

The Revd. Canon Nigel Tuffnell
Rector of the Benefice of Redenhall with Scole
(Billingford, Brockdish, Harleston, Needham, Redenhall, Scole,
Thorpe Abbots, Thorpe Parva and Wortwell)
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Mr Richard Bacon
House of Commons
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and of

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cc sally.culling@parliament.uk and reevet@parliament.uk

16th March 2022

Dear Mr. Bacon,

I am writing to you as Rector of the Benefice of Redenhall with Scole, and on behalf of the Benefice Meeting representing the parishes of this benefice, namely the parishes of, Scole, Billingford, Thorpe Abbots, Brockdish, Needham, and Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell.

As the Member of Parliament for this constituency, I am sure that you share the horror of your constituents at the plight of the people of Ukraine. In particular we welcome and support the latest statement from our government on its website that, "Everyone wants to do their bit to support those who have been forced to flee their homes because of the invasion." Therefore, as your constituent I feel sure that you will share the concerns of my churches regarding the direction of travel in government policy on refugees and asylum. Proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill currently before Parliament would enshrine in legislation the existing two-tier system which divides the relatively small number of people who arrive in designated refugee resettlement programmes from those who arrive by irregular means, travelling across Europe to reach the UK and claim asylum. The latter, even for legitimate refugees, will be deemed inadmissible and the government will attempt to remove them to safe third countries (which may not even be a country to which they have a connection). If it proves impossible to remove them within six months, access to asylum will be provided, but only as a temporary status, up to 30 months, with reduced rights and benefits, regularly reviewed, and the threat of removal.

This is based on the assumption that legitimate refugees can and should stop in the first safe country they can reach. We hope that you can also agree with us that the Ukraine crisis gives a very clear example of why that approach might not be appropriate or sensible. The UNHCR has said that these proposals "would damage lives, be hard to implement and undermine international cooperation on refugee issues". We urge you therefore to take up our concerns as your constituent and work to counter these proposals. As our MP we call on you to speak for us to make the Nationality and Borders Bill

match the clear will of the people of this country to be more generous to those who are victims of the war in Ukraine, those who have put their life on the line for this country in Afghanistan, and refugees in general.

More immediately, while we of course welcome the government's opening of new routes for refugees from Ukraine, we press for more support for those who are arriving. For example, many if not all of those coming here will have experienced serious trauma and will require specialist support, not all of which can necessarily be provided by willing volunteers. There will need to be help developed for seeking employment and support – particularly for single adult households with children. In this we ask you to stand with the churches of this land in taking up the call to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” (Proverbs 31:8-9).

On behalf of my parishes, I look forward to hearing from you regarding your response to these concerns. I also look forward to champion this cause on behalf of your constituents, and for the betterment of this nation as a whole.

Yours faithfully,

The Revd. Canon Nigel Tuffnell

Rector of the Benefice of Redenhall with Scole

(Writing on Behalf of the Benefice Meeting representing the parishes of this benefice, namely the parishes of, Scole, Billingford, Thorpe Abbots, Brockdish, Needham, and Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell)