



<http://www.malvernwelcomes.org>

Registered Charity 1174004

Malvern Welcomes Newsletter

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2023

Issue 16

The Last Six Months

We are delighted that we have now welcomed a new family to Malvern under the UK Government's Community Sponsorship (CS) scheme. On the CS scheme we have full responsibility for resettling the family and must provide eight hours per week English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) to each family member. We look forward to supporting them as they settle into life in our community.

This will be the fourth family to be resettled by Malvern Welcomes under this scheme. It is a significant achievement, not just for our charity, but for the wider community in our area whose continued generosity and support have made this possible.

For people arriving in a strange country where they are not familiar with the language, learning how to live and navigate everyday life is a huge challenge.

When the first family was resettled in Malvern over five years ago, we were concerned that they might feel isolated, given how strange the language, culture and bureaucracy was to them. Since that time, I have asked many resettled people "What was the strangest thing to you when you first came to the UK?" They always give the same reply without hesitation - "Everything!"

Now, however, that they are living independently and confidently in the area, they are eager to give a warm and caring welcome to the newly arrived family and to support them through their first challenging months.

Malvern Welcomes was recently invited to send a small delegation to a Call for Evidence run by the Commission for the Integration of Refugees, which was held in Hereford. The Commission aimed to gather evidence from rural areas to add to the data from larger cities. Our delegation included two resettled people whose competency in English and confidence in expressing their views and making suggestions was truly impressive and inspiring. Hearing them speak, it was hard to believe that neither of them had been able to speak a word of English when they arrived in the UK a few years ago.

We recently set up a working party to explore ways of creating a more cohesive programme of support into employment or better-quality jobs for those already in employment - from CV writing to job seeking to applying for jobs to preparing for interview.

Families are required to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after they have been in the UK for five years and some have now applied and been granted ILR while others have started the application process.

Within the last six months a new baby was born and three youngsters have reached school-leaving age and are now attending college courses. Several adults have passed their driving theory test - a challenge which they have met with great perseverance, bearing in mind that English is not their first language - and, one by one, they have also been passing their driving practical test.

It is vital that we do all that we can to challenge this cruel treatment of people who, through no fault of their own, need to ask our country for sanctuary.

Our social activities and events continue to be much enjoyed. These have included an informal cricket match, a picnic and a coach trip to Barry Island. The very talented Abdullah Tamo has given a number of performances including in the Requiem for Peace at Colwall Church and in Evesham at a concert for Refugee Week.

As Malvern Welcomes continues to welcome families to our area, we work closely with seven other Welcome groups as part of the umbrella group, Worcestershire Welcomes Refugees. Some of the Welcome groups in our county are working to support refugees and asylum seekers who are in very challenging circumstances in hotels and dispersal accommodation. They continue to provide clothing and toiletries to people who have arrived with only the clothes they are wearing and to support them with essential advice.

In each group in Worcestershire there are several active volunteers and large numbers of supporters. This level of concern and support is replicated throughout the UK, showing clearly that not everyone accepts the increasingly negative rhetoric in the media around refugees and asylum seekers.

We, rightly, applaud the tremendous commitment of volunteers and the courageous way in which refugees and asylum seekers overcome huge hurdles. However, we are all too aware that the passing of the Illegal Migration Bill in July 2023 marked an ominous moment. It will cause much distress, preventing anyone from seeking asylum in the UK. Anyone who tries will, in effect, be criminalized.

In the words of Enver Solomon, CEO of the Refugee Council:

“The government has chosen a path that doesn’t reflect the values most of us hold dear: of showing compassion, respect and humanity for those people who through no fault of their own become refugees, and who are simply searching for safety.

There have been a number of migration bills in recent years, but make no mistake: the illegal migration bill that has now passed through parliament is a watershed moment. It will go down in history as a milestone like no other. As the UN has said, it “extinguishes access to asylum” in the UK for anyone arriving by a route the government deems “irregular”.

It is vital that we do all that we can to challenge this cruel treatment of people who, through no fault of their own, need to ask our country for sanctuary.

