

A Way to help Ukraine

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

Filling a Gap in Our Response?

Like others in Britain and Europe, people in BaNES have generously helped the Ukrainian people, contributing to national and international charities and aid organisations. Our own refugee charity, *Bath Welcomes Refugees*, has helped potential participants in the Homes for Ukraine scheme and is in support of this proposal.

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

A 'Twinning' Link?

Processes of overseas twinning involve different agencies and set procedures. In response to our request to BaNES Cabinet, Councillor Romero has asked the Mayor's office about the possibilities of a twinning link.

However, it may be that a less formal kind of link is necessary; for example, similar to those set up by BaNES districts like Midsomer Norton, Keynsham and Batheaston.

So, Bath Stands with Ukraine and other BaNES citizens are urgently asking all councillors 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 community.
2. To provide channels of communication between BaNES groups and Ukrainian recipients for the supply of goods, such as medicines and equipment.
3. To assist in linking 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.

Would councillors from all the parties on BaNES council give their support to this idea?