

REFUGEE CRISIS

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL STATEMENT

On Wednesday 9 September, during Buckfastleigh Town Council's regular monthly meeting, the Council discussed the ongoing refugee crisis as an item requiring urgent attention. The Council unanimously agreed to offer our support to the innocent victims of war and to invite and encourage local people to help.

We agreed to create a register of local residents who could offer accommodation to refugees and to ensure that the information is passed to the local and central government bodies who are coordinating activity. Anyone able to accommodate refugees should email clerk@buckfastleigh.gov.uk detailing how many people they are able to accommodate and for how long.

We published information about two local community groups, Help For Syria and Aid For Calais, which are collecting goods and money to help provide relief to refugees in need. We also signposted people to an online petition encouraging the Government to accommodate more refugees in the UK.

This issue was raised as an item requiring urgent attention because Councillors and members of the public felt that the scale of the refugee crisis warranted a discussion about what action our community could and should take to help.

Members of the Council were reminded that people fleeing Syria were being attacked by both conventional and chemical weapons and were desperate to move themselves to safety. Most left with very few belongings and face a terrifying and uncertain journey into the unknown.

The meeting was addressed by County and District Councillor Stuart Barker, who outlined the actions that regional government bodies were being asked to put in place to assist in the distribution of refugees nationally.

The Town Council's decision is in line with the United Nations statement asking for action to be taken at all levels of government "*Exceptional circumstances require an exceptional response. Business as usual will not solve the problem.*" (António Guterres - head of the UN refugee agency). Further information can be found here <http://www.unhcr.org.uk/news-and-views/news-list/news-detail/article/unhcr-chief-issues-key-guidelines-for-dealing-with-europes-refugee-crisis.html>

Further details about what this means for Buckfastleigh can be found on our website:

<http://www.buckfastleigh.gov.uk/buckfastleigh-refugees-welcome/>