

# Harehills English Language Project

Registered Charity number 1138199

[help-esol.org.uk](http://help-esol.org.uk)



## ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



Supported by



The **Hilden** Charitable Fund

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# Chair's report

*We offer a safe, welcoming, supportive and caring environment where people can feel valued as they learn English.*

Like many other third sector charities, our project has experienced a very bumpy year due to Covid-19 which forced us to go into lockdown on 27 February 2020, 2 weeks before the official government lockdown. As trustees, we took this decision to safeguard the health of our learners who mainly come from the BAME communities and that of our volunteer tutors who are mainly retired teachers aged 70+.

Our project, Harehills English Language Project (H.E.L.P), which began in 2006, is based in Harehills, Leeds 8 which is a vibrant, multi-cultural community but is not without its problems of high unemployment with great competition for the few jobs available, drug addiction and anti-social behaviour. Many families find themselves on the margins of society with little or no income, living on benefits and suffering from isolation and loneliness. Despite there being deprivation there is a richness and diversity within the community. Also, there is a willingness of many to integrate with British society and culture whilst retaining their own unique cultural identity. In the area, many third sector charities work together in harmony. People are friendly and happy to engage with charities and support agencies and have a thirst for learning and a real desire to engage in educational classes leading to changes in aspirations and goals. Through our English (ESOL) project H.E.L.P provides education, social and cultural activities to improve the well-being and confidence of learners and to support inter-cultural harmony. We offer a safe, welcoming, supportive and caring environment where learners, who often feel marginalised because of their experiences and journeys so far, can feel valued as they learn English. Our learners come from over 40 countries world-wide and therefore we consider ourselves to be a microcosm of the world. Most of our learners come to us on the recommendation of their friends, but we also take referrals from PAFRAS, LASSN, Touchstone, local housing associations, those working on behalf of job seekers and from the websites advertising English classes. Our students are mainly, but not entirely, asylum seekers and refugees. In 2010 the project became a registered charity, number 1138199.

Over the past 14 years since our inception, we have experienced many changes as our project has grown and developed, but until early 2020 nothing like the seismic shift brought about by Covid-19. At our emergency Trustees' meeting on 27 February, we took note of the rapid development in Europe of what was to become a pandemic, and bearing in mind that it was our policy to accept registrations from new arrivals into the country, we reluctantly decided to contact our learners and put classes on hold until after the Easter break to safeguard all involved in the project. Our Project Leader, Nick Thomas, was given the task of contacting all those registered with us and our volunteers to inform them of our decision and to assure them of our pastoral support. It was also decided that he would prepare a mail shot of resources at the appropriate level for each of our learners. During the ensuing weeks as the number of infections in the country rose, we realised that the project was likely to be closed to face-to-face teaching for much longer than we thought at first.

The breakthrough came on 9 April when I was contacted by Leeds Community Foundation (LCF) and asked whether we would like to apply for a Resilience Grant to enable our project to continue working. After discussions with the Trustees and our Project Leader, it was decided to make an application to LCF which would allow us to continue to employ our paid key staff and to look at innovative ways of continuing to teach English, including teaching online, and through engaging an IT Consultant to develop a new website as a platform for distance teaching and learning. Regular mail shots of resources would also continue. We were informed on 1 May that our application had been successful and that a one-off grant of £7,013.40 had been transferred to our bank account to cover our costs for a period ending on 24 August.

The work of our project to be carried out over this time of lockdown fell hugely to Nick, who worked tirelessly, and for more hours than we were able to pay him, to ensure that the activities listed in our application were carried out. These included keeping in contact with as many of our learners as possible by preparing and mailing out Home Study Support Packs, working alongside and supporting Naghmeh Effat, one of our previous learners, who had the expertise to develop a new website, contacting volunteer tutors who were prepared to work online with learners and supporting them with teaching resources, liaising with Almaz Woldemichael and Hidat Gebremedhin, our crèche leaders who were tasked with making masks, and above all paying our staff on a weekly or monthly

basis. Throughout the period of the Resilience Grant, Nick and I liaised frequently to discuss progress and the Trustees met virtually and regularly by Skype Business. Additionally, we worked to update and alter Jimbo's, another LCF administered grant, which would allow us to double the Project Leader's hours and also allow us to continue paying our IT consultant to regularly update and upload teaching resources and take care of our website. The Hilden Trust, whose grant had financed the crèche from the beginning of the academic year, kindly agreed that we could continue to pay our key crèche workers from their funds and to employ them making masks for our learners and for other local charities. Before the end of the financial year, the Trustees and Project Leader reviewed the progress which had taken place during the period of the Resilience Grant and it was agreed that the provision of the website and online teaching now provided a springboard for our learners to continue to access their English classes until such times that we are able to offer face-to-face teaching again. It was also agreed that the pastoral support of learners would continue through social media and telephone contact.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we have been unable to arrange our usual annual seaside visit for our learners and their families and for our thank you meal out for our volunteers and staff, kindly financed through a grant from Wade's Charity.

As Trustees, we owe a debt of gratitude to LCF for giving us the opportunity to apply for the Resilience Grant, but most of all we wish to thank our key workers: Nick our Project Leader, Naghmeh our IT Consultant, Almaz our Crèche Manager and Hidat her Deputy for all their hard work over the months of lockdown and also our volunteer tutors who have been willing to move to teaching online. It has been an unprecedented and very difficult time, but we have been able to make the most of it and intend to continue to develop our website and online teaching until it is safe to restart face-to-face classes.

