

Wivey Welcomes Refugees Newsletter 6



Steady Progress

At the heart of what we do is the Welcome Hub at St Andrew's, running three times a week, week in and week out. Each time there is an hour long English beginners lesson followed by a 40 minute children's lesson, and we have started an additional conversation class for better speakers at the same time as the children's lesson. To date we have funded and delivered 21 adult lessons and 10 children's lessons. All are well attended, and we can see a definite steady improvement in the quality of English spoken and the confidence of our guests.

Just as important is the practical and emotional support our guests offer each other, the informal conversations that happen and friendships that are being built, and there is something of a mini food bank on Saturday mornings.

Everyone is welcome at the Thursday morning 10-12 'Cafe for All', where the lesson takes place between 10 and 11. We also have a small team of volunteers who provide refreshments and support at the lessons at the Saturday morning and Tuesday afternoon hubs. If you would like to help, offers of home baking are always most welcome, and we'd encourage you first to come along on a Thursday morning first to meet members of 'Wivey Welcomes' and informally meet some of our guests.

By the end of this week 55 Ukrainian guests will have moved into our area, although one family has already moved on to alternative accommodation. A number of others are deciding if they still want to come or are waiting for their visas.

A Need for Hosts

A couple of months ago it seemed like there were more offers of accommodation than there were refugees looking for it. Now that situation has totally changed. On 28 July 5 charities issued a press release saying they were short of many thousand UK hosts: the Taunton 'Homes for Ukraine' group are still posting requests which are going unanswered and we have at least two requests for hosting from friends of guests already in the Wivey area (In both cases a mother with a son and a pet dog). Some have their own transport and others can drive, so even rural areas are being sought.

If you are able to help, you can email us at wiveywelcomes@gmail.com, look at the Taunton Homes for Ukraine facebook page, go to www.opora.uk or www.LoveBristol.org

Transport Challenges

Many of our guests have to attend Taunton Job centre once a week, and others have hospital appointments and other essential trips. We have noted before the shortage and high cost of public transport in our area, and for a while we have had a Whatsapp group for those needing and offering lifts. We are aware that there are some people who have the time to offer lifts but are put off by the high cost of fuel, and so we have agreed to pay a mileage rate of 40p a mile to those offering lifts that aren't part of

their regular journeys. So that we are not taken by surprise, we would appreciate being told in advance if you would like to take this up and for what purpose you will be making the journeys. Thank you!

Thursday Picnics and games at the Wivey Recreation Ground (near the tennis courts)

Thursdays 12.00 - 15.00 (weather permitting). Along with 'Taunton Welcomes Refugees' we will be hosting a picnic with games for children and teenagers and a chance to socialise. Bring your own food. Starting on Thursday 4th August and if we have fun, every Thursday until the end of the school holidays. We are not offering childcare, so children who are not old enough to be in the Rec on their own must be accompanied. Anyone who could lend us bats, balls, hoops, skipping ropes, kites etc please get in touch.

Other Events

There is a meeting for hosts kindly hosted by Eddie East at his home in Langley Marsh on Saturday 13 August at 10 am. If you're a host and didn't know about this, maybe you haven't yet joined the Hosts Whatsapp group?

Ukraine Independence Day 24 August. We are looking to mark this day with a party for guests, hosts and active supporters, probably at Milverton Recreation ground starting at 5pm.

The Wivey Carnival on 11 September. We're looking to have a banner and stall with a Ukrainian theme for this event. There is a banner making workshop in the Community Centre on 10th August 10am-5pm.

Financial Support

If you would like to support what we are doing financially that would be great, as due to the County Council decision to fund support hubs in the main towns only initially we rely entirely on voluntary donations. The generosity of the local community has so far enabled the English lessons, teaching materials and emergency hardship payments but we do need to replenish these funds to keep going.

Our bank account is now up and running: we can accept cheques made out to 'Wiveliscombe Welcomes Refugees' or BACS transfers made to sort code **30-98-97**, account number **85902463**. If you would like to gift aid your donation please ask us how to do this. Finally, if anyone could help us by writing fundraising bids we'd love to hear from you!

Thank you!

First sent on 3 August 2022 Wivey Welcomes Refugees

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 are affiliated to Taunton Welcomes Refugees, registered charity no. 1183921 . Peter Pearson (Chair), Mirren Boyle (Secretary), Tom Fox (Treasurer), Steering group: Mark Blaker, Pauline McNichol (Town Council Refugee Champions), Dr Rosie Riley, Ann-Marie Paterson, Eddie East, 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

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