



# Samphire

Changing attitudes to, and improving the lives of,  
ex-detainees and migrant communities

## Annual Report 2021 - 2022

Patron: Rt. Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin

Registered Charity No. 1106667

[www.samphireproject.org.uk](http://www.samphireproject.org.uk)



samphireproject



@samphire\_



## **Chair's Report 2021-2022**

As I watch seagulls battling the wind on the cliffs of Dover, I reflect that there have been times when the past year has felt like this. Yet, without the wind blowing against us we would never have the lift to fly.

Samphire started autumn 2021 without a director, but with the unwelcome presence of new variants of Covid-19 creating havoc among our staff and clients, and stalling attempts to re-start our activities in schools and communities. As the year went on, the immigration policy environment became increasingly hostile, with the government seeking to send asylum seekers to Rwanda or fit them with electronic tags, coupled with preparations for the abolition of the Human Rights Act and the threat of withdrawal from the European Court of Human Rights, while all the time new waves of refugees fled from Afghanistan, and later Ukraine.

A new Director was recruited and started in January 2022 but the job did not work out as we had hoped and she left us in July. Though it has been a challenging year, staff have demonstrated amazing resilience and hard work; they stepped up to fill the gaps and went the extra mile to ensure the smooth running of our programmes. We appreciate enormously their commitment and determination.

We are grateful that Samphire has been in a solid financial position throughout the year, thanks to two significant grants from The Lottery Fund, and Justice Together, as well as smaller grants from a variety of loyal donors. The Justice Together grant allowed us to expand our newest initiative of *pro bono* legal clinics providing immigration advice to people seeking to regularise their status, particularly in the wake of Brexit and changes to immigration laws. With the cooperation of Citizens Advice Bureau, weekly clinics are running in Dover, Folkestone, and Thanet. The demand for appointments validates our decision to invest in this service.

During the year we said goodbye to one member of staff and welcomed three others, two of them to assist our work with post-

detainees. With the hardening of regulations and negative attitudes towards people who have experienced immigration detention, it is not surprising that many post-detainees suffer long-term mental stress which can eclipse hope and confidence. Yet encouraging progress has been made in establishing a Steering Group of people with 'lived experience' of immigration detention, and they showed great courage when they stepped up to the podium at the Post-Detainees Conference this year to share their personal stories, poems and songs.

With Covid still restraining momentum, it has been a challenge to kick-start our community engagement activities. Our 'Schools of Sanctuary' project in East Kent schools will finally re-open in September, following the recruitment of a new member of staff to lead that initiative. In Dover, our disappointments and struggles were swept aside when the sun shone and crowds of every age and background came together to celebrate our annual Multi-Cultural Festival.

Situated at Britain's 'front door', Dover is uniquely located to be a 'city of sanctuary'. It has been – and still is - the first place of footfall and a place of safety for so many refugees and exiles through the ages – a place where diverse cultures have met and mixed since the days when the Bronze Age boat traded across the Channel. Though storms whip up waves of negativity from time to time, we remain firm in our resolve to work with our partners to construct positive attitudes and celebrate Dover's pride of place in the history of migration and refuge.

Although I am stepping down as Chair, I shall remain a trustee. It has been an honour to be a care-taker Chair for a year. I have learned so much over the past year. I could never have done it without the enormous and united support I have enjoyed from the amazing team of trustees, as well as our dedicated and long-suffering team of staff. Thank you all.

Joy Poppe



## Post-Detention Support Project

In this past year we have operated the Post Detention Project both remotely and from the office. This was influenced by Covid-19 and the government regulations around it. The helpline for people who have experienced immigration detention in the UK remained open to enable us to support former detainees with their needs. The project helpline received 1,535 requests for support/assistance/advice in the past year. In the last year **the project assisted 193 individuals** who have experienced immigration detention in the UK.

One of the challenges the project encountered was an increased demand for our service due to the Home Office detaining newly arrived asylum seekers as part of their asylum process. This **resulted in the project amending its eligibility/registration criteria** to support those who have been detained on an indefinite basis.

