

**Dorset Welcome Fund**  
**Impact report for Round 4 (grants made June 2024)**

**Summary of funded projects and impact on beneficiaries**

| <b>Grant recipient</b>                              | <b>Project</b>  | <b>Amount Awarded</b> | <b>Allocations</b>                              | <b>Number of beneficiaries</b> | <b>Number of volunteers involved</b> | <b>Outcomes</b>   |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| St Mary's Church, Ferndown                          | Refreshments for monthly support meetings   | £620                  | £620 Dorset Council                             | 40                             | 6                                    | Peer support & friendship<br>Community integration<br>Improved English language                   |
| AsOne theatre company Ltd.                          | Dorset Ukrainian Art Therapy group  | £4950                 | £4950 Dorset Council                            | 35                             | 6                                    | Peer support & friendship<br>Community integration<br>Improved English language                   |
| Citizens Advice Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole | Immigration Advice Clinic drop-in service to residents across Dorset and BCP                            | £5000                 | £2465.70 BCP Council<br>£2534.30 DCF Fundholder | 55                             | 2                                    | Access to advice & advocacy<br>Improved access to work<br>Improved access to eVisas               |
| Community Alliances Limited                         | Partnership Project providing Refugee & Asylum support delivered through cultural food based gatherings | £4500                 | £4500 BCP Council                               | 60                             | 10                                   | Peer support & friendship<br>Community integration<br>Reduced isolation<br>Improved mental health |
| Emerald Ant CIC                                     | Art Friendship Group for female refugees, asylum seekers and local women                                | £4757                 | £4757 DCF Fundholder                            | 10                             | 2                                    | Peer support & friendship<br>Community integration<br>Reduced isolation                           |
| Purbeck Connect Ukraine                             | Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub; English lessons for adults and Ukrainian lessons for children           | £5000                 | £5000 Dorset Council                            | 45                             | 12                                   | Peer support & friendship<br>Community integration<br>Improved English language                   |

|                           |   |                |                      |                          |                      |   |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Recreate Dorset           | Seeking Refuge Project - weekly music workshops for male refugees and asylum seekers  | £2475          | £2475 DCF Fundholder | 73                       | 12                   | Peer support & friendship<br>Reduced anxiety<br>Improved mental health                |
| Safe and Sound Dorset     | Ukrainian Women's support group meeting fortnightly in conjunction with ICN   | £5000          | £5000 BCP Council    | 54                       | 2                    | Peer support & friendship<br>Reduced isolation<br>Improved English language           |
| Samee                     | Enable 12 disabled refugees/asylum seekers to become financially resilient via employment support                               | £4967          | £4967 BCP Council    | 12                       | 3                    | Improved access to work   |
| Shaftesbury Refugee Group | Inclusive cultural events, visits to understand British culture, Summer schools for English development                         | £5000          | £5000 Dorset Council | 150                      | 12                   | Peer support & friendship<br>Reduced isolation<br>Improved access to work & education |
| Treads                    | Art and craft, music, cooking, sport and interactive activities for children and young people<br><i>(extension to Dec 2025)</i> | £5638          | £5638 Dorset Council | tbc                      | tbc                  | tbc   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              |   | <b>£47,907</b> |                      | <b>534 beneficiaries</b> | <b>67 volunteers</b> |   |

## Reports and case studies submitted by the groups

### St Mary's Church, Ferndown

*"We are very grateful for the continued support of DCF. Thank you for enabling the group to continue this far."*

#### Funded activities

We used the grant money to deliver food, drink and craft activities for Ukrainian families living in East Dorset. Since the group started, the reach of the group has extended from Ferndown; we now have people coming from BCP, Wimborne and even Blandford as well.



### Impact

The grant has helped build cohesion within the local Ukrainian population and the existing local population. We have welcomed new members to the group during the year and they have appreciated belonging to a group that provides a safe space to connect with others in the same population. Also, because the meetings take place in the church hall with cafe adjacent and open in the week, they feel they can drop in and connect with others. The meetings have also helped the local population understand that there are Ukrainians settling with us. For example, we have church and non-church members who support the meetings with cakes and time.

