

AUSA – AGM November 2024

Chairmans Report

AUSA has had a number of achievements over the last year, the highlights of which are set out below.

The most important actions are those which have been accomplished by Irina in her role as Ukrainian Support Worker with Community Works. This role is jointly funded by W4R (Worthing 4 refugees) and AUSA in a consortium with Community Works (CW). The consortium put in a successful bid for grant funding from Adur & Worthing Councils, from money set aside by central government for Ukrainian Support. The arrangement has worked extremely well and has led to several projects including various trips and 'Club 55+'. Irina, through this role, has taken on many of the important questions which AUSA formerly addressed, such as Education, Accommodation & Employment and followed them through with the relevant authorities and bodies which has allowed AUSA to focus on the social aspects of support.

The tail end of 2023 saw us support a fund raiser at Church of the Good Shepherd, where Yulia represented us and raised £1000 for Gen Ukraine charity.

2024 started well with another great Christmas party, thanks to Shoreham Baptist Church for hosting us again. We really have built ourselves a reputation with these events, which we have to live up to. A great evening of entertainment including Halyna Balaban and a banquet thanks to Margarita & Gergoo, supported by Irina & Alina and many other volunteers.

At the February 24th anniversary of the full-scale invasion, we took a stall in the Shoreham market, next to the war memorial, and despite the typical winter weather had lots of good interaction with the public, shared Thank You messages from the Ukrainians hosted locally and had a successful Living Library in St Mary de Haura Church.

With awkward conflicts over both New & Old Easter dates, we decided to put all our efforts into a UK/UA Ceilidh dance event at Shoreham Community Centre and to make it a fund raiser to support 'Goodwill 100 Volunteers' of Kyiv. The event was in partnership with Polypolka and was a great success. The event showed us that we could turn our hands to fund-raising to help those in Ukraine and led to us looking at how we could support amputees and those with other injuries from the war and got us started on our first fund-raising campaign.

We ran a limited mobility aids campaign, which was a great success, now known as MAids+++ which has brought together volunteers from UK & UA communities to collect donations of equipment which has been sent to Ukraine. Two of our members, Olesia & Emiel drove a vehicle with some of our collected donations over to Lviv for onward transit to Mira Help charity in Sumy. Other items went to a charity in Kyiv who act as a central distribution point for many hospitals, support centres and

other people and places who have need for mobility aids. So successful was our first campaign, that we are continuing and extending it so that we can continue to send much needed aid to Ukraine. We are extremely grateful to the support of St Vincent De Paul charity, St Michael's Worthing group for their initial and ongoing support with providing storage space for our donations, publicising our campaign and also in providing donations.

Born out of our Living Library project, we teamed up with others to produce the Faces of Resilience exhibition which has featured and continues to feature in several prominent locations, most recently alongside another Living Library at International Neighbours event. We believe it is important for us to continue to put Ukraine on a stage to refocus public attention on the ongoing conflict.

The year has seen major developments in our Ukrainian guests lives: More are in work, more are in independent living and they have had great successes in education. Support for much of this has been driven by Irina in her Co-Ordinator role. Unfortunately, the government funding has come to an end and whilst our partners in Community Works are seeking to find grants to continue this work, AUSA has no more financial support from the Council.

AUSA support activities have followed a policy to subsidise activities rather than offering them free, in order to make our funds more sustainable. We are also looking to other grant sources and to put ourselves in the best position to win awards, we are hoping to move to Incorporated Charity status, hence the major proposal on the AGM agenda, which I ask you to support.

I would like to close my report by thanking my fellow officers and members of the committee for their untiring efforts to make AUSA the number one Ukrainian Support Organisation in the area. I also thank our Golden Volunteers who work in the background to make projects work. Many of you have kept the show on the road through my period of illness and I thank Colin and Irina for supporting me when I was in hospital and recovering.

2025 will hopefully see AUSA making a massive transition into a more professional operation and I look forward to the continued support of all of you.

Robin Sadler

Chair, Adur Ukraine Support Association