

	Meeting (No)	Community & Environment (2)
	Date	27 June 2023
	Document	Ref No
	Summer Support Sessions for Ukrainian Refugees	CE2/24

Background

We have received a funding request for the continuation of weekly support sessions for Ukrainian refugees over the summer period.

The request

I am a qualified ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Teacher and have been supporting the Ukrainian Refugees since they arrived in Neston when they fled from the war. I started by volunteering and delivering Conversational English classes at Neston Library, I was then offered contracted teaching hours with a nearby organisation.

I deliver ESOL sessions twice a week – but these unfortunately stop over school holidays. I think six weeks will be a long gap in both learning of the English language and also will be a significant length of time when they won't have a designated place where they feel safe and comfortable to come together. I am concerned this could have a negative impact on mental health and some could lead to social isolation.

For this reason, I am working on a solution to this gap in social connection and learning over the summer. Jen Fisher (a qualified yoga teacher) and I have both committed to run sessions throughout the summer to support, educate and hold space for the Ukrainian Refugees.

Please see Jen's website where you can see more about her work : [Willow Mindful Yoga](#) and the engagement she has with the local community.

The idea of bringing in Jen as a yoga teacher came from a brief introduction to yoga / relaxation we delivered recently. This came about as one of my students asked whether there were any yoga sessions in the area to help her daughter to relax as she was, understandably, traumatised from all she had been through and having to leave her home in such devastating circumstances. I asked Jen who is a certified Yoga Teacher and runs her own sessions through her organisation 'Willow Mindful Yoga' to come and talk to the group. I also used the opportunity to cover essential vocabulary – parts of the body/movement etc. We had excellent feedback – even from such a short session – and all students said they felt calmer after this lesson; which led me to think about partnering the English language lessons with yoga, mindfulness and community building.

We will be holding an event 'Supportive Saturday' on a voluntary basis this weekend (17 June) in advance of Refugee Week next week. This is a stand alone event, where we will be focusing on well-being, relaxation and community. However, in an ideal scenario, this will be an introduction to our summer sessions.

Jen and I are both qualified tutors with a wealth of experience in our fields. I gained my PGCE (Adult ESOL Subject Specialist) in 2005 and have since taught ESOL to a wide range of students of all ages/nationalities, including refugees and asylum seekers. I also have experience of delivering training, co-ordinating projects and supporting people back into employment. Along with being a qualified Yoga Teacher, Jen also holds a Masters of Science in Counsellor Education and has extensive professional experience in mindfulness, childhood development, education and mental health.

We hope to provide some continuity and support through the summer holidays by creating a bespoke course of three hour sessions and will be inviting people of all ages to attend – very much supporting the whole family and giving the students some agency of subjects covered with the main focus being on promoting well-being and learning English via different platforms – a holistic approach; with the aim to support both educationally and therapeutically. Neston Community Youth Centre (NCYC) will be overseeing the project.

I think we have the potential to do something really special here and are hoping you could provide the much needed funding to ensure this venture can move forward to support our local refugees.

The school summer holidays are fast approaching so we need to secure funding as soon as possible so we can begin spreading the word and be able to support as many people as possible.

Below please find our breakdown in costs with two options: one is our 'gold standard' which would total £1415 and one lower breakdown, which totals £1115. The difference between the two costings is in option one we have increased the funds for refreshments, as we feel providing fresh fruit and healthy snacks is very important to holistic health, which we are aware some refugees may not have regular access to, as well doubling the funds for supplies and activities, giving us the opportunity to create more varied activities.

Option 1 - £1,415

Staffing (2 teachers and 1 translator): £183 per session x 5: £915

Fresh Fruit and Refreshments: £60 per session x 5: £300

Supplies / activities: £40 per session x 5: £200

Option 2 - £1,115

Staffing (2 teachers and 1 translator): £183 per session x 5: £915

Basic Refreshments: £20 per session x 5: £100

Supplies / activities: £20 per session x 5: £100

For discussion and decision

To consider the request and decide whether to provide a community event donation for this project and to agree the amount.

Audrey Duncan
Community & Environment Manager