New arrivals in the group mix with others who have been here much longer and they are able to help each other. In particular, older people whose English is poor, appreciate being able to speak to younger adults who can bridge the language barriers. We had a new arrival in Ferndown who plays the Saxophone. Through the group, he got to know more people and now is given free access to rooms to practice his Saxophone. He took part in our Carol Concert. One lady asked if she could use rooms to run a couple of sessions on the new electronic Visa.

### Project Development

We have sufficient funding to run a few more meetings and are not seeking extra funding at this time. At each meeting, we are looking at numbers and those coming to gauge the value and likely impacts of continuing. We expect the meetings to taper off in frequency and even stop altogether at some point.

### Case study

'M' lives in West Moors, and we could tell she quickly felt at home at our group even though she couldn't speak a word of English. Her daughter is also in Ferndown and told us that her Mum is bored in her flat not knowing anyone and just wanted to be useful. She told us that M liked gardening so we connected her with a lady who looks after the grounds at St Mary's. Since then, Ma has become a well known sight in Ferndown. She often catches the bus and borrows a brush and a hoe and just enjoys keeping the grounds looking good. She is known now to the cafe manager, office team and I think feels she belongs.

### AsOne theatre company Ltd.

*"The staff were very understanding and supportive and the (application) process simple and straightforward."*

### Funded activities

Activities were enjoyed by the participants and hundreds from the local community at festivals and other venues in Dorchester, Bridport, and Weymouth during the summer and autumn of 2024; Children's work shops, Singing groups, Rehearsals leading to performance, Performances at festivals

### Impact

All agreed the project has made a positive difference to Ukrainian refugees and host/support families, providing: • A Sense of Dorset community, and welcome • A Sense of Ukrainian community coming together • Shared ongoing worries and grief • Shared Joy and achievement • Shared Experience of festivals • Shared Cultures • Important practice of Oral English.

The performances at the One World Festival and the Small World Festival were significant for the Children taking part and enjoyed by all those that saw them. The Christmas Concert at St Peter's Church in Dorchester was a great success which blended a traditional Ukrainian Christmas Angels story with English carols. The large Church was packed and the feedback was extremely rewarding.

## Project Development

Extreme weather resulted in cancellation of the Dorchester event celebrating Ukraine Independence Day. We made a call out and were offered the Dry Dock in Weymouth and opted for several cars for transport rather than a mini bus – all more convenient in the end.

We have secured an additional grant (£5430) to develop shared art and culture with the communities to the summer of 2025. It is hoped this group will become self-sufficient in the future to continue supporting the Ukrainian Community in Dorset as long as it is necessary.

## Case study

"I want to thank you for the help and support you provide to our Ukrainian diaspora in Dorset. For our family, our Friday meetings have become a place of power. Where we can switch off our thoughts for 4-5 hours and have a great time in a warm circle of fellow countrymen. Talk in our native language, discuss interesting topics. For my daughter, participation in the programs is a Ukrainian language lesson, a Ukrainian culture lesson, and a creative meeting where she can express herself. I see how her mental state is improving."

*"I had the privilege of taking part in a Ukrainian project held in an English church in Dorchester, involving Ukrainian children. It was a truly inspiring experience, filled with warmth, creativity, and a strong sense of community. The event provided a safe and supportive space for the children, allowing them to express themselves, connect with others, and engage in meaningful activities. Seeing the collaboration between the local church and the Ukrainian community was heartening, demonstrating the power of unity and kindness. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to supporting similar initiatives in the future."*

*"It gave us the opportunity to gather and spend time in a creative atmosphere, to speak Ukrainian, remember customs and traditions. It was also a therapeutic process because we supported each other. It was very important for us that we could demonstrate and perform our Ukrainian program and receive support from British viewers, there were so many responses and thanks, it gave us optimism and a desire to live. Thanks to regular meetings we supported each other, the children received a Ukrainian language environment and the opportunity to learn more about their country and its customs and culture."*



## Citizens Advice Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

*"Receiving immigration support has helped many of our clients to be able to prevent further decline in their living standards, and has therefore reduced a deeper burden on stretched services."*