**The main issues** faced by people calling the project remained lack of access to services and support – people are not allowed to work or claim benefits until their immigration situations are resolved. People stuck in limbo suffer from isolation and loneliness, lack of sense of ownership over their lives. Brexit grace period having come to an end, we also see more and more European nationals falling within the measures of hostile environment.

The project's **Make Christmas Count Appeal** raised £2204 last Christmas through public donations. This was more than double its initial £1000 target. The funds donated assisted 41 individuals of the post detention support project totalling £951. The additional amount raised (£1252) was put towards the destitution fund, which allows us to assist people with small (£15-£25) emergency support and travel payments and phone top ups throughout the year.

Wed, 22 Dec 2021 09:04

Hello everyone at Samphire, just to say a big thank you for the £30 donation you helped me with to buy some Christmas gifts for my kids. I can never thank you enough always for what you do for us, but only to pray that the Lord continues to open more financial donors to your organisation to continue with your good work. A very merry Christmas to all of you and your families and prosperous New year. Thank you  
[REDACTED] Coventry

The project's **annual telephone survey** was carried out in March 2022 by volunteers of the project. The results indicated that 66% of the respondents felt less anxious after speaking to the project staff. A further 80% of the respondents stated that the information provided by the project staff improved their access to services such as health, welfare, education etc. Majority of the respondents (93%) stated that taking part in volunteering opportunities has helped them feel more included in their communities.

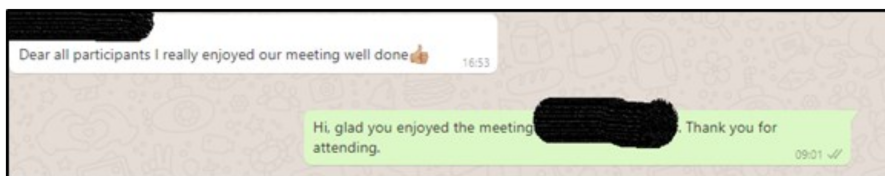
May 2021 the initial **Steering group** and the Manchester Community Champions Programme were merged, following the advice of the group members. Having two groups that consisted of more or less same individuals was not effective. It was clear that some attendees were not benefiting by the meetings and therefore the decision was made to merge the groups.



*A moment from  
the Steering  
group training in  
London, November  
2021*

After a few unsuccessful attempts earlier in the year, the consolidated **Steering group** which comprises of clients with lived experience, was formed in November 2021. The group started off with only two members however over a short period of time more members have joined increasing the total number to seven (2 males, 5 females). One group member took part in an interview with media (IMIX and I News). The members have also been involved in the planning of the post detention support conference and provided valuable feedback to staff. One member arranged representatives from the charity English Pen to deliver a creative writing workshop at the **2022 Post Detention Support Conference** while two other members have provided contact details of representatives from other

charities (Survivors2gether, Praxis, Detention Action etc), they wish to invite to the conference. Another group member who participated in a study under the CLORE leadership programme referred the Steering group members for interviews as part of the study. This means that over half of the group members (57%) have actively participated in advocacy.



Thank you very much! Today's steering group meeting was quality, though we were small in numbers of attendance, I love it and we were listened to and everyone present were inclusive, spoken and comfortable to share our stories. Welldone Indra and Judy, kudos to you both. I also appreciate the presenters, please on behalf of all of us, I want to say we are thankful and grateful that they have our interest at heart, and this is huge reassurance to us that, some people other than the UK Home Office, with the hostile environment slogan gone worst, believes in us and are willing to be in a room with us, listened and empowered to use our voice to telling our stories to wider audiences. I say thank you!

### *Steering Group meetings feedback*

Although the group has quickly gained momentum, the challenge encountered has been in organising meetings. Some members struggle with long-term health conditions and undergoing treatment while others have commitments in their lives to attend to. However, staff and group members have been very flexible which has led to meetings being held at least once a month with all the group members being present. The successful development of the Steering group must be one of the proudest achievements of the Post Detention Support side of the project. Continued involvement of experts with lived experiences often proves to be difficult due to hectic lives that people lead, lack of trust, unwillingness to disclose their stories due to the fear of it affecting their cases, etc.

