

Welcome to Huntingdonshire



A guidebook for Ukrainian refugees who have come to Huntingdonshire under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme



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Welcome to Huntingdonshire

This guide will help you prepare for your first few months in Huntingdonshire. It tells you what to expect as you find a place to live, look for work, meet new people, and adjust to British culture and society.

During your first few months in Huntingdonshire, there are organisations and groups that can help you get the services and support you need. They have the knowledge and experience to help you, so share your questions and concerns with them. You can also have a look at our FAQ's page which covers many of the questions Ukrainian refugees have had so far.

The Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine means that you can live and work in the UK for up to three years. You will be able to access healthcare, welfare benefits, employment, support, education, and language tuition. Your host has agreed to share their home with you for a minimum of 6 months. Huntingdonshire District Council and many of our fantastic community groups are here to help you and your host make this transition as smooth as possible and we hope you feel supported over the coming months.

Settling in

Your sponsor will be your key point of contact during your initial settling in process and with their support and our support, we will help you do this as quickly as possible. At HDC we do not currently employ any native Ukrainian speakers but are working to address this. If you send us messages in Ukrainian, with your permission we will get them translated and respond to you.

Sponsors can phone the Residents Advice Team on – 07596 889440

Immediate needs

If you have immediate needs, please speak to your sponsor, or send an e-mail to crm_communitydevelopment@huntingdonshire.gov.uk. As part of the settling in process the government has made £200 available for every person on the scheme. You can use this to meet your short-term needs. Your sponsors are there to ensure you are fed and housed comfortably. However, there will be other things you need that either they may not be able to help you with, or which you do not feel comfortable asking your sponsor for. This guide is intended to help you meet these needs.

Being contactable

We need to make sure that you can contact and be contacted by your friends and loved ones back home. Your sponsor will be able to help you with this. Along with your sponsor we can help you use the welcome cash to get access to a phone/tablet and data so you can keep in touch with your loved ones. A sim for an unlocked phone or a mobile phone and sim is available from most large supermarkets, phone shops or Amazon for less than £50. Contact crm_communitydevelopment@huntingdonshire.gov.uk for help.

Making connections

We will work closely to support your placement in Huntingdonshire and help bring you together with other people in similar situations. During this time, you may find comfort in contacting other people going through similar experiences. This guide points you in the direction of support which is available to you. Contact crm_communitydevelopment@huntingdonshire.gov.uk for help.

Basic services

1. Schools – if you have children between 5 and 16 years of age, they will need to attend school. The link here will let you register for a school place [In-year admissions \(moving schools\) - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)
2. Money and income - All those from Ukraine of working age who have come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be able to apply for and receive Universal Credit – you can apply [here](#). You may also be able to receive other support.
3. Health – the first place to resolve all non-emergency health issues is a family doctor, called a GP (General Practitioner). You will need to register with a GP to be able to get medicine prescribed etc. Your sponsor can help you to register, but you should do this as soon as you can – www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4

Looking after yourself

All of us need some time to ourselves. In times of stress finding time for things that are important to you is vital for your wellbeing.

- **Faith** - There are several churches locally, and a Ukrainian Church in Peterborough which may be helpful.
- **Exercise and outside space** - There are many parks and open spaces, that you can visit to relax, or use to exercise. [Parks](#)
- **Internet and entertainment** - Cheap tablets are readily available for under £50, to enable you to access the internet, tv and other resources, if you can make use of your sponsor's internet.
- **Spending time with others** either your sponsor, others on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, or those in your host's community can be a source of comfort and a way to build friendships as you settle here. We will offer opportunities for you to meet up with fellow Ukraine guests and to provide other sources of support and fun during your time here.

Transport

Your sponsors are likely to want to help you access services wherever they can. However, there are likely to be times when you want to make your own way around the area. There are frequent bus services within our towns, and more limited services in some of our more rural areas. Taxi services are also available.

We can help you to access bikes and other forms of transport if that would be helpful.

Clothes, food, toiletries

Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives have a range of shops, supermarkets, and charity shops where you can buy clothes, food, and other essentials. Most local corner shops will carry basic food, toiletries, and sanitary products.