## **Funded activities**

We continued our Immigration Advice Clinic, including partnering with a local private immigration adviser at OISC level 3. We held monthly drop-in sessions for clients requiring immigration advice - from refugees, to visa nationals, from any area within Dorset and with any immigration need. The clinic remained as a drop in service, and we do not limit the number of times a client may return. We offer 15 minute initial advice sessions, offering signposting at the end of the session where appropriate. During the first 6 months we began to see very high and complex needs within the clinics, on a level that went beyond what we were previously used to. We began to triage clients ahead of the clinic, then pivoted to a triage system where users were able to access us via telephone, a direct email address, partner referrals and our usual advice channels. This way of working allowed us to identify which clients needed more than just advice.

## **Impact**

People who have had their immigration status secured by us can work, access the NHS and live independent lives, all the while contributing to society. Time and time again this year we have seen the impact of poverty and destitution caused by insecure immigration status. Difficulties in demonstrating status, due to new and complex systems like share codes and eVisas, coupled with extra barriers for those where English is not their first language, unfortunately leads to a cohort of people who are digitally and systematically excluded from their basic entitlements. We have discovered that a large part of our role is to provide clarity, and to advocate for our client's right of access to services which they should reasonably expect to use. About 62% of our clients have been able to access either work or public funds by us resolving their immigration issues.

In 2024, the Home Office decided to digitise the UK's immigration system, so that those in the UK on any type of visa, including those already settled with Indefinite Leave to Remain, would no longer be able to prove their status using any type of card previously issued by the Home Office, or a stamp in a passport. This has meant that millions of people who believed that they could rely on previously issued documents were no longer able to do so. Many clients who have been in the UK for many years either no longer hold proof of their status or hold documentation that was issued several years ago. In these cases, there is no simple way for them to get the new 'eVisa' without receiving immigration advice, and we have provided this for many.

## **Project Development**

We are now in receipt of National Lottery funding which will enable our Immigration caseworkers to undertake training and to begin to operate casework on a longer term basis. Further funding for focused immigration project work will likely need to be further secured.

## **Stories of Change**

M is a survivor of domestic abuse who was on maternity leave with her infant son when her visa sponsor attempted to hurt them both. She fled with only her pram and a single bag of baby clothes to a friend in Poole and had no links or understanding of the public services available to her. We applied for the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC), which enabled her to receive public funds and housing for 3 months while we assisted her with a settlement application. During this time, we also supported her with grants from local charities to support their basic living needs and to get baby items like a cot and clothing. The settlement application was completed by a local Level 2 adviser with our help, and while she was waiting for a result, she was able to work and find housing for herself and her son. Her application for Settlement as a victim of domestic violence was granted, and she is now settled and working locally.

An elderly man came to us when his wife needed full time care at home for cancer. He had worked in the UK and owned businesses for many decades but was having trouble proving his immigration status to receive pension credit, which he needed to help pay to keep their home warm for his wife. He was very distressed at having to prove his status when he had been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain around 1974. He had not had a valid passport in many years, and his children and grandchildren all live in the UK. We decided that to get him the quickest response, he could apply for Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme. The application was granted in less than 3 weeks and he was awarded pension credit and winter fuel allowance with the help of our Benefits team."

## Community Alliances Limited

*"The grant process was straightforward, accessible, and well-structured, making it easy to navigate even with limited capacity... The support from the grant manager was outstanding - responsive, understanding, and genuinely invested in our success. We felt valued as applicants and partners, which boosted our confidence and allowed us to focus fully on delivering impact through the project."*

### Funded activities

Our events - community meals, games, music, and cultural storytelling - were carefully chosen to foster connection, inclusion, and a sense of belonging among asylum seekers and the wider community. With part of the funding allocated to transportation, more asylum seekers - many of whom face financial hardship and are often geographically isolated - were able to attend the events. Community meals formed the heart of each gathering. Participants were invited to prepare and share traditional dishes from their home countries, creating an atmosphere of warmth and cultural pride, and encouraging conversation and friendships. Games played a key role too, breaking down social and language barriers, helping participants of all ages feel comfortable and included. Music added energy and emotion to the events. Guests shared traditional songs, played instruments, and danced together, creating moments of joy and celebration. Participants shared personal stories, legends, and traditions, deepening connections and promoting empathy. The Giving Voice event celebrated people who have moved to the UK, was well attended by BCP Council members and dignitaries.

