



# West Sussex Mediation Service External Newsletter

## Message to our Volunteers

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People from all walks of life around the UK take the time to volunteer and make a huge difference to their communities. Volunteers Week 2022 is a time for us to come together and thank all our wonderful volunteers for their invaluable contribution, here at the West Sussex Mediation Service. Our volunteers form the heart and soul of our Service, and it goes without saying that our charity would be nothing without you. Special thanks must also be given for the perseverance and commitment shown which enabled us to continue delivering our much needed service to the community during the pandemic. This came at a time when many of us were also working our way through our own personal trials and tribulations, which is even greater testament to the dedication shown by our volunteers.

This 38th annual Volunteers' Week, myself and my fellow Trustees would like to thank all those who have continued delivering our Mediation Service as volunteers over the past 12 months, but also all those who usually volunteer but have not been able to because of the pandemic.

Many of you have continued volunteering your time and skills from home as we adapted to a new way of operating. Your crucial contribution has not stopped, despite the uncertain times we found ourselves in. I look forward to continuing to volunteer alongside you all as the service continues to play an important role in West Sussex.

The contribution of volunteers is often unseen and unrecognised by many, visible only through the incredible impact of their volunteering on the communities that they help. That is why, on this 38th annual #VolunteersWeek, it's time to say:

**Thank you volunteers!**

Nicola Neal-Smith  
(WSMS Chair)



## News

**Kind Offer** – you may have seen a recent email circulation from our Volunteer Mediator Elspeth, who kindly offered some free tickets to the show ‘Guys & Dolls’ at the Connaught Theatre in Worthing for 3rd May. Elspeth is the Chair of the Worthing Musical Comedy Society and the cast and all the crew did her proud with this production. Nick our Co-ordinator and Suzanne, one of our mediators, can vouch for that, as they were in the audience with their guests, thanks to invitation. No wonder Elspeth finds it difficult to find time to mediate, with this and her work with a church and other commitments!



**Work Experience** – we will be hosting Bruno, a student from Forest School in Horsham, from 4th to 7th July at our offices in Park House. We have done this on a number of occasions in the past and hope that it will be a worthwhile experience for the Year 10 student.

We remain in touch with a number of college and university students who have visited us in the past. We will invite Bruno to write an article for our July Newsletter to talk about his time with us and what he has gained from it.

**Funding** – we suffered a huge disappointment recently when we heard that our grant bid to The Henry Smith Charity (County Grants Programme) was unsuccessful. As the fund is soon to close it was our last chance to gain further support under this particular stream of funding. The charity had helped us twice in the past with core funding. We will be looking for alternative sources of support.

However, we have been successful with no other than the KFC Foundation. They have agreed to a grant of £2,000 towards an Intergenerational Mediation training course.

We are also working on providing some training in respect of Mental Health issues. It is something that so frequently crops up in our referrals. We want to equip our mediators with the skills to help them identify the signs and symptoms displayed by clients who may be suffering from mental health problems and how to react.



## More News

**Visitor to Park House** – the Member of Parliament for Arundel & South Downs, Andrew Griffith, is visiting our offices on Friday 20th May . We had several previous attempts at this, which failed because of busy diaries. He will be accompanied by a Senior Parliamentary Researcher. As we cover a large county with a number of constituencies in it, it is good to be able to spread the word about the great work that we do.



Andrew Griffith was first elected as the Conservative Member of Parliament for Arundel and South Downs at the December 2019 General Election. Before entering into politics most of his career was spent at the successful British company, Sky Plc.

**Certificates of Service**—following a timely reminder from one of our fold, and in line with recognising the great dedication of our volunteers, Nick our Co-ordinator is busy catching up on producing Certificates of Service for those who have achieved the milestones of 5, 10 and 15 years volunteering as mediator with WSMS. We even have one (Martin) who can now have his name on a 20 year Certificate! That may well remain a record for us. They will be signed and posted out in the coming weeks.

