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# ON THE MOVE

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## The Newsletter of Refugees Welcome - Crawley



### Crawley Talk Club

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

- [Crawley Talk Club](#)
- [Into Work](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Thank You!](#)

The conversation is continuing to flow during the weekly meetings of Talk Club Crawley. In the autumn term we enjoyed a range of activities such as arts and crafts, singing and dressing up, and were delighted to welcome a new family and their little girl and also, for the first time, we have enjoyed welcoming teenagers, who add a new and exciting element to the group! Our numbers have therefore increased to an average of twenty each week, which is fantastic. We finished the year with two lovely experiences, on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December we all took a trip in various volunteer's cars to Cuckfield to visit the annual Christmas tree display there. How we wondered at the many, many differently decorated fir trees that filled Holy Trinity Church in the village, a big thank you to Ros and Gill for suggesting and arranging everything so thoroughly. And on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the first birthday of our youngest member, with family friends invited especially for the occasion, party games and lots of delicious food, what a wonderful way to end the year!

In just over twelve months since our Talk Club meetings began we have observed an admirable increase in the confidence and complexity of our members' language use, both adults and children alike, which is testament to their hard work and perseverance to engage in their new communities and get to grips with their new language, well done everyone on such great progress! Here's looking forward to another successful year of language learning, friendship and welcome to folk newly settled in the town. Thank you to all those who help to make Talk Clubrun smoothly each week, and to the Charis Centre for continuing to allow to use their Jungle Tots play space to meet in.

## INTO WORK



Looking for work and finding work is not easy in Crawley. The difficulties multiply when you are not from here and you are not fluent in English. Refugees who are willing to get working and start providing for themselves find themselves having to navigate the different systems and processes that are in place to get a job. To give you an idea of the process here is the search for work experienced by local refugees from arrival under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme...

### Arrival in Crawley April 2016

Key workers helped establish and set up new residents with all the necessary legal requirements to find work. This meant registering for benefits and Jobseekers Allowance JSA. Local refugee made weekly/ fortnightly visits to the Job Centre looking for work and signing on. Six months later referred to the Shaw Trust - an organisation that helps people back into work. A job is found that is 16 hours a week has no English required and fits with English lessons.

### Start of 2017

A job is offered by a supportive employer. An application form is filled in and submitted. The Employer wants to support but is trying to fulfil the safeguarding requirements of the role with very limited information from the vetting service and input from other professional bodies.

The Shaw Trust and our group communicate with the Employer and pursue a successful outcome by trying to fulfil all the requirements. This involves navigating the present and real danger to refugees that documents have to be sourced without the incumbent governments of their homelands finding out where they are. This is not just the fear they feel for themselves but mostly for family members left behind.

These problems were overcome and showed that there are ways to overcome these hurdles. With much joy, the vetting service issued the relevant document required to start work.

### Jan 2018

Starting work with the supportive Employer.

This is just a summary to illustrate that common sense can prevail! Among the rules and regulations there is room for discretionary decision-making when someone cannot possibly fulfil the demands of a process because they have left a situation where law and order have broken down so completely. It is extremely satisfying the outcome has been a success. For the next job-hunters, we can hold this up as an example and hopefully the process will be quicker. Our thanks to the Shaw Trust and the supportive Employer.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Please come to our AGM and Welcome Meal on Tuesday 27 March at Crawley United Reform Church - Worth Park Avenue, Pound Hill - a five minute walk from Three Bridges Station at 7pm. Please bring food to share and you can be sure of a big welcome. Our welcome meals are the focal point of our community welcome.

On Saturday 24 March you are invited to a cultural awareness class run by our volunteers. The class has limited places and if you would like to attend please email [RWCanna@gmail.com](mailto:RWCanna@gmail.com) to book a place. The cultural awareness class will run from 1100 to 1230 at St Paul's Church in Woodfield Road, RH10 8ER.

Come and SEW our community wall hanging for the new Crawley Museum to celebrate 70 years of Crawley New Town. No sewing experience needed. Sewing workshop on Saturday 24 March from 1230 to 1730 at St Paul's Church, Woodfield Road, Northgate. All are very welcome. Come and put the finishing touches to our community quilt. See you there!



Thank you for all you do to continue to show that Crawley and East Grinstead are places of welcome for refugees. Our gardening group and sewing project are flourishing. Talk Club is hugely successful in Crawley and East Grinstead. We have befriending and english language teaching projects and most recently have a food distribution scheme thanks to donations from Tesco and a great team of our volunteers. Thanks to Worth School for IT lessons for local refugees, and for giving local refugees the opportunity to teach Arabic. Join us as we prepare to welcome more refugees to the town. We look forward to seeing you all at our AGM and welcome meal on 27 March at Crawley URC.

THANK YOU ALL!