You can read more about the implications of the Illegal Migration Bill on this link: [The Refugee Ban Bill has passed - so what does it mean? - City of Sanctuary UK](#)

Ruth Forecast , Malvern Welcomes Co-ordinator



Worcestershire Welcomes Refugees publicity officer: bobjefford@gmail.com

22.05.2023

OPEN LETTER ON “ILLEGAL” ASYLUM SEEKERS from WORCESTERSHIRE WELCOMES REFUGEES coalition to councils in the county.

*We are writing on behalf of all the **Worcestershire Welcomes** groups and asylum seekers support groups in the county. We are grateful to county, city and district councils for the welcome they have extended so far to refugees in our midst. We acknowledge and value the unstinting support of the resettlement team employed by Worcestershire County Council.*

However, we have become deeply concerned by the tone of the rhetoric being used, especially at a national level, by some politicians and some media who refer to ‘Illegal Asylum Seekers’. We challenge the use of ‘Illegal’ in this context. This is of course not the only terminology misused in this way, but is, we believe, the one that underpins most of the rest.

We ask our County, City, Borough, and District Councils to speak out against the use of such dangerous and inflammatory language.

Since the arrival of the first Syrian refugees in 2016, and subsequently people from Afghanistan and Ukraine, all our voluntary community groups have offered a welcome to those seeking refuge in our county. We have also been encouraged on the occasions when our local MPs have helped and supported in some individual cases. Additionally there are many other sympathetic citizens who help, practically and morally. These actions show our society to be compassionate and caring, fulfilling our legal and moral obligations.

All our Welcome groups offer support to people of all ages - men, women and children - who have fled their homeland and seek sanctuary in a safe place. The causes of their flight include war, torture and persecution in their home countries, and they have almost always suffered immense personal trauma to get here. These people may have arrived through UK Government sponsored schemes, or they may have made their way here in desperation by other routes. In either case, we offer unconditional support without discrimination.

If the refugees did not arrive by one of the few officially sanctioned routes, they need to apply for asylum. Asylum is another word for sanctuary, so ‘asylum seeker’ is a perfectly correct and appropriate term for all people coming to our country seeking safety.

This is embedded in both international legislation and in our own law. They are not ‘illegal’ unless, and until, their case has been properly investigated and is then refused. Only if they do not leave when requested would their presence here become illegal. To use the term ‘Illegal Asylum Seeker’ is factually inaccurate.

This term, and other language suggesting that we are being ‘invaded’ or ‘overwhelmed’ by young men who are ‘economic migrants’ rather than by people seeking safety, is dangerously inflammatory. Such language increases violent prejudice and danger towards those already officially resident here, as well as towards those whose cases will be agreed once fully and properly considered.

This is why we seek your support to ensure that the narrative offered is accurate and respectful of the human rights of people who have already suffered so much.

Furthermore, in view of the widespread practical compassion for these people shown by our County, we request a meeting with the leader of Worcestershire County Council to discuss applying for the ‘Council of Sanctuary UK Award’ - see (<https://cityofsanctuary.org/>). By this means we hope to build solidarity and respond to hostility.

*We look forward to your response to **bobjefford@gmail.com** (WWR publicity officer)*

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Forecast for Worcestershire Welcomes Refugees & Malvern Welcomes

Johannah Dyer for Bromsgrove and District Asylum Seekers Support

Yvonne Rendell for Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees

Margaret Rowley for Droitwich Welcomes Refugees

Julie Tucker for Evesham Vale Welcomes Refugees

Brian Darwood for Worcester City Welcomes Refugees

Janice Bell for Wyre Forest Refugee Support Group

Sarah Lange for Wyre Forest Asylum Seekers Support Group

Refugee Week, Malvern



On the 18th June, as part of a number of events held throughout Worcestershire, Malvern Welcomes volunteers ran a stall in Church Street, Great Malvern.