### Impact

The grant has made a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, and the wider community. Individuals who often experience isolation, anxiety, and uncertainty were given the opportunity to feel more "at home" in their new environment. For many participants, these events were their first chance to connect with others in a safe and supportive environment since arriving in the UK. Preparing and sharing meals allowed participants to express their culture and identity while learning about others. Events often sparked conversations that bridged language and cultural divides, helping to nurture empathy, understanding, and friendship between asylum seekers and local community members. Events helped to challenge stereotypes and foster a more compassionate, cohesive community spirit. Beyond social interaction, the events also offered activities that supported mental wellbeing, encouraged creativity, and built confidence. Participants reported feeling more empowered and less isolated, and many expressed increased motivation to get involved in other community activities.

### Project Development

We are actively pursuing new funding opportunities. We have received a number of benefit-in-kind contributions including donated venues, volunteer time, and supplies for events. These generous offers have helped us maintain momentum and continue delivering meaningful activities for asylum seekers and refugees.

### Case study

When 'Amina', a young woman from East Africa, first arrived in the UK, she felt completely alone. Living in temporary accommodation with little money and no local connections, she struggled with anxiety and homesickness. She rarely left her room and found it difficult to trust anyone. That changed when she was invited to one of the events funded by the grant. With her travel costs covered, she was able to attend. Although hesitant at first, the warm welcome, familiar smells of East African cooking, and the sound of music from home quickly put her at ease. Amina met other women who had been through similar experiences. For the first time since arriving, she laughed, cooked traditional dishes, and shared stories in her native language. She began attending regularly and even volunteered to help organise future events. Over time, Amina's confidence grew. She started taking English classes and joined a local women's support group. She says the project "helped me find myself again" and gave her hope for the future.

## Emerald Ant CIC

*"Thank you for your continued support... This has demonstrated the power of art to unite and bring joy, overcoming intolerance and division."*

### Funded activities

A Carnival Art club was set up in Chickerell over 6 weeks, attended by 13 teenage girls, culminating in their performance at the Portland Parade. 3 participants were English girls at All Saints School, 4 were Afghans from settled families (referred via Social Services), and 7 were Afghan girls from the ARAP scheme at Chickerell Camp, whose families are waiting to be homed around the UK. The girls made head dresses based on flowers, and hand held flower carnival staffs as well as 2 large bird puppets for the Portland Parade. We started all sessions with focused painting to music, and ran English language tasks mid session. A youth worker supported the EA artist. To end the project we put on an additional session, a picnic, where certificates were awarded.

### Impact

The project has been fundamentally useful for this group of teenagers, who have been isolated due to gender and background. All girls on the project were either at All Saints School, or about to start in September. It was a fun, low pressure introduction for them, a space where they could chat informally whilst creating something to be proud of. The girls at Chickerell Camp were introduced to new learning styles, cultural distinctiveness, and made new friends. The British girls enjoyed making new friends, learning about other cultures and developing their creative skills.

The Portland Parade was a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity, enjoyed by the whole group. The girls worked in teams to operate their bird puppets, and we were able to include younger siblings from the camp. On the night the girls said the experience was 'beyond their wildest dreams'. Their carnival structures were amongst the biggest on show and played a key role on the parade, building confidence and pride, the experience enabled them to feel part of the community. Their white birds brought a message of peace, attracting much praise and have been used by arts organisations such as Bside.

Since the project ended 4 weeks ago, the girls from Chickerell camp and the English girls have met up.

