



Action on Ukraine

On Wednesday March 30th representatives from many local charities and churches joined together to discuss how faith groups in Ipswich might respond to the crisis in Ukraine. With contributions from the Mayor, Archdeacon Rhiannon King, a representative from Suffolk Refugee Support and many other volunteers we discussed what practical steps individuals and churches can take to assist with the situation where currently 7m are displaced within Ukraine, and 4m have fled the country. Some of the most moving testimony came from a local volunteer Alan Cutting, who has made many trips recently to Ukraine, Poland, Romania and Moldova – who described the scenes of mothers and children (few fathers) coming across the border and being met with a warm reception – and crucially some police support, to ensure that safeguarding issues were being addressed. Interestingly his experience was that almost all refugees wanted to remain as close

to Ukraine as possible – wanting to stay within Slavic cultures, and perhaps anticipating that they would soon be returning. Indeed as many people were going back into Ukraine – with supplies and to visit relatives – as appeared to be fleeing. None of the refugees he spoke to wanted to come to the UK.

This perhaps gives us some indication of where we should be aiming our support – individually and collectively. Much of the noise in the media has been about the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme, but the reality is that the vast majority of displaced people, who will need our support will remain far from our shores – and in that sense supporting the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal remains a highly effective way of trying to resolve the situation.

Nevertheless it is anticipated that refugees from Ukraine will come to Ipswich – and it should not be forgotten that there are already many refugee communities in Ipswich and Suffolk – and for that reason ‘Together for Ipswich’ – a group of over 80 churches and community groups – have come together to set out a 4-pronged approach to tackling this situation:

1. Support existing Ukrainian families in Ipswich. Do we know anyone who would like to be part of this group? If we do we can get in touch with Together for Ipswich who will link them up.
2. Support people who want to sponsor a family in Ukraine – taking them through the Homes for Ukraine process.
3. Provide a network for families in Ipswich and Suffolk who are hosting refugees

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Action on Ukraine – cont.

4. Support churches in providing support directly to all refugees
A series of links were provided to organisations which will provide support and advice to individuals and groups who wish to sponsor Ukrainian refugees and give them shelter. By far the most useful of these was for 'Reset' an organisation which was created to support people engaging in Community Sponsorship schemes, which has been running for nearly five years:

<https://resetuk.org/about>

This website has a toolkit for people investigating a sponsorship scheme -

https://resetuk.org/assets/Homes-for-Ukraine--Sponsor-Toolkit_v1_FINAL-1648486743.pdf

As a sponsor, you must name the person you wish to sponsor. However, if you do not know someone to sponsor, you can apply to be matched with someone looking to come to the UK via www.homesforukraine.org.uk, a service run by Reset

It is clear that the current situation is fluid. God willing soon we may have peace and it may be possible for people to start returning to Ukraine, to rebuild their shattered homeland. However the likelihood is that the present catastrophe will continue for some time yet, and many, many people will remain homeless or unable to return. In the face of that it is encouraging to see so much energy and love being directed at finding practical solutions, at living our faith.

John Stevens

Draft Mission

Linda King found the following on a scrap of paper being used as a bookmark in the Meeting House.

"A Draft Mission. To be a body of individual independent minded Christian thinkers who seek inspirational stimulating meeting together and share their warm welcoming fellowship."

Charles Nottcutt 11.3.2012

Grade 1 Neighbours



Rachel Sloane has written an article for the Suffolk Norfolk Life magazine about the two Grade 1 listed buildings in Ipswich which are neighbours – the Meeting House and the Willis building next door – worth a look!

Fundraising for Lighthouse

We are proud to have raised over £2,000 for the Lighthouse Women's Aid project and will be presenting a large cheque to Deb Johnson, the Manager at Lighthouse, at our service on 3rd April. Do come along to show her our support. We will also be giving her the latest batch of care packs (bags of necessities for women and children who have to flee their homes with nothing) which we have filled.

Future fundraising ideas are an organ recital and a theatrical production – and we need volunteers to make these ideas a reality. Please speak to Robert Waller or Adam Whybray.

Services in April

3rd - led by Elaine Marsden
10th - led by Richard Howarth. previously with L'Arche
15th - led by Rev Cliff Reed on Good Friday
17th - led by Rev Cliff Reed on Easter Sunday
24th - led by the congregation for our Anniversary Service - followed by a shared lunch

Birthdays in April

Happy birthday this month to Miranda McIntosh on 3rd ; Kate Gray on 5th ; Morag Blue on 6th ; Cliff Reed on 12th ; David Forsdike on 19th ; Sheila Seal on 21st and Rosemary Hamilton on 26th.


Last month John Ellis celebrated a very special birthday in style -



Grey Cells ... No Cells!

Recently I notched up another birthday. Also my younger grandson reached his (horror of horror) 13th birthday. In the very early hours of the day I had the bright idea to send him a text message. I have very limited knowledge of, and even less patience with technology, but I try. So I rummaged in my handbag and found the mobile 'telephone'. After switching it on, pressing various buttons and unable to fathom out how to send a text I realise... I did not pick up the 'phone, but instead it was my camera!! In my world they are separate items. Good news - I did eventually send the message and Leon replied in seconds.

