

GROUP NEWSLETTER • OCT/NOV 2023
Stories from across the Foundation



Words from our trustees

Welcome to our latest newsletter. In addition to news from our different programmes of work you will also find a range of suggestions of how you might want to deep deeper, get involved, or take action.

There are suggestions of films to watch, books to read and podcasts to explore; there are organisations to discover and campaigns to support; there are opportunities to use your home to provide desperately needed accommodation; and there are new volunteering opportunities to help resettle families through community sponsorship and to support Afghan families who have recently arrived.

Gaza

Palestine, and its beautiful people, are close to our hearts as three of the four of us Trustees have been to the West Bank to run 'the Right to Movement' Bethlehem marathon, along with many Palestinians, and Tracey has also visited Gaza - all with our friends at The Amos Trust.

Trustee, Tracey Elliott wrote an emotional response on 17th October 2023 to the traumatic events unfolding in Gaza.

"We are lost for words tonight at the unfolding devastating news that the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza has just been bombed with an estimated 500 people killed and 600 injured. Al Ahli hospital is very dear to my heart, and I cannot believe the footage I have watched unfold this evening! In 2015 as a cancer nurse, I visited medical projects and the cancer services at Al Ahli Hospital with the Amos Trust. That hospital is full of beautiful people doing wonderful work and I am so grief stricken by this news. The bomb this afternoon hit in the centre of the hospital. It was supposed to be a place of safety, 4000 civilians were sheltering in the hospital in addition to the staff and patients. This HAS TO STOP, this is a humanitarian horror, there has to be a ceasefire.

What happened on the 7th of October was truly horrific; the Hamas bombings, hostage taking and brutal murders in Israel were just devastating, and our hearts go out to the families of those taken hostage or killed. We call for the release of the hostages. Hamas' actions were simply inhumane and inexcusable, and our thoughts are with the bereaved and the people of Israel as they grieve this truly awful attack.

We do need to say out loud that Hamas is not the Palestinians, and our thoughts are with the Palestinian people who are now suffering. In the last 10 days there have been 3000 people killed in Gaza including 1000 children, most of whom are civilians and have nothing to do with Hamas. 28 Ambulances have been targeted and 22 other health clinics or smaller hospitals have also been destroyed.

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When I went to Gaza in 2015 the living conditions were bad enough; an area the size of Birmingham but with 2.5 times the population, half of which are children under 18, one of the most densely populated places in the world. They were running out of water, it was so highly salty, it burnt when you showered, and the water came on trucks as tap water was unusable. The people of Gaza have been under siege since 2008, with food and medical supplies at a basic level – not enough to live well and with dignity." [You can read this in full here.](#)

We are sharing a few ways in which you can help; Support and donate if you can to organisations like [Amos Trust](#) and [Doctors Without Borders](#)

Write to your MP and visit their surgeries, demanding they take action and call, in Parliament, for an immediate end to this violence.

North Devon – [Selaine Saxby](#)
 Torridge – [Sir Geoffrey Cox](#)

[Sign Sanctuary Foundation's open letter to the UK Government, calling for urgent aid to go out to those in desperate need and to allow a safe and legal route into the UK for those seeking safety.](#)

The Old Oak @ The Plough



"Hope is political, hope is not wishful thinking, hope is when you have a path that is credible, that you can take, to bring you out of the mess you're in, whatever it is. And you can see that path and you can take it."

- Ken Loach, Director

Thank you to the incredible team at [The Plough Arts Centre in Torrington](#) and all those who joined us on the 20th of October.

Throughout the day, our team shared the 'For a Time' photo and word exhibition and after both screenings of 'The Old Oak,' we extended an invitation to attendees to stay on and watch our film 'The Lost Guide'- A story sharing our passion of community support and standing by those who seek sanctuary here in Northern Devon, wrapping each session up with a Q&A.

Thank you to those who signed up to our mailing list and your kind offers of future support!

The film will continue to be shown in many cinemas around the UK, [listings can be found here.](#)

Group Dates for the Diaries

- 3rd/4th Nov 2023 Screenings of The Old Oak at Bideford cinema at Kingsley School
- 25th Nov 2023 Sponsor Appreciation Event
- 30th Nov-12th Dec 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28)

"It can feel quite helpless watching the news right now and reading the headlines in the media. Volunteering with the Pickwell Foundation has been a real gift. The team are super welcoming and there's a whole host of jobs to suit everyone".

