

Report on *Ukrainian Support Scheme*. April 2024

Support for our Ukrainian friends is still going on in our town with language support and housing issues being offered at two of our churches. The majority of our former guests have now managed to find accommodation to rent either through The Council or privately owned properties. *The BS Support Group* regularly publicise requests for furniture and household requirements (through their *Whatsapp* site in order to set up new households; along with occasional requests for more specific support with bureaucratic issues, and transportation and delivery of items or occasional specific family matters. *The Exchange* facility offered by the *Baptist Church* is the main source of supply of good quality domestic items and clothing. Most of the new residents now have some kind of employment, albeit not within the occupations and professions in which they were engaged in their home land. The children are all in school or college and are doing well.

All volunteers, however involved, were invited to a joyous New Year party held at the community hall in Parsonage Lane. Also a very moving two year anniversary service was held at *The Methodist Church in February*. The service was led by Mione Goldspiink, who set up the scheme, soon after the war broke out. All present were invited to light a candle and take part in the service which included a combination of hymns, songs and talks, some delivered in Ukrainian and some in English. A small group of children delivered their readings wearing their own national dress.

At the time of writing, (Mid-April) there is no sign of any cessation of the war, and worryingly less support in the form of supply of hardware and ammunitions. Nor are there any diplomatic moves to end the destruction of our guest's home country on the horizon. However, they appear to remain cheerful and pragmatic, although we can only imagine what it is like to live with the daily knowledge that their menfolk, husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, are involved in the fighting and could be killed at any time. Not to mention the carnage being reeked on their towns and cities. As Christians we can pray for them and offer any practical help or a friendly face if the opportunity comes our way.

Please include them in your prayers,

Margaret Fox.