Paulette Reed





'In Raiment of Needlework'

An exhibition of textiles and vestments for the Platinum Jubilee

St Peter Mancroft

Wednesday 1st June - Monday 6th June
10:30am - 3:00pm
(Sunday 5th June 12noon - 3:00pm)

£5 Entry
(payable on the door)



Advance notice - Dr Nick Groves is doing a Book Launch on 7th May at the Octagon in Norwich.

Build your own Theology/Beliefs

Last month we announced the start of a course for anyone who is interested in exploring and clarifying their own individual beliefs. This is an open invitation, so anyone is welcome to join, whether they attend the Meeting House services or not. What is required is a spirit of enquiry and a willingness to honour the other participants and their points of view. Once the course starts it will be a closed group and nobody else will be accepted into it.

The course will be led by Dr Adam Whybray and the start has been delayed until Thursday 21st April. The sessions will be fortnightly from then and will be from 18.30 to 20.30. Contact Adam on adamwhybray@gmail.com for details.

Extract from Ipswich Unitarian Congregation,
Monthly Bulletin March 1956.

COLOUR BAR IN IPSWICH.

As readers of this Bulletin will be well aware, the town has been faced with a serious social question through the action of one particular restaurant – the Rendezvous Restaurant in Tacket Street – in imposing a colour bar, something which is alien not only to the traditions of this country but also to the principles for which this church, and every other church, stands. Already this act of racial discrimination has received wide publicity throughout the country, and no doubt in other countries as well. On February 19th, when we had our largest congregations since Christmas, we pledged ourselves not to patronise any restaurant which violates in this way the principle of the brotherhood of man to which we all subscribe. It has been emphasized that this is not a boycott aimed at injuring the restaurant proprietor, but rather an act of principle in dissociating ourselves completely from something we believe to be evil.

On the positive side, members may like to be reminded that the Ipswich Caribbean Society, which tries to promote better understanding between the local population and the West Indians in our midst, meets every Saturday night in our Hall*. Anyone is welcome to join in the informal programme on these occasions, and to get to know these people who have come to this country because of depressed conditions in their homeland. Unitarians in all lands have made a fine contribution to better relations between differing races, and the reputation we have was shown by the fact that the Minister** had already been approached by three separate newspapers before it was announced that we would be taking the matter up.

*The old Victorian Hall now demolished.

** Rev Phillip Hewett.

THE LAUNCH OF

As If Everything Were a Miracle

6.30 pm Friday 29th April

The Meeting House will be the venue for the launch of the latest collection of poetry by Suffolk poet Peter Watkins. Peter will be in conversation with Ian Griffiths of Eye Wild Books as well of course as reading some of his poems. Wine & light refreshments will be served from 6.30 p.m. There is no charge for the event, but donations are invited for Lighthouse Women's Aid.

Do join us and tell your friends about the event too.

There will be limited parking available at the Meeting House – it may be advisable to park in Cromwell Square where parking is free after 6 pm!



Some comments about Peter's book:

"I am very much enjoying reading the many uplifting poems such as "Daily Jubilation"

Margaret Ferguson

"Thank you for publishing such a truly wonderful book. I also love the pictures by Carol Lawrence." Griselda Appleton

"This beautifully produced book is overwhelming in its simplicity.....but the images and thoughts sparkle like dew on the grass in the early morning." James Roose-Evans

Ipswich CAN

This year, Ipswich CAN (Clean Air Now) ensured that clean air for Ipswich was on the agenda by making representation and asking questions at three Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Boards. Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) are a statutory forum where political, clinical, professional and community leaders from across the care and health system come together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

To raise awareness of air quality, in 2021 the local Craftivist group sent a craft lung to councillors in Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council. Sorrell Grove followed this up by asking a question at this month's Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Board agreed to take action and in January 2022, held an air quality summit for elected members and senior managers from across the county council, district and borough councils and local NHS. The event was led by Stuart Keeble, Suffolk's Director of Public Health, and aimed to improve understanding of the effects of air pollution on Health, the current air quality situation across Suffolk, and initiatives to prevent, mitigate and avoid poor air quality. Although this event was closed to the public, a full report of the event, along with the Suffolk air quality profile can be found [here](#).

An interesting statistic from the Summit is that in Ipswich 38,882 people are within 500m of an Air Quality Management Area, whilst 5,766 people are similarly affected in the rest of Suffolk.

Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed to -

- Provide oversight of the health impacts of air pollution, and
- Form a subgroup to support collective action which will involve communicating to affected residents, and to prevent, mitigate and avoid poor air quality

Whilst many barriers remain this is a good step forward. We believe we should now start to focus on solutions and support our councils to urgently communicate and take those prevention, mitigation and avoidance actions that they have agreed are so necessary. Please send any feedback to Tony Horner www.ipswichcan.org

Ipswich Art Society Annual Open Exhibition

Ipswich Art Gallery will be reopening on Saturday 9th April with Ipswich Art Society's annual Open Exhibition, which runs to Thursday 5th May.

The Ipswich Art Society has held its Annual Open Exhibition since 1874, pausing only for the two World Wars and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic. This spring marks its return and their 143rd year! A selection of artworks from the public, as well as the Friends and Members of Ipswich Art Society, will celebrate local creativity.



Disclaimer

We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community.

Contacts Contributions PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa before the deadline of Wednesday 27th April by email to

ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

To contact our Secretary ring 01473 728498 email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Thought for the month

Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in - *Isaac Asimov*