

# WRP NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2023

## Change is possible



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### Join us for our AGM

**Saturday 25 November**  
**Friends Meeting House**  
**High Wycombe**

This will be held at 11.30am at the Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BJ. We plan a brief AGM featuring Zahra, a refugee from Afghanistan, sharing her story, and a video of the inspiring skateboarding group. Parking is available behind Trinity United Reformed Church, a short walk to the entrance to the Friends Meeting House in Stuart Road.

**Do come!**

### Chosen to be Refugee Week Ambassador for 2023

I am Zahra Shaheer, an Afghan female journalist and I worked as a journalist for almost 10 years with RTA (Afghanistan National Radio TV) as TV and Radio news presenter. I am a single mother of two and have done my bachelor's in political science and law. I worked voluntarily as a woman rights activist alongside being a journalist for equal rights for women in Afghanistan.

I was evacuated in August 2021 with my children, and moved to the UK. Whilst living in a hotel before moving to Wycombe I was able to help other refugees with interpreting. In February 2022 with the help of Wycombe Refugee Partnership we were resettled in High Wycombe and began a new life. My children enrolled in school, and I am pursuing courses to help me integrate into British society and for my professional development. This has included a six-month course of journalism with the Refugee Journalism Project. I have found these courses very helpful.

I have worked voluntarily with the Refugee Council with their social media team which gave me the hope that I can continue my job as a journalist again here in the UK. Then later I got a fellowship with the Refugee Council in partnership with the University of the Arts in London

as communication assistant. Now I am working as a reporter with the BBC with the Afghan service desk. I have started working with a charity organisation as a content producer as well which is great experience.

I applied for a master's degree at a university in London and was offered a place, but I need to defer it until I can find a scholarship or funding that is available with my refugee status so I can pay the fees, and continue to support my family as a single mother.

**“In the UK I feel secure, and my children's lives are safer here”**

I especially miss and worry about my female colleagues still in Afghanistan. Most of them are no longer employed as they once were. My role has been filled by another. In the UK I feel secure, and my children's lives are safer here. The regulations are more robust, and my children can attend school. I am actively seeking employment in my field.

I have started advocating for Afghan women's rights and refugees in the UK and I have been selected as the Refugee Week Ambassador for 2023 by IMIX, a charity organisation that provides press and media support to people campaigning for a better immigration system. I have been selected to be the Ambassador because of my hard work campaigning for equal rights for refugees here in the UK.

Being chosen as the Refugee Week Ambassador for 2023 is a testament to the belief that change is possible when individuals come together to champion a cause. It is a reminder that every voice, every effort, no matter how small, contributes to a larger narrative of hope and resilience. As I embark on this new chapter of advocacy, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity and determination to make a lasting impact. Together, we will continue to work towards a world where refugees are not just seen, but truly heard and valued. This is the promise of the Refugee Week Ambassadorship for 2023, and I am honoured to be a part of this remarkable journey.

## Art and opera with Vache Baroque

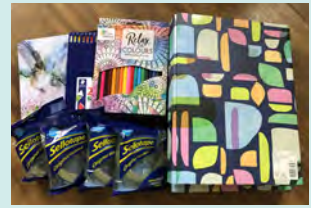
A group of 10 of our young people were invited to join VIPs and friends of Vache Baroque at their special midsummer event in the beautiful setting of The Vache country estate. This followed on from a creative workshop exploring the themes of music, nature and art where our young people made fabulous willow lanterns, pictured on the right.

The evening began with a picnic by the lake before heading inside to watch a performance of opera and music based on Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

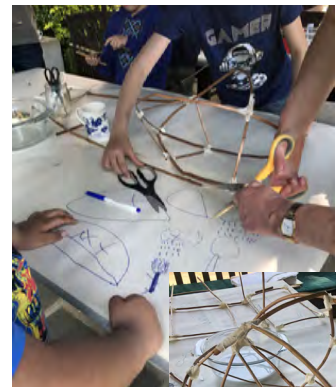
We had a perfect bird's eye view of the action from the Minstrels Gallery (left), which

### Gifts of stationery

#### for the new term



These items were collected by the Head of Sixth form at Wycombe Abbey School which were given out to children at the beginning of the autumn term.





kept everyone transfixed for the whole evening.

The young people thoroughly enjoyed the event:

*'I found it really interesting and very nice. I really like opera and want to find out more about it. The singing was impressive. It was royal and ancient.'*  
*'It was funny. I liked the main character who was my favourite.'*



A parent of some of the children summed up the experience:  
*'It's very amazing because it was the first time I have been to real opera, and my kids were very happy and enjoyed the opera. I can't understand more but I feel good, I feel happy. The house was really special and we saw a lot of beautiful pictures and new faces and friends. The music and the artists were amazing, wonderful.'*

## Introducing

## Charity Log

We are introducing a 'customer relationship management' software system to record the information needed to track the support for 150 refugees and asylum seekers now linked to WRP.

