

Welcome to Newsletter number 7

Read on for news of our Open Evening

See page 2-3 for our ASPIRATIONS and information on the different schemes to support refugees, page 3 for appeals for numbers enthusiasts and fundraising ideas, and page 4 for events coming up.

AGM and Open Meeting

Malvern Welcomes held its AGM and Open meeting on Thursday October 11th. We have now been a registered charity for just over a year and what a busy year it has been!

The meeting was attended by over 60 people, who enjoyed delicious homemade baklava, made by one of the refugee families.

The business of the AGM was conducted efficiently and briefly. All trustees stood down and were re-elected, with the exception of David Kitcat who stood down as

Chair. David has been a fantastic Chair and was warmly thanked. The reports of the trustees and the treasurer were accepted and are available on our website.



We were delighted to welcome the first refugee family to Malvern at the end of June. They have been helped to settle in by a brilliant team of volunteer supporters, and the work of this team was described by Lyn Goswell. The family have embraced the learning of English with enthusiasm, greatly assisted by our ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) team, led by Sharon Baker who talked about the pleasure of working with such a co-operative and hard working family.

Without offers of accommodation from private landlords it would not be possible for refugee families to come to Malvern. It was a sign of their commitment to Malvern Welcomes and its aims that that two landlords were at the meeting; Jan Watts is already running inspiring English conversation sessions which the refugees attend. She explained her reasons for wanting to become further involved, telling us that she was delighted to be able to offer a property to a refugee family and urging other landlords to think about this option.

Our guest speaker was Carly Whyborn from Reset, a charity that has been very recently set up by the Home Office to advise and assist organisations through the process of applying to resettle refugee families through the Community Sponsorship scheme. We heard of the considerable interest in community sponsorship that is developing in UK and of its origins in Canada in 1979.

Ruth Forecast shared the aspiration of Malvern Welcomes for the coming year, which includes resettling two or three more refugee families.

We thanked Lansdowne Methodist Church for allowing us to use their hall, and left feeling very positive about the year ahead.

The Annual Report and Treasurer's Report are on our website if you want to read them in more detail - malvernwelcomes.org

Why two schemes?

You may be aware that Malvern has now welcomed two refugee families to our town – but you may not know that they have arrived via two separate schemes. Briefly, this is how the schemes differ.

The Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation scheme (SVPR)

This dates from 2015 when David Cameron, the then Prime Minister, made the commitment that the UK would resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection. This scheme is run through local authorities. Malvern Welcomes had already been actively campaigning to persuade Worcestershire County Council to play its part in taking refugees, and in the spring of 2016 Worcestershire finally decided to resettle 13 families and contracted with Refugee Action (www.refugee-action.org.uk) to manage the resettlement. It was very disappointing that none of these families was placed in Malvern, due to the lack of suitable housing. This year, following discussions with Malvern Welcomes and other Welcome groups in the county, Worcestershire has agreed to resettle a further 12 families under the SVPR. A family has recently arrived in Malvern under the scheme, which continues to be managed by Refugee Action. Although we are not their primary support, Malvern Welcomes is now in regular contact with the family, it having been agreed with Refugee Action and Worcestershire County Council that we should play a significant role in supporting the family as befrienders.

The Full Community Sponsorship scheme

In 2016 the government launched a second scheme – Full Community Sponsorship (FCS). This differed markedly from the SVPR, in that local community organisations, rather than the local authority, could apply to the Home Office to accept a family for resettlement. In doing so the organisation would be responsible for raising all the money required to equip a house, pay any rent voids that may arise, cover



the cost of interpretation fees, ensure that the family had English language teaching etc. We had to show we had at least £9000 in order to be accepted. Under this scheme we could decide what to provide for the family, within the limits of our income and being aware that what we might provide for one family should be equitable with the next family to arrive under the FCS.

Having two schemes has inevitably led to comparisons being made about what is provided – for example, we have provided internet, TV and licence, whereas Refugee Action does not provide these things. The FCS scheme has offered the family a wider volunteer support network, and it must be said that having these two schemes running side by side does not sit easily. We have agreed how we will work with Refugee Action in order to minimise conflict. We will not make up the difference where they provide a lower level of service and we will only do what they are not contracted to do by the County Council ie befriending: helping with some lifts and informal English conversation.

We do not know how things will change in the future, but it looks likely that the government will promote the FCS schemes, for two reasons - firstly it saves them money, and secondly research indicates that FCS have a high rate of success in integration.

*We need someone to complete a **research evaluation questionnaire** for us. The Home Office have asked us to provide the information and if you like figures and stats in boxes now is your chance! Please contact dick.stockford@slj.org.uk*

FUNDRAISING - URGENT!!

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY IDEAS ABOUT HOW WE CAN EFFECTIVELY FUNDRAISE TO ENABLE US TO WELCOME MORE FAMILIES AND DEVELOP A CLUSTER? WE WANT TO GET BETTER AT THIS SO IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH SUE WOLFENDALE ON susanwolfendale@btinternet.com

EVENTS & NOTICES

TRAINING FOR BEFRIENDERS AND SAFEGUARDING

Worcestershire Welcomes are planning sessions on befriending - what it is, how to do it, what to avoid - and safeguarding, in the new year.

Both courses promise to be really good days, with contributions from experienced befrienders and safeguarding experts, and a great opportunity to meet others from across the county who are also working to support refugee families.

If you'd like to attend (it's free!) please email Alan Meyrick on alanmeyrick@btinternet.com to register your interest.

BRING AND SHARE LUNCH

There's a 'bring and share' lunch on 24th November 12.30 onwards in St Andrew's Methodist Church, Pump Street, Worcester WR1 2QT . All the refugee families in the county will be invited, and all volunteers and supporters of Malvern Welcomes are also warmly invited to join us for some pre-Christmas socialisation!

FINALLY - A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED MALVERN WELCOMES THROUGH DONATIONS - YOUR SUPPORT IS INVALUABLE.

A quote from the son of a supporter: 'Following the death of my father we held a memorial service and made a collection in aid of two local charities. Dad was a firm believer in welcoming people into the Malvern area and did all he could through the local Quaker group to help people find their feet.' A cheque for over £200 was enclosed.

THANK YOU!

AN EARLY HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL OF US AT MALVERN WELCOMES TO ALL OUR MANY SUPPORTERS - WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

As ever, please get in touch with any comments or feedback, either through the website malvernwelcomes.org, our facebook page or by e mail to info@malvernwelcomes.org.