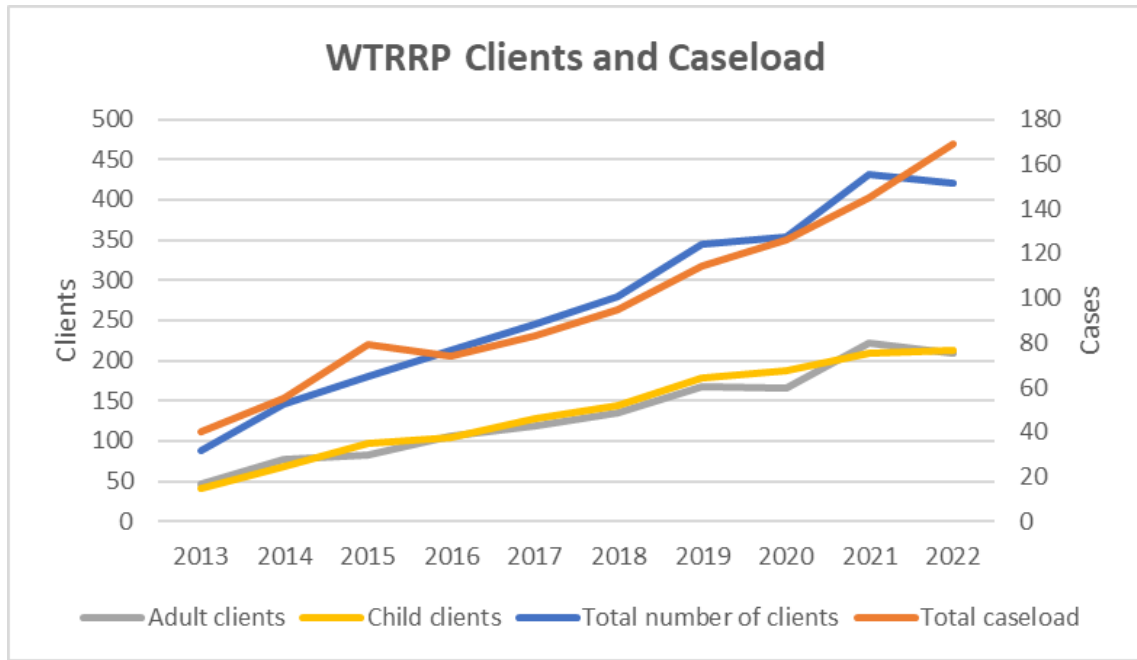


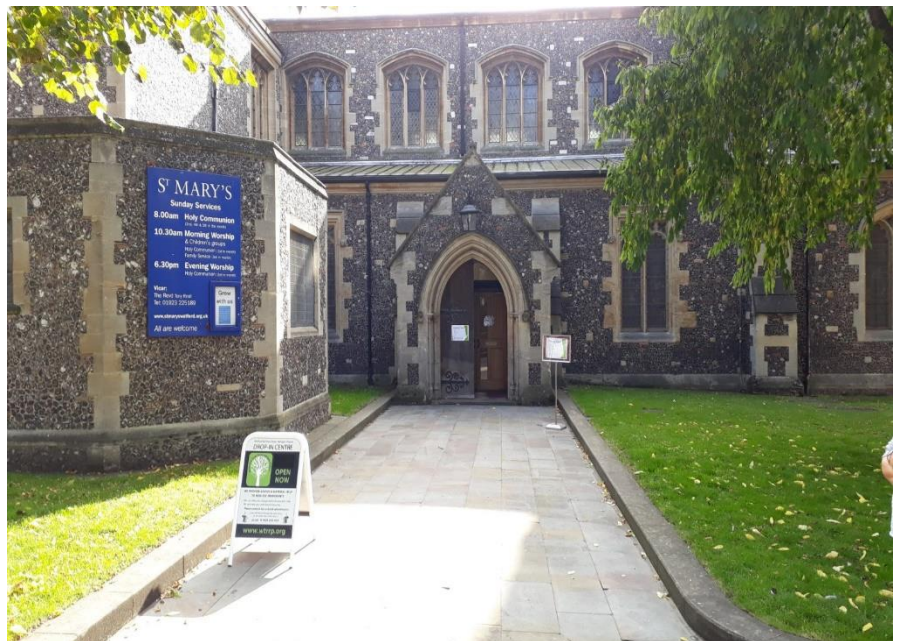
We're proud to have helped 421 people in need during the year