These are the current numbers of Wycombe residents we care about:

Adults with refugee status	32
Children with refugee status	23
Adult asylum seekers	34
Children of asylum seekers	27
Ex Ukraine and Afghan adults	14
Ex Ukraine and Afghan children	17

## Wherefore art thou?

WRP were kindly offered tickets by the Swan Theatre to watch Matthew Bourne's contemporary take on the classic tale of Romeo and Juliet. A group of 12 enjoyed the show, and for some this was the first time they had been to a theatre.

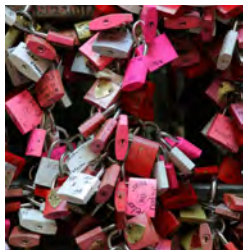


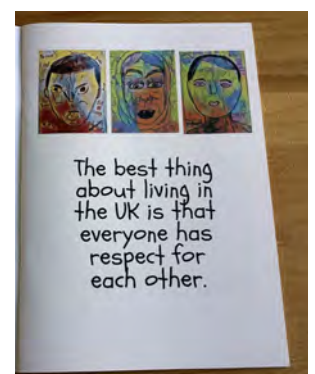
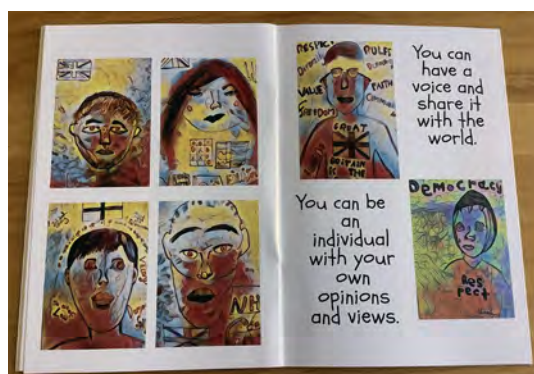
Image by Pixsource from Pixabay

## Elmhurst School Year Six go the extra mile

Elmhurst Primary School in Aylesbury inspired their Year Six pupils to learn about Wycombe Refugee Partnership. The class went the 'extra mile' to support the children we work alongside. Firstly they created an A5 booklet designed to connect with new arrivals in the High Wycombe area. Bursting with self portraits that the children painted in class, it also features facts about British culture and values that they felt relevant to share. At the end there is a handy list of all the useful amenities like parks and libraries that someone new to the area might like to visit.

As well as the booklets, they donated a large number of art supplies so that children who may be struggling on a limited income could enjoy painting and colouring during the summer holidays. Finally, the children organised a 'trashion show' where they made items of clothing from newspaper and cardboard. The parents were invited to watch as they paraded their outfits down a catwalk accompanied by music and video projections. The money raised from ticket sales was donated to WRP.

What a lot of amazing things for a class of 10 and 11 year olds to do!



## Skateboarding nurses!

During the last few weeks of July a group of four mental health student nurses joined the skateboarding group as part of their community placement organised by the Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy. Our skateboarding coach Joe thought it would be fun for the children to teach, so roles were reversed and the children rose to the challenge. By the end of two sessions they were all skating! A really fantastic exchange of ages and backgrounds. Here are some words from two of the junior 'teachers'

*'I taught David how to skate and balance on his skateboard and push, and I taught him a few tricks. He was a quick learner. I thought he looked very happy that he could do that, proud that he could do something that he learnt in one day, he really liked it. He was confident.'*

On asking this particular child how it felt to be the teacher:

*'It felt good, it felt nice'*

Another child said, *'I taught Jasmine and I taught her how to skate and push using her toes.'* What could Jasmine do by the end of the sessions? *'She could ride a skateboard easily and with my support she was getting more brave because at the start I could see she was nervous to try but in the end she became braver. She felt brave and proud.'*

**“By the end of two sessions they were all skating!”**

## Mentmore Road makeover, all in a week!

When one of the families we support was offered a property we took on the challenge of helping them to get it ready, inside and out! The whole house needed painting, floors covered, curtains hung and furniture sorted. The garden was hugely overgrown after months of neglect so a team of volunteers rallied round to help! We drew on local companies and work people to source goods and it became a real community project.



Image by Rudy and Peter Skitterians from Pixabay



Community Board  
High Wycombe



Community Board  
North West  
Chilterns



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f Refugees Welcome in Wycombe

**PARTNERSHIP**

Rebuilding lives  
Renewing hope