At the end of the period of our Resilience Grant a report was sent to LCF outlining the ways in which we spent the allocated £7,013.40:

**Resilience Grant expenses**

	<b>Please give further detail about what you spent this on</b>	<b>Amount spent (£)</b>
<b>Staff costs</b>	Project leader, IT Consultant, Key Crèche Workers' salaries	6,207.04
<b>Volunteer costs</b>	For example, were these for travel? For expenses?	N/A
<b>Operational, activity costs</b>	A4 Paper & envelopes for Home Study Support Packs, photocopying and postage Website costs	733.21
<b>Office, Overhead, Premises Costs</b>	PPE including hand sanitizer, gloves and cleaning products	107.16
<b>Capital costs</b>	For example, were these for remote working such as laptops, tablets, mobile phones?	N/A
<b>Other</b>	Please explain what these 'other' costs were	

<b>Total awarded</b>	<b>£7,013.40</b>
<b>Total spent</b>	<b>£7,436.45</b>

The money was spent as intended. However, a decision was made to continue to pay and retain key staff over the summer to allow us to continue with provision of services which resulted in a slight overspend in funds provided by the grant, but was covered in part by previous grants that had been secured for the 2019-20 academic year.

Our treasurer, Michael Blake, continued to provide an Income and Expenditure report each month whilst keeping the Resilience Grant separate from our regular accounts within which there was very little movement from April onwards.

### **Regular Accounts from 1 September 2019 – 30 April 2020**

For the sake of clarity, we divided our budget into three sections:

**Teaching Resources** – including Project Leader’s sessional payments; insurance; education and leisure trips; resources and training.

**Crèche costs** – including crèche and deputy crèche managers’ sessional payments; volunteer travel expense; training and DBS checks.

**Accommodation costs** – room hire at both churches.

**Teaching Resources:** Since our classes and crèche places are free for our students, we rely heavily on grants to meet our financial commitments: room hire and insurance for St Aidan’s and Trinity, remuneration for our Project Leader, Crèche Manager and her Deputy, volunteer bus fares, DBS checks, and capital expenditure including stationery and refreshments. However, due to the current financial climate, grants for third sector charities have become more difficult to access. Fortunately, we received £2280 from regular Standing Orders, £1,148.33 from HMRC Gift Aid Receipts and £712.86 from donations and fundraising. Additionally, we received the following grants: £4,000 from the Sisters of the Cross and Passion for rents for St Aidan’s and Trinity United Churches, £5,000 from the Hilden Charitable Trust for the running of the crèche, and £2,500 from the Yapp Charitable Trust. Sessional payments up to the end of April 2020 for the Project Leader came from the final payment of a 3-year grant of £2,500 from the Yapp Charitable Trust, and £3,708 from a LCF Jimbo grant: both ring-fenced. Due to Covid-19, Zurich delayed the annual insurance renewal until after the end of the academic year, making it renewable in September 2020. Resources including stationery, board markers, exercise books etc were mainly covered by a private donor.

**Crèche Costs:** Sessional payments for the Crèche Manager and her Deputy totalling £2,567.70, were covered until the end of April 2020 by a ring-fenced grant from the Hilden Charitable trust and from May to August by the Resilience Grant administered by LCF. Crèche volunteer travel expenses, training and DBS checks estimated at £1,500, were also covered by the Hilden grant, ring-fenced for the crèche.

**Accommodation Costs:** Until our classes closed in February 2020 due to Covid-19, these were covered entirely by a ring-fenced grant from the Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

Any shortfalls in funding to cover training and teaching resources were covered by GiftAid receipts, fundraising, including a coffee morning at Roundhay Methodist Church, and a donation from Whixley and Green Hammerton PCC. Throughout the year, our dedicated fundraising group met on a regular basis seeking and applying for funding for the next academic year.

In what has been a difficult and unprecedented year due to the pandemic, our special thanks go once again to all those who give their time and talents to the project: for the invaluable support of our Project Leader who has worked tirelessly to deliver our aims and objectives over the lockdown period, to our Volunteer Tutors, Crèche Manager and Deputy Crèche Manager and their volunteers, to Administrative Volunteers, the Management Committee, the Trustees and to St Aidan's and Trinity United Churches who allow us to hold classes in their buildings at a subsidised rent. We feel fortunate in being the recipients of a Resilience Grant which has enabled us to branch out into new and innovative ways of delivering our project and caring for the many people who come to us to learn English and for pastoral support. Last, but not least, thanks go to Michael Blake our treasurer and to Malcolm Wilson, who has kindly been our Independent Examiner for HELP's accounts over the past three academic years. We very much appreciate all the work they have done on our behalf.

Over the 14 years of our project, we have worked with many learners and it has been a great joy to see the positive changes in their lives. From being quiet and withdrawn, many are now living successfully and independently within their local community. Many were suffering from trauma when they joined us but in time, they began to feel more confident, secure and willing to use English knowing that they would receive encouragement and affirmation. Some who have come through our

classes are now volunteering or have paid work. Learners look forward to our twice weekly classes which are often places of laughter. For some of our parents who use our crèche facilities, it may be the first time they have accessed education. Being able to leave their children in a secure, safe environment helps them to relax and enjoy learning. The children too are not only being looked after but are also learning to play together and to learn English as well as developing their mother-tongue. Having been with us for a while, many of our intermediate and advanced students feel able to become more involved in the workings of our project by becoming members of the Management Team, joining other classes available to them in Leeds and/or offering as volunteers. For many this is preparation for life in the UK and the workplace and is something to add to their CV.

