

# CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR CHIPPING BARNET

## Justice and Peace Newsletter 30

November 2015



### REFUGEE UPDATE

#### 1. Refugees from Syria

Thanks to pressure from local voluntary groups, Barnet was one of the first boroughs in the UK to offer accommodation for Syrian refugees coming from the camps set up in Lebanon, Jordan and other countries surrounding Syria. Other boroughs have now followed suit. Men, women and children in the camps who wish to come to Britain as refugees are now receiving security checks and being assessed for their medical and psychological needs. About fifty of them are expected to arrive in Barnet before Christmas.

At the Barnet Multifaith Forum “Welcome the Stranger” held at Hendon Town Hall on 17th November, a Jew, a Pakistani and two Syrians described their experiences of being refugees in Britain. It was clear that integration into British society takes time and cannot be taken for granted. Refugees, and children in particular, arriving in Britain may be traumatised by their previous experiences and need a lot of help. Their needs include welcoming, English language classes, local people available to answer their questions on how to cope with life in Britain and to help them make their way through our maze of bureaucratic procedures.

Barnet Council was represented at the Forum by the Mayor, Cllr Mark Shooter, the Leader of the Council, Richard Cornelius and High Barnet Local Councillor David Longstaff. Also present were representatives of local churches and synagogues and others from local voluntary groups. They asked ‘what should we be doing to offer welcome and support to the refugees?’

The Borough Officer charged with co-ordinating the preparations to receive the refugees is Stephen Evans. He replies: “Barnet Council are finalising arrangements to resettle 50 Syrian refugees in the Borough, following a commitment made by all of 63 Barnet Councillors on 20 October. The Council are working with central Government to ensure appropriate funding is made available and with local community groups such as Citizens UK to identify accommodation and put in place wider support. The Council would like to hear from any voluntary groups who would like to offer donations or support. Please contact the Council at [refugeesupport@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@barnet.gov.uk).” See also [citizensuk.org/north\\_london](http://citizensuk.org/north_london).

Volunteering Barnet is the service provided by the charity Groundwork London on behalf of Barnet Council. Its aim is to inspire and support volunteers across the borough. Individuals can register as would-be volunteers, and organisations in need of volunteers can be helped to find them. Volunteering Barnet can also provide information about existing voluntary groups and activities. Contact them at [volunteeringbarnet.org.uk](http://volunteeringbarnet.org.uk) and follow them on [facebook.com/volbarnet](https://www.facebook.com/volbarnet).

PTO

Barnet Refugee Service has a good record of supporting asylum seekers and refugees. They employ a teacher of English, a health and social advisor, a youth worker, co-ordinators for men's, women's and children's groups, and several people who co-ordinate the work of their many volunteers of different nationalities. Their HQ is at The Hyde, Colindale, from where they organise events and workshops at several sites around the borough, including Barnet College. BRS is a charity supported by NHS Barnet, Barnet Council, charitable funds and local churches. They will be swinging into action when the Syrians arrive. Donations and offers to volunteer would be very welcome and should be sent to:  
Barnet Refugee Service, Hyde House, The Hyde, London NW9 6LH.  
Tel: 020 8905 9002 Ext 1.  
Email: [www.b-r-s.org.uk](http://www.b-r-s.org.uk)

## 2. Other Refugees



Christian Aid has put out this statement:

"The images of desperate refugees crossing the Mediterranean in unstable boats, or packed illegally into lorries, or protesting 'We are human beings too' in the port of Calais, are a distressing reminder of the shocking refugee crisis that led to the founding of Christian aid in 1945.

"Christian aid is working with churches and other agencies in supporting humanitarian efforts taking place in Europe and the Middle East. Our partners can provide essential humanitarian supplies such as food, fuel for cooking, hygiene and sanitation kits, water containers and cash assistance, as well as psychological support for those who are suffering as a result of the conflict.

"The numbers seeking refuge will grow as long as the conflicts in Syria and Iraq continue, and, as winter approaches in all countries of refuge, their needs will increase. We urgently need funds to continue supporting existing vulnerable families and prepare to reach thousands more."



**At the Barnet High Street Fair on Sunday 6th December, there will be a stall giving out information about Churches Together for Chipping Barnet, including an invitation to the Wesley Hall, where there will be a Christmas Bazaar in aid of Christian Aid. At the stall, pick up a voucher for free tea/coffee.**

The Editor would welcome news of local projects or plans that could be usefully made known to others through this Newsletter. [jennyremfry@btinternet.com](mailto:jennyremfry@btinternet.com). Please also send a message if you wish to be added to or removed from this mailing list.