ALISON SMITH - VOLUNTEER ACROSS ALL OUR SCHEMES



Volunteer Application Form



 [Or click here](#)

[Learn more about our schemes here](#)



 [Click here for full Recruitment details](#)

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Khadeja in Brussels

Speaking during the event 'Building Resilient Community Sponsorship Programs in Europe and Beyond' in Brussels, Our Community Resettlement Ambassador Khadeja Alamy addressed an audience of policymakers and civil society leaders engaged in community sponsorship from Europe, the US and Canada.

The panel 'Building for the Longer Term: Challenges and Good Practices' focused on how to capitalize on emergency responses and grassroots support to set up long-term sustainable solutions and pathways for refugees.



Community Allotment

In Chulmleigh, Youssef has had a fantastic year growing vegetables in the community allotment. He's grown so much that he's been giving some away in boxes outside their home.

The whole family enjoyed the first street allotment party, with everyone contributing food. Here he is with youngest daughter Tala, who loves to come and help.



ESOL awards

Congratulations to Hasan and Eman Albakar! They've successfully achieved their 'ESOL Skills for Life' qualifications. We're immensely proud of your dedication to learning English. Special thanks to their incredible ESOL teacher, Sonya, who has now become more than an ESOL teacher, a cherished family friend too.



Driving test success!

Congratulations to Mamoun Alamy on passing his driving test. An incredible achievement, opening so many exciting opportunities to you. On behalf of the whole Pickwell family, HUGE Congratulations!

Brighton Welcomes

Words from Mark Campbell Joint Lead at Brighton Community Welcomes

"Hi all we are the newest members of the Pickwell family (and the most distant!). We are a community sponsorship group that has formed at the other end of the country in Brighton!"

We've been really inspired by the work Pickwell and all of the linked groups have been doing and we thought it would be a great idea to start in Brighton (there has never been a successfully community sponsorship group here). We are a group of about 14 people linked to varying degrees through the community of One Church Brighton which is an inclusive church/charity that is involved in a number of community projects in the city.

We've set-up the group at speed over the last 3-4 months and are in the process of completing purchase of a house that will be used for the family.

One of the unique things about our group is that we have been 'smart-matched' with a family that one of our group members used to work with in Afghanistan almost 20 years ago! So we hope this existing relationship/understanding can help smooth the resettlement process but we are keen to learn from the wider Pickwell network as we go along."



Government consults on safe and legal routes for refugees

The government is continuing to deliver on the Illegal Migration Act, giving local authorities an opportunity to influence the cap on safe and legal routes. [Read the press release here.](#)

The Old Oak at Kingsley School Cinema

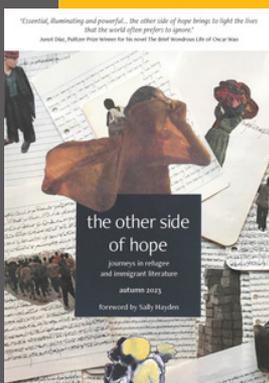
The Old Oak film will be showing at **Bideford cinema at Kingsley School** on 3rd and 4th Nov. Some of the team will be there to talk about how you can get involved in a variety of our schemes including Community Sponsorship and share our film 'The Lost Guide'

Book recommendation

The Other Side of Hope - Journeys in refugee and people seeking sanctuary literature is a UK-based literary magazine edited by sanctuary seekers & refugees.

They exist to serve and celebrate the refugee and sanctuary seekers communities worldwide. They are proud to be the UK's first ever literary magazine of Sanctuary, accredited by City of Sanctuary UK.

The project is made possible thanks to public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Established in 2021, the other side of hope is unmissable reading for anyone with an interest in migrant literature.



Dates for your diaries

3rd/4th Nov Screenings of The Old Oak at Bideford cinema at Kingsley School

HOMES FOR UKRAINE

Sponsor Appreciation Event

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Tree of life Sunrise event

Thank you to our friends at Sunrise Diversity for hosting a very special Tree of Life wellbeing session.

Tree of Life specialists were their help to focus on strengths, relaxation and breathing exercises and music. Thank you as always for your incredible support and hospitality.



Cycling with CEET



Despite the wet weather the team at Community Environmental Educational Therapy CIC hosted a cracking cycling session in partnership with Barnstaple's Bike Shed.