As our project grows and develops, we continue to assess how we might best serve those who come to us week by week for much needed free English classes, free childcare and for pastoral support. At the beginning of our fifteenth year of teaching ESOL, we look forward with confidence to the time when we are able to return to face-to-face teaching and until then will continue to support our learners online and through mailed resources.

*Rev'd Diana Zanker*

*Chair of Trustees*

*October 2020*

# Trustees' Report

## *Personnel*

There were some changes in the composition of the Trustees during the 2019-20 year. Rev Mark Harwood retired, due to his relocating to the north west of England. He will be sadly missed as a trustee and we thank him for his input and for his hospitality in hosting our meetings at Trinity United Church. We wish him well in the new phase of his ministry. Additionally, we appointed and welcomed Alasdair Fraser, one of our fundraising group, as a Trustee. We are grateful to Alasdair for agreeing to our invitation.

A sub-committee of the Trustees, Diana Zanker, Alasdair Fraser, Sue Noble and David Noble along with Gill Gibbons (CEO PACE) spent a considerable time throughout the year on grant applications and fund raising. David Noble kindly agreed to continue to administer GiftAid applications.

The largest change came with the advent of Covid-19, when at an emergency meeting of the Trustees, it was decided to suspend face-to-face classes for a few weeks. As the pandemic developed, this became a much longer period than anticipated and with the help of a Resilience grant administered by Leeds Community Foundation, we were able to continue to pay our staff throughout the lockdown period: our Project Leader to organise online one-to-one classes and prepare resources for mail shots to learners, an IT Consultant to finish our website and upload resources, and our Crèche Manager and Deputy to make masks. throughout the summer. Through this unprecedented change we were able to establish a new and innovative way of supporting and working with our learners.

## *Classes*

A range of classes from Pre-Beginners to Upper-Intermediate was offered. There were 237 learners registered during the year, with a typical weekly number of around 90 in attendance. The Crèche continued to play an invaluable role in enabling learners with young children to attend classes.

Plans were made for the introduction of Fire Drills in St Aidan's and Trinity United churches.

## *Policies and Procedures*

It was noted that a review of our Data Protection Policy was on-going. Arrangements made to re-introduce Gift Aid were put in place and overseen by David Noble.

### *Fund-Raising and Finance*

Trustees' work in these fields is covered elsewhere in this Annual Report.

### *Thanks and Appreciation*

The Trustees want to record their sincere appreciation of the contributions made by both volunteers and employees to the achievement of HELP's aims in classes and the Crèche. It is literally true that without the willing, able, and enthusiastic input from a wide range of people, the teaching of English to learners in the Harehills area would be impossible, and the Trustees offer them their sincere thanks.

October 2020.

# Receipts and Payment Accounts

## HAREHILLS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROJECT (H.E.L.P.)

### Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2020

#### Receipts & payments account

	2020	2019
	£	£
<b>Receipts - Grants, donations and fund raising</b>		
Yapp Charity	2,500.00	2,500.00
Donations through standing orders	2,280.00	1,510.00
Proceeds of coffee morning	512.86	517.54
Sisters of the Cross & Passion	4,000.00	5,000.00
Leeds City Council	1,200.00	1,000.00
Other donations	200.00	160.00
Resilience Grant	7,013.40	-
Gift Aid recovered	1,148.33	-
Hilden Charitable Trust	5,000.00	-
Allen Lane Foundation	-	3,000.00
Franciscan Aid	-	1,000.00
Age Partnership	-	600.00
Whixley with Green Hammerton PCC	-	220.00
Tesco	-	2,000.00
Wade Trust	-	1,800.00
Norman Ashton Foundation	-	500.00
Y.L.C. of Education	-	500.00
St Michael's Headingley	-	180.15
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>23,854.59</b>	<b>20,487.69</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
Room use - St Aidan's	1,700.00	2,730.00
Room use - Trinity United Church	910.00	1,515.00
Project Leader's fees	9,976.00	8,670.00
Salaries	5,166.96	4,044.75
Volunteers' expenses	180.30	523.20
Website consultancy	527.00	-
Resources and training	811.53	1,332.50
Refreshments	22.50	43.30
Insurance	-	201.60
Recreational visits - (Wade Trust)	41.95	893.97
Sundries	9.39	95.49
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>19,345.63</b>	<b>20,049.81</b>
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>	<b>4,508.96</b>	<b>437.88</b>

## Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2019

### HAREHILLS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROJECT (H.E.L.P.)

#### Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2020

##### Statement of Assets and Liabilities

<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>TOTAL 2020 £</b>	<b>TOTAL 2019 £</b>
<b>Cash and Bank</b>		
Cash	281.00	21.89
Bank current account	21,967.44	17,717.59
<b>Total assets at 31 August</b>	<b>22,248.44</b>	<b>17,739.48</b>

<b>Represented by</b>	<b>TOTAL 2020 £</b>	<b>TOTAL 2019 £</b>
Excess of receipts over payments for the year	4,508.96	437.88
Opening cash and bank balances	17,739.48	17,301.60
<b>Cash and bank balances at 31 August</b>	<b>22,248.44</b>	<b>17,739.48</b>

At 31 August 2020 the charity had no liabilities (2019: £nil).

