

How can we help Ukraine ?

This is a proposal to link our authority, Bath & NE Somerset with a similar city in Ukraine. It comes from a group of locals and Ukrainian activists known as *Bath Stands with Ukraine*.

Filling a Gap in Our Response?

Local people, like others in Britain and Europe have responded with great generosity to the dreadful plight of Ukrainians. We have made contributions to various national and international charities and aid organisations. Our own refugee charity, Bath Welcomes Refugees has also taken a leading role in coordinating information for potential participants in the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

But the scale of the crisis is enormous and a more direct connection between BaNES and a beleaguered Ukrainian area could provide a more tangible and visible focus for people here.

A 'Twinning' Link?

We recognise that processes of overseas twinning involve different agencies and set procedures. However, less formal links already exist; for example, with BaNES districts like Midsomer Norton, Keynsham, Batheaston; and the city of Bath and Manly in Australia.

So, on behalf of Bath Stands with Ukraine and other BaNES citizens we are urgently asking the council for an in-principle commitment to twin with a comparable city locality in Ukraine.

- Three such suitable areas have been identified and communications established with two of these: Poltava and Oleksandriya in the centre of Ukraine.
- At the moment, there is no ground fighting in these areas
- But the residents live under threat of attacks and have to cope with the shortages and dislocations caused by the wider conflict.

Aims

The exact purposes of the link would be defined in conjunction with the Ukrainian partners but the general aims would be as follows.

1. To communicate messages of solidarity and support from citizens and organisations in BaNES to the Ukrainian communities.
2. To provide channels of communication between BaNES groups and the Ukrainian recipients for the supply of goods, such as medicines and equipment.
3. To assist with the linking of potential refugees with prospective hosts in BaNES.
4. To link cash-strapped Ukrainian bodies with potential BaNES donors.
5. To keep BaNES citizens, media, charities and voluntary bodies informed and aware of what is happening 'on the ground' in an area with which they can identify.

What Specific Help is Requested from BaNES?

1. Provide official endorsement of the link
2. Publicise the arrangement through all its media channels, web site etc
3. If possible, a small proportion, maybe one day a week, of officer time to assist with administrative and communication tasks to be mainly done by local volunteers.