

Dear friend

Here's a date for your diary!

Here at Ripon City of Sanctuary, the local refugee support group, we're finally getting back to our pre-COVID public meetings. So please, join us for a massive update on everything we've been doing – and it's a lot! – at **7:30pm on Thursday, 16 March 2020** at [Thorpe Prebend House](#) (behind the cathedral). Tea & coffee available; please come with friends, and with any questions!

Brief update

- There are now 10 families from the Middle East in Ripon – 9 brought by the government, and 1 by our own Community Sponsorship project. We continue to work very closely with NYCC on this.
- Our Community Sponsorship family arrived in July last year – come along on the 16th and find out how they're doing! We also have the money in the bank to bring a second family.
- We're engaging with around 15 schools, helping to raise a generation of young people in our area who understand refugee issues.
- Our [clothing collections](#) are still being delivered to Hull and Wakefield. We're also running a special campaign for [school uniforms & schoolshoes](#) for asylum-seeker children elsewhere in North Yorkshire; they arrive with nothing, and without school uniform they can't go to school.
- We're matching (and in some cases, rematching) Ukrainians with hosts, and providing specialist support in some cases.
- We were a key part of the campaign group which achieved a victory against the Home Office last August, when the government had to abandon its plan to place 1,500 asylum-seekers at Linton-on-Ouse, right in the middle of a village of 700 people. That was to be the first of a series of horrible new 'asylum accommodation centres' (but more are coming, so watch this space).
- We are currently supporting various campaign groups around the country who are fighting to get asylum detention centres shut down, or to stop them from reopening (the detainees' only crime is claiming asylum here).
- We are working with Asylum Matters, Medical Justice and the Helen Bamber Foundation to challenge the government on Clause 101 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which would allow the government do whatever it likes on Crown land (including setting up asylum centres) without consulting with local communities or seeking planning permission.
- We've been working with the RCVS and the Refugee Council to help asylum-seeking veterinary surgeons to pass their UK 'conversion' exams, ensuring their exam fees are waived and providing grants towards the cost of their studies.

There's lots more too, so please come along on the 16th and find out all about it, and see if you'd like to help! We are keen to talk to anyone interested. Remember, none of us knew anything about this sort of thing until we started doing it...

Hope to see you then -

Nicola David

Chair, Ripon City of Sanctuary

One life to live