

Supplement to the agenda for

Council

Friday 4 March 2022

10.00 am

**Three Counties Hotel, Belmont Road, Belmont, Hereford, HR2
7BP**

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Title of report: Motions on notice – urgent matter supplement

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 4 March 2022

Report by: Monitoring Officer

Motion – Ukraine

In accordance with paragraph 4.1.90 of the Council's constitution the Chairperson, in consultation with the monitoring officer, has accepted the motion below for debate at the meeting on 4 March as an urgent matter directly affecting part or all of the county and it is not practical to defer consideration of the motion to the next ordinary meeting of Council.

(Proposed by Councillor Nigel Shaw, Seconded by Councillor Mark Millmore)

My wife and I have visited Ukraine and my wife has been working under contract for several years to the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice, training their Probation Service, lately remotely because of Covid. She has remained in daily contact with her colleagues now under attack. I've taken this from a Facebook post:-

Natalia from Odesa writes:

"When the war is over, roses will bloom in my garden. And my children will sleep in their beds. I will not have to stand in long queues, I will not have to load the car with the necessary things for the war. Or rather, to escape it. When the war is over, I will not be angry at the meanness I see, at the betrayal of those I never expected from, at the hypocrisy. And strangers become relatives either temporarily or permanent. When the war is over, my children will be safe. Not in the safety they write about in the manuals with ventilation and access to water, but the real one - with access to the sea, walks with dogs and in their favourite rooms. When the war is over, I will be stronger, angrier and kinder at the same time. I will be able to be a person, not a target or a volunteer unit, or kind of a puppet. I will stop being afraid to knock on closed doors, or failures, or looking stupid or awkward. It doesn't matter if there is a real goal. When the war is over, there will be a holiday atmosphere in my house. And I will allow tears only when the war is over"

It's not hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousands, but hundreds of thousands of mainly women and children that have already fled Putin's onslaught of cruise missiles and shelling; of rockets and thermobaric weapons. Many civilians have bravely stayed to fight.

When the government asked us to look after Syrian refugees and asylum seekers Herefordshire volunteered to do so. When they asked us to look after unaccompanied children Herefordshire answered the call. I think this Council, its officers, and the people of Herefordshire did a great job in answering those requests.

I want this Council and our residents to be ready and waiting when the opportunity comes to welcome Ukrainian refugees into our county. We have welcomed their countrymen and women to work in our agricultural sector for many years as seasonal labour but these soon to arrive will not have expected to have to leave their homes, their jobs, their friends, relations and schoolmates. None of them signed up to trek across Europe with only what they could carry as convoys of tanks and Russian soldiers chased them out of their neighbourhoods.

I have heard and seen just how enthusiastic and resolute our residents have been in collecting aid to be sent to Ukraine and to meet the desperate immediate needs of refugees now fleeing the war zone. I am sure that they will be just as enthusiastic and resolute in welcoming those who have been displaced by this European conflagration. I am sure that no one in this room ever anticipated, in their lifetime, seeing such sights as these occurring now, only 1500 miles away. That's 28 hours by car, although a tank may, fortunately, take a tad longer.

I recall the fateful words of Winston Churchill from his broadcast talk of 1st October 1939, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

We must remain optimistic that this crisis will be resolved.

That a diplomatic solution will be delivered - to jaw-jaw is better than to war-war.

In the meantime we should prepare.

I hope my request to support this motion finds a sympathetic ear amongst you all.

Motion

This motion calls on the executive to consider and put in place whatever facilities as may be reasonably expected to receive Ukrainian refugees, subject to direction from national government and an evaluation of council resources required, to ensure that schooling and health services are alerted and to inform the government in Westminster, immediately, that Herefordshire will not be found wanting in our welcome. And to extend a wider request to our residents to be willing to welcome any refugees that they can into their homes, and to be ready to facilitate such organisation and support as these actions may require.