



g refugees in partnership with the Home Office.

Domenica Pecoraro and Canon Gareth Jones have been appointed as the Church's first National Representatives for Community Sponsorship.

They will work with a steering group chaired by the Bishop of Bradwell, Dr John Perumbalath, who also chairs the inter-denominational Churches' Refugee Network, and supported by staff from Church of England's national Mission and Public Affairs team.

This initiative will build on the positive work since the 2015 General Synod which agreed a motion urging "parishes and dioceses to work closely with local authorities and other community partners, to provide practical and sustainable resources and structures for the resettlement of vulnerable refugees and to pray for all those seeking to address the causes as well as the symptoms of this crisis".

Since then dozens of parishes have taken part in community sponsorship and welcoming families from Syria with at least 20 serving as lead sponsor.

Canon Gareth Jones said: "I'm looking forward to taking up this roll working alongside colleagues across the Church of England as we seek to make a difference in the lives of some of the worlds most vulnerable people.

"Christ taught us to love neighbour as self. In putting this into practice through refugee resettlement, we find the stranger among us is in fact our sister and brother and that our lives are intrinsically bound with theirs."

Domenica Pecoraro said: "With Community Sponsorship, I have witnessed first-hand the transformative beauty of welcoming.

"My hope is to help as many people as possible find safety in the UK through Community Sponsorship, and at the same time, help our parishes, our agents of Love and Grace, to experience and be renewed by these encounters."

Bishop John said: "The recent events in Afghanistan have challenged the churches to increase their support for refugees.

"This follows from our commitment rooted in the belief of the dignity of all human beings who are created equal in the image of God.

"Churches need to build on the work they are already doing, especially in the area of community sponsorship.

"Our National Representatives will be available to our dioceses and parishes across the nation for advice and guidance on community sponsorship."

The new national representatives and steering group are tasked with working collectively to support churches working with refugees, to expand on the work achieved since 2015 and to work collaboratively with partners across the Church and society.

More information:

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