



Community News

SPECIAL Issue

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*The Community News is an information service from PACDG - the Presteigne Area Community Development Group
"Working Together For Our Community"*

Presteigne Area Refugee Support – an update for you

We're continuing to support with your help, and that of the wider of community, the Ukrainian arrivals who are living in the Presteigne area. Some have now been here for more than six months and are settled in full-time work, while a few are still looking for work. Their ability to find jobs is partly limited by transport issues and their level of English. Hosts and our support network have been helping with the writing of CVs and making links with possible employers, and also encouraging the learning of English through online ESOL courses and individual tuition. Amazing work continues to be done by all hosts and the Ukrainians themselves...

Some Ukrainians have now moved on or are looking to move on from their initial hosts. For some it may be possible to rent privately; others are going to find it very difficult to afford to do so (even with Universal Credit's housing benefit allocation) and will need, at least initially, to continue to be part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and will therefore need to find new hosts. It's not yet clear what will happen once that scheme is over.

If you are willing to be a host for a short period or offer a temporary safety net at an affordable rate for those who are trying to move into private rented accommodation but need time to get their finances in order, or if you know of any flats, houses or annexes that might be rentable/affordable then please let us know – and we can put you in touch. The challenge is that any new accommodation needs to be walkable to school or town or on a decent bus route.

Now that many of the Ukrainians are feeling more settled there's not the need to support people in quite the same way so it's much less time-consuming from a host's (or indeed temporary landlord's) point of view, and it's enormously rewarding to see people's lives take shape. Do please consider it if you can.

An update on the Presteigne Area Refugee Support Fund, which is kindly held for us by PACDG and administered by its wonderful treasurer Maggie James... the Fund was boosted HUGELY by Presteigne's Ukrainian Fundraiser on 25 June: we received an incredible total of £5,313 to add to the £3,000 from Pant Hall's garden opening and many other donations from the Presteigne community, including some very generous (you know who you are) one-off gifts. This was then boosted by £146 from Kington Choral Society's summer concert, and then a fabulous £332 from the Presteigne Festival collection at its final concert at St Andrew's. A big thank you to you all - we're very grateful for the way you have continued to think about the Ukrainians' situation.

The current total for the Fund is now £7498.31. We've used it so far to help with the following: car insurance for some whose new-found jobs relied on having a car; we've also covered fuel costs for those driving people to Universal Credit and medical appointments; bought bike helmets for the children and English-language books; helped hosts with initial set-up costs; and made hardship payments for essential needs to one individual whose Universal Credit payment was incorrectly withheld (if anyone would like a complete list of payments then I can give you one.) There are many of you who also help with driving people to places without claiming, for which thank you!

We are now working on setting up an English-language class in Presteigne and will be looking at other ways to use the monies you've so generously donated. We don't need any more at the moment.

Thank you for your support - and a last word... as many of you know, I'm taking a break for a few months. I'm leaving the administration of the Fund in the capable hands of Kate van den Ende, John Trew and Kate Bull. The initial port of call for any 'grants' will be Kate van den Ende. Kate van den Ende and Carol Driver will be helping coordinate support for the remaining hosts and guests while I'm away (with help from many of you).

If you need to get in touch, email: katevandenende@btinternet.com or carolmdriver@hotmail.co.uk

With thanks to you all, Emma Lilley

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