Martin	Simmonds	Staff
Harriet	Simons	YMCA
Pavlenka	Small	
Ian	Stewart	Trustee
Cad	Taylor	ICM
Boogie	Thompson	Student trustee
Gerry	Toplis	Trustee
John	Troup	NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups
Rachel	Turner	WEA
Marianne	Walker	Staff
Danielle	Waller	Trustee
Sally	Webster	Refugee Council
Liz	Wood	Staff
Keith	Wright	Supporter
Angela		ICM

Apologies

Rev Nick	Atkins	Supporter
Jonathon	Baker	Translating and Interpreting Providers
Nicola	Beach	Suffolk County Council
Skhurte	Bejtullahu	Staff
Alan	Blackshaw	Trustee
Cynthia	Capey	Supporter
Rosie	Carter	SafeCiC
Fran	Ciotaki	Staff
Petra	Claxton	Volunteer
Melanie	Coffee	Cafcass
Sarah	Cole	Volunteer
Cllr Martin	Cook	Councillor
Tom	Daly	Migrant Help
Anne	Day	Supporter
Bobby	Dekerdrel	Volunteer
Mark	Ereira-Guyer	eg.consulting
Gaby	Ereira-Guyer	Art therapist
Simon	Goddard	Churches Together
Rev Paul	Graham	Clare Baptist Church
Susan	Hagley	Supporter
Shiona	Hardie	Member
Bishop Mike	Harrison	Bishop of Dunwich
Cllr Liz	Harsant	Councillor
Karen	Hopkinson	Volunteer
Trish	Hurley	Volunteer
Cllr Carole	Jones	Councillor
Susannah	Kennedy	Staff
Payman	Khobani	Volunteer
Janice	Leaver	Supporter
Beverley	Levy	Volunteer
Sue	Liddell	Member
Michael	Lumb	Volunteer
Janet	Martin	Supporter
Tanya	Mercer	ITV
Angela	Page	Member
John	Pelling	Supporter
Andrea	Pittock	Suffolk Community Foundation
Cordelia	Richman	Woodbridge Youth and Art Centre
Jonathan	Ripman	Suffolk Law Advice Centre
Susannah	Robirosa	Activ Gardens
Dave	Rowley	Supporter
Bernard	Segrave Daly	Member
Linda	Siu	Suffolk Mind
Bob	Tostevin	Supporter
Clem	Turner	Staff
Becky	Turrell	IBC Housing

Cynthia
Sue

Walsh
Young

Member
Supporter

1) Ian Stewart – Chair

Welcome and apologies

The Chair Ian Stewart (IS) introduced himself, the Charity Manager Rebecca Crerar (RC) and the Vice Chair and Treasurer Nick Feldman (NF). He welcomed and thanked people for attending including staff, volunteers, funders, clients and supporters.

2) A few words from Sandy Martin MP and Deputy Mayor Cllr Sarah Barber

Sandy Martin MP addressed the AGM and spoke about his experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees, and the unfair treatment that they often receive. Sandy referred to the “ruthless inefficiencies” of the Home Office related to the lack of training for its staff and an absence of joined up services.

Sandy stated that he was committed to seeking more support at a national level for asylum seekers and refugees through the opportunities the he has as an MP, as well as speaking up locally. Sandy congratulated and thanked Suffolk Refugee Support (SRS) for its work.

Deputy Mayor Cllr Sarah Barber acknowledged that everyone wants to feel safe and secure, and commended the work that SRS does through deeds not words.

3) Minutes of 2017 AGM

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed as a correct record (proposed by Alan Blackshaw and seconded by Lucy Kerry)

Annual Report 2017-2018

- **Chair’s Report** can be found on p.14 of the Annual Report.

IS provided an overview of the range of services that SRS provides including the Resettlement programme and support to young asylum seekers.