Housing

Your host has volunteered to offer you a home for at least 6 months. The accommodation can be anything from an empty room or an unoccupied home if it's safe, heated, and free from health hazards, and provides you with adequate access to bathroom and kitchen facilities. You should feel that your accommodation is in suitable condition, is safe and you have privacy when you need it.

Two people should not be in one room unless they are: adult cohabiting partners; a parent and child; two siblings of the same gender if aged over 10; two siblings regardless of gender if aged under 10. Individuals who didn't previously know each other should not be given the same room.

Your sponsor should make sure that you are comfortable in your accommodation, and you are set up with the basics. You should have enough food when you arrive and essential supplies like toiletries, the rest you can buy from your £200 arrival payment.

You are not expected to pay any rent during your stay. The government will be providing a 'thank you' payment of £350 per month to sponsors which will not affect benefit entitlement as well as remaining tax free

Your host is not expected to cover the costs of food and living expenses throughout your stay (although they may wish to offer this as a kind gesture of good will).

What happens at the end of the six-month sponsorship period?

Your sponsor has committed to host you for a minimum of 6 months but you both may decide to continue beyond this if you both wish to. Your host should let you know with plenty of time (2 months) if they do not want to continue past 6 months so you can make other arrangements.

You will have access to public funds and, after leaving your hosts home, you will be able to rent a property like anyone else. If you need to, you'll be able to claim the housing part of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. The UK Government has useful information on renting property which is available in the [How to Rent Guide](#).

For more information about money please see our money tab.

What if a sponsorship arrangement doesn't work out?

It is important to acknowledge that there could be difficulties and that a sponsorship arrangement may not work out. There will be a system of locally based support workers and volunteers who will be able to help and advise you and your host during the coming months.

If it becomes necessary to end a sponsorship arrangement early, support workers will step in to provide support to you and your sponsor. This will include finding alternative accommodation.

If you have concerns about your host and/or the accommodation, then please contact crm_communitydevelopment@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Money

When you arrived, you should have received a £200 payment to help you get any essential items you may need. We hope you found this helpful and that you were able to find what you needed. You do not need to pay this back.

Benefits

The UK has a welfare system which is designed to help those who face financial hardship, or who have specific needs. All those from Ukraine at working age who have come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be able to apply for and receive Universal Credit. You may be able to apply for advance payments where eligible. Pension age guests will have access to State Pension Credit and Housing Benefit provided they meet eligibility criteria.

Your local Jobcentre Plus will be able to help you find out which benefits you may be able to access. This may include:

- Universal Credit – a payment for those of working age, to help with your living costs if you're on a low income. You could be working (including self-employed or part time) or be out of work.
- Pension Credit - extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age which is 66 in the UK and on a low income.
- Disability benefits – extra money to help with additional costs for those who have a long term physical or mental health condition or disability.
- Carer's Allowance – extra money if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week.
- Child Benefit – extra money to help with the cost of raising a child.

Payments and banking

You will need to have a bank account to receive universal credit and/or other benefits. There are major banks on all our town High Streets. You will need to make an appointment for an advisor to help you open your account.

To open a bank account in the UK, guests will usually need to show proof of ID such as passport, biometric residency permit, driver's licence, or recognised identity card. Some UK banks ask for proof of address although this is not required by law to open a bank account and the Government is working with them to encourage them to relax this requirement.

You can open an account that is free of charge, and you will be provided with a bank card which can be used to make purchases and withdraw cash. You should also be able to access online banking so you can manage your money online.

Banks

Most UK banks are working on making clear and relevant information especially for those coming to the UK from Ukraine under certain schemes.

[Ukrainian Refugees | NatWest Bank Accounts](#)

Employment

Your safety and well-being are paramount to us. Settling into your new environment and feeling safe and secure is the most important thing right now. However, over the coming months you may wish to look for a job. There are organisations that can help you find work which we will be happy to share with you over coming weeks.

Education:

There are 90 pre-schools, nurseries, primary and secondary schools in Huntingdon with many more in the surrounding villages and towns. You will need to register your child(ren) for a place at your preferred local school. Please talk to your host family as they will know more about the area and might be able to help you find a suitable place for your child.

You can click the link below that allows you to apply mid-year for a place at primary or secondary schools.

[In-year admissions \(moving schools\) - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

If your child is due to take exams or you are worried about the process, please email admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

English Language

There are community groups that are setting up local English classes. When these arrangements are confirmed, they will be displayed here.

