

Ukraine

In light of the awful events in Ukraine, SKDC is regularly reviewed the refugee situation in the UK with a view to providing all the help we can to the Ukrainian people.

The Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum have been assessing the situation and through our Director of Housing and Property we are helping to feed into that process.

Aid agencies and other organisations are providing all the support they can, and the UK Government has put in place two schemes to support refugees, the Homes for the Ukraine programme and the Ukraine Family Scheme, which we are proactively sharing information about.

For the first scheme, households can host a Ukrainian individual or family rent-free, or in another property, for at least six months, and will receive £350 a month as a gesture from the Government.

The second scheme will increase the number of people from Ukraine who are eligible to come to the UK to be reunited with their families. We are currently waiting for further detail on how this will be administered and if there is a role for South Kesteven.

As of Sunday (20th March) 61,100 applications had been opened.

Folk Festival

I attended the hugely successful Folk Festival in Grantham on Saturday, which proved to be an extremely entertaining event for residents of all ages. Not only did the festival host live music from 11am to 7.30pm, but there was excellent food and drink, street performers, and free face painting and caricatures for families.

The sun was shining and hundreds congregated on Conduit Lane throughout the day to take advantage of everything happening. It was wonderful to see the hard work of our Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer, Jade Hope, result in such an engaging day out for local residents.

The event was funded by the Welcome Back Fund and it achieved the desired outcome of bringing many of our local residents back together for a great day in the sun after what has been a very difficult few years.

Bourne in Lights

Following the Folk Festival, I headed to Bourne on Saturday evening for the Bourne in Lights event. The residents of Bourne showed up in their thousands to see the high street light up with art installations, which was incredible to see again. There were lights throughout North Street, as well as interactive street exhibits, rides, and a variety of amazing food and drink stalls in what really was a special night.

One of the exhibits featured butterflies coloured in by around 800 children from local schools, which were incorporated into a light show which was displayed above local shops. Many shops and bars stayed open for the night and saw huge amounts of foot traffic in what will have been an extremely impactful evening for the local economy.

This event was also funded by the Welcome Back Fund and I think our team did an amazing job of maximising the effectiveness of this fund and rewarding our residents with an unforgettable night. I couldn't help but overhear so many attendees express how amazing it was to see the high street so busy again, and this is exactly what we hoped to achieve with this funding.

St Martin's Park

Following the end of the judicial review period on 12th April, contractors will commence demolition work on the old Cummins site on Barnack Road on 19th April, to make a start on what will become the exciting St Martin's Park development.

This new project to bring affordable housing, commercial space, and a retirement village to Stamford will bring so many benefits to the area and I will keep you updated throughout the development process. The focus now is on clearing the existing site, before ground can be broken on the proposed development.

Mid-Lent Fair

After two years of postponements, it was great to be there for the return of the six-day Mid-Lent Fair in Stamford at the end of March. With rides and street entertainment, there was lots going on and residents travel from across the District to enjoy the events in the town centre.

It was amazing to see so our community reunite in the streets after such a prolonged period of restrictions, and with the weather starting to improve I look forward to many more events like this in the months ahead.

In June, the country will be coming together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and SKDC will be distributing information to all in the District about community events and information regarding street parties to celebrate this pivotal event in British history.