Having members of our steering group contribute to Samphire's advocacy efforts and implementation of the project, such as assisting with organising the Annual Post Detention Support Conference is undoubtedly a very proud achievement.

The project staff **remained part of national forums and groups** that focus on issues related to asylum support, asylum, detention and migration – such as Detention Forum, Asylum Support Advice Network, EUSS Alliance. The staff attended 22 forums and networking events in the Year 1. In total 11 contacts with new organisations were established – such as Humans for Rights network, Refugee Youth Service, MigrEurop and others.

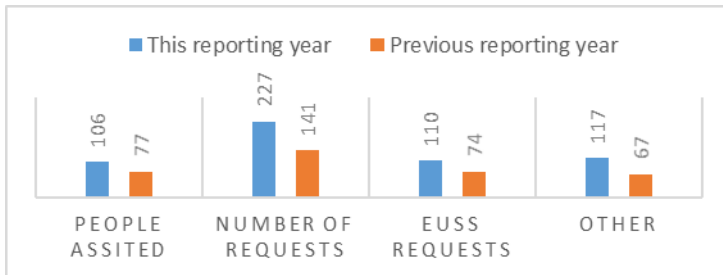
Post Detention support staff also **contributed to policy work nationally** – by contributing to 5 joint papers on policy change (off-shore detention, Afghanistan crisis, ASPEN card changeover crisis, etc. We also provided submissions to the New Plan for Immigration and contributed to the APPG submission to the Home Office on safe and legal routes.

## **Immigration Legal Project**

This reporting period has brought a lot of Covid -19 related ups and downs. Face to face contact increased in the beginning of the year due to the rolling out of Covid vaccines. Then followed the re-opening of Dover Citizen's Advice bureau offices, which further on went into another lockdown and no IRL contact in the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022. This was quite challenging as a lot of vulnerable migrant communities rely on face to face support due to limited IT or language skills.

Where we could see that remote contact is sufficient based on clients' location, language and IT skills, we continued to assist people via Zoom, WhatsApp and phone. However, as the EUSS deadline was approaching at the end of June 2021, we saw an increase of requests from local communities to assist with EUSS – via Samphire's Roma Inclusion officer, but also via other channels.

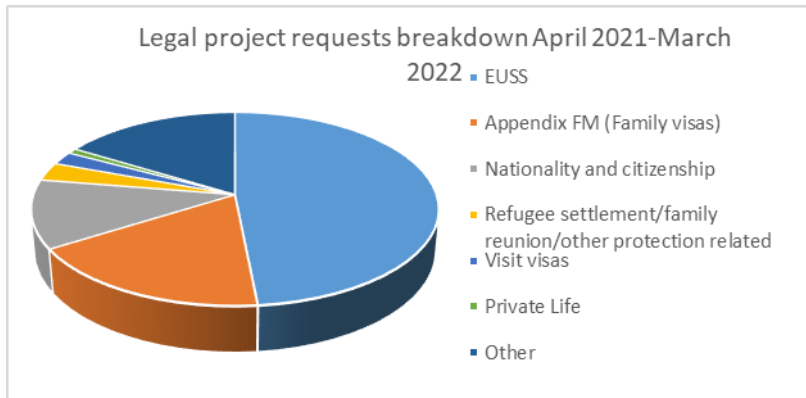
In the Year of April 2021 – March 2022 Immigration Legal Project assisted 106 individuals and dealt with 227 requests for assistance. This is an increase from the previous year.



Amongst other immigration issues, the project continued to assist EU nationals and their family members on EUSS applications, despite the end of transition period – there continued to be a huge number of late EUSS applications – especially for children with no ID documents and by individuals who simply did not apply before the deadline. Moreover, the project started to see issues arising in the aftermath of the EUSS deadline and the changes in immigration rules that came into force in early 2021 – mainly negatively affecting EU nationals and their family members.