Healthcare and Wellbeing

Healthcare

In the UK, family doctors are called General Practitioners “GPs”. A GP is the first doctor you will see when accessing healthcare. To receive medical treatment, you and your children must register with a GP as soon as possible, even if you are not ill. You need to find GPs that are near where you are living and can use this website to find one:

www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4

You will be asked to fill out a registration form and bring identification and proof of your address if you can. Please note ID (Identity Document) and proof of address is not necessary for registering with a GP. You should not be asked about your immigration status.

Dentists

Some dentists offer NHS treatment and private treatment. You should register with a dentist as an NHS patient and let them know if you are receiving benefits, in which case your check-ups and necessary treatment will be free.

Note that getting dental treatment before receiving Universal Credit can result in charges.

Can I get extra financial support with a health condition?

You might get additional money from Universal Credit if you have a health condition that means you are unable to work or prepare for work. So that you can get healthcare on the NHS you will need to register with your local GP practise.

Please follow the link to find your nearest surgery and contact them to do this.

[Find a GP - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

If you have a non-critical emergency that cannot wait until you can get a doctor's appointment or is out of hours, you can call 111 for assistance

In any emergency call 999 for Police, Ambulance or Fire Service

There are few local NHS Dentists in Huntingdonshire you can register with. Due to COVID the back log for dentistry work is very long and there may be a wait of some months to wait to be seen.

[Find a dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Wellbeing

Barnados

<https://www.barnados.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/ukrainian-helpline>

Ukrainian Support Helpline to provide a holistic support service. The Helpline is free and available to anyone fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

0800 148 8586

Get in touch if you need support with:

- Therapy with a qualified psychotherapist – delivered via the phone or online, with access to interpreters
- Advice on a range of issues e.g., housing, accessing key health services, education, employment and more via our trained helpline support workers
- Practical support - access to digital devices to ensure families stay connected to loved ones during this worrying time, as well as stimulating toys for children, vital baby items and more

All services include access to interpreters in Ukrainian and Russian.

The Helpline is open:

- Monday – Friday 10.00am-8.00pm

- Saturday 10.00am-3.00pm

You can phone us on 0800 148 8586

You can email: ukrainiansupport@barnados.org.uk

Sane Ukraine

Daily online trauma and resilience support sessions for Ukrainians everywhere who need practical psychological and emotional support. Led by experts and translated into Ukrainian.

Sessions are held on zoom every day at 5:30pm UK time/7:30pm Ukrainian time led by experienced therapists and trauma coaches with Ukrainian translation. Sessions are 45 minutes long, except 60 minutes on Tuesdays.

- [Direct link](#) for live sessions.
- More details on the [Sane Ukraine website](#).
- Rewatch the previous sessions by signing up to the [Embodiment Studio](#)
- There is also a [Facebook page](#).

Other services

One Leisure has leisure centres in Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives, and St Neots which are managed by Huntingdonshire District Council. They offer a wide range of memberships to suit your personal fitness & health goals.

Huntingdonshire District Council concessionary membership scheme enables people who receive certain benefits to access a number of activities at its One Leisure Facilities at a discounted price, weekdays before 4.30pm and all weekend, including: gym sessions, fitness classes and public swimming.

<https://www.oneleisure.net/>

Getting around

As you settle into Huntingdonshire, you may want to visit different places. Your host is not expected to provide transport for you throughout your stay, so it is a good idea to get familiar with the travel options you have.

There is a bus service that covers Huntingdonshire which is run by Stagecoach. The daily bus routes and timetables are available on the website below. Just click the timetable tab at the top of their page. It can personalise your journey if you know where you would like to go too.

[B Bus Route & Timetable: Huntingdon - Peterborough | Stagecoach \(stagecoachbus.com\)](#)

There are train stations in Huntingdon and St Neots they sit on the line running directly into London going south and Peterborough going North.

Times for trains anywhere can be found via this link:

[Trainline: Search, Compare & Buy Cheap Train Tickets \(thetrainline.com\)](#)

Our most local airport is Stansted which is approximately 50mins from Huntingdon Town.

Things to do

Parks and Nature Reserves

There are a number of country parks, nature reserves and [play areas](#) in the district - click on the links below to find out more. Visit the [Countryside Events page](#) for details of what's on at our parks and nature reserves.