It was a great opportunity for volunteers to raise the local profile of Refugee Week, a global event which takes place annually, and to talk about the challenging situations facing asylum seekers and refugees in Worcestershire and other parts of the UK. We particularly wanted to challenge the current negative rhetoric around refugees and asylum seekers. Passers-by were invited to sign an open letter to the Prime Minister regarding seriously held concerns about the Illegal Migration Bill and to urge him to reconsider and drop this incredibly harmful legislation.

People also conveyed their thoughts on the comment tree.



Sadly, since then the bill was passed into law on July 13th.

Kate Gant, volunteer

Call for Compassion

As refugee, all I am asking/requesting is humanity, kindness & solidarity for our fellow human beings going through struggles and suffering to get to safety. Let's not take our peace/security for granted. It's simple, be kind, compassionate, treat people with respect/dignity. The enemy of love is not hate. It is indifference. The enemy of love is turning away from those in need. The enemy of love is doing nothing when you can help your fellow man.

Extract from "The Lightless Sky" by Gulwali Passarlay, published 2015 by Atlantic Books.
Included by kind permission of the author.

The Bring & Share lunch on Saturday 3rd June



Thank goodness we held it in June! Sunshine: days of warmth and blue skies - that was the whole of June and we had a truly glorious day for the bring and share lunch at Tethers End.

Around 40-plus of us brought great food and enjoyed time together.

Jim brought tennis balls with streamers and entertained the children; Kate brought emergency extra forks from the Hay Festival; Alison had persuaded a very capable and kind young man, Tim Cook (of TC and the Groove family), to bring his drums, his talent (and his mother, Deb) to join us. Tim gave excellent drumming workshops before and after lunch and it went down a storm, especially with the young people who showed their own rhythmic talents.

Many thanks to Jim, Kate, Alison and Tim for entertainment - and to everyone for making it such a tasty and relaxed picnic.

Gluten-free Flatbreads

Back in April I was treated by Raghad to a Master-class (Mistress-class?) in making gluten-free flatbreads. The recipe follows. Raghad showed me the trick of rolling out the dough between cling-film, using a small saucepan lid as the cutter (perfect size) and suggested toppings.

Flatbreads Recipe

Note: the amount makes plenty for lunch and the remainder (plenty) for freezing.

Ingredients:

300g Almond flour
170g Coconut flour
8 x dessertspoons psyllium husks
8 x dessertspoons flax seeds
1 teaspoon g-f baking powder
4 dessertspoons olive oil
4 cups warm water



Method:

Heat oven to 180 degrees.

Line 2 baking sheets with greaseproof paper.



Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl and leave the dough to rest for 10 minutes.

With olive oil rubbed on the palm of hands, take a small handful of dough and roll it out, between sheets of cling-film; remove the top cling film and cut out a flatbread using a small saucepan lid, and lift it to the baking tray. Scoop together the off-cuts and continue till both baking sheets are full. Apply toppings if using and bake in the oven for 6 - 8 minutes. Repeat till all the dough is used.

Keep warm on a warm plate & cover with a tea-cloth till all are cooked.

Toppings.

Finely cubed onion, chopped tomato, seasoned with sumac and a little salt, olive oil, fresh spinach that has been sprinkled with salt, left for few minutes then squeezed out and chopped. Add to the tomato and onion mix. Spread over the flatbreads before baking.

Fresh thyme leaves and oregano, finely chopped. Brush the uncooked flatbreads with a little olive oil, sprinkle with the herbs and bake.

Ingredients for Raed's Festive Risotto ... as an extra.

Onions - chopped

Mushrooms - chopped

Stock

White wine (optional - or extra stock)

Risotto rice

Top with Chopped chestnuts and grated Parmigiano cheese.

Jean Bryant, volunteer

A Trip to the Seaside

The excitedly anticipated coach trip to Barry Island was a great success.

A. It has always been one of my dreams to go to the sea and enjoy the picturesque view. I will never forget that the people at Barry Island were very welcoming to the Malvern Welcomes group. Despite the weather being rainy it was a more than wonderful day and we enjoyed our time a lot.