Drop-In Centre

Paul Tucker

Our Drop-In service provides an opportunity for refugees to come and receive support and advice. We meet twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesdays between 11 am and 1.00pm at St Mary’s church in the centre of Watford. Our volunteers provide a wide range of advice and liaise with other organisations to supplement this. On the fourth Tuesday Salma Khan, a solicitor from Pickup and Scott, holds general advice surgeries covering immigration issues.



We are also grateful to Sue Ellison, and other volunteers, who have supported clients on other Tuesdays and taken referrals enabling us to see many more than last year.

A key part of our service is to provide a listening ear and a sympathetic approach so that, whatever their circumstances, refugees have the confidence to share their story and explain their situation. Many struggle with the complex bureaucracies that they have to deal with and having someone with time and understanding can be invaluable for them. On the specifics, a large proportion come for help with immigration advice, including expert legal guidance (67%). This can entail leave to remain, visas, bringing a relative from abroad and queries with the Home Office and much more! They may also need help

with their benefit entitlement, English language (we provide ESOL lessons - see elsewhere in the report), where to obtain free food and to discuss housing difficulties. For many the initial issue can then evolve into others as the conversation moves on to wider concerns and their confidence in sharing their situation grows.

Our approach is to have an initial conversation and then take personal details on a referral form (with their consent) and this is used as the basis for considering how best they can be helped. This might mean a telephone call to a Government Department or voluntary body, linking up with another part of the Partnership (English language and food), referring to the solicitor for her next appointment at the Drop In, and eventually to the Case Review Team to consider what longer term support can be provided.

With arrangements for distributing food support changing over the year from actual food to vouchers and moving the distribution day to a Tuesday with a new social hub this has created good opportunities for the clients to move between this and the Drop In in a relatively seamless way.

**Breakdown of the main reasons clients accessed the Drop In
(Many come with multiple queries)
176 clients attended in all.**

Legal	Food	Housing	ESOL	Form filling	Clothing	Finance/Benefits	Health	Support	Money
118	21	30	13	7	1	17	3	19	10
67%	12%	17%	7%	4%	1%	10%	2%	11%	6%

We are grateful for the help we are given by a number of individuals and different groups. Salma Khan – our solicitor from Pickup and Scott – has provided an invaluable service providing surgery sessions on legal issues relating to immigration. We are also appreciative of joint working with St Mary’s church and the help and welcome we have received from Revd. Tony Rindl, the church wardens and other staff who have been so supportive. Beyond this we have been assisted by a number of different agencies, Citizens Advice Bureau, Three Rivers District Council, Migrant Help, Red Cross, Social Services and New Hope and more, all of whom have given their expert assistance willingly and we are very grateful to them.

Our thanks go to our volunteers who come from a wide background and whose commitment and professionalism continues to inspire. If you are interested in seeing what we do, then please do get in touch. 176 clients attended in all.

The Tuesday Hub and Gift Cards Team

John Gray

Another year and a change of name reflecting the evolution of our practical support for clients.

In 2020 it was called the Food Team, but we moved from giving out food in favour of supermarket gift cards (but continuing our provision of nappies and sanitary products) during 2021, thanks to a number of very generous grants received for this purpose.

