

Refugee Crisis 2015-2016

Statement from St Dunstan's Parish Team,
St Dunstan's Catholic Church, Shaftesbury Road, Woking GU22 7DT

In September 2015 the parish team held an emergency meeting to consider how we, as individuals and as a parish, could respond to the on going refugee crisis.

We made contact with other church leaders and Faith communities in Woking, Woking Borough Council and other Agencies.

It was clear to us that, as a parish, we needed to work through official channels. Cardinal Vincent Nicholls and Archbishop Peter Smith as representatives of the Catholic Church in England and Wales issued a statement on 9th September on the Refugee Crisis. At the same time our bishop, Richard, issued a similar statement. We made both of these statements available to the parish on the weekend of 12th /13th September 2015.

Bishop Richard appointed Aidan Cantwell at DABCEC (01293 651161): <http://www.abdiocese.org.uk> and Mary-Jane Burkett at St Cuthman's (01403 741220) to act as the diocesan contacts with local councils. Bishop Richard stated: **"It is of the utmost importance that we work through these channels to ensure that the best possible support and aid can be directed in the most effective way."**

We followed our bishop's directive and have worked through these official channels. We have offered our support and have maintained contact with Aidan and Mary-Jane. We know that a number of parishioners contacted Aidan Cantwell and have already helped in a variety of ways. Aidan is coordinating these activities.

A reminder that Bishop Richard suggested three ways in which could help:

1. With emergency short-term placement accommodation; short term accommodation for those who are unable to pay; self-contained long-term property for those granted refugee status (who are able to pay rent);
2. With skills and time – including language skills; the teaching of English; legal assistance; knowledge of the local community and the facilities that may be available;
3. Financial support. **We held a collection at St Dunstan's on 1st November 2015 and collected a magnificent sum of £10,000. Thank you**

If you are able to help in any of the above please contact:

Aidan Cantwell, DABCEC, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6RP. Or by email to: aidan.cantwell@dabnet.org or by telephone: 01293 651154 and 01293 651161.

Please provide a copy of your email or letter to the parish office.

Thank you

John Sexton
Chairman, Parish Team