



# The Newsletter for Refugees Welcome, Cheshire East January 2025

## A QUICK UPDATE

Refugees Welcome, Cheshire East, is continuing to support Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, who live in our area. Recently three new Afghan families have moved to Macclesfield and Bollington as well as a family from the Chagos Islands, who had been living in Mauritius. Our volunteers support the families in their homes and run English classes and Conversation Cafés. It is thanks to the generosity of our donors to the Boundless fund that we have been able to establish and maintain our support networks for all the groups of refugees.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

Current information can be found by emailing [refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com](mailto:refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com). Or through the Refugees Welcome website. – [refugeeswelcome.co.uk](http://refugeeswelcome.co.uk).

**In this edition of Boundless you can find out about the dynamic nature of our organisation. There are articles about Christmas preparations and our volunteer activities. There is also an introduction to our newest trustee, and we are sharing a letter received from Macclesfield's new MP.**



Registered Charity Number  
116990

*Refugees Welcome* aims to support, integrate and empower refugees in every possible way, from sourcing furniture and equipment, to helping with access to medical care and education, interpreting and English learning. We acknowledge the huge contribution which newcomers - including displaced people - have always made to our society. We are committed to helping newly arrived people fulfil their potential as independent members of the community, enriching it with their skills, culture and unique perspective.



## MP Visit.

**Tim Roca, Macclesfield's new MP visited the Macclesfield Conversation Café at the beginning of December and sent us this letter following his visit.**

**To the Team at Refugees Welcome Cheshire East**

I want to express my thanks to you and everyone at Refugees Welcome Cheshire East for the incredible work you do to provide a safe and warm environment for those fleeing war, hardship, and unimaginable challenges. Your dedication to supporting refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and beyond showcases the very best of humanity.

Your efforts to create a sense of belonging—whether through your outreach, conversation cafés, or English classes—make an extraordinary difference to so many lives. You help families not only to rebuild but to thrive, offering them hope and a future after such difficult circumstances. The fact that some of the refugees you've supported are now volunteering with you is a powerful testament to the welcoming, inclusive environment you have created.

To all your trustees, volunteers, and everyone involved in the charity, your dedication and compassion is inspiring. From guiding families as they settle into a new country to offering practical and emotional support, your impact cannot be overstated. The work you do transforms lives and strengthens our community, reminding us all of the power of kindness and solidarity.

I really enjoyed visiting the refugee café recently, and I am looking forward to visiting you again in the new year to meet more of your incredible team and the families you support.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind regards, Tim



## **We Welcome our newest Trustee**

### **Mark Buttle**

I've spent the last twenty-five years as a humanitarian water supply, sanitation and hygiene specialist, working outside of the UK, mainly for Oxfam, Save the Children and UNICEF. This has taken me to east and west Africa, working in drought conditions, in civil wars, and even helping to set up and run an Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone. In 2011 I helped establish Save the Children's emergency response inside Northern Syria, where normal families lived alongside rebel fighters in freezing conditions in muddy, tented camps.

Previously I worked in rural Afghanistan. Unexploded ordnance was everywhere, and the fragility of life was emphasised by the deaths of family members of my own workers, from diseases that given just a little investment, are totally preventable. From 2016 to 2021 I lived and worked in Ukraine, working with water companies to fix local water systems, meanwhile working with people from both sides of the conflict, looking for ways to increase cooperation, while protecting the water workers who sometimes faced direct shelling or sniper fire.

I moved to Macclesfield in 2022 and, as a trustee, I'm hoping to bring some of the skills I developed, while working for other charities, to Refugees Welcome. The plight of displaced people will always be close to my heart. Most people, when they flee, simply move to a safer area in their own country, or, they move to the nearest neighbouring country. For people to move across the globe, to Europe or the UK, that represents such a huge decision: a commitment to change everything in their lives. Refugees have faced challenges and dangers that are hard for us to imagine. They really deserve our assistance, and a change to get back on their feet, within the limits of practicality.

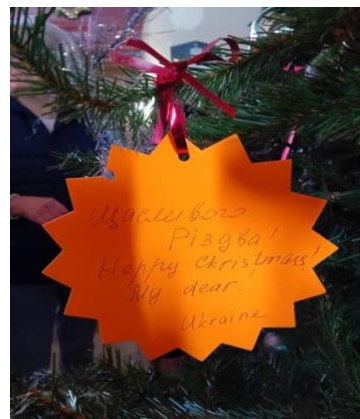
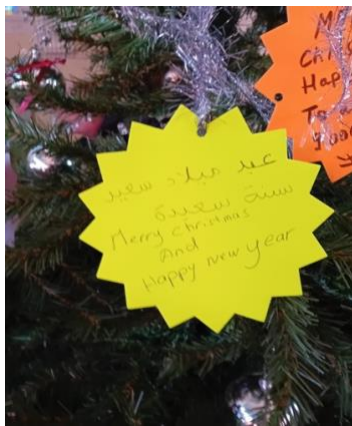






## Christmas Tree Dressing

Members of the Tuesday morning Macclesfield ESOL group went to Christ Church in Macclesfield to dress their Christmas tree. They had a wonderful time. The tree looked magnificent, and they wrote messages on coloured stars to hang on it.



## Christmas Gifts from the Baby Library.

The Baby Library, which is based at Bethel Baptist Church generously donated Christmas gifts to some of our families with very young children. We would like to thank their donors and say how greatly the gifts were appreciated.







## Refugees Welcome Volunteers

**Our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds and give any amount of time they are able. Regular meetings are held between volunteers and trustees.**

In early December, we held a meeting in Macclesfield for Refugees Welcome volunteers, where guest speaker/ facilitator and Refugees Welcome Trustee David Raines gave a short talk.