Thank you for providing some of our Homes for Ukraine guests with free bike hire and a guided cycle along a damp Tarka Trail.

If you have guests, who have resettled here in North Devon and you think they'd enjoy cycling opportunities, then please email CEET's (pronounced with a K) Sarah Jellard - sarah@ceetcic.com

Paddle Boarding

We'd like to thank Lorna and Cal, our friends at Seaful - for hosting a paddleboard session, downriver from Bideford with the tide into Appledore.

During this awesome session, Seaful provided all equipment, safety advice, and instruction on the SUPs for free, along with a celebratory chippy tea!

Providing our Homes for Ukraine guests with transport back to Bideford after.

Thank you so much for a great session, as you can see by the photo's lots of fun was had by ALL!



Save The Date

Join us for an evening of thanks and appreciation to those who've supported our Homes For Ukraine guests.
4pm-7pm
25th November 2023
Wings, Bideford

DATE CHANGE



Due to circumstances beyond our control, we have made the difficult decision to reschedule the 'Sponsor Appreciation Evening.'

The new date we kindly request you to mark on your calendars is Saturday, November 25th, from 4-7pm. The venue remains the same, at Wings SW Hall in Bideford. Our team, in collaboration with some of our Homes for Ukraine guests, are working behind the scenes to plan and coordinate an unforgettable evening filled with gratitude, music, scrumptious food, and the celebration of togetherness. We've started sending the official invitation that contain all the necessary details, including how to RSVP. We genuinely hope to see as many of you there as possible, as this event serves as a tribute to the remarkable community togetherness in Northern Devon.

Do you have a spare room?

Would you like to help people fleeing from the war in Ukraine?

We need your help!

Many Ukrainians are searching for safety and sanctuary in the UK and require sponsors in North Devon and Torridge. If you have an empty room, annex, or holiday let, why not consider sponsoring an individual or family under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

- Easy to register – we can support you through the process.
- You will receive a dedicated advisor to support you and your guests (Ukrainian speaking available).
- You will receive monthly financial support from the government.
- You can choose to sponsor someone who is currently in Ukraine, or guests who are already established in the UK and are looking for a rematch.
- You will be making a difference in people's lives.
- Minimum of 6 months commitment.
- We are looking for hosts, but also landlords who can offer a property for private rental situations.



Sponsor Registration Form



You find out more and get in touch by visiting: <https://www.northdevonwithukraine.co.uk/get-involved>

Dates for your diaries

25th Nov 2023

Sponsor Appreciation Event



Info@northdevonwithukraine.co.uk

AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Donations hub



Many of these families have arrived in the country with almost nothing (one suitcase between a family). We are having to target donations quite carefully so that we don't get overwhelmed with items that are not needed to reduce waste and improve the efficiency of sorting, we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the community thus far and the families we welcomed so far have been given much needed warm clothing and school uniform for the children a priority.

We now have an amazing donation hub at St John's Community Centre in Barnstaple. Please check out our social media accounts for regular updates on when we will be open to accept donations and the items that are specifically required.

Given the proximity to the Tarka Trail we are looking for any bikes, as well as helmets (in good condition) and bike locks/lights. We have a fabulous volunteer who is refurbishing any bikes who need a bit of work so please do let us know if you have anything.

New to the team

We are delighted to welcome the lovely Liza Baker to the Afghan team – Liza has been thrown straight in the deep end and is being wonderful asset to our team. We are also advertising an Afghan Resettlement Case worker. [See here for details.](#)



 Pickwell Foundation
FOR PEOPLE & PLANET

JOIN OUR TEAM

Our exciting and expanding team are looking for a full time Afghan Resettlement Caseworker.



More families welcomed

They are finally here! Well, some of them at least! We are really chuffed to have welcomed our first 5 Afghan families to Chivenor. Every day has been full of joys and challenges, but it's been a privilege to see the families gradually finding their footing, connecting with one another, and building relationships with our staff and volunteers.

When we went to Heathrow to welcome our first 2 families, one of them said to us on the minibus to Devon 'We felt hope for the first time when we were on the plane'.