The financial statements have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis.

APPROVED BY THE TRUSTEES AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 28 October 2020 AND  
SIGNED ON THEIR BEHALF BY:

.....*J. Zauner*..... Chair

28.10.2020

# Independent Examiner's report

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE HAREHILLS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROJECT

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2020 which are set out on the previous two pages.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of Independent Examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention;

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



# Project Leader's report



The academic year started well and many of last year's learners returned to resume classes. The project also received applications from a lot of new learners, which led to the creation of a Beginners' class taught by new volunteers Roy Haworth and Ben Humphries.

The crèche continued to be as popular as ever with our learners and it operated near to capacity for the majority of the year. This is a clear indication of the importance of providing childcare as many of the learners would not be able to study without having this option. My sister, Holly Thomas, has worked as a singing teacher in the past and now works with unaccompanied child refugees in Birmingham. As she had some time off work in October, a visit to the crèche was arranged for a short English language singing class with the children. This was very well received by all at the crèche and greatly enjoyed by both the children and Holly. This is something that we plan to repeat if the opportunity arises in the future.

Map+, a charitable organisation working with migrants and refugees in Leeds, visited the project early in October to deliver a presentation about accessing services within the city and how to use their website to find out what support is available. The presentation was delivered in several different

languages before the learners were divided accordingly and given the chance to navigate the site and see what it offers with the support of a Map+ volunteer.

Members of Oakwood Church organised a fantastic Coffee Morning in Aid of 'HELP' which took place early in January – it was a great success and thanks go to Sue Noble and the other volunteers for all their hard work. Sue has kindly provided a short report which can be found at the end of this section.

The new year saw an increase in the number of learners wanting to register and the need for English language provision in the area was evident. There was increased demand for classes from taxi drivers who are now required to have ESOL Level 3 certification in order to be given a licence. The number of enquiries was so great that a plan was formed to start evening classes which would run one day of the week but could be increased to two days if the class proved popular. The class started early in March, after half-term, but it was only a matter of weeks before face-to-face classes were cancelled due to Covid19.

This decision was taken well before government advice was issued warning people to avoid public transport and to work from home where necessary. It was reached after much discussion and deliberation with the Trustees who were all in unanimous agreement that cancelling the classes was the best thing to do. Many factors were at play in making this decision, primarily:

- 1) we are working with immigrants, some have recently entered the country – this was seen as a risk
- 2) the majority of the volunteers are in what the government deemed the 'at risk' category and their health and safety was of concern
- 3) we work in an area of Leeds that has consistently shown high Covid19 infection rates
- 4) cancelling the classes would not result in loss of earnings for employees as they would still be working and could be paid through the Resilience Grant provided by Leeds Community Foundation.

The Crèche Manager and Deputy would need to be involved in some kind of work while the crèche was closed so that they could continue to be paid, and with this in mind the trustees set about coming up with safe and viable options. It was decided that their skills would be best put to use by making face masks which could be distributed to our learners when face-to-face classes resume and also distributed to local charities. To this date, over 100 face masks have been produced and many

have been donated to St Aidan's church and the other organisations that work there. As well as making face masks the crèche staff are to start working on our Pastoral Care programme designed to offer support to some of the learners that opted out of having online classes. This will take the form of regular telephone calls which will help to keep lines of communication open and offer much needed advice and reassurance during difficult times.

From the start of lockdown, I maintained very close telephone and email contact with the Chair so that the ever changing situation could be monitored effectively and decisions would be made in real time (not to close the stable door after the horse has bolted). This has been maintained throughout the year and was necessary in order to continue with the regular administration of the online classes and the developments and changes there, funding applications, and financial matters, such as managing payments to crèche staff. This close contact has helped to keep things running as smoothly as possible and I must thank Rev. Diana Zanker for all the support she has provided and the hard work that she has done over the recent months.

At first, the hope was that teaching would be able to resume once the Covid crisis was under control, and so the initial decision was to review the situation on a weekly basis with the hope of starting classes again. However, soon after Easter it became apparent that things were not going to improve in the short term and the decision was made to cancel classes for the remainder of the academic year. It had already been decided that we needed to keep open lines of communication and continue to provide education to our learners, and using the internet seemed key to all of this. The HELP website was almost ready to go live, after being worked on and updated, and with some small changes could be used as a learning platform – a place where materials and useful information could be uploaded for use by learners and teachers. Online teaching was the other obvious way to overcome the problems posed by the pandemic and so a plan was devised to contact learners and teachers to see who would be interested in moving online and into the digital world.

It was decided that 1:1 classes would be the best option to begin with as they would be easier to manage. The obvious disadvantage was that by working 1:1 it reduced the number of learners that could be worked with, however there were many advantages including the relationships that the teachers and learners develop through the close contact of a 1:1 class, the increased level of

attention that the learners receive, and in turn the speed of their development. Learners were paired with teachers, where possible ones that had taught them in the past, and teaching moved online. The process of contacting learners had made it very clear to me that online learning/teaching would not be for everybody. Many of the low-level learners did not feel capable of managing online classes and so an alternative support system was developed to enable them to keep studying from home. Resource packs would be compiled on a regular basis, which would consist of a series of worksheets which could be completed at home. The resource packs would be at four different levels and posted to all the learners that were registered and attending classes in March 2020. This meant that they could be used in the online classes and for individual learning.