We regularly get donations of clothes, books, toys and toiletries, so we started laying these out on tables every Tuesday in St Mary’s so that clients could choose what they

needed when they came to collect their gift cards, nappies and sanitary items. Assisted by a number of client volunteers, we also provide food and a social get-together.

We encourage all clients to come to St Mary's whenever they can, but for some we arrange deliveries as necessary to make sure that they receive the support we provide.

The socials proved to be a success and so we moved to committing to a social each Tuesday 11am to 1pm, including those when gift cards are not given out, and arranged with the church to use the lounge and kitchen.

Thus, we are able to invite all clients including those who don't qualify for gift cards, and to provide refreshments, crafts and games, and for children to play securely.

We regularly have visits from local service providers from the Watford & Three Rivers Council Healthy Hub team, including NHS health professionals such as a nurse, GP, health visitor as well as a You Matter mental health charity who provides hand massage. We also have a visitor from the Women's Centre and council representatives advising on housing, energy bills and other council services.

In December we had a very successful party in St Mary's with clients bringing food to share which they would have in their home countries, as well as the opportunity to sing along with Christmas carols.

A wonderful team of longer-term volunteers plus client volunteers keep this good work going.

We had sufficient money in grants last year to fund the gift cards, and in the Autumn were able to provide an additional £5 for each person for a limited time to help with the extreme pressures on incomes.

The grants team has worked tirelessly to give us these opportunities; very few people realise how much work is involved in applying for grants and in providing feedback for those we have been awarded.

Grants are becoming harder to obtain as they become scarcer and competition increases, so we are having to review the level of support which we can maintain over the remainder of 2023.

The number of households which we support with vouchers increases remorselessly so that by February 2023 it stood at 103!

A big thank you to all those who have supported this aspect of the work of WTRRP.

Education

Marie-Jo Churchill

WTRRP offers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) throughout the year. Most of our clients are unable to access classes at the local colleges due to their immigration status or special needs. WTRRP's ESOL lessons are free, material and photocopies are provided.

Our aim is to develop fluency and confidence in the language, offer practical help tailored to refugees (such as help with CV, job applications, visiting public services, an understanding of the UK culture and practical support with citizenship tests).

Students are assessed and placed in a group according to their level. Many of our students have lived through traumatic experiences and we are constantly mindful that we are dealing with vulnerable people.

In 2022 we opened a new beginners' group. We were also able to offer face to face literacy help on an individual basis. We are happy to welcome a new teacher to our team, Hilary Phillips, who will start in March 2023. We will have 5 teachers dedicated to helping students with English.

The groups at the end of 2022 were as follows:

- Beginner I, 3 students with Annabel Foley – Hilary Phillips due to take over this group in March (face to face)
- Beginners II, 8 students, with Annabel Foley (face to face)
- Pre-Intermediate, 9 students, with Marie-Jo Churchill (face to face)
- Intermediate, 6 students, with Yvonne Zane (on Zoom)
- Advanced, 6 students, with Marie-Jo Churchill (on Zoom)
- One-to-one Adult Literacy, 2 students, with Marie-Jo Churchill (face to face)
- Christine Lowe is also offering one to one tuition and cover if and when needed (on Zoom)

This makes a total of 31 students – 2 students attend two groups. This is a percentage increase over 3 years of more than 150% which is above pre-pandemic level. We are continually assessing new students therefore figures for the 2023 academic year should be higher.

Client cases and our Case Review process

Tony Rindl

Our Case Review Team continued to meet approximately every two months to review the clients in our caseload and any new clients referred from the Drop-In Centre. The team collects updates from all the befrienders, and after discussion, makes recommendations to the Committee where financial or other help is required.

The committee comprised Tony Rindl (Chair), Sue Ellison (Casework Coordinator), John Gray, and legal specialist Paulene Gandhi.

In the current year up to January 2023 there were 169 active cases (in 2022 we reported on 145 active cases). During the year we welcomed 61 new clients and discharged 41 clients.

