

## Upper Wharfedale Refugee Support Group

Please can you **circulate the update** amongst your community and friends. We are hearing that there are people wanting to support refugees but don't know how to make links. We can help! [refugees@upperwharfedale.net](mailto:refugees@upperwharfedale.net)

### Requests for help

Many thanks to those who have been busily collecting **toiletries** for Upper Wharfedale's **Christmas appeal**. There is still time to put them in your shopping trolley! Please drop any donations at Buckden Barn or contact me [stella@stellaperrott.com](mailto:stella@stellaperrott.com).

If any of you are wondering how best to support those who might be cold this winter, we are collecting winter coats for BIASAN (men's and children's are particularly needed). We can also arrange for anyone who wants to donate their winter fuel payment (or part of) to BIASAN to support refugees in fuel poverty.

Upper Wharfedale Churches Together (Christian Aid) will be **carol singing** for refugees and the earth's poorest at Tesco on 20 December 2-4pm. Everyone is welcome to join in the singing.

The number of **Ukrainian refugees** that have come to the UK and to the area have slowed significantly. Requests for homes continues though and the recent resurgence of Russian bombing of cities means they may fluctuate but the need will remain. We are still looking for landlords who can offer permanent or longer-term accommodation. Ukrainians are primarily working but many have children and cannot work full time. Rent (up to a certain level) is covered by benefits but is less than is usually charged in the Dale. If you feel you can offer accommodation, there are plenty of people who will support you and your guest/ tenant. Please get in touch with Nicky [nicola.corp@mustardmanagement.com](mailto:nicola.corp@mustardmanagement.com)

Local **Ukrainian fundraiser**. UWRSRG has been raising funds to provide transport for Ukrainian refugees or their hosts. And we have had donations of two old cars which also requires some fundraising for costs (Nicky again). Alongside this UW Ukrainians and hosts have benefited hugely from the work of **Skipton and Craven Ukrainian Refugee Support** which has a regular coffee morning with games, English lessons, free toiletries and food. It has been very successful in helping families come together, support hosts and help integration but has now run out of money. Angie Pedley [angie.pedley@gmail.com](mailto:angie.pedley@gmail.com) is helping to raise funds for them through a charity 'birthday fund-raiser' and if you can donate, please do.

### Dates for your diary

As above, carol singing for 20 December at Tesco.

**National Holocaust Memorial Day** is on Friday 27 January. There will be a vigil in the early evening (time to be decided) to remember the victims of the Holocaust and those currently experiencing persecution (more [here](#)).

## **Craven District of Sanctuary**

A Zoom meeting to consider how to take forward the plans for a **Craven District of Sanctuary** was held on. The session was primarily an information giving session which included an overview of the global to the local, the county council's role, how City of Sanctuary works and supports local groups and how local groups were developed and support refugees. The You tube video is attached:

[Introduction to Becoming a District of Sanctuary for Craven - YouTube](#)

A core group has been formed to take the work forward and there will be another open meeting in January. The January meeting will be much more discussion based and identify how best to move forward. We are particularly keen to involve parish councillors, businesses, community group, church and education groups – the people up and down the dale who know how to make a welcoming community. Please get in touch with me, if you would like to be added to the circulation list.

### **How can we help?**

If you or a group/ organisation with which you are involved would like to understand the current situation better or want to make decisions about how best to help (for example, we are getting queries about Albanians and small boat crossings) please do get in touch. We now have a wealth of knowledge and experience and are happy to share it.

### **Christmas**

This seems to have been the worst year (in my memory, anyway) for refugees. The climate has become much more hostile, not just in the UK but across Europe too. The passing of the Nationality and Borders Bill and the plans to send refugees to Rwanda has been particularly hateful.

Yet, also it has been a year when people have opened their doors and hearts to refugees, firstly in relation to Afghanistan and then Ukraine. We continue to see people promoting the rights and humanity of refugees. At the weekend Sheffield Labour party chose, from a highly contested and diverse field, a refugee to represent them in the next general election. The generosity of people in Upper Wharfedale over the course of the year has been astounding. It is through these acts kindness that we will make a difference.

Many thanks to the support you have given me this year. Many of you are not able to do all you used to do, but your support and encouragement has been vital.

Wishing you and all those you care about a very **Happy Christmas** (whatever your beliefs or none) and a peaceful 2023.

Stella

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