The project realigned its focus from face-to-face teaching and learning to:

Website to support online teaching and learning

1:1 online classes

Home study support packs that are mailed to learners

The process of implementing such wholesale changes in a short period of time was never going to be easy and there was a lot of planning and communication that had to be done, which is that little bit harder when you cannot meet face-to-face. However, the support of the teacher volunteers, the Trustees, and the Chair made this process relatively smooth, and the one thing that we all had in common was that it was a new situation for everyone. So, at points patience was required as new technology was grappled with and weeks passed waiting for learners to respond to messages and phone calls... but we got there in the end thanks to everybody's hard work and understanding. These measures were implemented over summer 2020 with the hope being that face-to-face teaching would resume in September for the 2020-2021 academic year. However, the decision was made in September 2020 that teaching onsite would not resume until January 2021 at the earliest, so the new method of working would remain in place until that point. However, the likelihood is that some teachers and learners will want to continue to work online even when face-to-face classes resume, and with that in mind the project plans to offer these new services in the future. This way, the reach of the project is strengthened as learners can be supported by post, online, and face-to-face learning.

Looking forward to the 2020-2021 academic year the initial aim is to develop the online learning while face-to-face classes are still on hold. This will involve recruiting new volunteers to meet learner demand for online classes, and plans are underway to start online group lessons which will enable us to connect with larger numbers of learners. Throughout the process it will be essential to adapt to the needs, requirements, and concerns of volunteers and learners, and this goes hand in hand with the desire to develop the pastoral care/support aspect of the work that is carried out by the project.

A great deal has been learned from the forced cancellation of face-to-face classes and the process of moving learning online. Although it has been difficult and challenging at times, the overall result is that the project has become much more resilient and capable of adapting to any given situation and these are the positives that can be taken from what has been a most unprecedented year. Many thanks to all those involved in the project directly and indirectly for their tireless dedication, enthusiasm, and willingness to adapt when faced with a challenge.

Special thanks to John England who left the project in March to focus on other commitments. He had spent much of his time working with the Intermediate group, a class that he shared with Margaret Hughes. He will be missed and all at the project wish him well for the future.

Nicholas Thomas

Project Leader

October 2020

Coffee Morning in Aid of 'HELP'

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 10am to 12 noon

At Oakwood Church, Oakwood, Leeds

The event was well attended with many people enjoying bacon butties, toasted tea cakes, buns, cakes and tea and coffee. Helping, were people from Oakwood Church supported by volunteers and trustees from 'HELP'. The atmosphere was very friendly with many stalls to entice the supporters.

There was a cake stall, book stall, cards, a raffle and a very well stocked scarf and jewellery stall.

£508.86 was raised on the day with a further £46.66 Gift Aid to be claimed.

The surplus scarves were given to our learners who attend classes.

Sue Noble

# Class reports from tutors



For eight years now I have taught English to migrant people in the Undercroft of St Aidan's, Harehills and I have loved every moment of it. As with so many other activities, our classes had to be put on hold because of COVID-19 restrictions. Other teachers have found ways to continue to teach on-line but this is not something I can do. But I have been reflecting.

HELP provided our students with so much more than English lessons. Arriving at St Aidan's two mornings a week, they were welcomed by name and received into well heated classrooms. They were carefully assigned to groups which suited their language ability and where they could be at ease. Classes were well prepared and teaching materials were the best our funding could provide. They met and made friends with other people like themselves. Hopefully, our classes provided moments of stillness and calm to people whose life experiences are so chaotic and uncertain. All this too has been put on hold.

For several months now, on our BBC news bulletins we have heard people responding to conditions of lockdown as they experience them. We have heard people arguing, weeping, protesting, demanding, accepting, advising, interpreting... People making their voices heard. And rightly so! But what about Asylum Seekers and Refugees? I have not heard one report that spoke of their needs. Where are their voices? Who will be the 'Voice of the Voiceless' now?

***Carmel Gorman, Volunteer Tutor***



The class started off very well in September. Many of the learners were the same as the previous year so we lost no time in getting the class established. The attendance was also very good and we made good progress immediately.

We concentrated on speaking and listening and did some useful work on real-life situations e.g. working in a supermarket, cleaning and filling shelves or in warehouses loading and unloading. We also did some reading and writing each lesson.

Since March I have been working on-line with two learners. We use mobile phones and do the lesson on WhatsApp.

One is a beginner and is very determined to improve although the intense nature of one-to-one teaching, especially on-line must be very intimidating. At the moment we do two thirty-minute lessons a week. She is fortunate in having a husband and children who help her and she is always well-prepared for the lesson. We have built up a good relationship and I think she is gaining in confidence. She is Eritrean and a very positive and cheerful woman and we laugh a lot.

The second learner is pre-intermediate level. She has made a lot of progress since March. We do two one hour lessons a week. Her understanding is very good and her speaking is improving. She is keen to understand the grammar as well and we really enjoy the lesson. We are learning a lot about each other's cultures. She is Kurdish and we talk a lot about life and food in our countries. She always shows me what she's cooking and it looks amazing. She is about to have a baby but will be able to carry on with the lessons.