Our client group comprised 50 families or individuals from Ghana (the largest number), 15 from Iran, 11 from Nigeria, 11 from Afghanistan, 9 from Albania and the rest mostly from across Africa, the middle East and the Indian subcontinent. There are at least 37 different nationalities represented amongst our clients.

Typically, clients make initial contact with us through the Drop-In Centre, where they request advice or ongoing support, which could include food boxes, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, legal and financial advice and befriending.

The team meets to share information, discuss, and where possible, resolve problems and dilemmas that clients are encountering and make financial requests to the Committee. We prioritise the requirements of those newly referred, usually from the Drop-In Centre, and those we know to be in particular difficulty. However we make sure everyone is discussed at every second meeting. Thus, we aim to discuss around 70 cases in each meeting.

The issues discussed are many and varied. Many clients are seeking financial help and we offer financial support towards Leave to Remain applications, which continue to increase in cost each year. Where applicable we make recommendations to WTRRP's Committee to make financial contributions for Home Office application and NHS fees. (An applicant for Leave to Remain has to pay a fee of £1,560 in total for possible NHS use – the so called 'Immigration Health Surcharge' – for typically 2½ years, in addition to the application fee – currently £1,000 in most cases. They also have to pay their own solicitor's fees, and possibly also the cost for fingerprinting and photos, costing up to £300 or more.)

The Case Review Team considers the resources that we can provide and what else may be needed. Alongside talking about the inevitable housing and Leave to Remain crises that our clients face in an increasingly hostile environment, we review whether they are collecting their food parcels or attending ESOL classes and make sure we follow up with those who have not been in touch.

In addition to WTRRP's own resources, we work with, and refer clients to, other organisations in the area who can help with particular needs, including New Hope, Stanborough Welfare Centre, the Red Cross Refugee Centre in Luton, Citizens' Advice, debt counselling organisations, as well as the Social Services and other statutory organisations.

We remain aware that a problem brought by a client can often be just the tip of the iceberg, and that clients may be fearful and need to feel they can trust us in order to be open about the extent of their needs. A common problem is with landlords, making our clients fearful that they will be made homeless. Others have complicated financial or family difficulties and need the expertise of our caseworkers and befrienders to extricate themselves and direct them to the appropriate organisation. We have been concerned about the risk of us being seen as intimidating, especially as some of our clients are in constant fear of deportation. So, we aim always to be responsive and work alongside clients at their own pace.

We are always on the lookout for more volunteers to act as befrienders and caseworkers whereby we can be more attentive to the on-going needs of our clients.

Our social programme

In 2022 we were able to resume some of our social events, especially the Tuesday hub social events described above.

In August we held a party in Cassiobury Park for our clients, organised by Musarut Mukadam and Sophie Edwards. Around 40 clients with their families were able to join us, and the weather held up quite well!

We were able to make and distribute Christmas hampers to **78 families** in December. Musarut Mukadam, Sophie Edwards and Tim Whittaker led this activity.

The hampers contained Christmas crackers and decorations, edible treats and presents for each family member, appropriate to age and gender. These were provided by the generosity of a number of organisations:

St Luke's church donated items for, and packed, 40 of these hampers for us to distribute: our huge thanks to Caroline Tearle and her team of Guides and others.

Stanborough Park church in their annual Toy Service donated a totally amazing selection and quantity of presents for all ages: we are likewise hugely grateful to Pat Walton and the members of the church for their generosity.



St Mary's church kindly loaned premises, and around 18 volunteers arranged and packed the balance of the hampers (see picture), with a similar number delivering to our clients.

Grants Team

Peter Howard

In 2022, the Grants Team (Mick Hayter, Peter Howard, Sarah Myers and Peter Myers) secured grants for the charity totalling £78,356.

