

Happy 2024 to you all.

1. December round up, and new activities for 2024 –

Bring and Buy sale (photos attached)

The Christmas period seems a distant memory, but we packed in a lot of activities during the festive period. December was a busy time for the group, we had our monthly social at the Quakers meeting house on the 2nd of December, followed by a Bring and Buy sale on the 16th of December. This was in aid of Ukraine and many people (mainly local Ukrainian families) baked gorgeous pastries and cakes to sell. There were also many donated items that were for sale. £100.00 was raised and the local Ukrainian families who organised the event, will decide on the appropriate route for the support in Ukraine.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (photos attached)

On the 17th of December, 45 Ukrainians plus volunteers and hosts attended the pantomime, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at Ludlow Assembly Rooms. It was the first pantomime that many of our guests had attended, and they absolutely loved it. There was a mixture of emotions, surprise, fear (the wicked Queen was rather scary for some of the younger children) bemusement around The Dame, and great hilarity throughout the show. Thank you to the Ludlow Assembly rooms who were such a help in organising tickets and the system for using tokens for refreshments. Also, thanks to Peter Higgins and Oksana for help before the event, and on the day.

Christmas Party (photos attached)

On December 22nd, our annual Christmas party took place at Bitterley village hall, over fifty people attended, with a Ukrainian Father Christmas, who was transported to the village hall by vintage tractor decked in Xmas lights, and accompanied by another five tractors decked out with sparkly lights. BBC Midlands Today filmed part of the party, and it was televised live that evening, I was interviewed and also Olena K who talked about the celebrations and the importance of feeling part of your community and having local support. Presents were given out by Father Christmas, for all children and teens. The food was brilliant, everyone brought food to share, and a volunteer made lots of trifle and Xmas pudding. The Ukrainians sang traditional Xmas songs and played party games. It was a great evening. A group of people contributed £180.00 towards the cost of the Christmas presents. Also, a big thank you to Colin Richards who organised the tractor run, and thanks to all from Brimfield Tractor group who really helped to provide a sparkling event.

**2. Before we move onto our new activities for 2024 –
Please Can You Help?**

Storage space for Kitchen equipment, furniture etc

As you may be aware we have been receiving donated furniture and kitchen appliances, to pass onto refugees when they move into independent housing. We have stored these goods in a local village hall. The trustees of the hall had very kindly agreed for us to use the hall, as a storage point for nearly a year. However, there is a plan to renovate the hall, and therefore we need to find alternative premises, if we are to continue to receive these donated items. Ideally the space needs to be fairly close to Ludlow, as all of our volunteers who support this work live in the area. The 'building' needs to be accessible for much of the day, and large enough to house beds, wardrobes, white goods etc If you have any ideas, please do message or email me. Thank You.

3. **New Year - New Activities**

Ludlow Castle Tennis Club open session Saturday 27th January 12.00

noon     

All members of the refugee community in South Shropshire and North Herefordshire are welcome to visit Ludlow Tennis club to have a look around the courts and speak with Linda McMahon who is a Tennis coach. Through the Ludlow Refugee Support Group, Linda is going to provide free Tennis lessons to children and young people starting on Saturday 3rd February at 9.45.

Directions for the Tennis club as follows:

Address is Ludlow Tennis Club. The Linney, Ludlow, SY8 1EE.

To access the club's car park, use the same access road as the Rugby Club as the Tennis club shares the same driveway on The Linney. Please drive slowly on the Rugby club drive.

Pedestrian access is also available from The Linney, through a small gate just below the junction with Upper Linney.

Cricket and Football    

We are looking to provide free Cricket and Football sessions for all children aged fourteen and under, we will start with some taster sessions, and children can 'have a go' at football and cricket. Cricket is a really great game for all ages and there are lots of local teams, so if children want to move on to other teams, or form their own Ukrainian team, its all possible in the area. Rich Morley from South Shropshire Youth Forum will be collaborating with us to provide the coaching sessions. Currently (**although this is not 100% confirmed**) we will start the four-week taster sessions on **Friday 23rd February at 18.30pm** and the first session will be held at the Ludlow Football Club, Bromfield Road, Ludlow, SY8 2BN. (It is close to Ludlow school.)