I'm looking forward to when we will be 'back to normal' but meanwhile, we will do our best to reach as many learners as possible.

As always, thanks to Nick and Diana for all their help and support.

***Donna Kennedy, Volunteer Tutor***



Between September and February I taught on a Tuesday from 10.00 to 12.00 at Trinity United Church. As in the previous year, we shared the church space with the Advanced class which worked fine.

Students came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria and Bolivia. There was a core of 5 regular attendees, with others coming intermittently. The best approach therefore was to treat each session as a self-contained unit as far as possible, but without losing sight of progression. I shared the group with another teacher, and we liaised about what we had done in our lesson.

I planned the lessons around the book provided *-English for Everyone, Level 2 Beginner-* as a basis for grammatical progression and vocabulary building, and students applied the newly acquired language to everyday situations. Given that the majority of students found reading difficult, and writing even more so, most of the tasks centred around the development of speaking and comprehension. The varied backgrounds and cultures of students are a rich resource for teaching and lend themselves well for comparison with life in Britain. Students enjoy making this cultural link which can be a motivating factor.

I enjoyed meeting and teaching such a diverse group of students. They thrive on the progress they make, and it was a pleasure to observe their increased confidence.

From April onwards I taught 2 students online individually via WhatsApp. They were confident with this, and we were able to have quite intensive 1 hr sessions which allowed for addressing each student's specific needs. However, for students this can be quite tiring at this level of language competence. If I was to do this again, I would reduce the sessions to 45 minutes. One student

brought her 2 younger children along which created some funny situations. They wanted to be taught too, but could in the end be persuaded to assist their mum with some of the exchanges! The resources Nick supplied to students and me were necessary and a most helpful underpinning for each lesson given the limitations of showing pictures/words/texts and instructions for tasks on a mobile phone screen.

Under the current circumstances, online tuition has been a suitable substitute for face-to-face, but, of course, I was not able to reach as many students.

***Helga Adams, Volunteer tutor***



The 2019/20 academic year started as usual. I shared two classes at the Trinity United Church with other tutors, moving between the classes so as to provide cover for tutors who could not be available.

The classes were very different; one being a large class of fairly low level learners and the other a smaller class of learners who were quite proficient at English but who wanted to increase their knowledge both of English grammar and British culture.

This was a good combination for me as I enjoy teaching ESOL at all levels. I like the variety and the different challenges that these classes offered me.

Of course, everything changed at lockdown and after things had settled down a bit and Nick had had the time and opportunity to organise both tutors and learners, I was given two learners to teach online. I hadn't met these learners before but Nick had clearly put a lot of thought into these pairings and I found both my learners a delight to teach.

Their level of English was very different; one was a lot more advanced than the other. But they were both motivated to learn, able to use online apps and very good at preparing for classes on their own, before the lesson. (I always email them the next lesson a few days before we meet online, to give them the chance to prepare.) We have now settled down into a routine and we each know what to expect from each other.

Teaching one to one online is quite an intimate way of teaching and I've got to know the learners quite well. I'm able to prepare the lessons to suit their individual requirements and can spend as much time as is necessary, concentrating on their particular needs. I can also make myself available to them at times which suit them. They both have jobs and work irregular hours so they might not have been able to come to many ESOL classes at St Aiden's if the lessons had clashed with their working hours.

From my point of view, I've enjoyed teaching them very much. It's given me a focus and an interest at a time which would otherwise have been a bit dismal. Difficult as it is living through this pandemic, I am always cheered up when I see my learners' smiling faces online and they communicate their optimistic and happy outlook on life to me. It's a really good lesson to me as I know life must be so much harder for them than it is for me, either with or without a pandemic.

So at the moment I'm working online with my two learners and Nick may very well give me a third. While I miss the buzz of teaching in a real life situation with a larger group, I can also see the benefits of one to one online teaching and am looking forward to continue this work up to the time when it's safe to resume more normal teaching. Or perhaps even beyond, who knows what the new normal may be?

I would also like to add a thanks to Nick for organising this set up so well, for his ongoing support and the online materials which he has made available and which one of my learners is finding very useful.

***Tom Waples, Volunteer Tutor***



During the first half of the academic year the class followed the normal pattern of grammar and reading designed to improve fluency and comprehension. We worked through the use of various tenses in simple and continuous modes, and read a variety of pieces drawn from press articles or works I had written which were of local or topical interest, such as the origins of Halloween, Dickens' Christmas Carol, and an article on the history of Roundhay Park.

This pattern of course changed with the onset of the pandemic and the dispersal of all learners. I emailed everyone to say that we could continue classes in a revised format; I would prepare some written material for them to read, and answer questions in writing. This would hopefully extend their knowledge of the English language and improve their writing skills – a facility which in normal classes tended to be edged out by speaking, listening, and reading.

In the event only one learner, Kitti, took up this opportunity, and she and I worked continuously through until end-July. (She then 'left' to go to university in Budapest.) We covered quite a wide range of material in this way. I wrote a piece on the history of English language, pointing up the wide variety of its origins, and subsequently an account of social change in Britain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As well as posing questions relating to these texts, I asked about comparable events in the Hungarian language and culture so that she had to write answers using some new material. We also worked on a few magazine articles, including an account of Clement Attlee's premiership; interestingly, she knew of Attlee in the context of the introduction of the Welfare State, but nothing about his personality. I also invited Kitti to raise questions concerning language or culture, and she sought some revision, for example, of future continuous verb use.