I also fulfilled my dream and swam in the sea. Thank you to the Malvern Welcomes Team for giving us the opportunity to have such a memorable trip.



Jane and I went with two of the teenagers to do a recce on a very cold and windy day back in March. It met with approval and the coach was booked for a day in July with the hope that the temperature might be more comfortable by then.

Unfortunately, we were greeted by a blast of chilly air as we tumbled off the coach. As Brits, we felt that we should demonstrate the way of having seaside fun in the UK was to smile and say how much we were enjoying ourselves while clinging to our waterproofs and blankets!

A. We went on a trip with Malvern Welcomes to Barry Island which is at the seaside. It is a fantastic place. The weather was NOT fine! However, we enjoyed everything and we chatted and shared food. Me and my family would definitely like to go again next year.

N. It was the first time that I see real beach. I used to watch it on TV. It's a different feeling. Oh, how beautiful it is, even though the weather was cold and the clouds were overcast.

However, the youngsters were immediately on the beach playing and kicking a football. Several people were even bolder and went in the sea. For many it was the first time that they had seen the sea and it was a significant experience for them.

B. I just want to thank you so much for the lovely trip that we all enjoyed in Wales. What I think is that everyone liked it and enjoyed their time together. Also, I asked a few of my friends about going there again and they said that they would really like to go again because actually it was wonderful!

R. (one of the children) We have had lots of fun with friends and I wish it was longer!

It was a true joy to spend a day at the seaside with such delightful company.

K. My family and I would like to say thank you very much for the seaside trip. It was a beautiful place and we had a great time with everyone.



Ruth Forecast, Malvern Welcomes Coordinator, and Family Members

Malvern Welcomes ESOL Programme Update

Malvern Welcomes has had the pleasure of supporting resettled families with their English for over five years now and, consequently, accumulated a lot of experience and knowledge. Fundamental to the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Programme are the skills and commitment of its qualified tutors and the commitment and motivation of the many learners - the commitment of both is evident in the excellent progress made in the English language skills of learners.

We are excited to have recently welcomed a fourth family under the Community Sponsorship Scheme. We witness each time that almost miraculous process of people learning and, consequently, living in a new language in a new life. Arguably, when we learn a new language, we take on a new identity or, in the very least, a new and important aspect to our existing identity. More people on the planet are bilingual than are monolingual and a significant percentage of people live in more than two languages. Malvern Welcomes is very clear that bilingualism and multilingualism should be celebrated, and first language/s must be valued.

The English language needs of the new family will naturally be prioritised on our ESOL programme - not least because, on applying to the Home Office to sponsor a family under Community Sponsorship, we are obliged to provide 8 hours per week of English language support to each family member.

Moreover, it is probably the case that, as in previous years, the adults would be unable to join any certified college ESOL courses in Worcestershire until the following academic year. On progressing to Entry Level 1, from September adults can usually attend two 2 hour ESOL classes per week in Worcester.

Meanwhile, the Eden Centre in Malvern Link offers free community ESOL classes one morning a week during term time.

Sharon Baker, ESOL Coordinator

The Malvern Welcomes team of brilliant ESOL tutors expands and contracts as, like for all volunteers working in Malvern Welcomes and elsewhere, life events and other commitments dictate their availability to volunteer.

Currently our team has shrunk a little. So if you are a qualified EFL / ESL / ESOL teacher, or you know others who are, have a little time to commit each week to teaching resettled individuals and would like to apply to join our ESOL Team, please email me at:

sharon.baker@malvernwelcomes.net



Primary pleasure, perseverance, practice ... and perfection (well almost!)

Further to my previous writing about volunteering at a very welcoming primary school, we have sent two of our delightful children onto secondary school, with our best wishes and joy in their hearts. They were really looking forward to their new experiences. Before they left primary, we did lots of exciting activities, I like to think they were. Judging by the smiles on their faces during the sessions I believe they were enjoying themselves, as well as learning. At times they asked, ‘What have I learnt today?’. A great question because, although it was not measurable, it led to discussions about perseverance, practice and perfection (well almost) as being invaluable attributes. This was done through sudoku, poetry and Doble. They loved the competition in trying to beat Cliff, which they often did - I must be getting old!

