

**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**4<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**



## **Local charity rallies Colchester community support to Ukraine**

**World Food Aid** is helping coordinate a major appeal to deliver much need humanitarian aid directly from the community of Colchester to refugees in urgent need in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

The 100% not for-profit, local initiative is being managed by World Food Aid and **Lion Walk Shopping Centre** and is being spearheaded by Colchester **Councillor Martin Leatherdale**, Colchester **Mayor Robert Davidson**, and the Dulai family, owners of **Surya Foods** and **Colchester's George Hotel**.

It sees a host of Colchester organisations join forces, with significant backing from the wider local community, notably **Community 360**, **Colchester Food Bank**, **Anti Loo Roll Brigade**, **Colchester Community Facebook Group** and many others. The scheme is also being bolstered by the **Colchester Rotary Club**, **Colchester Council** and **Colchester Business Improvement District – Our Colchester**.

The **Colchester to Ukraine: Humanitarian & Emergency Aid Campaign** was officially launched at the Mayor of Colchester's Best of British event held at Colchester Town Hall on April 23rd. The first goal of the campaign is to send one articulated lorry load of essential aid to those in need, with a view to scheduling regular deliveries, depending on community support.

Surya Foods are contributing transport and production of food to the scheme while Lion Walk has opened a drop-off site to the public.

Speaking about the campaign Suki Dulai, CEO of Surya Foods said: *"It is impossible to watch the horrors unfolding in Ukraine and not want to do something to help. Many of us have experienced a sense of helplessness, witnessing the despair and suffering and watching families lose loved ones and their homes. And while, in those early days, there were appeals for donations of items like nappies, bedding, tents, medicines etc. and the UK*



*public responded warm heartedly, it has quickly become clear that a refugee crisis of this magnitude requires a very sophisticated, coordinated response and highly efficient use of resources.*

*“Sorting through mountains of clothing and donated goods is time consuming and transporting such items is costly. The chaos at the other end, not to mention customs challenges, also means mountains of aid is simply not getting to those who need it.*

*“That is why, we, as a group of key businesses and organisations in Colchester, have come to the conclusion that the best way for Colchester to help the people of Ukraine is for us to come up with a coordinated effort which lets us all focus on playing to our strengths – by fundraising and donating real practical skills and resources to ensure every pound the people of Colchester donates directly benefits Ukrainian refugees – no dilution. Surya Foods already has established transport routes through Europe, we understand the customs system and we can procure and produce food at very low prices – much lower than if you buy an item from a supermarket and donate it. That means every pound goes further. We also have the capacity to dispatch articulated lorries, so we can transport significant amounts of food in one drop. This is what we do best and this is what we are donating to this amazing community effort.*

*“There are literally millions of mouths to feed, now, so there really is no time to waste in reaching our first target which is essentially to raise £25k – enough to send 100k meals direct to Ukrainian refugees.”*

**World Food Aid is appealing for monetary donations** which will be used to procure and produce foods specifically demanded by aid agencies working on the ground. Surya Foods has pledged to produce bulk pallets of necessary food and non-food items at discount/cost/production price with funds raised from the appeal.

World Food Aid is also liaising with major organisations on the ground to ensure what is sent is needed and to help the donating public stay up to date with which items are in demand. When the charity has specific requests for blankets, sleeping bags, medicines etc. it will notify the public via its website and social media platforms. These can then be donated via the Lion Walk drop off centre which will also be a hub for creating much-needed food kits.

Councillor Martin Leatherdale, manager of Lion Walk Shopping Centre, said: *“It’s humbling to support a community project of emergency humanitarian aid directly from our home town – I am proud.*

*“We aim to procure, produce, and deliver urgent aid to those in Ukraine and neighbouring countries as a matter of absolute urgency.*



*“This is a 100 per cent Colchester based community project supported by the World Food Aid charity and we will deliver every penny for penny, door to door.”*

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Latest estimates suggest more than 5 million people have fled their homeland with many more displaced within Ukraine.

Colchester Mayor Robert Davidson said he was humbled and proud of his town’s response to the situation in Ukraine and said: *“We should be proud to be part of such a caring community.”*

*“Everyone I have met since the Ukrainian invasion is appalled by Russia’s indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population.”*

*“Our community is keen to help and together we can help provide support and essential goods for the refugees and those remaining in Ukraine.”*

*“Please help those struggling Ukrainians by donating to this worthwhile cause today.”*

Suki Dulai added: *“An important element of our family’s ethos is to assist those less fortunate than ourselves, and to this end we are proud and honoured to use our resources to support this humanitarian initiative. We are excited to see where we can take this project with the people of Colchester and really believe we can set a fantastic example of what can be achieved by one town when everyone is playing to their strengths.”*

The Lion Walk donation hub is located next to Primark, in Culver Street, and is in operation between 11am and 3pm.

To donate to the campaign visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/colchester-to-ukraine>

The appeal, launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, is currently at just over £13k of it is £25k target.

### **Colchester to Ukraine Humanitarian and Emergency Aid Campaign Links:**

**VIDEO:** [Colchester to Ukraine Humanitarian and Emergency Aid Campaign](#)

**DONATIONS PAGE:** [Colchester to Ukraine Go Fund Me Page](#)

**-ENDS-**

**For further details on WFA please visit:**

<https://worldfoodaid.org>



<https://www.facebook.com/WorldFoodAid/>

[www.suryafoods.com](http://www.suryafoods.com)

For further information or images please contact Lyndsey Filby: [pr@suryafoods.com](mailto:pr@suryafoods.com)

## Notes for Editors

### World Food Aid: *'Hunger – Together we can end it'*

- Since its inception in 2011, [World Food Aid](#) has been helping improve some of the millions of lives around the world affected by hunger in the UK and abroad. Adopting the mission statement 'Hunger – Together we can end it', the charity considers hunger an entirely preventable pandemic and is on a mission to end it in this generation. It funds projects ranging from soup kitchens and school holiday meals to helping extreme poverty-stricken communities in countries like India and Peru, among others. Funds raised through its Clacton charity shop are exclusively dedicated to 'eliminating hunger locally'.

**Locally** the charity works in partnership with schools and church groups, providing grants and food parcels.

**Nationally** it works in partnership with likeminded charities, providing grants and food parcels.

**Internationally** the charity helps respond to disasters, via the Disasters Aid Committee, to provide emergency food parcels.

- WFA is the affiliated charity of global business group Flying Trade Group Ltd. Flying Trade Group operates across several sectors of the UK food and leisure industry - its main subsidiary businesses including Surya Foods and Surya Hotels Ltd. Under the directorship of brothers Harry and Suki Dulai, the rapidly expanding, family run, business has an annual turnover in excess of £170 million and an employee base of more than 1400, operating in over 30 countries. Impressive growth during recent years has seen it featured in both the Sunday Times Top Track 250 and Sunday Times International Track 200 league tables.
- World Food Aid funds worthwhile projects in the UK and abroad and aims to galvanise the UK into becoming a vital part of a worldwide movement to end hunger.
- Previous beneficiaries of significant WFA campaigns include the British Red Cross, Fareshare and Trussell Trust.
- **World Food Aid** Charity Shop in Essex: *Clacton Charity Shop Address: 15 High Street, Clacton on Sea, CO15 1NU*