



A Ukrainian Thank You

It's now 5 months since the First Ukrainian guests arrived in the Wivey area. For a change we will start with words from one of them, spoken at the start of the Independence Day party on 24 August and reproduced with permission:

Today is a very important day for all Ukrainians - Independence Day of Ukraine. But today each of us lives this day especially emotionally. Perhaps today, for the first time, each of us feels what Ukrainian statehood, independence, and freedom mean.

Today we are far from home, but a part of our soul, our heart is always there, at home, in Ukraine.

Today our home is here thanks to you. Each of you opened for us not only your home, but also your heart, and we are eternally grateful to you for your help and support. We endlessly appreciate your support and never tire of being surprised by the openness, kindness and beauty of your soul. We are sure that when the war is over, no matter how our lives turn out, a part of the heart of each of us will be occupied by Britain. We are happy to celebrate the Independence Day of Ukraine with you. And today we want to treat you with dishes of Ukrainian cuisine. Have a nice evening.

We were indeed treated to a feast of delicious Ukrainian food and were

beautifully hosted by Dan and Sally at the Old House in Milverton. It was something of a bitter-sweet occasion, with the date also marking 6 months since the start of the Invasion and as expected, there were extra attacks on civilian targets in Ukraine. Yet that made it extra important to show solidarity our Ukrainian guests on that day.

Busy as Ever!

Do look out for our stall at the Wivey Carnival tomorrow 10-430 and come and say hello!

We're now offering English lessons at both the Beginners and Intermediate levels 3 times a week at our Welcome Hub at St Andrew's church. Everyone is welcome at the Thursday morning 10-12 'Cafe for All'. 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.

We are still seeking proper funding.

There is still a need for hosts.

We currently know of 58 Ukrainian guests in our area, with at least another 8 on their way. Many now have jobs in the area and most of the children have started school or Nursery.

We could do with more people able to offer lifts and we can make a mileage payment for journeys.

Reasons to be Thankful

Our country is in mourning for a beloved Queen, yet we can be thankful for her extraordinary life of service and that we live in a country where both the Head of State and Prime Minister can change in a peaceful and orderly manner in the same week. Meanwhile there is some very positive and encouraging news from the Ukrainian forces breaking through East of Kharkiv.

Finally, those who have used the bureaucracy around applying for visas, welfare checks etc, have found it to be working very much quicker and more smoothly than it was at the start of the crisis. And apparently, *much* better, and more welcoming, than that of another European country often cited as an example of how to do things!