With the EU nationals being unable to benefit from free movement anymore, there is a lot of confusion in the community about bringing existing and new family members from the EU and elsewhere to the UK.

In February 2021, Samphire’s immigration adviser raised Samphire’s OISC registration level to Level 2, thus allowing us to assist people with more complex immigration applications.



The word about the project continued to spread among the communities by way of word of mouth - beneficiaries assisted on certain complex cases referred their friends with similar issues, individuals who were assisted on EUSS applications brought their children and their extended family members.

We remain members of Civil Society EUSS Alliance. As a member of this Alliance, we regularly report issues to The 3 Million – a national charity having direct communication channels with the Home Office and collecting evidence for calls for policy change and /or strategic litigation. Membership of the SE Strategic partnership for migration allows us to feedback to stakeholders regionally on issues we face when delivering immigration advice.

In September 2021 we established a new extremely valuable contact with North and West Kent CAB. In May 2022 this contact was formalised into a consultancy agreement – NW Kent CAB Immigration lead, who is also OISC Level 3 advisor, is now our Immigration Adviser's "go to" person for advice in the most complex cases.

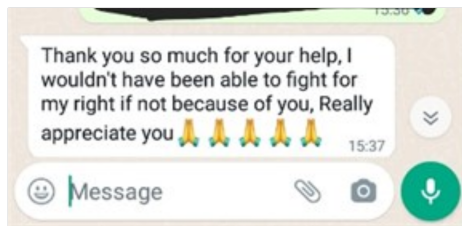
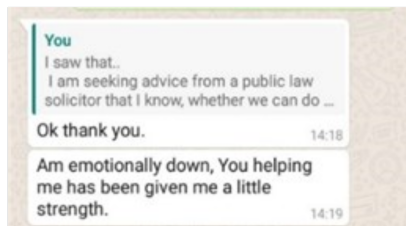
A three year grant from Justice Together initiatives was secured for Samphire's immigration legal advice work in December 2021. This allowed us to follow up with our pre-Covid plans for expanding our services to Thanet where we now hold fortnightly pro bono immigration advice surgeries. This functions alongside our fortnightly immigration advice surgeries at Dover CAB.

*Case Study: Patience (name has been changed)*

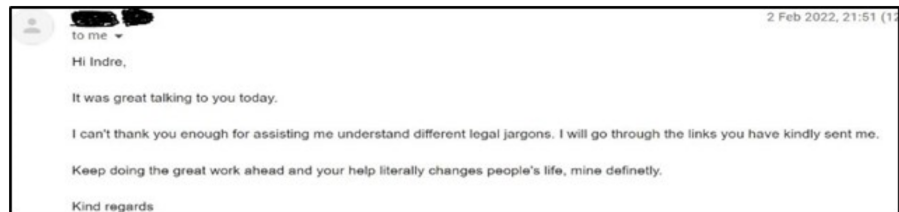
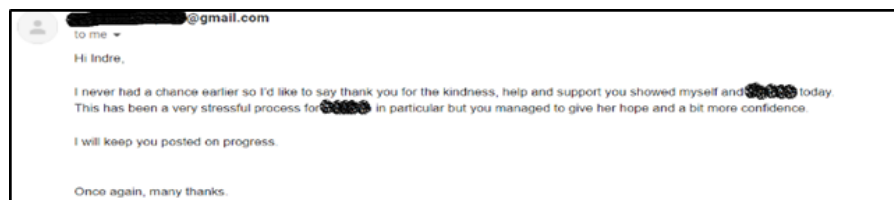
*Samphire's Immigration adviser was approached by BRC in Kent with a referral. Patience is in the UK with 2.5 LTR as a parent and it is about to expire. She is from Nigeria and is a single mum to two children – both born in the UK. One of the boys is a British Citizen, one has an application for registration as BC outstanding. Patience receives homelessness assistance from local authority. She is on a 10-year route to settlement, has no money to pay her fees and no money to pay a solicitor. Her application relies on exceptional circumstances, therefore, a OISC level 2 advisor is needed.*

