



Dear Supporters of Dorking Refugee Support,

Firstly I would like to encourage you all that Dorking does have its place in welcoming and supporting refugees, and the work you do has a lasting impact. Since our Autumn update, Sir Erich Reich spoke at Dorking Museum giving his memories of growing up as a refugee in Dorking during the second world war (if you missed his talk and want to read his book – its called [The Boy in the Statue](#)). And then since then we have received a lovely letter from another man born to refugee parents in Dorking during the war, who now lives in America, and recently visited Dorking. He writes:

*“... Even though I have lived most of my life in California I still think of Dorking as a home. I am grateful to Dorking for taking in my parents, myself and saving my parents so that there would be two siblings born later in the United States....”*

*...I do not know where the Dorking refugees of today come from but I want them all to know that Britain is a welcoming nation. These new refugees should be pleased to live in Dorking.”*

With that in mind, here are some upcoming events and ways you can support:

#### **Drinks and a catch up – This Thursday 30th January 7-9pm at the Old House at Home [\(map\)](#)**

Feel free to join us to chat, discuss what is going on, how you can help, and of course have a drink. Don't forget to bring your own ideas and passions. DRS works best that way.

#### **Refugee Tales – A call to end indefinite immigration detention ([refugeetales.org](http://refugeetales.org))**

Refugee Tales' 2020 walk from Crawley to Winchester organised a walk every year, and this year, Dorking is the first overnight stop on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July**. There will a large evening event, so save the date, but you may also want to support by doing some / all of the walk. See their website for details.

In the lead up to this events, there will be smaller events to raise awareness. If you would like a talk from them to a local community you are involved with, then please get in contact with us, and we will pass on your details. We will also let you know how you can attend a pre-event.

If you want a taste of what Refugee Tales do, visit: <https://28for28.org/> - it is well worth a visit.

#### **Collections for Refugee Camps Abroad**

**Anytime Fitness [\(map\)](#)** in Dorking (and once it's open, Leatherhead [\(map\)](#) too) have very kindly offered to act as a collection point for donation for the refugee camps abroad. We will be doing a trip to Calais and also working with Anaya Aid to send supplies to the camps in Greece. We hope to have the collection point open by the end of this week (31 January). A list of what is (and is not!) required is attached to this email.

#### **Specific Requests**

2 refugees who have been hosted in Dorking would like to settle here and so we are looking for more permanent accommodation for them. If you are aware of any affordable apartments that they could rent, please do get in contact. Both we have known for a long time and can vouch for.

Secondly we have a couple of refugees in Dorking who are currently learning to drive. Having passed their theory, they are now taking driving lessons but would benefit from someone willing to take them out and practice. If you are willing to ensure them on your car and arrange a time to take them out, please do get in contact. One is female and would ideally prefer another female to take her out practicing.

### **English lessons (Tuesday and Thursday) and the Saturday Morning English Speaking Café**

These continue to take place and are led by a fantastic team. Please let anyone who is isolated due to their language know about them. The English Speaking Café is a place for refugees (or anyone for that matter) to come, practice their English, enjoy a cuppa, and build relationships. Attached is a flyer. Please print out and place somewhere prominent. Thank you.

### **How else you can support:**

There will always be a need to host refugees in people's homes, so please get in contact if you would like more information (no commitment). I can honestly say this has always been a blessing for our family.

Often we need odd bits of help which you may be able to help with (for example, we soon may need someone who is willing to take one of our refugees out on driving practice). Just by joining us and engaging on facebook / this email list / the website is support in itself.

### **BUT**

Dorking Refugee Support works best when you have an idea of what you would like to do to support the current refugee crisis abroad or closer to home. We can then support that, and hook you up with like minded, supportive people. Let us know what you want to do, and we can help you.

Keith Halsey

(As always, if you want to be removed from this mailing list, just let me know.)