The younger girl has blossomed so wonderfully. Gradually she began to speak English, well, at least the words were in the language we love so well, but they were certainly not in the right order. One fine morning I went in, and she came out with very understandable speech. It brought a lump to my throat. She enjoyed our time together doing shapes, bingo for phonics and stories. We finished with learning nursery rhymes, going on a Bear Hunt, which was great because she loved repeating her favourites and “we can’t go over it, we can’t go under it, we can’t go over it, we have to go through it”.

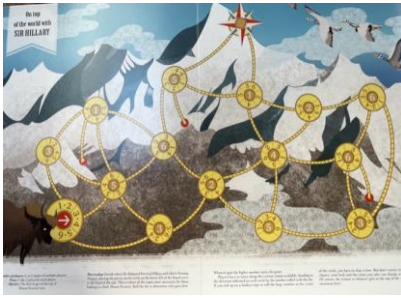
Finally on the last day of the summer term, another big step forward in confidence was made. I took our dog, Parker, into school. She was loved by all the children. Although our little star has always said she was afraid of dogs, that day, with a little help from her friends, she stroked Parker, and said, ‘her fur is so soft’, with a big smile on her face. Maybe, no big deal for most of us, but for her it was a real breakthrough.

The children have shown a tremendous growth in self-confidence and become a real part of the school.

Cliff Farthing, volunteer

Volunteering at a local primary school for the last two terms, has been fun and very rewarding. I have been working with a brother and sister aged 7 and 11 who have been in the school for nearly two years and have needed some help to gain more confidence in their language and communication skills. We looked at maps, and supported the school curriculum of The Romans and Greeks; we looked at Boats and Explorers; we did word searches and puzzles and read Ali Baba and the 40 thieves. The younger pupil was quite reticent to begin with so we did drawings and told stories and created puppet shows, making origami and masks. It was exciting experiencing their changing confidence and seeing their abilities start to flourish. They worked hard and were so determined to learn. It is so satisfying to feel that one can make a small contribution. I would recommend volunteering to anyone who would like to help!

Sue Marshall, volunteer



Over the last six months, my input at school with a student in Year 6 has revolved, at his request, around wordsearches and games - motivational ways of expanding vocabulary, learning spelling and chatting about anything and everything.

We have raced to the moon, crossed America, found Tutankhamun's treasure, been icebound in the Antarctic, climbed Everest ... And all these adventures somehow seem to have been

metaphors for the journey he, and other children, have been on since resettling in Malvern: a huge challenge with great achievements and occasional setbacks, embraced with a wonderfully open mind, curiosity, courage and good humour.

Alison Brough, volunteer

Picture From The Big Book of Explorers' Games by Francesca Rossi

Cuppas and Cakes

August saw the return of our annual Cuppa and Cakes event which is held as part of Jim Morris's open art studio.

Jim shows his work as part of Worcestershire Open Studios which is the largest free art event in the county.