If you are interested in holding a regular activity in one of our parks or open spaces, please visit the [Events on HDC Land](#) page for further information and to make an application.

Interested in finding out more about volunteering at countryside sites? Please view the [volunteering page](#) for more information.

Huntingdon and Godmanchester

- [Hinchingsbrooke Country Park](#)
- [Godmanchester Community Nursery](#)
- [Riverside Park](#)
- [Spring Common](#)
- [Stukeley Meadows Local Nature Reserve](#)

St Ives

- [Hill Rise Park](#)
- [Holt Island Nature Reserve](#)
- [The Thicket](#)

St Neots

- [Barford Road Pocket Park](#)
- [Paxton Pits](#)
- [Priory Park](#)
- [Riverside Park](#)
- [Sudbury Meadow](#)

District-Wide

- [Play areas](#)
- [Countryside events](#)
- [Ouse Valley Way](#)
- [Running an event or party on HDC land](#)
- [Use of drones in parks and green spaces](#)
- [Information about the brown tail moth caterpillar \[PDF, size unavailable\]](#)

Community Services and Faith Groups

Working in partnership with statutory services, community groups have an important role when you arrive. This will include making sure you have what you need; providing meals until you get their own food sorted; helping you contact friends and family; and in many other ways.

Community Groups

H.A.R.T

Huntingdonshire Asylum and Refugee Taskforce is made up of individuals and community groups who support people in the district to settle into our way of life. They are there to help you access essentials, clothing, food, and other essentials as well as promote and celebrate our rich cultural diversity within a growing community.

huntingdonshirecommunitygroup@gmail.com

Help with food and other essentials

Foodbanks

There are organisations in Huntingdonshire that can help you access emergency food in a crisis. They can support people in need with food until they find a more sustainable solution.

Diamond Hampers

[Diamond Hampers – Hunger doesn't take a day off so neither do we](#)

Godmanchester Foodbank

[Godmanchester Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](#)

St Neots Foodbank

[St Neots Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](#)

St Ives Foodbank

[St Ives Foodbank – All Saints Parish Church \(stivesparishchurch.org.uk\)](http://stivesparishchurch.org.uk)

Sawtry Foodbank

[CARESCO - Serving the community around Sawtry since 1982](#)

Yaxley Foodbank

[Food bank - St. Peter's Church, Yaxley \(saintpeters.co.uk\)](http://saintpeters.co.uk)

Ramsey Foodbank

[Ramsey Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](#)

Community Fridges

These are run by local community groups to redistribute healthy and nutritious food for free. There are no limits to the number of sessions you attend, and you are also helping the environment by using the food that would otherwise go to landfill.

Oxmoor Community Fridge

A free to use service for the community, running from Thongsley Fields Primary School to redistribute excess food from local supermarkets, shops, and farms.

Location: Thongsley Fields Primary School, Buttsgrove Way, Huntingdon, PE29 1PE

Tuesday: 2pm - 4pm

[Facebook](#)

Yaxley Community Fridge

A community project set up by the parish council for the benefit of the parishioners. Free to use no matter what your social status is. If you wish you can leave something in the food bank in return, such as biscuits or tins.

Location: Austin Hall at the Amenity Centre on Main Street, Yaxley

Weekdays: 9am - 4pm / Saturdays: 9am - 1pm

[Facebook](#)

Affordable Food

The Diamond Hampers Pantry offers affordable food to support low-income families. Helping to generate independence and dignity to those in need of support.

The Pantry – Diamond Hampers



10 All Saints Passage
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3LE

Telephone: 07769 312711

Email: diamonhampers@yahoo.com

Website: www.diamonhampers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DiamondHampersUK

Churches and Faith Groups

Huntingdon

[Huntingdon Methodist Church](#)

17, High St
Huntingdon PE29 3TE

[Trinity Free Church](#)

Butts Grove Way
Huntingdon PE29 1LY

[All Saints Church Hartford](#)

The Rectory, 3a, Longstaff Way
Hartford, Huntingdon PE29 1XT

[All Saints Huntingdon](#)

Market Square, High St
Huntingdon PE29 3EA

[Huntingdonshire Community Church](#)