*Patience did not know about an option to apply for a fee waiver. We have assisted Patience with a fee waiver application, which was granted. In the meantime, she had her benefits nearly stopped by the council, as they insisted she was not entitled to it. We have corresponded with the council at length, providing legal basis of why her benefits must continue. It was successful. We have assisted Patience to submit her extension application after a year of waiting she was finally granted leave in July 2022. We have also helped Patience to prove her right to rent when moving from homelessness accommodation to a more permanent housing.*

This is Patience's feedback:



Feedback from other clients:



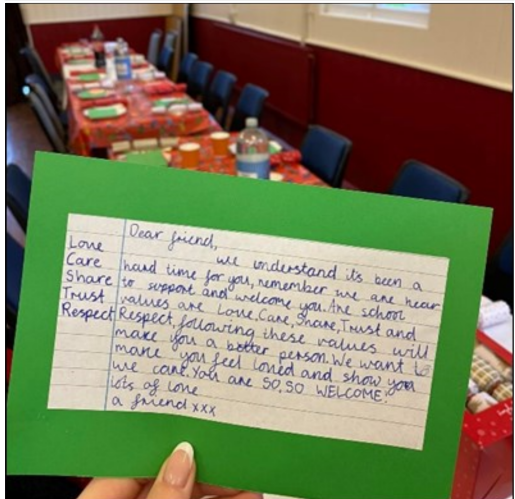


## Napier Barracks Support

Samphire's work with residents of Napier barracks has included welfare and rights advice at the offsite weekly drop ins, yoga classes, and distribution of warm clothes donated by the local communities especially during winter months. The work continued with only a couple of breaks throughout the pandemic.

Our work at Napier is in partnership with traditional, well-established charities and newly formed groups from Jesuit Refugee Service to Napier Friends. This has enabled us to support high-risk, newly-arrived people during a pandemic with practical support and wellbeing activities. We have also been able to contribute evidence to support some of the legal challenges relating to the barracks, from planning requirements when the Home Office sought to make the site permanent to legality of the site overall.

In December, Samphire organised a Christmas celebration at Napier Barracks. Volunteer chefs cooked Syrian and Eritrean food and Hear Me Out provided a music workshop, which Samphire then brokered into regular on-site music workshops at the Drop in. Samphire's Community Engagement Coordinator (who has been volunteering with us at Napier) delivered over 400 Christmas cards made by school children to people staying at Napier Barracks over the Christmas period and decorated the site in partnership with Napier Friends – this was so important to people as the Barracks was in lockdown over Christmas due to Covid.



In March, Samphire introduced people housed at Napier to the Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti during his visit to view the Barracks and brought a group of residents to discuss the Hostile Environment with him, Bishop Paul and civil society activists at St Paul's Church in Dover, as well as socialise.

Samphire is one of few NGOs with regular access to the Napier Barracks. This puts us in a unique and powerful position to contribute to the ongoing challenges of opposing the inhumane practice of housing people in settings that are not fit for human habitation that has been tested on the Kent coast and is becoming a blueprint for Home Office/UK Visas and Immigration initial accommodation and processing sites.

BETHANY BELL | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2022

**Napier barracks confinement 'like living in a prison,' say asylum-seekers**

**A**SYLUM-SEEKERS living at Napier Barracks and campaigners have warned that underlying problems remain at the site despite government claims of significant improvements.

It comes as the Home Office prepares to open another ex-military base in nearby Manston to process asylum-seekers, despite criticism of the government's use of the former barracks.

With the plans underway, asylum-seekers at Napier spoke out today about poor conditions at the site in Folkestone and concerns around Covid-19.

Indre Lechtimiakyte, legal and migrant support manager at Samphire, a charity supporting refugees in Kent, told the Morning Star

"There is only one nurse on site. Men are not aware that they can register with their GP."

Ms Lechtimiakyte said that mental health support was still "non-existent" despite the prevalence of mental health conditions among men at Napier.