*"It was great and very adventurous I learnt communication and I made some friends there"*

*"I enjoyed the painting to music and colour and mood activities"*

*"The parade was so fun, we also met new people and saw other projects"*

The camp said *"Thank you again for reaching out and enabling them to have this fabulous opportunity - those girls will remember this forever!"*



## Project Development

This project has laid the ground for our continued work with refugees and asylum seekers, having established lines of communication with the camp, social services, and with the school. We hope to establish another art club. To ensure numbers of participants in the future we will work with the camp to ensure incoming teenage girls are welcomed to the art group when others leave (3 of the girls from the camp had been rehomed around the UK before the project ended, and only one girl remained at the camp of the original 7). We also hope to welcome refugees/asylum seekers of other nationalities, working with social services in Weymouth & Portland.



## Case study

Tessa Braidwood, Resettlement Caseworker for Care Leavers & Asylum Seeking Children, Dorset Council:

"B' loved coming to the Art and Friendship Group and it gave her a real confidence boost in speaking and understanding of English as well as a creative space to explore. She clearly felt relaxed and at ease in the space provided and had a confidence I haven't seen in her before, head up and smiling. (3 others) also loved coming to the group and were excited every week to attend. One in particular seemed to come out of her shell and seeing her act as an interpreter for other students as well as being told to listen, showed how comfortable she was made to feel. It was such a positive group and I really appreciated being able to come along one week to see how you were running it and how the students were getting on."

## Purbeck Connect Ukraine


*"We greatly appreciate the continued support for the work of Purbeck Connect Ukraine, without which it would be difficult for us to provide for the needs of the Ukrainian refugees coming to Purbeck."*

## Funded activities

We have continued the activities of the Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub (Vodohray). Regular sessions are held at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Swanage. We have delivered Ukrainian lessons for children and English lessons for adults (221 hours in total). English lessons are held in small groups at levels from basic to advance, given by two Ukrainian teachers (themselves refugees). The children's lessons cover Ukrainian language, reading and writing in the Cyrillic script, Ukrainian history and cultural practices, and craft activities. At the same time as the children's lessons on Saturday mornings, the adults have the opportunity to socialise over tea and coffee. This gives our Ukrainian guests opportunity to talk to and support one another, and the chance to discuss with our volunteers any problems they may be facing. This enables our guests to build trust with us, so that they are willing to turn to us in times of need e.g. when moving to new accommodation and requiring household goods, or when facing health problems.

We marked Refugee Week 2024 with the screening of a short film about Korean refugees in England, to which both the Ukrainians and our volunteers and supporters were invited. In August, we organised an outing to Durdle Door for our Ukrainian families. In December, we organised an eVisa workshop for our Ukrainian guests in collaboration with Migrant Help. Together with our Ukrainian friends, our organisation was represented at both the Swanage Carnival and the Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival. These activities helped to strengthen the bonds within the local community.

Українська школа  
водограй



Purbeck Connect Ukraine

Субота, 5 жовтня 2024 р

Уроки української для дітей

Українська мова, історія та культура

10:00 - 12:00 год

Уроки англійської для дорослих

Поглиблений і базовий класи -

10:00 - 12:00 год

Безкоштовний

Відбувся нагорі о:

Батистська церква Еммануїла



160 Victoria Avenue

Swanage, BH19 1AZ

Приєднуйтеся до нас за чаєм чи кавою

За більш детальною інформацією звертайтеся до:

[purbeckconnectukraine@gmail.com](mailto:purbeckconnectukraine@gmail.com)





## Impact

Some of the adults who have been here for some time have made great progress with their English and are now much better integrated into the local community. This improves chances of gaining meaningful employment. Others who have arrived more recently are just beginning to learn. For them it has been valuable to be able to get to know the Ukrainians who arrived before them and to become part of the local Ukrainian community, benefitting from support and friendship.

The children greatly appreciated being able to interact with their peers in their own language. Research among Ukrainian children in exile is revealing the importance of providing opportunities for them to use and to learn in their own language. Without such opportunities, the children are at risk of losing their mother tongue, making it difficult for them to communicate with grandparents and other family members. Our Ukrainian lessons provide the chance to interact in their own language and learn more about Ukrainian traditions.

The Learning Hub outings have given the refugees the opportunity to enjoy and connect with the beautiful natural environment of Purbeck. By taking part in local events, such as the Swanage Carnival and Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival, the Ukrainians have been able to meet other members of the local community and remind local people of their continued presence in the area.