83a, High St
Huntingdon PE29 3DP

[St. Mary's Huntingdon with St Benedict](#)

High St
Huntingdon PE29 3TP

[St. Michael Archangel](#)

82, Hartford Rd
Huntingdon PE29 1XG

Tilbrook

[All Saints Church](#)

The Rectory, Church Lane
Tilbrook, Huntingdon PE28 0JS

Sawtry

[All Saints Parish Church Sawtry](#)

The Rectory, Church Causeway
Sawtry, Huntingdon PE28 5TD

Brampton

[Brampton Parish Church](#)

15, Church Rd
Brampton, Huntingdon PE28 4PF

Godmanchester

[Godmanchester Baptist Church](#)

East Chadley Lane
Godmanchester, Huntingdon PE29 2BJ

[St. Mary the Virgin C of E Church](#)

Post St
Godmanchester, Huntingdon PE29 2AQ

Alconbury

[RAF Chapel RC](#)

Raf Alconbury
Alconbury, Huntingdon PE28 4DE

Alconbury Baptist Church

37, Ermine St, Little Stukeley
Huntingdon PE29 2BE

Ramsey

Ramsey church of Christ

Stocking Fen Rd
Ramsey, Huntingdon PE26 1SA

St. Thomas A Becket

The Rectory, Hollow Lane
Ramsey, Huntingdon PE26 1DE

Bluntisham

St Helen Colne

The Rectory, Rectory Rd
Bluntisham, Huntingdon PE28 3LN

St. Mary Bluntisham Cum Earith

The Rectory, Rectory Rd
Bluntisham, Huntingdon PE28 3LN

Great Gidding

St Marys Church Leighton

6, Luddington Rd
Great Gidding, Huntingdon PE28 5PA

Kimbolton

St. Andrews Church

Vicarage, 37, High St
Kimbolton, Huntingdon PE28 0HB

There is also a Ukrainian church in Peterborough with details listed below

SAINT OLGA'S UCC



Parish Priest:

Rev. Fr. Bohdan Bilunyk

Divine Liturgy Schedule:

Sunday 10:00

Confessions: Before Divine Liturgy and upon request

Contact Details:

Church Address: UCC Peterborough, New Road, Peterborough PE2 9HA

Correspondence Address: Presbytery, 67 New Road, Peterborough PE2 9HA

Priest Mobile: +44 (0)7704912576

Administration / Charity enquiries: 07974244581

Legal advice

<https://advice-ukraine.co.uk/>

We are a group of volunteer legal professionals with immigration and asylum expertise. We are providing a free service to connect Ukrainian citizens (and others fleeing Ukraine) with free legal advice on UK immigration, visas, and asylum from qualified and regulated lawyers.

<https://www.immigration4ukraine.eu/>

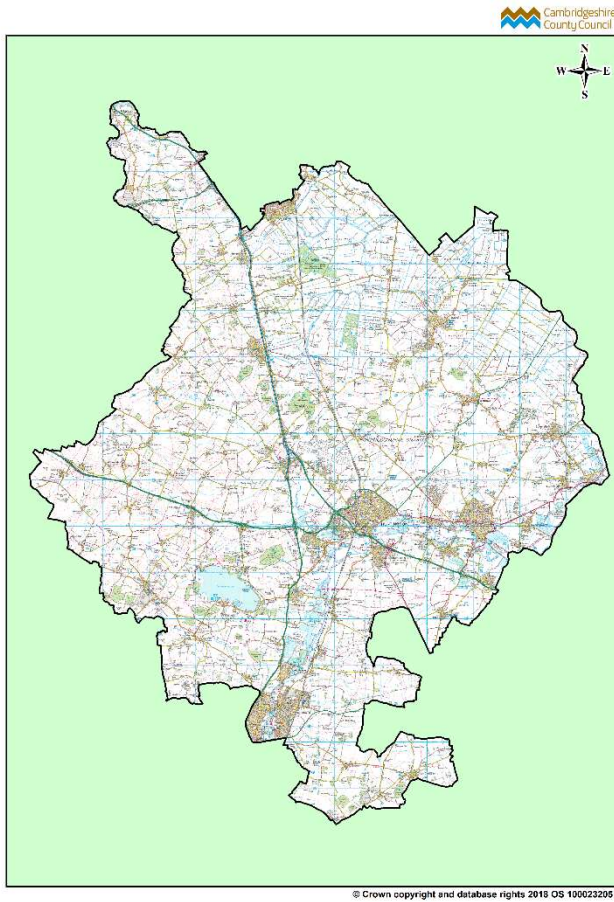
A resource for Ukrainians seeing assistance relocating to Europe

Location and History

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK) or Britain. The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain (made up of England, Scotland, and Wales), the north-eastern part of Ireland and lots of smaller islands within the British Isles. England makes up over half of the total area of the UK with London as its capital city with a metropolitan population of 14 million.