## **Inclusion Development – Roma Project Dover**

We started our art project during the pandemic and we have successfully completed the project this year. The finished artwork was display at the Turner Gallery in Margate. The art was very popular; we had amazing feedback from the gallery and they are keen to work with us in future with similar art projects. The Roma women are very happy that they have taken part in the project - they have found their hidden talent!



Our Halloween, Easter, and Christmas parties were very successful. It was positive to see people from different backgrounds coming together as one community. We are hoping to organize similar events this year.



Our 'Healthy Lifestyle' sessions run weekly. They are led by Samphire and the NHS 'One You' adviser. We have different activities every week and we always explore healthy eating options. 'Walking Talking' also runs weekly. From October, we are considering starting Yoga or Zumba.

We host 'Family Support' sessions every week which help the Roma Community to access the services they need. Most Roma have settled status but we still have some difficult cases, which are referred to our legal advisor Indre.

## **Community Engagement Report**

The last year has been an interesting time at Samphire. Navigating the post-Covid landscape in terms of community engagement, we have seen a whole new set of challenges.

However, despite the difficulties, we have had some wonderful successes! Earlier this year we held the 3rd annual Samphire International Football Tournament, bringing together children from all different backgrounds and nationalities. Seeing the children play so happily together illustrated the importance of using things like football to build cohesion and break down barriers. We are very much looking forward to building on this success to make the next tournament bigger and better than ever.

Our international movie nights have continued and we have shown some very thought provoking films this year. It has been wonderful to see the same people returning and see how the films inspire deep and meaningful conversations.

We have started to develop more volunteering opportunities at Samphire working with people from Napier Barracks. So far, we have had one office volunteer who has now moved on; we also had a group of people come over to help with the Multicultural festival. This has already felt incredibly valuable for both Samphire and our friends at Napier and we are hoping to develop this further.



As part of our 'community relaunch' following the pandemic, we wanted to find out what problems and barriers people were facing in Dover and how we could best shape our work to really help. We held a community conversation event at Biggin Hall with Future Foundry to speak to as many people around the town as possible and hear their thoughts and opinions. It was an interesting and valuable day, particularly for forming and re-forming partnerships with local organisations. We gathered a lot of useful feedback which will help us shape our community engagement strategy going forward.

For Refugee Week this year, we held a Vigil at the memorial plaques on the Dover seafront. It was an intimate gathering attended by many of our friends at Napier barracks who were incredibly grateful for the event. Hearing people speak about their personal experiences and journeys was beautiful and moving. Other vigils we have held at the same spot have been reactions to hideous tragedies in the channel; it was refreshing to gather there in celebration and not grief.

### Dover Culture Carnival

Our annual multicultural festival was the most wonderful success this year! Following our scaled down version last year, after Covid, it was great to see the event coming back to the fun-filled celebration it has always been. Interactive activities, music, food, dance and so much more! And the sun shined on us all day. The event was opened by Friend of Samphire - Town Mayor Cllr Gordan Cowen who also stayed and got involved in all the activities. Our group of volunteers from Napier worked so hard to help set up the event and collect feedback from attendees throughout the day. Many people commented on having met some of our volunteers while wandering around and what a positive experience it had been. Feedback from the event was the best we have ever received and very encouraging.







*Dover Multicultural Festival*

### Samphire in the media

Samphire has continued to grow our media presence, speaking with local, regional and national outlets. Some of our more notable appearances this year have been a piece we worked on over a number of days for the Financial Times, several appearances on national television such as Sky, ITV, BBC and Channel 4 News. We have also been brave enough to go up against GB News. These comments and appearances are incredibly important to our work, being in Dover we are on the front line of the migration situation. So often, negative attitudes towards our work and the people we work with come not from hate, but from ignorance and misinformation. By answering the difficult questions and taking every opportunity to spread our message of love and compassion, we really do change attitudes, hearts and minds.

