Newsletter 1

First arrivals

The first refugee family arrived in our area on 10 April. To date we know of 5 hosts matched with refugees, 3 in Wiveliscombe, 1 in Ford and 1 in Milverton, 20 refugees in total, 9 adults and 11 children. The visa process is long-winded and the granting of visas is unpredictable, eg members of the same family receiving them days apart. Persistence is needed!

Hosts - Details Please!

We know of about 30 other potential hosts in the Wivey area and we now have a form on our website asking for specific details so we can try and help with matching and inform schools etc of the situation. The form is at https://wiveywelcomesrefugees.org.uk/wivey-hosts-form.html

The Matching Process

Our aim has been to help this happen in a coordinated way so that extended families and people from the same area can be near each other. In practice we are still following a number of leads overseas (mainly in Poland) but have not yet been able to find a single reliable partner who can help with this. If you know of anyone who can help please let us know!

To date the most successful route has been through the Homes for Ukraine Taunton Hosts private Facebook group. If you're keen to get matched quickly we recommend registering with them as well, or let us know if you would like us to pass on requests from them https://www.facebook.com/groups/385559703401847/

The government are recommending matching through the RESET charity: https://www.homesforukraine.org.uk/ We are waiting to hear of the first matches made that way.

However a match is made, all hosts need to register with the government at https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine

Questions that Refugees have

Every family coming over asks about schools, transport and work opportunities. Particularly if you are in a more rural area, please think and ask around how you can help meet these needs (eg school bus routes, sharing lifts, sharing cars, etc)

Supporters - Details Please!

If you can help in any way (lifts, befriending, childcare etc) please fill in the form for this purpose on our website: https://wiveywelcomesrefugees.org.uk/wivey-supporters-form.html As we cover quite a wide rural area we are intending to coordinate this in four rough areas: East (Milverton, Fitzhead, Halse, Ash Priors), North (Brompton Ralph, Huish Champflower, Clatworthy, Tolland, Chipstable and Raddington), Central (Wivey, Langley Marsh and Ford), and West (Bathealton, Ashbrittle, Greenham, Kittisford, Stawley, Appley and Tracebridge).

Please do forward this email to anyone you know who may be interested. If you receive this from a friend and would like to stay in touch please either complete one of the two forms (hosts or supporters) OR email us direct at wiveywelcomes@gmail.com Please do not reply to this email.

We will need help moving and storing some beds and kitchen equipment that has been kindly offered for the use of refugees. If you have a van or can help move these some time between 20 and 23 April, please let us know. If you are a potential host and need to equip a kitchen or need extra bedding or a bed, please ask!

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Wivey Welcome Refugees is a Community Association formed on 01/04/22 with the aim of coordinating the welcome for refugees across the wider Wiveliscombe area. We will soon be affiliated with a local charity (details to follow). Peter Pearson (Chair), Mirren Boyle (Secretary), Tom Fox (Treasurer), Steering group: Mark Blaker, Pauline McNichol (Town Council Refugee Champions), Dr Rosie Riley, Julian Mellor, Ann-Marie Paterson, Kirsty Cockerill, Julia Hatfield

Our mailing address is:

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If you would like to subscribe, please complete one of our two forms or email us at wiveywelcomes@gmail.com

Our thanks for Martin Valuks for permission to use his Ukraine inspired photos