The grants team are making every effort to ensure that in 2023 WTRRP has enough money from grants to provide supermarket vouchers, school uniforms, sports kit and subscriptions, period products and nappies. In addition, we are applying for continuing funding for the Office Manager post and for a Casework Coordinator post (both including associated office costs). Grants in 2022 were very generously provided by the following:

Super market vouchers, nappies and sanitary products

Watford Food Bank	£5,000
Watford & Three Rivers Trust	£9,700
HCF Herts Household Support Grant	£5,000
Society of the Holy Child Jesus	£15,000
Cooperative supermarket	£1,836
Arnold Clark	£1,000
The Souter Foundation	£2,000
Tesco supermarket	£1,500

School uniforms and sports kit & subscriptions

Hertfordshire County Councillors Mark Watkin, Asif Khan, Nigel Bell, Steve Cavinder, Stephen Giles-Medhurst and Tim Williams	£3,200
HCF Small grant	£3,720
LocalGiving Magic Little Grant	£500
ASDA supermarket	£1,500

Digital equipment (laptops, etc.)

Watford & Three Rivers Trust	£1,320
Crowdfunder	£1,050

Learning to drive

HCF Small Grant	£1,280
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Casework coordinator (see What's Next section)

HCF Building Life Chances	£10,000
Mbili Foundation	£6,000
Allen Lane	£9,000

Here are some testimonials about the difference these grants have made:

Food and nappies:

'The Sainsbury vouchers that I receive every month are helping me and my family a lot. We really appreciate it, God bless you all.'

A Ghanaian mother of four boys. Her and her partner work long hours as cleaners to support their family.

Laptops/Chromebooks:

'The laptop helped my mum with understanding, including the videos she watched for English. She finds the bigger screen very helpful as she can't see very tiny on the phone. She also open other programs related to health and medical issues, and it is easy to use and write. She is happy about it and thank you for the help!'

School uniforms:

'I can ask you any questions, I thank God that I have found you and WTRRP.'

'Most free classes only offer one basic level in English, so it is really helpful to be in a more challenging level and I would like to continue to study with you.'

ESOL classes:

'I can ask you any questions, I thank God that I have found you and WTRRP.'

'Most free classes only offer one basic level in English, so it is really helpful to be in a more challenging level and I would like to continue to study with you.'

Football club kit and subscriptions:

'Football is fun and belonging to a team is a route to being a famous footballer and joining a top club. I enjoy the competition, teamwork, playing other teams, learning skills and respect for refs., coaches and other players.'

Our Office Manager and our Volunteers *Seema Agnihotri / Yifan Wang*

We are pleased to have a total of 81 active volunteers fully signed up (and more than 10 were in the process of joining in the first quarter of 2023), which is excellent news. Most of our volunteers are either befrienders or on the rota for the Drop-In Centre. We are also very privileged that several of our former clients have become volunteers, often being able to provide insights and experience that can really help current clients. As a result, we have actively started to encourage suitable clients to become volunteers through the Social Hub.

Some highlights from last year on the recruitment side: Jakki Barber has joined us in the Social Media team to refresh our social media accounts as well as continuing the WTRRP Newsletter to ensure everyone in the organisation is up to date with what we are doing. Sophie Edwards and Musarat Mukadam have taken on the Event Coordinator role and will be organising our future events. Mark Davies, Paras Pun and Bernard Steiner have joined WTRRP as IT experts and will be supporting the organisation and clients on IT related issues.

We have also resumed face-to-face volunteer social gatherings and knowledge sharing sessions in the evenings after the Covid lockdowns. Since then we've had Paulene Gandhi to enlighten us on the immigration and asylum processes; ThirtyOne Eight provided online safeguarding training for all volunteers and enlightened us on what signs to look for and what to do if a client is in distress; Peter Dean from the Credit Union educated us on finance tips for our clients especially around savings and access to loans; last but not least, Jonny Issacs from Citizens Advice Bureau gave us insightful tips on how to manage utility bills in the current cost of living crisis. In addition, we've had two social gatherings for volunteers in the summer and at the end of the year to show our appreciation for all our volunteers. We would also like to express gratitude to Quakers for providing the venue for many of our meetings and gatherings.