Our volunteer team has been nothing short of incredible. There's an extensive to-do list when it comes to helping someone settle into life in a new country. From medical registrations and initial health check-ups to setting up bank accounts, applying for Universal Credit, school visits, and applying for school placements, not to mention commencing ESOL (English) classes – the list goes on. We've also been busy ensuring their homes are equipped and ready for their arrival and assisting them with the first grocery shopping trips. It's been a whirlwind! The process hasn't been without the odd bump in the road, as the systems are far from straightforward. However, we're all improving and adapting together, learning as we go. Our families are simply beautiful, and it's especially heartening to welcome some of the most precious children who now have somewhere safe to call home.

As we eagerly await the arrival of another eight families, we'll have a busy few weeks ahead of us.

If you'd like to join us, we're always on the lookout for new volunteers. Please feel free to reach out to us and apply using by filling out our [volunteer application for more information.](#)

Why our families have arrived from Pakistan

This short video, filmed for the BBC's Newsnight programme highlights the the desperate situation Afghan families, who supported the British armies are facing in hotels in Pakistan since the capture of Kabal by the Taliban in 2021. They have been waiting to seek sanctuary for over two years in the UK, where a safe and legal route has been opened to them via the ARAP scheme.



DISPERSAL SCHEME

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Rwanda Asylum Plan back in court.

In 2022, the UK and Rwandan Governments agreed to a 140 million 'Rwanda Asylum Plan'.

A five-year trial, whereby an unknown number of people who've sought sanctuary in the UK will be sent to Rwanda. Under the plan they will not be able to apply for sanctuary in the UK but can apply in Rwanda upon arrival or seek asylum in another 'safe third country'.

In June 2023, the first flight due to take sanctuary seekers from the UK to Rwanda was cancelled minutes before take-off after legal rulings by The Strasbourg human rights court (The Council of Europe, which still counts the UK as a member post Brexit). The UK government is currently back in court appealing the ruling.

UK charities supporting sanctuary seekers have continually pleaded for the policy to be abandoned and a fair and humane system be devised. What can you do?

Join Refugee Councils campaign for a fair and humane asylum process.

Write to your MP and visit their surgeries to hear the views and challenge if necessary.

North Devon – **Selaine Saxby**
Torridge – **Sir Geoffrey Cox**

Pickwell on the road

Rebekah Hester, one of our Resettlement Coordinators went on a road trip to the Southeast to visit our friends **Empathy Action**, **Sanctuary Eastbourne** and **Church Crawley**.

Ben Solanky and his team from Empathy Action took Rebekah headfirst into their project: **'Desperate Journeys'** which is an 'immersive refugee crisis workshop, exploring the global refugee crisis by tracking the journey of a family forced from their home in a war-torn country.'

We're hoping to bring Ben and his Empathy Action team to North Devon in February/March 2024 to give our secondary school children the opportunity to take part in this experience.

Check out our socials for a more on Rebekah's Southeast road trip and how you can get involved in the 'Desperate Journey' experience.



Visiting Cheltenham

Last Month, Trustee Susannah, Dispersal Lead Steph alongside volunteers Pam Laing and Phil Strahan had the delight of visiting a group of our Dilkhusa diaspora in Cheltenham.

After the relocation of residents seeking asylum from the Ilfracombe hotel, many of our guests were transferred to Cheltenham. It was a lovely visit and great to see everyone doing so well. A large group of them play football together informally in a park space a couple of times a week and they have continued to learn English; we didn't have to use google translate once! In Cheltenham, many of our friends have begun receiving questionnaires as part of the government's streamlined asylum processing scheme aimed at addressing the asylum backlog. We are deeply concerned about the potential risk faced by asylum seekers who, after receiving leave to remain, may become vulnerable to street homelessness due to eviction from asylum support accommodation within just seven days.

Our main reason in visiting them was to provide guidance and direction on the crucial steps to follow once they receive these essential documents. Additionally, it was an opportunity to share food, drinks, and stories with them once more. It was lovely to hear the fond memories they hold of their time in Ilfracombe and the meaningful relationships that were forged during that period. Ilfracombe extended an exceptional and warm welcome to the community, an experience that still resonates deeply with our residents.

Do you have a spare room?

Do you have a spare room? You could be earning £300/month plus extra to cover bills. As we have mentioned, some of our friends and ex residents from the Dilkhusa are beginning to get their leave-to-remain granted and will have a very short time frame to find somewhere to live. At that point they will be eligible for local housing allowance, so can pay for somewhere to live. If you have a spare room available and would be interested in having a lodger, do get in touch with us as we can help with rental agreements, matching and try to answer any of your questions.