## Project Development

The work of the Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub is set to continue. We have received another grant of £5000 from DCF, which should cover our expenses for the English and Ukrainian lessons for a further eight months (January - August 2025). If there is still a need to continue the Learning Hub after this time, further funding will be required.

## Case study

After about a year-and-a-half in the Purbeck area, one of our first Ukrainian guests decided to return with her young son to Ukraine, as she missed her husband and the wider family so much. For some months, they lived in their hometown in Ukraine, but the situation became so dangerous that they moved to a nearby village. A while later, the house of their new neighbour was bombed, and the mother and son immediately fled the country for a second time. One of our volunteers was able to go to Bournemouth airport and meet the family. In tragic circumstances, it was a happy reunion. The Ukrainian family had been offered temporary accommodation by another Ukrainian living in Poole. Our volunteer learned that the two Ukrainians had first met at a social meeting that Purbeck Connect Ukraine had organised in Swanage in the summer of 2022. Since that time, the two ladies, who have sons of a similar age, had become close friends and had been able to provide much support for one another. The lady in Poole was able to accommodate her friend for some days, and has introduced her to someone able to provide host accommodation for the family in Upton, where they are staying to date.



## Recreate Dorset

*"The feedback we have received has been 100% positive, with all participants reporting the music workshops are providing therapy and calmness to their stressful situation."*

### Funded activities

We provide music workshops for refugees and asylum seekers and delivered 12 weeks of workshops, 2 hours per week, running from July - October 2024. The beneficiaries were 80% asylum seekers who are currently living in temporary accommodation. All the participants are male and each workshop there are between 12 - 15 attendees. We have also continued to offer monthly film screenings as this is very popular and from here we recruit to the new music workshop.

### Impact

Within a very short time, we have seen the participants gain so much more confidence and they report feeling happier and less stressed after the music workshop. We know from our ongoing work with refugees and asylum seekers it takes longer to gain their trust than other groups we work with, so this has been a very short period to make an impact on their lives and see changes in their health and wellbeing. The men comment that they can enjoy the music workshop and reduce their anxiety and stress.

### Project Development

We have funding from our unrestricted grant from the Henry Smith Trust so we can continue the work in 2025.

### Case study

Participant 'A' first attended a workshop when he was being transferred from the barge in Portland to a hotel in Bournemouth and has been volunteering with us, helping with the new music workshops, community events and working in the community garden at our hub. He finds communication difficult but was very keen to help with tasks where he wouldn't need to directly speak to or be approached by others. After attending regularly, he started to feel more confident and relaxed and began to help others with tasks he was familiar with. He now supports the workshop leader, moving all the instruments ready for the group. He is also volunteering at the cinema events, running front of house, serving refreshments and clearing up. He has said how the workshops have helped him overcome his fear of speaking to others and his lack of confidence and nervousness of meeting others. He says volunteering has helped him manage his anxiety which leads to his poor mental health. He has become calmer and more relaxed so he can enjoy the company of other participants and start to build friendships now he can trust others. He has started to look for other volunteering and feels confident to speak to new people.





## Safe and Sound Dorset

*"This is an important support group for the women that attend.  
Thank you for the funding."*

### Funded activities

Up to 15 women and girls attend our Wednesday sessions every week. At half term and over the holidays, there have been up to 20 women. We arrange crafting activities and ICN choose English activities that support with living in the UK. English Sessions this year have included: Greeting and Emotions, Cafe and Restaurants, Travelling, Shopping, English Ingredients, Filling out their details on a form, Hospital and understanding the English NHS, Summer party letter templates, Sayings and Idioms.

### Impact

The women look forward to meeting and say that here they have become happier and feel more settled. This is a unique session where women, girls and their children can come to meet other women and girls experiencing the same, being able to communicate in their heart language amongst fellow citizens, which offers great comfort and support. The environment in the group creates opportunities to re-tell stories of escape, share tears and memories, compare notes on British culture, navigate affordability of life in the UK. It helps to build integration of people who are potentially isolated and disoriented. It also provides opportunity to ask questions and understand cultural differences e.g. at a doctors appointment, job centre, expectations in school, work etc. Most are also learning English so it's a perfect platform to encourage each other and share their development.



