

# Aylesbury Vineyard Storehouse Ukrainian Hub Update

The Ukrainian Hub at Aylesbury Vineyard Storehouse started in May last year and has helped our Ukraine guests feel welcome and settled in our local community.

What we originally envisioned for the Ukraine Hub and what happens today are very different, we had a vision of a similar setup to our Tuesday drop in, community hub where our local community have the opportunity to come in and talk to local agencies (Buckinghamshire Council Helping Hands, local housing associations, adult learning, family support services, Advisa etc) to answer all their questions. We were aiming for a 'one stop shop'.

Although we had a translator (provided by Community Impact Bucks) and a couple of Ukrainians with good English the initial language issue made this un-workable but what we did discover was that Ukraine guests were all helping each other with the initial basics, bank accounts, Universal Credit, Biometric id cards, driving licences etc. So all we had to do was provide a safe place for the guests to gather, talk and help one another, we provided lunch for them and alongside the Sponsor Liaison Officers from Buckinghamshire Council that joined us we were able to advise and sign post were needed.

We discovered early on that many of the Ukrainians have great career backgrounds but were limited by the language barrier so English lessons were needed to help them get work and settle here in the UK. We soon began running 45 minute sessions alongside the hub, although well attended and received the lessons were short and run voluntarily so with the support of the William Harding Trust we were able to help accelerate the learning. At the beginning of September we ran a week of intensive English lessons with three English Tutors that we had hired, beginners, intermediate and advanced classes.

These classes have continued in the mornings before the hub and we now have 3 Ukrainians who teach for us, these lessons have been so well received with around 90-95% of our Hub guests attending the lessons.

Numbers to the hub vary, the success of the English lessons means we lose people as they find employment etc. but new guests are still arriving on an almost weekly basis. We are currently supporting around 50-60 guests every week with a majority of them taking part in our free English lessons that we provide over 3 different levels.

Our Christmas celebration meal brought back guests who we hadn't seen for months who told us how the Hub had helped them settle in the UK. Each of our Ukraine guests received Christmas presents from us and every volunteer received a card and present from the Ukrainians to express their gratitude for our help.

The money from the Community Boards has ensured that the Hub can run on a weekly basis although the original calculation for catering had not foreseen the huge increase in the cost of food (16.5%), and the original board funding was to cover the costs of using 3 rooms. With 3 different levels of English lessons taking place we now use 5 rooms but Aylesbury Vineyard Church has not made any additional charges.

The next challenge is helping to find and furnish houses as guests move out of hosts properties into their own and we are currently looking at ways to support them in this alongside the Buckinghamshire Council.

**Ukrainian Friends and Family Hub**

- for guests and sponsors
- every Thursday 12.30-2.30pm
- english lessons
- lunch and refreshments
- advice and support
- play therapist available

**WELCOME, ласкаво просимо,  
laskavo prosymo.**

aylesbury vineyard  
**STOREHOUSE**  
Gatehouse Close  
Aylesbury  
HP19 8DN

THE BERNWOOD COMMUNITY BUS

Community Board  
Aylesbury

Our original Ukrainian Hub Leaflet.



The Kitchen Volunteers (Christmas Dinner)

On behalf of our family, I want to thank you for all the support and help, for these wonderful dinners, where everyone felt comfortable and happy, and of course for such wonderful gifts, in which a piece of the soul was invested! ❤️🥰🥰 You are very kind-hearted people and deserve only the best for your sensitive actions, thank you, from all Ukrainians! Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year! 🎄🎁🎀 16:24

Feedback from one of our Ukrainian Guests.



Sorting Christmas Gifts for all the Ukrainian Hub Guests.