IS was pleased to announce that the expansion in staff, currently at 21, has led SRS to extend its premises through leasing a vacant commercial property next door from Ipswich Borough Council, which it is sharing with another local charity Ipswich Community Media (ICM). In recognition of the support that SRS has from various partners and volunteers to make this possible, SRS will be holding an official opening, details tbc.

IS reported that the Big Lottery funding is for the period 2017-20, the end of which is fast approaching. IS added that SRS has significantly diversified its services and income streams in recent years, and has hugely increased its income through individual donations.

IS thanked the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, funders, members and supporters for their continued commitment. IS referred attendees to his report for further details on the activities achieved during the last 12 months.

- **Charity Manager's report** can be found on p.1 of the Annual Report.

RC commented on the remarkable strength of the asylum seekers and refugees that SRS has the privilege to work with.

RC recounted some stories of particular clients she has supported, and talked about the kind of suffering that they encountered in their home countries, the realities that the staff come across frequently.

RC thanked the trustees, staff, volunteers, funders, members and supporters. RC gave a special thank you to the volunteers Bobby Dekerdrel, a previous volunteer at the International Women's Group, for her exceptional contribution to the work of SRS. RC thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their continued commitment and hands on support.

Susannah Kennedy, Resettlement Programme Manager, unfortunately unable to attend, wished to recognise and thank volunteers Mary Hope, a trained psychotherapist, for the supervision and support she has given to volunteers working with Syrian families, and Jutta Brueck for her extensive support to Syrian families.

Rebecca, Charity Manager, was thanked for her sterling work for SRS and its clients.

4) Treasurer's Report

NF outlined the current financial position of SRS and referred attendees to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018, highlighting in particular that £27,894 was received from individual donations. Nick stated that support from members, partners and the wider community is essential to ensuring the organisation continues.

NF thanked Independent Examiners, Foreshore Accountancy LLP and Ed Day who oversees SRS's accounting system.

The Annual Accounts 2017-2018 were accepted unanimously.

Independent Examiners Foreshore Accountancy LLP formally agreed for next year.

5) Election of Trustees to the Committee

The following new trustees were elected unanimously:

- Gerry Toplis
- Maggie Barradell

It was noted that Alan Blackshaw, a founder trustee of SRS, chair of the Human Resources sub-committee, and previous treasurer is stepping down. Attendees voted unanimously for Alan to be an 'honorary trustee'.

It was noted that Kate O'Driscoll, secretary and trustee, is also stepping down.

Alan and Kate were thanked for the support to the Board.

6) Introducing the staff

All staff present introduced themselves and their roles at SRS to attendees. RC thanked Marianne Walker for the outstanding coordination of the AGM.

7) Updates, successes and achievements.

Staff members Martin Simmonds and Jodi Peck talked about some of the many education successes of SRS clients.

Martin Simmonds interviewed an asylum seeker who has taken up a place at the University of East Anglia to study law, following support from SRS with voluntary work and applying for a bursary. The UEA, UoS, and the Soroptomists Ipswich were thanked for the work that they do with SRS to improve access to education and training.

A display of education success stories was also exhibited at the AGM.

8) Questions from the floor

Cllr Julian Gibbs asked a question regarding what financial planning is in place to mitigate the impact of the dependence on the Big Lottery funding.

IS and RC responded by outlining SRS has diversified its income streams and worked hard on increasing individual donations, however the funding pressures remain a challenge.

Stephen Atkinson asked a question regarding whether there is a possibility for asylum seekers and refugees to be housed in other areas of Suffolk such as the west of the county in Bury St Edmunds.

IS and MS stated that housing for asylum seekers is designated by national government. MS added that there are opportunities to house resettled families through the 'community sponsorship' initiative and private landlords.

9) Music by Ammar Awtani

Ammar Awtani sang a Syrian song. Ammar is also a chef and is currently setting up his own business.

10) Any Other Business

There were no items under AOB.

11) Refreshments

Kindly cooked and prepared by volunteers Fatima Al Hamadi, Dorson Abdullah, Rana Abou Alhawa and Ammar Awtani