*"Good day! I would like to thank the Safe and Sound Dorset for their hospitality and care for women who had to leave their home country. Meeting together, doing creative work, singing, practicing English - helps us adapt to new conditions and learn new skills. Mostly women of retirement age come on Wednesdays, as this is working time. Each of the women has unique talents and a lot of life experience. They are happy to remember and share the types of art that they have done in their lives. This year we attended master classes in Petrikovsky drawing, neurographics, made angels from beads, jewelry from dried flowers and silica gel, simply painted flowers, made flowers from felt, embroidered, wove bracelets, made beads, earrings, postcards. Following the meetings, I do a photo shoot and edit a video for us to remember. And of course, we sang our Ukrainian songs, which mentally took us back to better times. Madeleine, the support worker from ICN is very kind and understanding. She helps us improve our English. The staff at the Well cafe are always hospitable and treat us to fresh pastries and coffee at each meeting."*

*"We, Ukrainian refugees living in Bournemouth, England, we are grateful, to Zanora Natalia, a Ukrainian women who organized us, refugees from Ukraine, and convinced the local authorities to provide a place and finance weekly meetings for psychological and moral rehabilitation of each refugee who found refuge from terrible war in England. For two years Natalia planned and ensured meetings of Ukrainians. It is a opportunity they can communicate in their native language. Natalia herself is successfully learning English. She organised English teachers to conduct practical classes at the meetings, everyone is satisfied with the classes. We wish Natalia will continue to organise much needed meetings for Ukrainian women who need long-term psychological and moral rehabilitation from the war."*

## Project Development

We hope to find more funding over the summer months for this group to continue into 2026.

### Case study

*"I always enjoy coming to our meetings. This is the only opportunity I have to chat with my compatriots in our native language. It unites us a lot. The atmosphere is friendly. It helps us to distract from our problems and horrors of the war in our homeland. We discuss latest news, find out some useful information, support each other. We have a lot of common interests. We engage in creativity, needlework, handicraft, embroidery, painting and at the same time improve our English. We like singing Ukrainian songs. So these meetings are very important for us in such a difficult time when the war is still continuing in Ukraine."*

*"These meetings are a connection with my homeland. Each of us has our own problems, experiences, and when we get together we can talk about it openly and open our souls and receive understanding and advice. After the meeting it becomes so much easier and that is why I look forward to each of our meetings. If we lose this it will be my greatest sorrow."*



## Samee

### Funded activities

We delivered a 12-month self-employment skills building project impacting 12 disabled refugees from war-torn home countries who have resettled in Dorset.

### Impact

In total we successfully met our target of recruiting and retaining 12 refugees and delivering a total of 192 output hours of personalised 1:1 self-employment skills building support. We exceeded our outcomes target with 7 of the 12 project participants successfully moving into self-employment or traditional employment.

We definitely needed 16 hours of support as in 5 cases the participants were so caught up with resettlement challenges that they were not in a positive enough space to consider employability skills development support. In the 5 cases aforementioned, we used some of the early support meetings as a safe space for each participant to take stock and talk about their experiences whilst buying the time needed for them to reach a more settled space in order to focus on employability support.

## Project Development

Not continuing

### Case study



*'A' and I have been working together for the best part of a year now. A settled into the local area from her war-torn home country in early 2024 and was experiencing high levels of rejection from jobs she was applying for, knocking her confidence and damaging her mental health. A was challenged with moderate social anxiety, so the first thing we worked together on was strategies to build her resilience and develop her self-employment skills and job-hunting strategy for the modern UK jobs market. We worked together on two areas of interest. A was interested in self-employment as a virtual business admin assistant, but A was also open to traditional employment options in business administration as well. We revamped A's CV to make this more enticing to employers, and we spent a large amount of time on improving her interview skills as A had not been exposed to very many.*