**Movement for Good** - we ask a quick favour of you. Please could you follow the link below and place a vote for West Sussex Mediation Service to increase our chances of receiving £1,000 from the ‘Movement for Good’ scheme run by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. It is worthwhile, as we were successful on one previous occasion. Please spread the word and ask family, friends or work colleagues to chip in also. If we miss out on the first round your vote will carry on to the next one.



<https://movementforgood.com/#nominateACharity>

## Ukrainian Refugees

The Government now seem to be getting its act together and improving the speed of visa application approvals for Ukrainian refugees who want to come to the UK while the war rages in their home country.

Nick, our Service Co-ordinator and his partner Elayne, have a mother and her 3 year old daughter, coming to live with them very soon. The family had their home destroyed in the shelling and they were having to live with the grandparents. The husband remains in Ukraine. He does not have to fight as he is in a protected occupation.

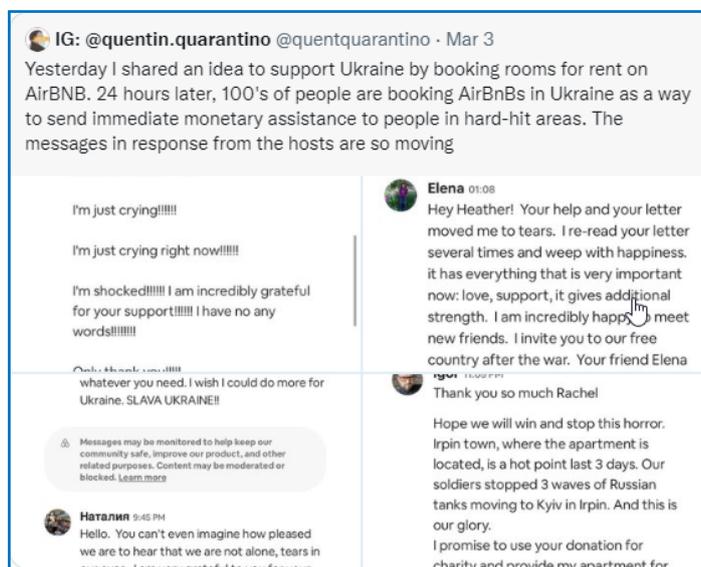
Elayne has been busy helping to find hosts for a good number of Ukrainian families who want to live here. She has found suitable homes for various sized families as far afield as Yorkshire and Scotland. All this was achieved through the connectivity the Facebook provides and not through any Government initiative. More locally, successful placement have been made in Ardingly and Steyning.

Sadly, not all placements in the UK are going to be trouble free. If hosts don't fully consider the implications of taking on such a role, there may be some falling out. We have already had one tentative enquiry to see if we could help out if/when such situations arose. The example given (out of county) was where the host and guests had different standards of cleanliness. Not sure which side had the higher expectations. The topic was discussed on LBC radio on 18th with various hosts highlighting some of the challenges that prevail - language difficulties, bureaucracy around benefit applications, power imbalances, setting ground rules/boundaries (such as bedtimes), etc. Hopefully we won't be needed too often.

One person on Twitter has started a great trend to help donate money to Ukraine.

The idea was to book an Airbnb property in Ukraine but not take up the reservation, telling the host to spend the money appropriately. Hosts were so grateful and explaining that the money would help feed soldiers, the elderly and help the volunteer defenders.

I suppose money transfer has been easier that way. Meanwhile Airbnb have waived any fees that may have been applied normally.



## Save the Date

An important date to put in your diary, before it gets crowded with other commitments! Nick, our Service Co-ordinator will be retiring at the end of November. He wants to invite all those, past and present, who have made acquaintances with him in his time with the charity, so that he could thank them for their support. More details of the location and timing of this evening event, will follow in the coming months. You will now be less likely to have the excuse of having a diary clash on that date, unless you have advanced planned a holiday, or similar!