Altogether, I think Kitti found this form of learning to be of real value, and she expressed sincere thanks when it finished. I was sorry that other learners did not avail themselves of this opportunity.

*Lloyd Davies, Volunteer Tutor*

The 2019-2020 academic year started very smoothly in September last year. As we warmly welcomed new learners to the class, we were happily ignorant of the current challenges of COVID-19 that will change all our lives tremendously.

The group of new learners were quiet and shy in the beginning of the course, but within a few weeks' time all students were able to settle in, adjust to the class atmosphere and start gaining confidence in their reading and writing skills.

Before the lockdown learners were able to improve their basic vocabulary for everyday communication, with the focus on phonemes and syntax used in the English language. We covered topical issues such as healthy living, Christmas season, favourite places to visit in England and the British weather. We engaged the students in lively discussion about coping with the cold weather and in some cases their struggle with healthy food choices.

Regular attendance and learning spellings were an uphill battle for some, but we did see individual improvement in these skills during the lockdown. I was fortunate enough to help two learners with online classes over four weeks ahead of the summer break.

It is, however, unfortunate that we were unable to finish the academic year with a proper farewell to one another, but like other tutors like me I do wish them best in their future studies.

As I am writing this report the challenges of COVID-19 are still there, but we must stay positive and hope for normality including a return to a normal class routine. I also want to express my special thanks to Nick Thomas for the updates and encouraging emails on regular basis during these difficult times.

***Awais Dominic, Volunteer Tutor***



In September 2019 I recommenced teaching every Thursday morning from 10am to 12noon at Trinity United Church.

We began with 6 learners eager to get to know each other, we asked questions of each other filled in information sheets then presented to the group what we had found out about each other. We made a list on the board of all their native countries and the language they spoke. Some were proficient in 2 or 3 languages other than English. This was humbling. By the end of September there were 16 in the group. Not all 16 came every week but a good core of 8 to 10 attended. We covered negative and positive statements, improved their vocabulary of adjectives. Using objects, pictures, clothing and food, they practised using all their senses to describe the objects.

Most weeks we used some exercises from 'English for Everyone' level 2, also games and practical activities to enhance the learning from the book.

In October/November we focused on regular routines then worked with exceptions, chronology, ordinal numbers using the calendar. We continued to cover basic grammar always recapping on spelling and punctuation and speaking and listening. The learners found pronunciation the most difficult. Finally, in January we did a topic on health.

We had many laughs throughout and it was a pleasure to be with the group. They were very committed to their learning and always ready to help each other. Our last session together was at the end of January then unfortunately later that year we were in Lockdown.

***Sue Noble, Volunteer Tutor***

I'd hardly claim any real knowledge or experience of online teaching, so I'm sticking to the learning process, in this short reflection.

During this extraordinary period over the last 8 months when St Aidan's has been unable to host classes, I've been venturing to work with 2 students one to one online.

The technology involved is pretty basic. I call each student once a week on What's App and we speak for about an hour. We arrange times via text: whatever is most convenient. If one of us can't face the camera (eg. still in pyjamas) sound and text only also works fine.

I send videos, exercises etc via text the day before. Then we can discuss them during the call.

After much trial and error, materials are chosen mainly from the British Council ESOL site and Life in the UK Test Web. One of the students is studying towards the British Citizenship Test. Thus we often do practice tests together.

So here are some of the things that I've learned:

Distance learning doesn't mean you are distant in communication terms. You can still have a good close discussion, albeit we miss the scope of group interaction.

Choosing times and topics of study makes learning more flexible.

I would probably fail the British Citizenship Test. Here are some of the questions I got wrong.

When did Britain become permanently separated from the continent?

10,000 years ago

50,000

15,000

18,000

Who was reigning in England when Wales became formally United with England by the Act for the Government of Wales?

Henry VIII

Henry VII

Elizabeth I

James I

When did the Wars of the Roses start?

1388

1455

1462

1478

How many members does the Scottish Parliament have?

60

90

120

129

Good luck with those!

To sum up, something's better than nothing. And it's worth having a go.

I can't wait to get back to normal but I'm impressed by everything everyone (especially Nick) has done to support our learners through this crazy period.

Useful sites:

[www.esolcourses](http://www.esolcourses)

British Council- Learn English

British Council- Grammar

Life in the UK Test Web

*Margaret Hughes, Volunteer Tutor*

# Clodagh Murphy



Clodagh, one of our longest serving volunteers, sadly passed away this year. She had been a volunteer tutor for more than 10 years and was loved and respected by both volunteers and students alike. She was a Trustee and it was she who came up with HELP, the name of our project. As our organisation grew, she worked on the many documents that were needed.

As a teacher, she was sympathetic and understanding. Her students benefitted greatly from her classes. As a friend and colleague she was warm, funny and unfailingly cheerful.

These are some of the comments from her fellow volunteers;

‘She really was so kind and caring, intelligent and humble, so full of grace’

‘I recall her with real affection, she was always cheerful with a twinkle in her eye, and always saw the bright side of life’

‘She was one of those people who enriches the lives of those they meet, and I am grateful for the memory of her’.

Thank you, Clodagh.