On top of the face-to-face meetings, we have also initiated a WhatsApp group where volunteers can share their knowledge on specific issues that may help to our clients; request for any help from the other volunteers. So far, we have 28 active members on the group. If you would like to be on this group, please reach out to Seema Agnihotri, Yifan Wang or Cat Kilgannon.

Seema Agnihotri and Yifan Wang continue their role as volunteer coordinators, and are managing our recruitment of new volunteers, running regular meetings for us all to share experience and thoughts, and working with the other coordinators to allocate the right people to all the work that WTRRP carries out.

We would also like to give a special thanks for Paul Shaw who is stepping down as the WTRRP Treasurer. Over many years, Paul has been a cornerstone to WTRRP as his attention to detail has really helped the organisation to grow successfully. We wish Paul the best in any future endeavours!

Finally, if you have joined us recently, we would like to say a big welcome and for those who have been with us for longer, thank you for your support and contribution over the years!

Volunteering with WTRRP is incredibly rewarding and makes a real difference to people's lives – and probably your own too. If you're interested in joining us, please get in touch by emailing admin@wtrrp.org.uk – we would love to hear from you!

Our committee and trustees

These committee members served with WTRRP since 1 January 2022 unless otherwise stated, and wish to stand for re-election at the AGM:

Yifan Wang <i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	*Paul Shaw <i>Interim Treasurer, but retiring</i>
*Tony Rindl	*Tim Whittaker <i>Chair</i>
Seema Agnihotri <i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Laurence Blake <i>Secretary (since Dec. 2022)</i>
Tinku Mitra	Fionnuala Smith

Committee members marked with * are currently Trustees.

Finances for 2022

Paul Shaw

Our finances remain in good health and in the year ended 31 December 2022 we recorded a surplus of £16,877 compared with a surplus of £7,723 in 2021. This has all been due to the wonderful efforts of our grants team who brought in new income of £86,063 an increase of £34,689 over the 2021 figure. This has enabled us to increase our contributions towards client fees by £9,363 to £21,197 and to continue to employ our part time administrator, Cat Kilgannon, which really helps in the smooth running of the organisation.

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019
Income				
Unrestricted income	25,754	46,692	46,789	49,305
Restricted income	86,063	49,374	48,434	20,424
Total Income	111,817	96,066	95,223	69,729
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	70,276	68,569	59,666	37,356
Management of the Partnership	24,664	19,774	8,508	4,938
Total Expenditure	94,940	88,343	68,174	42,294
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year				
	£16,877	£7,723	£27,049	£27,435