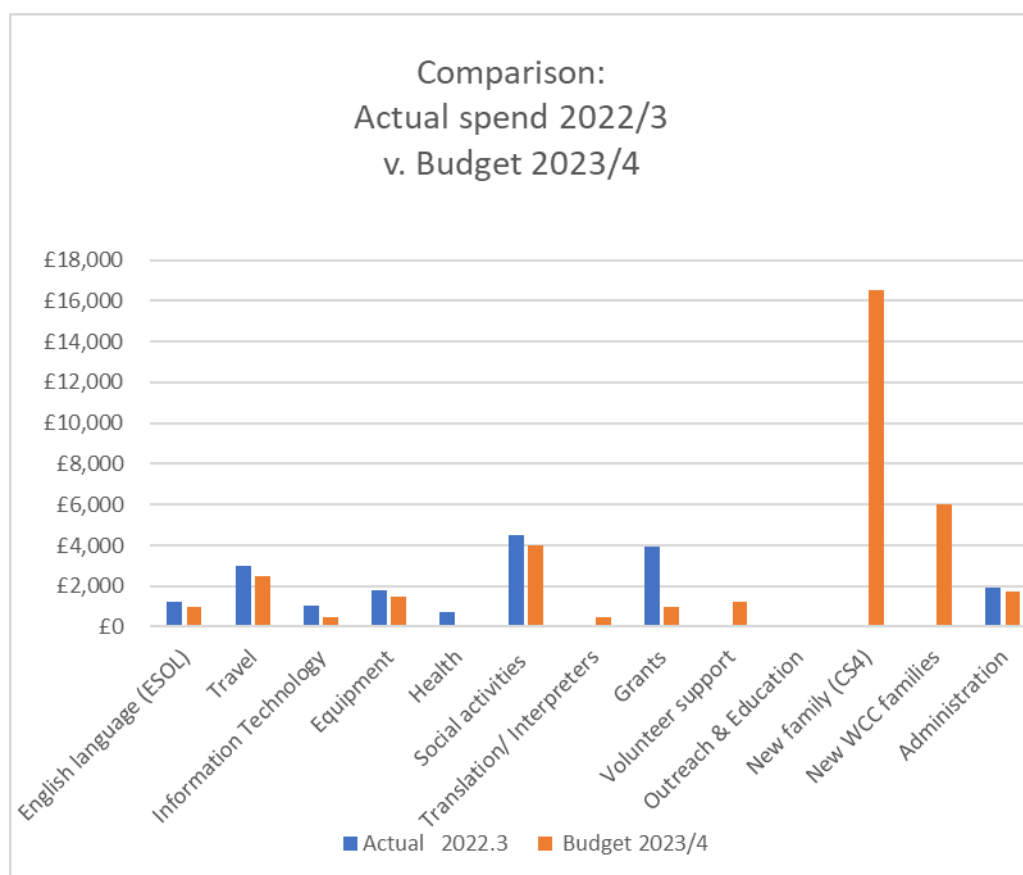
The sun shone and visitors had the opportunity to look at Jim's art work and sit in the garden to enjoy a cuppa and some splendid cakes.

This year we raised £500 for Malvern Welcomes from individual donations. Thank you to everyone who came along.

Kate Gant and Alison Brough, volunteers



How we spend your money



Expenditure: total so far to date £11,110

Since the last report in March 2023, expenditure and income have had a quiet phase, up till July.

Since then, with a new Community Sponsorship family now approved by the Home Office for Malvern, almost £7000 has so far been spent of our £16,500 new family welcome budget to fit out the home which we have secured with essential furniture and fittings. The house was approved from August, so we expect to pay rent (called 'void rent'). Now the family has arrived, the rent will be paid by housing benefits through universal credit support. We expect at least 4 weeks of 'void rent' will be reimbursed to us by the Home Office. The preparations for the arrival of the new community sponsorship family and the period since they arrived have been a very busy period, with many purchases and support expenditure completed to ensure that everything was ready for them.

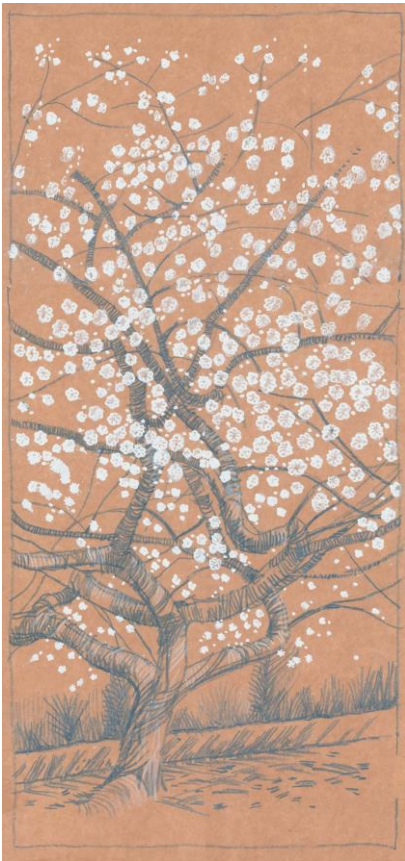
Travel has figured significantly once again with members of 2 families taking driving lessons and progressing well, for which MW provides a limited subsidy. There have also been train and taxi costs to facilitate families in attending their summer term training, and mileage costs for volunteers supporting English language classes and the Conversation Café.