**Finance Report**  
**April 2021-March 2022**

April 2021 started off a very positive year for Samphire. Funding from The National Lottery, AB Charitables, Dover Big Local, Peoples Health Trust and Colyer Ferguson kick started the financial year very well.

Samphire is, financially in a very good position to move ahead. The whole team worked hard supporting and liaising with our clients.

We continued to receive funds from Allen Lane, Just Giving and our own staff who raised funds to buy trainers for the men housed at Napier Barracks. Monthly contributions from individuals help enormously to purchase phone cards and give emergency support for the beneficiaries of the Post Detention Support Project. Samphire has a healthy bank balance but most of our funds are restricted. We are lucky to be supported with every Grant we receive with every penny our supporters raise. So a huge thank you to you all.

In 2022 we received funds from Justice Together for our Legal project. Without this we would struggle to support our vulnerable clients who need immigration applications completing and immigration legal advice.

One area that is very difficult to raise funds for is our Post Detention Support project where we help with phone top ups & Emergency Support Payments for essentials. If anyone can help us raise funds or suggest ideas for how we can raise extra money, please talk to one of us today or contact us by email [info@samphireproject.org.uk](mailto:info@samphireproject.org.uk). We'd love to hear from you.

**We are considering the following fundraising events:**

Wine & Cheese evening

Quiz Night

Musical Evenings

Folk Dance/ Barn dance

We will publish dates on our website but again if you would like dates and/or information please email us:

[info@samphireproject.org.uk](mailto:info@samphireproject.org.uk)



# Samphire

## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	9,100	161,440	170,540	202,234
Investment income	-	25	25	56
Other income	-	-	-	3,211
Total income	9,100	161,465	170,565	205,501
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Charitable activities	(13,466)	(154,293)	(167,759)	(165,066)
Other expenditure	-	(1,799)	(1,799)	(1,799)
Total expenditure	(13,466)	(156,092)	(169,558)	(166,865)
Net (expenditure)/income	(4,366)	5,373	1,007	38,636
Net movement in funds	(4,366)	5,373	1,007	38,636
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	14,128	107,919	122,047	83,411
Total funds carried forward	9,762	113,292	123,054	122,047

# Samphire

## (Registration number: 1106667) Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	3,035	3,598
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	3	-
Cash at bank and in hand	123,269	121,937
	123,272	121,937
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	(3,253)	(3,488)
<b>Net current assets</b>	120,019	118,449
<b>Net assets</b>	123,054	122,047
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>		
<b>Restricted income funds</b>		
Restricted funds	113,292	107,920
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>		
Unrestricted funds	9,762	14,127
<b>Total funds</b>	123,054	122,047



**Staff (2021-22):**

**Indre Lechtimiakyte**—Legal and Migrant  
Support Manager

**Judy Farmer** – Post Detention Caseworker

**Kay Marsh** – Community & Migrant  
Support Coordinator

**Iveta Janova** – Inclusion Development  
Officer

**Julie Lawrence** – Finance & Office Manager

**Trustees:**

**Joy Stephens** - Chair

**Sara Jones** - Treasurer

**Sara Hutchinson** - Trustee

**Liza Seed** - Trustee

**Duane Poppe** - Trustee

**Noel Urbain** - Trustee

**Kumba Kubrally** - Trustee

**Dominic Howden** - Trustee

**Beccy Sawbridge** - Trustee

**Martin Burrell** - Trustee

**Thanks to our funders:**

**National Lottery Community Fund**

**Gibbons Family Trust**

**Allen Lane Foundation**

**Justice Together**

**People's Health Trust**

**AB Charitable**

**Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust**

**Dover Big Local**

**and to all our individual funders**

**Gifts in Kind**

**Thanks to Tony Burrows & K R Gavin for donating the use of a van for the multi-cultural festival.**

**Contact Samphire**

**Tel: 01304 242755**

**Address: 56 Castle Street, Dover, Kent. CT16 1PJ**

**Email: [info@samphireproject.org.uk](mailto:info@samphireproject.org.uk)**

*This brochure has been printed on 100%recycled paper and using only vegetable based dye inks.*