Income

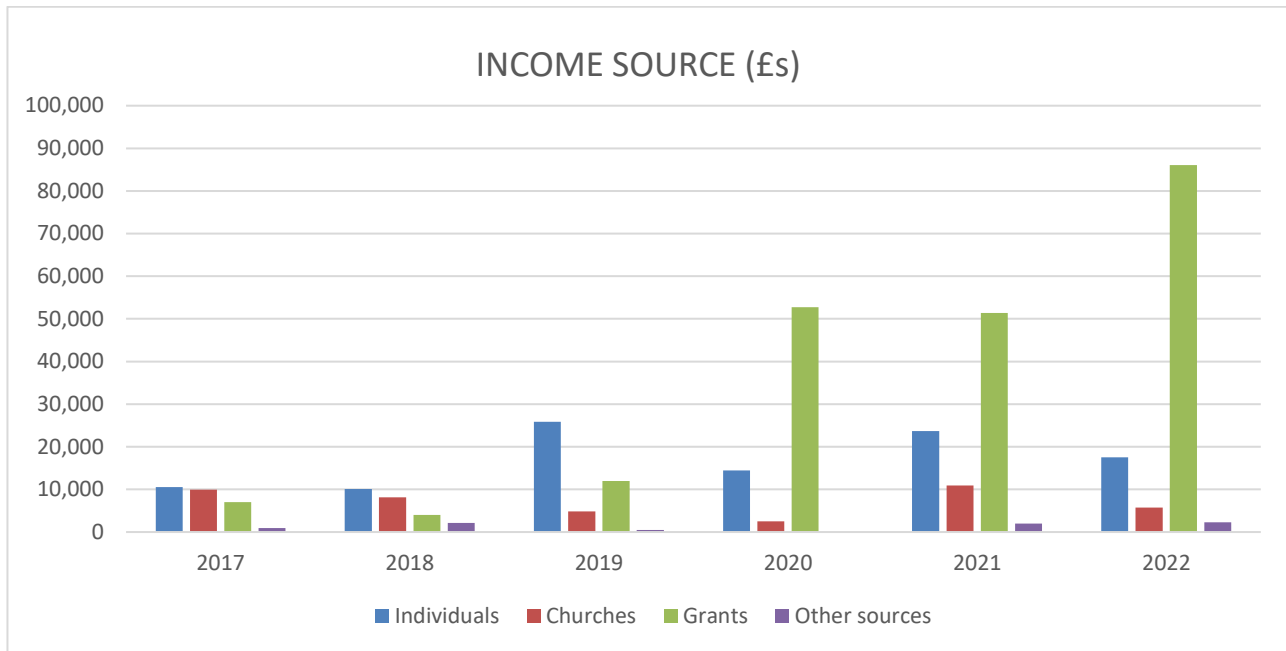
The income for the year of £111,817 is an increase of £23,929 (27%) on the previous year's figure (excluding food donations of £8,178) of £87,888.

Restricted funds represent funds received by the Charity that can only be used for the purpose agreed with the donor. This year we received grants from 15 different organisations, and these are listed in the statutory accounts as well as in the report from the grants team.

The unrestricted income of £25,754 was £20,938 lower than the previous year's figure of £46,692. Part of this decrease is due to the fact that with the rise in grants received to provide food or food vouchers to clients we stopped using food from Watford Food Bank which in 2021 was valued at £8,178. In addition, donations from both individuals and churches are down, no doubt as a result of the worsening financial situation. We received donations of £1,324 from Edge Grove School and £1,000 from Rotary Club of West Watford.

The income from individuals includes a sum of £1,878 being the amount of gift aid we have been able to reclaim from the tax authorities. We would like to thank the individual donors (particularly those who have continued to make donations by standing order) and the various local churches that continue to support the Partnership despite the difficult financial situation.

Below is a graph that shows our sources of income since 2017:



Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year was £94,940 compared with £80,165 (excluding £8,178 being the value of food donations) being a 18% increase.

52% (2021 60%) of our expenditure was on befriending which includes the provision of food and toiletries/food vouchers, laptops to help children with their education, the provision of school uniforms, help with driving lessons, providing parties and activities for clients and help with travel and other costs. 22% (2021 15%) on contributions towards legal costs and NHS and Home Office fees and 26% (2021 2%) on administration expenses which includes the cost of our administrator.

A detailed breakdown of our expenditure is in the statutory accounts on our website.

What's next?

Tim Whittaker

We are very pleased that our normal operation had again become possible in 2022, after the long winter of Covid19 restrictions and precautions. In particular, our Drop-In is back in full action twice a month, and our Tuesday Hub social get-together now runs every week. With our ever-increasing number of clients, the work of our volunteers who carry out casework for them has increased considerably, with meetings at the Tuesday Hub and elsewhere to assist with a great range of topics.

Our plans for 2023 include recruitment of a professional casework coordinator, to help us in the management and regular review of our case-load, expected to approach 200 separate cases this coming year. In addition, we are in the process of updating our case records and client information into a new coordinated system, which should reduce our admin load.

