

Frome Welcomes Refugees Advisory Group

Terms of reference 27.01.23

Introduction

The Frome Welcomes Refugees Advisory Group was set up by Clare Hein, Peter MacFadyen and Luke Wilde early in 2022 in response to the war in Ukraine and government plans to accept refugees into the UK. This is an unelected group without legal and formal constitution, but recognised by Frome Town Council (FTC), seeking to support Frome and relevant institutions involved with refugees. Concurrent with the financial support organised by FTC with Frome Twinning Association for Ukrainian refugees in our Polish twin town (Rabka-Zdrój), it has supported incoming refugees and their families through funds raised by FTC and Frome Rotary.

This document aims to set out the aims and responsibilities of this advisory group and define its ways of working. The group has now widened its remit to include all refugees and to cover the needs of the wider District of Frome, as defined below.

Aims and responsibilities

- To ensure that Frome and District¹ has processes and structures in place to offer a place of refuge for all refugees² regardless of nationality, religion, or need for refuge, both now and into the future
- To support and offer advice to the refugee support workers situated with FTC. They have primary responsibility for supporting refugees, identifying needs, advertising the FWR fund to refugees, keeping a list of all refugees in Frome and District.
- To establish a process and guidelines whereby decisions can be made as to how the funds³ raised for disbursement to refugees are allocated and spent.
- To oversee, on a timely basis, allocation of funds, ensuring probity, transparency and demonstrating a level of flexible compassion when needed.
- To act as an independent voice/advocate for refugees based in Frome.
- To contribute to future thinking about the provision of support for future refugees and anticipate what might be needed and how that can be provided; this may include

¹ Frome and District is defined as the town of Frome and those surrounding villages that fall into the catchment area for Frome middle and secondary schools. These villages include Norton St Philip, Tellisford, Woolverton, Farleigh Hungerford, Rode, Laverton, Lullington, Beckington, Nunney, Buckland Dinham, Berkley, Great Elm, Mells, Vobster, Leigh on Mendip, Chantry, Tytherington, Trudoxhill and West Woodlands

https://maps.somerset.gov.uk/ishareLIVE.Web/new_SchoolCatchment_solo.html?MapSource=mapsources/Schools&Layers=Secondary_School_Catchments&Layers=Secondary_Schools

² The term refugee is defined by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.

³ Funds are provided from appeals and similar fund-raising activities by organisations including FTC and Frome Rotary and directly through FWR

discussions about how to fundraise for future needs and to consider what forms of support may be required in the future.

- To communicate the role of FWR to a wider audience, including other relevant organisations (as laid out below).
- To act as a repository for knowledge and experience of how best to support refugees.

Membership

- Membership currently consists of:
 - Representatives of FTC (currently Anita Collier and Sara Butler)
 - One or two committed and experienced citizens (currently Clare Hein)
 - Justin Worryingham (Frome Twinning Association), who is Chair
 - A member of local Rotary group
 - A volunteer fund administrator (currently Jean Boulton)
 - A volunteer communications lead (Clare Hein has volunteered)
- Membership is open to others keen to play an active role in supporting refugees
- To ensure FWRAG functions efficiently, numbers should be restricted to between 3 & 8

Ways of working

- FWRAG will communicate with other relevant groups in order, in particular to advertise the fund and explain how we operate. Such groups include:
 - Frome Food Bank
 - Mendip Health Connectors
 - Frome Medical Practice
 - Frome Learning Partnership
 - Frome Community Education
 - Frome Renters Alliance / Fair Housing for Frome
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Faith groups
- Members are asked to sit on FWRAG for up to 2 years, although this may be extended subject to review.
- The Chair will convene meetings at least every two months and ensure notes are taken and circulated, and an agenda is sent out in advance.
- The Chair will ensure that the refugee community are invited twice a year to the start of a committee meeting in order to hear their views and share with them any relevant information.
- The Chair will ensure that an annual update is written and is shared with FTC, Frome Rotary and other relevant bodies.
- FWRAG will endeavour to have a presence at Multicultural Frome and possibly at the Children's Festival and, in addition, communicate as appropriate via press releases etc (hopefully aided by FTC)
- The Fund Administrator will provide a list of disbursements before each meeting.

- Sarah Williams, as Responsible Finance Officer for FTC, will be a supporting member of the committee and Community Projects Officer, Nikki Cox (who manages the refugee support workers), will from time to time, be invited to attend part of the meetings to update on initiatives and progress and make suggestions as to needs and priorities which might require funding or other involvement from the advisory group.
- FWR will work in a way that is transparent, open and respectful. Any learnings will be reviewed by the group at its committee meetings.

Review

- FWRAG will review the relevance and value of its work and the terms of reference every six months.

Appendix – the process for approving and paying disbursements.

- The primary fund administrator (currently Jean Boulton) will act as the conduit for all requests. Requests may come from refugees, from host families, from people who have provided agreed services to this group (such as events, teaching English, transport), from the Refugee Hub workers and from members of the committee, or from other organisations (such as Fair Frome and schools). Refugee Hub workers may coordinate requests from the refugee community, as appropriate.
- There will be a second administrator (Clare Hein nominated) who can deal with requests in the case of the primary fund administrator being unable to do so (through illness or extended vacation)
- The fund administrator can make decisions up to £300, in line with the scope and principles as set out below. If there are any grey areas or if the amount is higher or the need is urgent, then the fund administrator will confer with at least two members of the advisory group before proceeding.
- The fund is to be used for such things as:
 - School clothes and shoes
 - Resources focused on offering English lessons
 - Requests from host families for, say, extra bedding or heaters
 - Travel to medical appointments, formal appointments such as for visas, but not for pleasure
 - Occasional special events, particularly for children (depending on other priorities for the fund)
 - Unexpected hardships (e.g., through becoming homeless or losing income)
 - Supporting changes in accommodation (e.g., the need for small household items when setting up independently for the first time)
- Note that priorities for funding are likely to change, depending on need or the size of the fund, so this list should be viewed as guidance rather than any definite commitment.
- Payments will not be made retrospectively (e.g., now the fund has opened to the villages, costs already dealt with, e.g. for school uniform, cannot be now be reimbursed, unless there are very strong reasons)
- Depending on uptake, we may have to set a cap on the amount available for certain items (e.g., winter coats).
- If particular refugees were asking for funds at a much higher rate than others, we may need to explore whether there is a fairness criterion that might apply.
- When the fund administrator has agreement or has made a decision on disbursements, he or she will send a weekly email to Bryan Wilson at Frome Rotary, for him to make that week's payments and Bryan will send back to the fund administrator a list of disbursements made to complete the record.