

UWRSG Update

Brexit and refugee policy

In the last newsletter we raised concerns again about the emerging UK refugee policy in response to Brexit. You may remember, the Government announced its intention not to continue to fund refugee support projects that had been funded by the EU in spite of an earlier commitment to do so. Many thanks to those of you who wrote to Julian Smith (1,000 people overall wrote to their MP) and signed the petition (50,000 signed the petition). **The Government has reversed the decision.** Julian Smith passed our letters onto the Home Secretary, Pritti Patel, but as an election has now been called, we will not get a reply.

Bradford food bank

After our last mailing we put out an interim email regarding the provision of food for the Bradford foodbank. A considerable number of refugees rely on food banks. Those who are in receipt of government support may still have insufficient money to meet their needs and those who have been denied leave to remain but cannot return to their country of origin are destitute. All foodbanks had suffered from a shortage of food towards the end of the summer because of the school holidays and there were significant concerns about how a 'no-deal Brexit' would impact both on food supply and affordability.

The response from the Upper Wharfedale community was (as always) fantastic and we unloaded a carload of food at the food bank. **Particular mention must go to the pupils, staff and parents of Upper Wharfedale School who were so generous.**

Future events

Christmas Collection

Last Christmas, for the first time, we had a collection of gifts for refugees. The generosity of the local community was quite astounding and the care and thought that the pupils of Upper Wharfedale School put into collecting and wrapping children's gifts was an inspiration. The school has offered to collect again for children this year, and we would like our wider community efforts to focus on adults. The sort of gifts that are most helpful are toiletries—soap, toothpaste and brushes, bath bags, flannels, shaving foam, razors; gifts that are attractive as well as functional such as socks, water drinking bottles, pens etc. and nice things to enjoy—pretty soap and chocolate! Please contact Stella (017567 61320. stella@stellaperrott.com) if you have a gift you would like to donate.

Snug packs

So far we have raised £80 for Snug Packs (hats, scarves, gloves, underwear) for refugees in the French camps, if you would like to donate money for this please get in touch with Jane 01756 761333

Dates for your diary

Carol singing for Christian Aid in Tesco's Foyer on 20 December between 2 and 4 pm.

Coffee morning Buckden Village Institute, Buckden 11 January 2020 10am - 12noon

The Election

We have written to all the parliamentary candidates to ask about their refugee policies. We have specifically asked about how they will improve the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees; improve the UK's record on offering asylum; increase the number of children accepted into the UK ; and, improve the treatment of children approaching eighteen years of age whose 'leave to remain' will shortly expire.

We will produce a special edition of this newsletter with their responses at the beginning of December.

Who are we?

The **Upper Wharfedale Refugee Support Group** comprises a network of individuals living in Upper Wharfedale and Littondale who are concerned for refugees and wish to help in some way.

If you live, work or holiday in Upper Wharfedale and surrounding area and would like to be added to our mailing list or would like to help, please email refugees@upperwharfedale.net