*A's confidence and self-belief began to grow significantly once she was fully settled with her family in their new home. She was also responding well to talking therapies provided by a third party which came with her resettlement support package. By the 8th meeting I could tell that A's preference was to focus on getting into traditional employment, so we fully prepared her to start a new round of job hunting with renewed self-esteem. Fortunately, A successfully gained a new role in business administration with a month of our 8th meeting, so we agreed to do some in-work support to ensure that she felt secure in her new role. A also immediately gained a second part-time job role as a self-employed commercial property cleaning operative, so we spent the final support meetings ensuring that she could cope juggling both job roles and to make sure she knew how to register correctly with HMRC.*

## **Shaftesbury Refugee Group**

**Reporting on grant of £5000 in June 2024 plus top up grant of £3900 in Nov 2024**

*"The (application) process is thorough and yet accessible. Thank you."*

### **Funded activities**

The main beneficiaries were Ukrainian refugees although a small number of Syrian refugees participated in many of the events as well. We provided 30, week long places at a 5 week long summer school with our partners English Country Schools and Port Regis. In addition we provided a maths tutor to support Ukrainian examination preparation. We supported places at 'Make a Film in a week' activity and 'Make a Musical in a week' (for children) and a Christmas craft making workshop. We supported and organised culturally important heritage events and activities: Stand with Ukraine, Maslenitsa X 2, Vyshyvanka X 2, Ivan Kupalo, Independence Days, a Ukrainian Film Night. We supported and organised mindfulness activities for adults: Neurographica session, Yoga sessions, Meditation classes. We helped the refugee community access: Semley Music Festival, PotFest,, Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show, coach trip to The Jurassic Coast, coach trip to Oxford We provided support for transport including bicycles, driving lessons and license and driving test applications.

### **Impact**

The impact of the grant has been very significant. The dispersed community of Ukrainian guests in our area have regular opportunities to meet and build a community away from home. This chance to meet also provides an opportunity for parents and grandparents to share cultural traditions and speak in Ukrainian and Russian with children who, in some instances, have lived longer in the UK than in Ukraine.



The chance for children to attend Summer schools had the dual benefit of providing an inclusive environment in which English could be improved and relationships built and also of supporting parents with much needed childcare. The cultural trips were a chance to move outside the immediate area of North Dorset and find out more about the country that they have been displaced to. They also provided the chance to meet other displaced communities. We have developed children's activities that have been led by Ukrainian guests themselves. These have included demonstrations of Cossack traditions, agility races, traditional art activity, such as egg decoration and embroidery skills. In addition we have been able to support more formal educational tuition in Maths and Ukrainian via a Ukrainian speaking maths tutor. This has helped older children prepare for online examination in Ukraine.



In our rural community a significant need has been transport, especially for the cohort of Ukrainians who either did not have an eligible driving license or had arrived at age 17 without the resources to learn to drive. In addition we have helped with the purchase of bicycles which has enabled younger people to participate in activity with peers.

*"I am sincerely grateful to the group for their support and help upon arrival in the UK. It is hard to imagine how difficult it would have been to integrate into society without the information, activities and support provided by the Group."*

### Project Development

All of our activities will continue, we can only see ourselves adding to them as we have done so recently with employment support. We have secured Wessex Water Foundation funding to support the Summer Schools and some significant donations from benefactors which we will use to continue cultural activities.



### Case study

T is a single parent with a teenage daughter and son. T has significant anxiety due to her circumstances and this has meant that she has been unable to work consistently. Her anxiety is often related to meeting the needs of her children. For example she knew that her children needed adequate laptops to further their education. We were able to meet these needs with our partner Donate IT. T did not have an eligible driving license and lacked confidence on UK roads. Her son also needed a license to help him return from college. We were able to help them with some driving lesson coaching and support for license and driving test applications. T's qualifications could not be recognised here without a complicated process which fortunately we were able to help with. She has her qualifications recognised now. When T's son left for University we were able to help with a starter kit of necessary, first time away from home, items. T herself had significant difficulties with her host which we were able to provide counsel for and when, inevitably, she had to move out we were able to provide support for moving and the new furniture they needed. She says *"I want to thank you and your team again for everything, I am truly grateful for your help and understanding."*



## Treads

*Extension to December 2025*