For more info email steph@thepickwellfoundation.org.uk



Podcast

Declarations Podcast: Borders and Boundaries – A show about human rights coming to you every week from the Cambridge Centre of Governance and Human Rights.

This episode focuses on assessing the Rwanda Asylum Plan – UK's most controversial migration policy in recent years.



CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

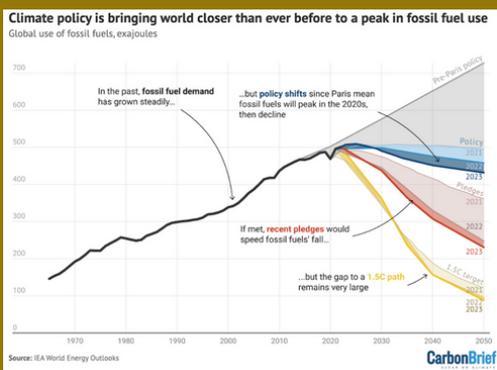
THE GOOD NEWS... AND THE NOT SUCH GOOD NEWS

Tracking global policy developments

In the last newsletter we featured [a review of Simon Sharpe's book](#) about our need to transition 'Five Times Faster' than we have over the last couple of decades. In this vein, there were some fragments of good news from the International Energy Agency's annual '[World Energy Outlook](#)' published last week

The report suggests that with the "unstoppable growth of low carbon technologies" carbon dioxide emissions from Energy and Industry will peak by 2025 at the latest and analysis by [Carbon Brief](#) suggests that the peak could come this year. Although this will be a significant moment the big question is how quickly we are able to reduce our emissions from this peak.

This very helpful graph illustrates the impacts of recent global policy developments over the last few years on the curve. It also shows where current pledges (targets) will get us to. Finally, it shows us the large gap between current policies and pledges and the route to a 1.5 degree pathway. Crucially the report argues that the recent rapid acceleration of green energy is keeping the path to 1.5 degrees just about open.



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COP28UAE
UNITE. ACT. DELIVER.

"There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all".
Jim Skea, the new chair of the IPCC

#COP28UAE

We are hoping that Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak does more than just 'turn up' at COP28 this November. He does not have a good track record when it comes to climate diplomacy.

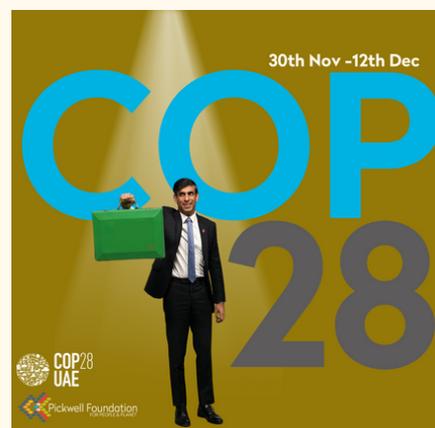
Last year he was forced to perform a late 'U turn' to attend COP27 and he recently snubbed the UN General Assembly on sustainable development, in order to stay at home and announce a watering down of the UK's net zero commitments.

The signs are that this COP will be an uncomfortable and potentially embarrassing diplomatic experience for the Prime Minister. Under his premiership the UK has moved from a position of leadership on climate action to something of a laggard.

There is a consensus that the 1.5 degree goal is rapidly slipping away without dramatic policy changes, yet the UK is currently retreating on a range of net zero policies.

The UN is clear on the need for a global commitment to 'phase out unabated fossil fuels' and yet continue with fossil fuels subsidies and we are currently committed to approving hundreds of new gas and oil licences, including the biggest at Rosebank.

[If you want to check out more on the key debates, decisions and controversies that are likely to feature at COP28 then keep an eye on socials and check out Richards article here](#)



Outrage and Optimism



Over the last few years, the Outrage and Optimism podcast has been such a gift! It is a brilliant podcast for anyone wanting to expand their understanding of the climate crisis and be inspired to take action.

It is expertly led by three insightful presenters including one of the architects of the Paris Agreement, Christiana Figueres. Covering the latest news from science, business, finance, politics and culture; it balances outrage that our response to the crisis is so slow, with optimism that we have the solutions if we can find the will. [Find all episodes here](#)

Dates for your diaries

30th Nov-12th Dec 2023

United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28)
The next General Election!