Huntingdonshire is a small district in Cambridgeshire that sits between Peterborough, Northampton, and Cambridge. It is a very flat part of England with the north being dominated by the fens (which are places of land below sea level) and the south having a few low, green hills. The population of Huntingdonshire is over 178,000



[Basic Huntingdonshire Map | Cambridgeshire Insight Open Data](#)

Main Towns:

Huntingdon



A former county town, Huntingdon combines a charming, pedestrianised high street, historic local attractions, against the scenic backdrop of the River Great Ouse.

Huntingdon's high street offers diverse local businesses, an abundance of cafes and restaurants, and an extensive programme of live entertainment and [events at The Commemoration Hall](#).

As the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell, Huntingdon is steeped in history; home to the [renowned Cromwell Museum](#), housed in the former school building attended by both diarist Samuel Pepys and Cromwell himself.

Award-winning green space is also just a short walk from the town centre with nearby Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Riverside Park.

[Find out more](#)

St Neots



As the district's largest town, St Neots has a bustling high street, boasting an eclectic mix of quaint boutiques, characterful cafés and bars, and charming shopping mews, like Cross Keys and Moores Walk, filled with hidden gems.

It's thriving local, independent businesses offer carefully selected items, from sweet treats and clothing, to house plants and pottery, alongside a regular Farm & Craft Market, offering food and crafts made and sold locally.

The centre is also just a stone's throw from culture and green space. The town's fascinating history is [told at St Neots Museum](#), based in the old police station and court building, and nearby is Riverside Park, providing majestic views of the River Great Ouse, and its own miniature railway.

[Find out more](#)

St Ives



St Ives is packed with historic charm, local attractions, and an excellent mix of independent businesses.

The quaint, riverside town of St Ives has much to offer its visitors, from exploring the independent traders in The Courtyard, strolling over the 15th century bridge – one of just four in the country to boast a chapel, to stopping for refreshment at one of the towns many cafes and restaurants.

Having first hosted a market in 1312, St Ives continues this proud tradition to this day with a market held every Monday and Friday.

Just a short walk away, you'll [find the Norris Museum](#), telling the 160-million-year history of Huntingdonshire, and the tranquil Holt Island Nature Reserve, perfect for eager wildlife photographers.

The [St Ives Corn Exchange](#), situated in the heart of the town, also offers an extensive programme of live entertainment, markets, and film screenings.

[Find out more](#)

Ramsey



Nestled in the open countryside, Ramsey is a Fenland jewel in the Huntingdonshire crown, home to friendly local businesses, historic sites, and beautiful green spaces. Awash with history, Ramsey grew up around the once great Benedictine abbey, the remains of which can still be seen today and are now maintained by the National Trust.

To more modern times, Ramsey is home to a diverse mix of local businesses, giving Ramsey its unique character and feel. Visitors can enjoy everything from local cafes and bakeries, clothing boutiques to an indoor market, plus a plethora of local events, like the regular Great Whyte Dine Out.

The high street is also just a short distance from attractions like the [Ramsey Rural Museum](#) and the [Ramsey Walled Garden](#).

[Find out more](#)

Donations and future support

In the coming weeks we hope to see many practical ways in which residents can help support local efforts. At this time, we do not need any donations but over the coming weeks we would like to set up a scheme where specific items of need can be requested. If you would like to volunteer to support refugees, there will be opportunities once we have a sense of what help is needed which may include:

- English speakers who also fluent in Ukrainian to help us check translations.
- Any contact with charities and organizations who are also helping bridge the gap between UK hosts and those in need.
- Experts in refugee situations to help us create advice and guidance

We welcome your thoughts and guidance on what is needed and what is missing.