



Registered charity 1174004 [www.malvernwelcomes.org](http://www.malvernwelcomes.org)

**Minutes for AGM**

**Date: 14 July 2026**

**7:30pm**

**Chair's Introduction:** Dan Herbert welcomed participants

**Apologies:** John Raine, Annette de la Cour, Karen Argent

**Minutes from 2025 AGM** were approved

**Annual Report** presented by Ruth Forecast from the Management Team

Malvern Welcomes (MW) has been recognised at an international event as a charity who have settled a number of families successfully.

Volunteer retention is a current challenge - some people have had to step down due to other commitments or illness. They are thanked immensely for their work, some of whom have served for many years. There is a current shortage of potential volunteers and suggestions on recruitment are welcome.

The resettled families are doing remarkably well – several are in work. The young adults are almost all in higher education and have part-time jobs.

MW is sometimes contacted by Citizens Advice Bureau or through the website by individuals who have arrived in Malvern for various reasons. We support and signpost whenever possible.

Good relations continue with the Welcome Hub who are providing English language classes, crafts and social activities in Littleton Wells. Meanwhile the MW language programme is led by Sharon Baker.

The new look newsletter gets very good feedback.

Worcestershire Welcomes is an important partner, e.g. advocating against anti-immigrant protests at hotels, vastly outnumbering them. Strong connections with the other Worcestershire groups for solidarity and information sharing is crucial.

Event highlights include the MW and Welcome Hub Well Dressing, working with a Ukrainian artist, and stands/activities at the Town Council event in Nov 2025 and the Festival of Ideas. These are important in raising profile and answering questions. Other activities with a Yoga teacher, a touring theatre company are ongoing.

MW have the commitment and funding to host another family but there is a challenge in finding suitable housing – several options are continually explored.

The families are gaining independence and appear to be well-settled.

## **Annual Financial Report**

Bryony Croft, MW treasurer presented this report. After many years of commitment from former treasurer, Richard King, this year has been focussed on transferring systems, bank accounts and getting things working effectively. Focus has been on monitoring and next year will be developing strategies.

The finance expenditure is mainly support for families to become independent in the long run, e.g. driving lessons. Fundraising is an area of development – e.g. donating through the Easy Fundraising platform.

## **Election of Trustees**

Current trustees: David Kitcat, Leila Kasem and John Raine will continue in their roles – re-elected in 2025.

Trustee changes to ensure robustness and new energy: Tony Vere will join the Trustee Board after many years on the Management Team. Suzanne Savage who has worked for many community organisations and managing director of the Fold.

Participants duly elected Tony Vere and Suzanne Savage to the Trustee Board

Dan will be standing down as Chair of Trustees, in order to fill the essential Safeguarding lead for the charity. Fiona Carmichael will also step down as a Trustee.

Passed on thanks to Jessica Pykett who has worked as secretary to the Trustee Board for 4 years.

Ruth thanked Dan Herbert sincerely for being Chair, support and wisdom during any difficult situation. Thanks extended for being there and for valued advice.

## **Guest Speaker: Pakiza Safi on Courage**

Pakiza's talk described growing up as a young girl from a military family at a time of civil war in Afghanistan. She recounted the experiences of fear, rapid change and withdrawal of opportunities for girls under the Taliban. She and her mother and two sisters moved to the UK to join her brother. They had to leave secretly, leaving behind close family and neighbours. Navigating border checkpoints without a male guardian was a struggle and only possible because of the kindness of a stranger. Arriving in the UK was the start of many more struggles – cultural differences, asking for directions, having conversations, feelings of isolation, taking the bus, paying with a bank card. They were grateful to be resettled on the UK resettlement programme so that their family could reunite. It took a long time to feel safe and it took a lot of courage and determination to transform her own life. She is also working hard to change the lives of the other women who remain in Afghanistan. Malvern Welcomes taught the family English, about culture and working experiences. She began applying for jobs and volunteering positions, faced many setbacks but didn't give up. Eventually she volunteered at a school in Malvern, took an IT, English and driving course. She gained a teaching qualification, passed a driving test within 2 years and began working in Worcester. This showed her patience, hope, learning and persistence. She still thinks sadly of the situation in Afghanistan often. Her message is to never lose hope.

**Chair's thanks to Pakiza****Open questions/discussion**

Kate announced a fundraising event, Cuppas and Cakes hosted in her garden and house, 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Information will be circulated by the Membership secretary.

**Closing thanks for all attending members and participants**