



LRSRG Minutes Thursday 26th April 2018
The Bell Inn, 7:30pm

Attending: Helen Tworkowski (West Devon Safe Haven); Roger Creagh-Osborne (vice-chair) Janet & Dave Rogerson; Karen Farrington; Ruth Christine; Joe Thompson; Terry Faull; Bill Glen; Sarah Gale; Jain Ritchie; Trevor Cook; Elspeth Nicholson; Alison Hardy; Nik Alatortsev; Sylvia Wright; Rebecca Brewer; Zoe Uglow

Apologies: Frances Tippett (Chair); Georgy Bellem, Jan Broom, Mike Warne

Reports & discussion:

Helen Tworkowski (West Devon Safe Haven) was introduced and told the story of accepting and supporting two refugee families in Tavistock and one in Okehampton. (A fourth family is arriving imminently)

These families were supported through Plymouth & Exeter, and the role of WDSH was to 'fill the gaps' left by the major support groups.

Instructions were initially to be 'removed' and 'distant', but it was quickly obvious that this approach wouldn't work. Now there is a much more 'get involved' approach and WhatsApp is used to communicate directly with families.

- Be really clear about what you want to do
- Support them as a 'family with benefits' (WDSH decided they weren't there to lavish them with money/gifts etc.)
- Set 'codes of conduct' - although this can lead to dispute

Volunteers need to be DBS checked

Recording contact through a closed FB group: each contact is written up to record interactions.

Language volunteers use Dropbox. Language support (two days a week in Plymouth) is backed up with 1-2 hours in Tavistock (They all want to learn English)

Great variety in families is to be expected (from poorest to professional)

Building trust & honesty is key; learn from each other.

Work towards establishing independence quickly.

Use buses as primary transport. Timetables and how to use.

Give each a card: "I am lost, please phone....."

They will all see uncensored posts from FB showing photos from Syria; family & friends and sometimes horrific incidents.

Spend our money on:

Clothes

More bedding

Solid footwear
WiFi in the house
WhatsApp
Phones
Bikes for children
Coffee pot & small cups
Dictionary
Wall calendar
TV licence??
Car seats
Freezer
Table football

Choose what you fund; Halal meat from Jasper's and from Plymouth; Turkish shops in Plymouth & Exeter are very important. Beware alcohol and gelatine in foods.

Communicate through WhatsApp & Google translate, but think of context and avoid idioms..!

(DK Arabic-English bilingual dictionary very useful - pictures)

Eat together - very important. Take time to build trust. Shared tasks will help.

English - starting to learn is really important; don't overwhelm with receptions, events etc. before they are comfortable.

Involve them in voluntary work - Oxfam, Rotary etc. - really important to give them a sense of purpose.

Driving lessons (essential?)

Contact with other families is really valuable and important.

Assist with health appointments, especially dental care.

Rebecca Brewer told the meeting about their building (the Resonance building in Newport) and their wish to make it available to our expected family(-ies). Large, warm, quiet, modern and ready - all were impressed! Frances & Angela are due to meet to decide on this in the next week or so.

Business:

Charity status; there is a delay - Bill to investigate

DBS checks for volunteers - Bill to investigate

Volunteer database update and questionnaire - Roger to instigate

Finances: £8597.75 in our account

The minimum target under the 'hybrid model' we are pursuing is £8-9,000.

Regular givers are needed: our bank details again are:

Bank Account name: Launceston Refugee Support Group

Account number: 24335460

Sort Code: 30-94-91

We accepted a cheque for £300 from the Town Council at an event last week.

Benefit Gig on 30th June:

Thomas Ford (local bluesman) will open

Lionhat Collective will headline

A band of Launceston College students will play, hopefully

After discussion with Lee Trenoweth (Lionhat) we should stick at three acts

Suggested ticket price: £5/£3 - through an agency

Contact all other volunteers - thank you, but next time? (Bill)

Date of next meeting: Thursday 24th May at The Bell