

*Dear All,*

*It is already 26 days since the people of Ukraine woke up to the sound of warning sirens and bombs blasting. Right from the start we have initiated help for those fleeing the war. After the first, rather humble call for donations, the Lewisham Polish Centre has experienced a nonstop stream of community members coming with a couple bags of items, then cars full of items, and later even truckloads.*

*We prepared just for a weekend action, hoping that reason would prevail, and hostilities would stop. Yet here we are, almost 4 weeks later. The response has been overwhelming: no one anticipated such a scale of donations, along with dozens of volunteers coming in shifts to help sort and pack the items. Likewise, the Centre launched a fundraising drive via JustGiving to cover the cost of sending these essentials to the Polish-Ukrainian border. So far, we have raised almost £80,000, of which we have spent £8,300 for storage and transportation costs. We have sent more than 24 tonnes of goods (1 HGV and 12 vans) to those people who fled the war just as they were, with no spare clothes, no toiletries, no personal things. We have volunteers in South-East Poland overlooking the delivery and distribution of goods among the Ukrainian refugees. You can see their reports and photos on our Facebook page. Although immensely helpful, we think that this is not the most optimal use of our resources and your generosity.*

*The Centre is now CLOSED to goods donations as mounting logistics challenges have made this option less efficient and are instead encouraging continued generosity to the JustGiving Ukraine appeal (or charity of choice). These monetary donations will reach organisations working on the ground - meaning you remove delays and costs of transport from the UK, and items can be purchased more cheaply in Poland - so your generous donations are utilised in their entirety and with maximum benefit. The funds raised through Just Giving will be transferred to several small organisations helping people just as they cross the border, in their first few days in Poland. Our volunteers will make sure that your donations are spent according to the actual needs of refugees.*

*Above all else, the Centre has been floored by the overflowing kindness and generosity of the Lewisham community and beyond in this effort to support Ukrainians during a time of immense tragedy. So many have donated time, expertise, and money to this effort: our volunteers, our donors, our drivers, and those helping with administrative and logistics work. This community has shown the best of the human spirit at a very dark moment. We'd like to recognize the generous support of Wards- Waste Management Company, Goldsmiths Community Centre, St George's Church on Vancouver Road, the Labour Party in Forest Hill and Sidcup, Councillors Kevin Bonavia and John Paschoud, Ellie Reeves MP and her office, Helen Hayes MP, Lewisham Council, Toca from Gabsnco and Ciaran Donovan Eurocourier. Every each one of you, who cannot just watch, but must help. Indeed, you have your heart in the right place.*

**THANK YOU!**

*Pawel Dokurno and Agnieszka Lokaj, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022*

*Dear All,*

*Thank you very much for your emails, offers of help and donations. And most of all – your kind hearts open to the needs of the ordinary Ukrainian people affected by war.*

*The Lewisham Polish Centre’s website is live again. By clicking the tab “Donate if you can” you can be directed to the JustGiving page, where we are collecting money to help Ukrainian Refugees in Poland. Initially we meant to raise money to cover the costs of transportation of your donations to Poland, but the outcome of that action exceeded all our expectations. Your generosity has surpassed our targets, so we will pass the funds on to charities in Poland which are routing the help in much effective way than we ever could. At the moment the money is still with JustGiving fundraisers, but once released to us – we will transfer it so they could help refugees straight away.*

*Volunteers from the Lewisham Polish Centre are working very hard to sort and send your donations to Poland. We have already sent 2 HGV lorries plus 7 large vans full of your donations. We hope that these items will help Ukrainians feel safe and welcome in Poland and replace some of those possessions that they had to leave when they fled in a hurry. But most of all – they will know that they are not alone, that help is available.*

*Some of our vans experienced problems at the border. LPC has never undertaken such a task before and we may lack experience and expertise, however we try to compensate by our enthusiasm and determination to help these innocent people. Sometimes even the biggest heart is not enough to overcome some obstacles - we are working on finding solution with incredible help of British institutions and ordinary people who like us, cannot stand by idly. We hope to resolve that problem very soon, but at the moment we ask you to pause bringing your donations to the LPC House. We hope it is just a temporary measure. If you cannot wait – please check other places which collect donations to send to Ukrainian people. We are not alone – people do care.*

*Pawel Dokurno and Agnieszka Lokaj*

*6th March 2022*



*Dear LPC members and friends,*

*We are overwhelmed by your response to our call to help people of Ukraine. LPC House has seen action as never before – mountains of donations being sorted and packed by volunteers choosing to spend their weekend helping others. Please do not be put off if your calls, emails and offers of help are not answered straight away. We prefer action. The first transport has already been sent, but it seems that your generosity will require further transfers. Please do follow our Facebook page as it is updated more frequently.*

*We are getting donations and messages from a whole spectrum of people – British, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian. Help does not have nationality – just a human face. People act from their hearts, just to help others in need. They oppose this invasion, this war - staged by a deluded dictator and his cronies, not by the Russian nation whose people are happy to coexist with their Ukrainian neighbours. We receive messages from our Russian friends of being ashamed of that war staged by their state – it is not in their name, not with their assent.*

*We witness the horrors of war from the front row seat. We see innocent people, children displaced from their homes, leaving all their belongings at a moment's notice. Forced to run for their lives leaving their loved ones to fight for their country. We support Ukraine wholeheartedly, knowing that if Putin is not stopped – Poland could be next.*

***We are grateful for your help. Every single item donated by you is going to help Ukrainian people fleeing the war. Moreover, it spells hope and solidarity – the free world is not going to watch the invasion idly – we will do whatever we can to help Ukraine and its people. There is no Europe without a free and independent Ukraine.***

*Lewisham Polish Centre  
28<sup>th</sup> February 2022*