

*Nottingham and
Nottinghamshire
Refugee Forum*

**Annual Report
And Accounts**

2003

Chair's report

Over the last year the NNRF has continued to provide both support and a focus for advocacy and organisation with and on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Due to the hard work and commitment of our volunteers and workers [now plural], we have contributed significantly to the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into Nottingham. At the same time, we have strived to keep alive a critical voice unambiguously committed to the rights and well-being of asylum seekers and refugees, and able to articulate their experiences to a wider public.

We remain aware of the different pulls involved in being both a provider of support and a campaigning group. We have kept an open-door drop-in policy during our advice sessions, and have been conscious of the need to engage asylum seekers and refugees actively in our work. Asylum seekers and refugees continue to play an important role in the work of the Forum, as volunteers, committee members and community organisers. However, recognising that it is easier to talk about asylum seeker/refugee participation than to make it happen, we recently started the Refugee Volunteer Network, a monthly meeting of asylum seekers and refugees from different countries resident in Nottingham. This is an attempt to support the invaluable community support carried out by refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

We have maintained close links with the local media, councillors, and MPs, and with other voluntary and statutory organisations involved in working with asylum seekers and refugees. Likewise, we have continued to develop our links with community, trade union and faith groups. Building a network of support that reaches out beyond the formal structures of the NNRF remains a central aim of our work. Existing social networks – be they based in the home, the workplace, the neighbourhood, the school wherever – offer mechanisms through which the hysteria around asylum can be challenged.

The political climate remains deeply hostile to asylum seekers and refugees. We have witnessed the ongoing tabloid demonization of asylum seekers, and watched with dismay the government's attempt to marginalize and exclude asylum seekers from the life of our communities. Challenging a populist and racist media and political discourse on asylum takes up much of our energy.

In terms of our support function, currently the biggest issue we face is moving premises. Continued funding from the Community Fund is contingent on our finding premises accessible for disabled people. The move has to be completed by September, and a great deal of time is being given over to finding a suitable new base. However, we do expect to have moved and be fully operational by the September deadline.

This year we changed slightly the operation of the management committee. Full committee meetings are now held bi-monthly, with the 118 Committee, a sub-group responsible for the development and maintenance of the centre, meeting on alternate months. Other committees include the Funding Group

and the Staff Group. The former is responsible for getting the money in, and the latter for managing our workers. The Campaign Group continues to meet on a monthly basis.

We have been able to increase the numbers of workers at 118, as funding for our work has been more readily available. Joining Sam Azad, the centre co-ordinator, has been Pat Carey, as part-time centre administrator, and Larry McCloskey, as the City Council funded health, education and housing advice worker.

Rob Peutrell
NNRF Chair.

I took on task of NNRF membership secretary in the spring, little knowing what it would involve! Then, there were around 250 members on the database; now (June 22nd) there are 293. Of the 293, only around 70 have renewed their membership this year. I would be really grateful if the other 226 would do so - even if you qualify for free membership, a renewal helps us to keep the database up-to-date.

Standing order forms are available for anyone who prefers to pay by this means.

I am trying to develop the database as a resource for all aspects of the Forum's work, and to add email addresses, as this means you can be contacted more quickly and more cheaply. Currently we only have 58 email addresses, so please, if you have one, let us know.

Amongst our 293 members are 34 people who are professionally involved with refugees and asylum seekers, and 85 organisations. 41 members are part of the Community Volunteers Network, most of them from the various refugee communities that are, or are becoming, established in Nottingham.

Since taking over as Membership Secretary I have emailed the membership occasionally, and designed new membership forms and welcome letters. I hope that this will help members to stay more in touch with NNRF.

If you have any queries about membership, please contact me at the 118 Centre or at chriscookcann@moose-mail.com.

Chris Cann, Membership Secretary

**Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum
Report of the Treasurer to the 2003 AGM**

1. **Summary.** As can be seen from the attached figures, the finances of the Forum have undergone a fundamental change over the last three years. Our income has increased by a factor of 20, and our expenditure has also increased significantly as we have increased the services which we provide to refugees and asylum seekers. The nature of that income has also changed. In our first year, members and other supporters raised all of our income. In the last year the majority of our income was from funding bodies to enable us to carry out support services to refugees and asylum seekers.
2. The **unrestricted funds** of the Forum are now over £11,000. We can use these funds for any activity provided it is within our charitable objectives. We do however need to keep a substantial reserve of available funds because funding from outside bodies is not guaranteed for ever and a surplus such as we now have will give us some flexibility for the future.
3. **Restricted Funds** are provided to the Forum by outside bodies to enable us to carry out specific tasks within our overall objectives.
4. **Cash Balances.** After the year-end monies were transferred from the Cooperative bank to the CafCash account to maximise the interest that we will receive.
5. We have encountered difficulties with our previous auditors who have only just completed the audit of the 2001 accounts. Soon after the AGM, Community Accounting Plus will audit the accounts for the subsequent two years and we do not expect a repeat of earlier difficulties. Detailed audited accounts for the two years ending 31st March 2003 will be distributed to members as soon as they are completed.
6. I shall be retiring as Treasurer at the AGM and I wish my successor well for the future. I hope to continue to contribute to the work of the Forum in some way.

Bob Crane
Treasurer
30th June 2003

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum						
Financial Report for the year ended						
31st March 2003				Year ending		
				31/03/2003	31/03/2002	31/03/2001
				£	£	£
Income						
Unrestricted						
	Membership			335	445	235
	Donations			5736	5831	921
	Fundraising			42	0	1931
	Other			236	34	5
				6349	6310	3092
Restricted						
	Comic Relief			0	28000	0
	Nottingham City			33326	11619	0
	Community Fund			19250	0	0
	Other			14135	920	0
				66711	40539	0
Total Income				73060	46849	3092
Expenditure						
Unrestricted						
	Information dissemination			962	465	183
	Rent for premises			77	714	181
	Events			0	436	727
	Other			92	344	207
				1131	1959	1298
Restricted						
	118 Mansfield Road			14388	14565	0
	Personnel costs			17564	0	0
	Other			18007	15689	0
				49959	30254	0
Total Expenditure				51090	32213	1298
Surplus for the year						
	Unrestricted			5218	4351	1794
	Restricted			16752	10285	0
	Total			21970	14636	1794
Cash Balances at 31st March 2003				Cooperative Bank	33622	
				CAFCASH	6060	
					39682	
Reserves at 31st March 2003				General funds	11363	
				Restricted funds	27037	
				Other funds	1282	
					39682	

NNRF Campaign Group report

The campaign group has continued to meet monthly. We have been involved in activity around:

- the planned 'accommodation centre' at RAF Newton
- section 52 of the 2002 Asylum Act which threatened to leave many in-country asylum seekers destitute
- the deportation of asylum seekers
- the forced deportation of asylum seekers to Afghanistan and Iraq

Our report into the housing conditions of asylum seekers led to significant improvements in the practices of Capital Accommodation in Nottingham.

We organised two public meetings, including one on detention with Sarah Cutler, of Bail for Immigration Detainees, and one with anti-racist activist and barrister Frances Webber.

Sadly, we failed to stop the removal of the Daoud family to Spain, but remain in close contact with them, as well as with their legal representatives in Spain. Members of the *Friends of the Daoud Family* have visited the family in Spain.