In April 2022 the **Nationality and Border Act** entered law. Its provisions relating to refugees and the asylum system focus heavily on penalising refugees who travel to the UK through 'irregular' means. But actually there are no 'regular' means to provide safe routes to the UK for people wishing to seek protection here (except for Ukraine at the

moment), which means that almost everyone is ‘irregular’ and potentially liable to summary deportation.

The Government says that two of its key objectives for the Act are to break up smuggling gangs, while also increasing ‘safe and legal routes’ for refugees to reach the UK. Unfortunately, nothing in the Act addresses either of these.

As we write, the **Illegal Migration Bill** is being debated in Parliament, with the aim of stopping people from crossing the Channel in small boats. If passed, it will mean that anyone who arrives irregularly into the UK will have their asylum claim deemed ‘inadmissible,’ meaning that the Home Office won’t even consider their claim. They could be detained indefinitely and then removed either to their original country or to a ‘safe third country.’

WTRRP itself does not campaign on these issues: it aims to assist affected individuals and families with support, vital items and fees. But if you are interested in the bigger picture, please search online for the Refugee Council, the UNHCR or for information about the two pieces of legislation above.

At the same time, we always need more volunteers for all activities, including befriending, helping with casework, helping with the support and entertainment of our clients in many ways – please see next page. So please continue to bear us in mind if you have any time or other assets that might help us.

Thank you! **See you at the AGM – we promise you an interesting evening.**

Trustee Approval

The Trustees approved this Annual Report at a meeting on < >, and it was signed on their behalf by Tim Whittaker as Chair.

We continue to need these Volunteers

If you are interested in one of the activities mentioned in this report, or in the following roles – or if you know someone who might be interested – please get in touch with one of the WTRRP coordinators or committee members. Alternatively, Cat will also be able to help you: admin@wtrrp.org.uk

Caseworkers

This role is for people who already have some previous experience in people facing roles. We are looking for people who have empathy, are good listeners and are non-judgemental. You will be supporting a small number of clients who have more complex needs and require extra support to get through difficult situations. We are looking for people who have two to four hours a week to spare. You will be offered support in this role by the Partnership. Examples of casework include:

- Providing moral support in meetings and making sure the client understands.
- Making phone calls or supporting a client to make calls.
- Helping with form filling and letter writing
- Working with clients on solutions to more complex issues e.g. debt.

Drop-In Centre Volunteers

Volunteering at the Drop-in Centre provides an opportunity for you to help our refugee clients with any issues they might have. We have two sessions a month (on the second and fourth Tuesdays) between 11.00 and 1.00pm at St Mary's church in the High Street, Watford, and we generally help with

- Filling in forms and interpreting official document
- Assistance with finding appropriate housing
- Access to the charity's other services, such as regular food parcels and free English classes.

Befrienders

Befrienders offer friendship and practical support to clients who can be isolated or new to the area of Watford and Three Rivers. You will need to have an hour or two a week to spare

Some Key Responsibilities Include:

- Keeping in touch regularly and maybe going for a coffee or a walk.
- Helping clients to understand everyday letters e.g. utility bills
- Helping to make appointments for free food/clothing/GP.

Fundraisers

Our fundraising team would very much appreciate more people, to help with both grant applications and public fundraising campaigns. We have had considerable success in both, and would like to increase amounts raised so that we can assist our clients more.

If you are able to support us financially, please visit <https://wtrrp.org.uk/donate> and follow the links, or contact us directly for more details. Thank you!



Registered Charity Number 1162226

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Watford WD18 0EG

Phone: 01923 252434

Email: admin@wtrrp.org.uk

You can also find this Annual Report online at www.wtrrp.org.uk

If you received this Annual Report by post, and can help us save money and carbon by receiving it by email, please let us know by emailing us at admin@wtrrp.org.uk

Please also let us know if we have sent it in error, or if you wish to stop receiving it