



## Sanctuary Breaks

**Basically**, when we started the group, it was

- to link ourselves with others who were interested
- to inform ourselves and others about the 'Refugee Crisis',
- to tell our elected representatives that we thought the country should be doing more to actively help show our support and welcome.

**At the first meeting** an elderly lady told us about how people from the cites used to come to the countryside for a day out and some food, usually hosted by one of the large houses and we thought this might be a good thing to try - SANCTUARY BREAKS started - we've now held about 20 of these days in many different venues but with things in common:

- A volunteer who is happy to be the contact point and coordinator (usually has been to at least one event so knows what to expect and plan for). Ensure a supply of business cards to help when trying to obtain discounts/freebies.
- Let the HBTSR wider group know of this persons email/phone and seek volunteers to assist but the coordinator will also recruit friends/family/others.
- Hold a meeting of potential helpers so they can meet each other and divvy up the work. Let each person recruit others to help.
- A venue that the coordinator is happy with that is large enough for about 100 people - preferably one with catering facilities, crockery and cutlery, tables and chairs, heating and space around for parking and play. We keep and supply as needed a large collection of mugs, a large urn, a number of tea towels, table cloths and some drinks flasks that are invaluable.
- Aim to provide continental type Breakfast, Lunch and Tea with tea, coffee, water and juices and fruit available. Our churches/faith groups have been a great supplier of cakes! Usually we provide a halal meat dish and various vegetarian dishes. Salad is popular as is bread. Hard boiled eggs are very popular. Take away containers!
- Need some people allocated to kitchen duties but this should be in shifts so everyone has a chance to meet people or sit down and need a steady supply of washer uppers!
- Aim to make available - exercise (e.g. football, volleyball, badminton, table tennis) a walk, some craft activities (e.g. clay, printing, painting, jewelry-making, wood carving), somewhere for children to play (a playpen is invaluable), possibly some basic games e.g. scrabble, cards, boggle. Time to chat. Possibly some music or dance - find local musicians or supply instruments that visitors can use.
- Possibly need space to change and feed babies and may need private space to pray.
- Need space to display takeaway items that might be useful e.g. clothing, kitchenware etc. And bags to take away in!
- Food-bank may provide short dated items on request to give groceries to take home and supporters will also provide items. Possibly groceries and toiletries most appreciated leaving gift. Aldi and Morrisons will give short dated goods. We usually make up bags of groceries and toiletries to take home. The coach driver suggested that these should be generic and handed out on arrival in Swansea to avoid long delays as people search for and fail to find their own bag! We were instructed by one of the asylum seeker volunteers that 'sometimes you get cabbages and sometimes chocolate and that's just how it is!' Surplus goes to the drop ins via the volunteers.
- Communicate with our contacts in Swansea about dates (Sunday is a good day as there is not much else going on and suits people in work) and let them find people who want to come. They provide a list with names, ages, countries of origin and dietary/other needs.

- We hire a 53 seater coach to bring people (always good to have a mixed group though our football trip was mostly men and several trips have been mainly for families - nb if a family drops out a short notice this can impact greatly on numbers whereas a few singles dropping out can often be replaced from the waiting list) and always include some of the local volunteers as well. Bluebird Coaches in Neath have been the cheapest by far and are always very helpful.
- We have organisers' tips on our website (<http://hbtsr.org.uk/how-can-i-help/away-days/respite-days-tips>) and safeguarding policies with some health and safety guidance.
- We decided that we wanted to be as inclusive as possible so we always have an open door policy that anyone who wants to drop in can do so and as we can't DBS check everyone we insist that we don't have any children without a responsible adult. We've started inviting the local community to call in and involving the local schools and children's groups such as cubs, brownies, scouts.
- Helpful to have amplification for announcements (also pictorial signs) and to allow 'simultaneous' translation.
- Have someone who can troubleshoot and liaise with the volunteer coordinators, who know the visitors well in case of any issues - rarely are any.
- First aider and person to report any safeguarding or other concerns to.
- Teamwork- we've been amazed at how well goodhearted people work together and how a few leaders emerge and how some people will drop in regularly to help.
- The need to have plans but also be flexible: it is a mix of careful planning and making do creatively with what and who is there on the day and the weather and the wishes of the visitors.....

### **Possible outline / timetable**

- 8:30 – Begin setting up hall
- 9:30 – 10 bus leaves Swansea- phone call to confirm numbers!
- 11:00 – Arrival at Village Hall
- 11-11:30 – Welcome breakfast (bread, butter, jam, tea, coffee, fruit juices)
- 11:30-13:00 – Group activity/greeting – morning activities:
  - Art/print-making – polystyrene pizza bases needed
  - Bread making – dough needed
  - Five aside football (weather permitting) - football boots?
  - Skateboarding – skateboards needed
  - Badminton
  - Walking (round the village or the lake/to Llangasty/bird-hide)
- 13:00-14:00 – Lunch:- Beef and vegetarian stew, vegetarian curry, salad, baked potatoes, rice, fruit
- 14:00-15:30 –
  - Music: local musicians– instruments needed!
  - Afternoon activities:
    - Welsh cake making
    - Walking
    - Skateboarding – skateboards needed
    - Badminton
    - Cake decorating (for children)
- 15:30-16:00 – Tea, cakes, and coffee
- 16:00 – Depart



- Be prepared for fun, friendship and laughter.
- Remember to thank those who have helped! Write up for the press as a good news story and for website.
- We've also started to have friendships forming and people visiting for short stays and possibly helping with farm work or gardening or just having a break.

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