The other significant expenditure this year is on activities, notably the outing to Barry Island in South Wales for the families, and a small amount on subsidised membership of local clubs and societies. Activities are a key objective for us, encouraging the families to build contacts with members of the local community and contribute to good health and well-being.

Fund-raising

The graph above compares actual expenditure in the financial year 2022/3 with budgeted expenditure in 2023/4 and shows how the acceptance of a new family under the Community Sponsorship Scheme (CS4) with an estimated expenditure of £16,500 and the anticipation that Malvern Welcomes support for Worcestershire County Council sponsored refugees resettled in Malvern (estimated at up to £6000) will necessitate a reduction in support for existing families. Even so, we are budgeting for a financial loss of approximately £7,500 in this financial year.

Income: total so far to date £3,467



So far this year, the recent Cuppas and Cakes fund raising event raised over £512.

There have been donations from Eliza Marshall Music, members and friends (as well as membership renewals), and from two local charities: The North Malvern Chapel Trust and St James Church in Colwall.

Also there has been Gift Aid recovered on last year donations.

Jim Morris, Cuppas and Cakes

Overall, from an opening balance of £39,348, we now have a balance of £36,285; so, still a healthy balance to support the planned expenditure to welcome and settle the new family in their first year.

In addition, we are about to embark on a series of funding submissions to local and national charities which have supported us over past years. Hopefully this will enable us to replace the deficit and build the financial resource to fund future families.

But importantly, as in previous years, the major contribution to funds continues to be the generosity of members and friends towards Malvern Welcomes to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude.

Thank you all.

Richard King (Treasurer) and Tony Vere (Fund-raising)

The Relaunch of Malvern Welcomes Facebook Page

As some of you will know, Malvern Welcomes recently relaunched our Facebook page. This is an important new beginning for our organisation. We have gained an important platform to spread awareness of the challenges refugees face in the modern world.



In an increasingly difficult environment, we believe it is only more important to highlight the many harrowing reasons which drive people to risk their lives to reach sanctuary in Britain.

< Malvern Welcom...



Malvern Welcomes

Malvern Welcomes was founded in 2015 to support refugees settling in Malvern.

 Message



We'll also be sharing a bit more about what we do as a charity, both through helping refugees settle in Malvern, and the activities of our friends and supporters. You can also find out about special events we're organising, as well as how to support Malvern Welcomes in the work we do.

If you'd like to keep up to date with our work, you can give us a like by following the link here: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Malvern-Welcomes/100092573874763/> or by searching for 'Malvern Welcomes' on Facebook itself.

Harry Lofthouse, volunteer

Thank You

Malvern Welcomes would like to acknowledge and thank every individual, group and organisation that donates to the work we are doing. Without your generous contributions we could not support the resettled families we have welcomed into our community or raise awareness of the very real and difficult challenges refugees face across the world.

Thank you, for every pound you donate to Malvern Welcomes.

Thank you also for every gesture of kindness you make to support refugees and make them feel welcomed within our community and beyond.

Thank you to Jim Morris for the illustrations in this newsletter.

www.jimmorrisart.info

Malvern Welcomes Website

Further information, including the minutes of the AGM, and regular updates can be found on the Malvern Welcomes website:

www.malvernwelcomes.org



Email: info@malvernwelcomes.net



Facebook: @MalvernWelcomes

<http://www.malvernwelcomes.org>

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