

BRISTOL-HANNOVER COUNCIL



Bristol-Hannover Council would like to show its solidarity with the way in which our dear partner city Hannover is generously endeavouring to make life bearable for the refugees arriving from Syria and other war-torn countries. We know that you are working hard, both on official and voluntary levels, to help the people arriving with you to find accommodation, access language training, and integrate into the educational and employment contexts. In this way they can have a decent life after such trauma, even if later the situation improves such that they can return home, which I am sure most of them will want to do.

We are reminded of the situation after the Second World War, when Bristolians extended the hand of friendship to Hannover with the Goodwill Mission in 1947 and sent Red Cross parcels to the devastated city with children's shoes, clothes, foodstuffs and toys. As you know, over the years Britain has accepted many thousands of refugees from many countries, so we are in a position to understand the problems in Germany today. The plight of the Syrians, rendered homeless and fearing for their lives, arriving with few possessions and with family members dead, is comparable to the terrible situation after the Second World War. This tide of refugees is becoming overwhelming, the biggest influx since that war, but we wish to pay a tribute to the massive effort being put in by Germany to ease the situation, leading the way in Europe to show these people that a new life is possible. The dreadful events of last Friday in Paris only serve to underline the urgency of finding a solution to the current situation.

One of our founding fathers and member of the original five- man Goodwill Mission, Professor August Kloss, said: 'What happens to a foreign country is the concern of all of us; the present world drama has imprinted this truth on our hearts and minds'. This is just as true today, and Germany, with Hannover in particular, is showing the way.

We would be willing to approach various groups and institutions in Bristol who might like to help out with what you are doing in Hannover, but we would need some sort of concrete proposal from yourselves, so that we could work out what role partners in Bristol might be able to play.

Ann Kennard

Chair