We will confirm the arrangements via Facebook – Ludlow Refugee Support Group, please don't turn up unless the date is confirmed via Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1239189220242149/?ref=share_group_link&exp=7ffb .

Please get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Chess Sessions

We are aware that Chess is hugely important and popular in Ukrainian culture, with top players hailed as celebrities, and ranks eighth in the world. We also know that many local families play, and therefore thought, that it might be useful to identify any local clubs that people could join if they wished. The following local options are available:

Ludlow Library, 2, Parkway Ludlow SY8 2PG– A chess club is held weekly for young people aged 10 – 16, this is a weekly session on Wednesdays 3.30 – 5.00pm

Church Stretton at the Bucks Head, 42, High Street, Church Stretton, SY6 6BX. This is weekly at 7.30 to 9.00pm for all age groups/families.

If you would like a chess group set up for Ukrainians and friends, this could be arranged at a day and time suitable for the majority – please contact either Oksana or Erica

4. **We are still in the process of organising:**

- Certificate Course in Food Hygiene (with interpreter)
- First aid courses (with interpreter)
- Wellness Sessions

These will be free for all Ukrainians and volunteers, more about these sessions in the next newsletter or via Facebook.

5. **Regular activities and support**

Yoga for women, Thursday evenings – 6.00-7.00

Yoga classes are now established weekly on Thursday evenings, from 18.00 to 19.00. They are led by Irina, who is an experienced yoga teacher. Classes are aimed at adults, and beginners are very welcome. It is open to all Ukrainians, volunteers, supporters, and hosts. It is a free activity. The venue will be the Quaker Meeting House unless Irene announces a change of venue. If you are interested, please contact Irina directly– contact details below.

English Language Assessments and English Lessons (All Levels)

Please remember that students can attend lessons more than once a week, at Ludlow please contact Jackie Moore if you are interested in the lessons. Jackie's contact details are below.

English lessons are held at Quakers Meeting House (QMH) St Marys Lane, Ludlow SY8 1DZ.

Tuesday morning 10-11.30 –
Wednesday evening 18.00-19.30
Thursday afternoon 13:30-15:00

We will continue to help find jobs:

Alison Toulson of Enable Service is available to help people find a job, discuss a job change, or find another role. Alison will be at the Quaker meetinghouse on the 1st Saturday of each month. An attached QR code that gives access to an application form that you can send directly to Alison, who can start supporting you in your job search in your area very quickly.

The Saturday sessions for 2024 are as follows:

Saturday, Feb.3rd, 3-5 p.m. (Alison Toulson will be available for job search assistance)

Saturday, March 2nd 3-5 p.m. (Alison Toulson will be available for job search assistance)

Saturday, April 6th 3-5p.m. (Alison Toulson will be available for job search assistance)

- **Furniture and household goods**, we have a household items store - please tell me if you need any kitchen or bed linen, beds, chairs, sofas. We may be able to help with home appliances. **I have attached an image of some of the kitchen appliances that are currently available.**
- **Relocation assistance** – we can help you move into a new house or apartment, provide volunteer assistance with transport and minibus hire. (Contact Erica for more information)

To get in touch at any time during the week –

1. **Erica's contact details:** mobile 07974001310 or email ericagarner@hotmail.co.uk (Please contact for all questions except English grades, lessons, homework club, and exams)
2. **Jackie's contact details:** mobile 07929656545 or email jackiamoore@gmail.com. For all inquiries related to English lessons,
3. **Peter Higgins** – If you need help with transportation. mobile 07757989708 or email refugeesludlow@gmail.com
4. **Oksana Kholevytska Yaremko** - will help with any general or specific questions if she is unable to answer them directly Oksana will reach out to other people, or agencies where appropriate, mobile 07786041678 or +380953801277 or email so369369@gmail.com
5. **Irina Ivanik**, for all questions regarding school camps, children's events, please contact the mobile 0743027943 or e-mail [ivanik irina@ukr.net](mailto:ivanik_irina@ukr.net)

Contact us via facebook – Ludlow Refugee Support Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1239189220242149/?ref=share_group_link&exp=7ffb

Erica, Jackie, and Oksana will be at the Meeting house on the first Saturday of the month and are always available to reach each day by phone, text message, or email, and they can meet with you in person at the Meeting house or elsewhere most days of the week.

We wish all our Ukrainian neighbors, volunteers, and supporters a happy new year.