David is a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist who worked with the World Health Organisation in Syria and Libya. He has a special interest in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and shared some thought-provoking insights into how people who've experienced trauma perceive safety and threat, and ways of building trust and understanding when working with refugees. If you'd like to watch David's talk, please contact Estelle to request the link ([estelle.worthington@cvsce.org.uk](mailto:estelle.worthington@cvsce.org.uk)).

Volunteers then discussed a number of scenarios in groups that they could be faced with when supporting refugee families and explored how they might respond.

Refugees Welcome Chair, Nicky Campbell then shared highlights of the year and invited volunteers to reflect on their experiences of supporting refugees. Among the many amusing and touching things shared were one volunteer's feeling that supporting a refugee family with a young baby had been the perfect training for becoming a grandfather. Another volunteer said they felt "Our reward is seeing refugees prosper and thrive."

**If you are interested in becoming one of our volunteers, please contact [Estelle.worthington@cvsce.org.uk](mailto:estelle.worthington@cvsce.org.uk)**



## And again, a heartfelt message of thanks to everyone!

You can support our work by setting up a standing order for a regular monthly donation - £5/10/20 or whatever you would like to give (see next page).

This will go directly towards:

- Supporting ESOL training for all the refugees who need it.
- Insurance for volunteers working with families
- Professional help to select, train, deploy and oversee volunteers.
- One-off needs – for example extra equipment required when a family sets up home.

Your payment should be made to:  
ACCOUNT NAME: Refugees Welcome  
SORT CODE: 01-05-41  
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 45946426  
REFERENCE: BOUNDLESS  
Please make sure that your name is clearly written on your BACS payment.

Go to [www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk](http://www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk) for more details or email [refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com](mailto:refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com)

Please send donations / standing order mandates to:

Alan Brown (Treasurer), Refugees Welcome, 13 Lea Drive, NANTWICH CW5 5JS

Refugees Welcome, c/o Macclesfield Methodist Church, Westminster Road, Macclesfield, SK10 1BX

Many, many thanks for your support.

All the trustees of Refugees Welcome Cheshire East

**REFUGEES**  
**WELCOME**

**Data Protection** Refugees Welcome is committed to protecting your privacy and will process your personal data in accordance with current Data Protection legislation. Refugees Welcome collects information to keep in touch with you and supply you with information relating to our work. A full data privacy statement for financial donors is available from Refugees Welcome on request.





**Standing Order Mandate. Registered Charity Number 1169909**

**Instructions to your Bank Manager.**

Name of your bank. \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch Address. \_\_\_\_\_  
Town/City. \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please pay to Refugees Welcome**

**Sort Code: 01-05-41 Account number: 45946426**

The sum of £\_\_\_\_\_ (in numbers) £ (In words)  
On the \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ and each  week  month  year

Until further notice and debit my account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited:

\_\_\_\_\_

Sort Code \_\_\_-\_\_\_-\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**My Details**

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Forename:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tick here to boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you give.** *giftaid it*

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box.

**I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I might make in the future or have made in the past four years to Refugees Welcome.**


I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is required to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

**Please notify Refugees Welcome if You:**

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient income/capital gains tax.
- If you pay Income tax at higher or additional rate and want to receive additional tax relief must include all donations on Self-Assessment Tax form to adjust tax code.





## Some more information about how we operate.

Refugees Welcome Cheshire East started more than 9 years ago, when the Syrian war was at its height. Syrian people were seeking refuge from their war and were living in camps in neighbouring Lebanon. The British government agreed to take a number of vulnerable families under the VPRS (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme). 5 Syrian families were welcomed to Cheshire East early in 2017. Two further Syrian families have settled in Cheshire East more recently under Community sponsorship schemes and another Syrian family has joined us more recently.

More than three years ago, the Taliban dramatically took over Afghanistan, making life extremely difficult and dangerous for people who had worked in any capacity with UK or US institutions. Many hundreds of people had to leave Afghanistan very quickly. Afghan refugees have been welcomed to the UK under schemes such as the ARAP (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy) and the ACRS (Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme). For the past 3 years 5 Afghan families have lived in permanent accommodation and many more have lived in temporary accommodation locally. Recently 3 more Afghan families have come to our local area.

The invasion of Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 meant that huge numbers of Ukrainians became refugees. Many Ukrainians are living in Cheshire East.

So.... Who are the people who work for Refugees Welcome?

7 of us are trustees of the charity. That means we run the charity. We make the decisions about policy, activities, finance and how the whole charity operates

We have meetings, along with our treasurer (a very important person!) approximately every 6 weeks. All of us are retired (among us are a GP, a psychotherapist, a counsellor, two teachers, a Chartered Engineer, a person, who worked in banking, a large project charity worker and one who is a very experienced business man). We all work in a voluntary capacity. We work closely with a team from Cheshire East, although we no longer have a contract with them. We have to report on our activities to the Charity Commission every year.

There are about 50 volunteers who work directly with the refugee families in a wide range of supporting roles. The volunteers also help man the conversation cafés and assist at the ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes. Our website is run by one of our volunteers. We are pleased to welcome several of the Ukrainians as new volunteers. The only person who is in a paid job with our organisation is an employee of CVS (Council for Voluntary Services).

We are fortunate enough to be able to work with other organisations in Cheshire East, who are supporting refugees.

We welcome more volunteers and trustees. Please contact us through our website, if you are interested in working with us. We would especially welcome someone who would like to work on the next edition of Boundless!

**Nicky Campbell (Chair of trustees)**

**Registered Charity 1169909**