Donna Kennedy and Diana Zanker

Article: Leeds Irish Health & Homes, Clodagh Mary Murphy LIHH Founding Mother Rest In Peace

<http://www.lihh.org/clodagh-mary-murphy-leeds-rip>

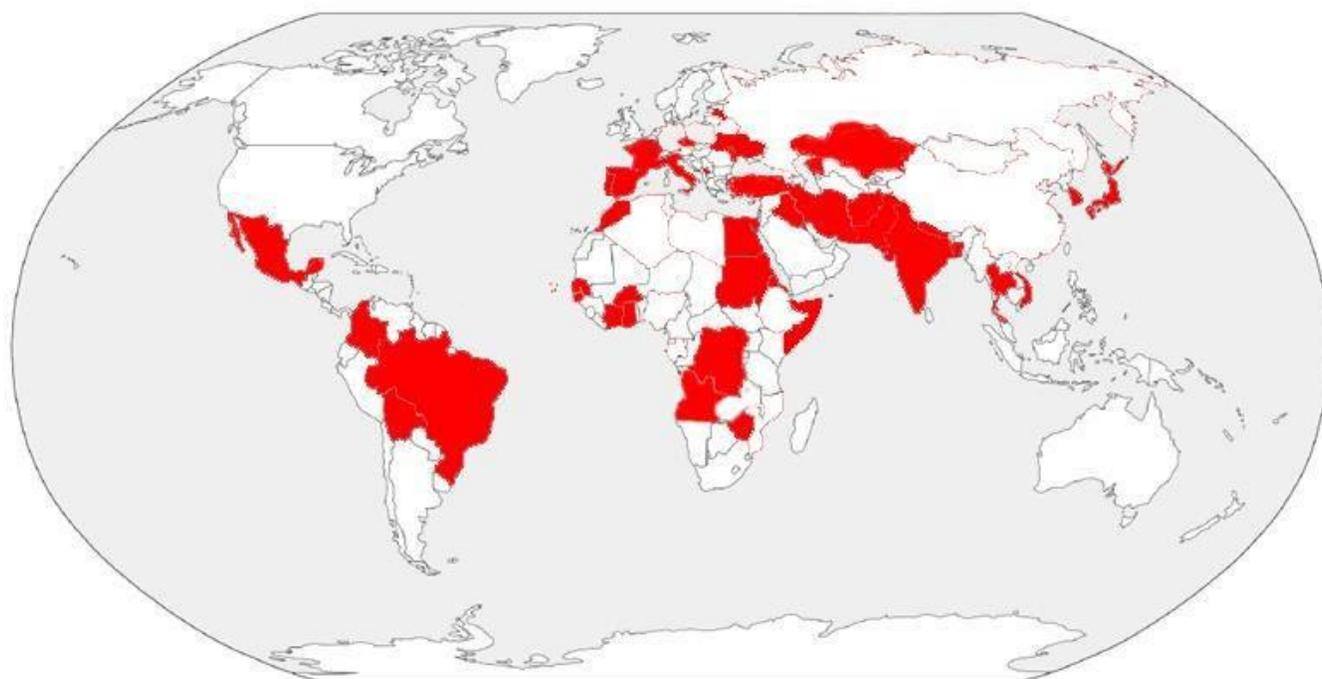
# Class Statistics

**For the academic year 2019/20 we registered and assessed 237 adult learners. 80 were male and 157 were female. The majority of our learners were non-EU asylum seekers or refugees, with others coming from Europe, Asia, South America, and a handful from Eastern Europe. Countries included:**

- Afghanistan
- Angola
- Bangladesh
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Cape Verde
- Columbia
- China
- Czech Republic
- Dem Rep Congo
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Eritrea
- France
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea Bissau
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Italy
- Ivory Coast
- Japan
- Kazakhstan
- Korea
- Kurdistan
- Kuwait
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Morocco
- Pakistan
- Romania
- Senegal
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Zimbabwe

**The majority of Adult Learners are from the LS8 and LS9 areas with others coming from across Leeds (LS 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13,15, 17).**

**There were up to 94 adult learners attending on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Our adult learners are from the countries shaded in red.**



# Staff and Volunteer team

Project Leader:	Nicholas Thomas
Crèche Manager:	Almaz Woldemichael
Deputy Crèche Manager:	Hidat Gebremedhin
Charity Trustees:	Diana Zanker (Chair), Donna Kennedy (Secretary), Sarah Feaster, Mark Harwood, Lloyd Davies, Susan Noble, David Noble, Alasdair Fraser
Fundraising Team:	Diana Zanker, Susan Noble, David Noble, Alasdair Fraser, Gill Gibbons
Management Team:	Nicholas Thomas (Chair), Donna Kennedy (Secretary), Michael Blake (Treasurer), Lloyd Davies, Margaret Hughes, Susan Noble, Carmel Gorman, Veronica Turley, HongJuan He
Learner Rep:	HongJuan He
Volunteers:	Tahir Aziz Rebecca Vipond
Crèche Volunteers:	Saba Yemane Ogbit Tesfamical Veronica Turley Jill Walker HongJuan He

ESOL Tutors: Lloyd Davies, Carmel Gorman, Susan Noble, Helga Adams,  
Margaret Hughes, Donna Kennedy, Awais Dominic, Tom Waples,  
John Riley-Smith, John England, Roy Haworth, Ben Humphries

ESOL Cover Tutors: Ros Marsden, Pat Walker

