

# Generosity From The Heart

*Sir Peter Bottomley MP*

*Worthing Herald Article*

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Wave of Compassion: those are words on the covers of the report on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme one year on. It was commissioned by the Sanctuary Foundation charity. Earlier, the Foundation developed 'HELLO', the welcome booklet for children from Ukraine. It explains that in Ukraine the president is in charge. In the UK there is the prime minister and the Royal Family. Their power, reputation and responsibilities help make sure the country is safe and strong and a good place to live.

A Ukrainian mother spoke powerfully on Tuesday in the Lords. She and others like her wondered why hosts had been so hospitable and why communities had been so welcoming? No, they were not paid. No, there was no tax benefit. She then described it as generosity from the heart.

Women's Institutes around the country are people who can explain. The National Federation brings together more than 190,000 women who forge friendships, develop new skills and make a difference in their areas. There are 19 groups listed within 10 miles of our home in Worthing.

On Friday WI members came to the Great Hall at Westminster for a tour of the Palace organised by East Preston's Anne Chapman assisted by Worthing Josh Harris. After discussion in the Jubilee room we slipped into the old crypt chapel to see the broom cupboard where Emily Wilding Davison had hidden on census night 1911.

The former teacher in Worthing was a famous suffragette. Her aim had been to avoid being listed in the census. Her name was recorded twice, in Westminster Hall and at her lodgings. The Davison school is not named after her. It was founded in 1812 by the Reverend William Davison, priest in charge at St Paul's chapel, now the community centre at the end of Ambrose Place.

Emily Davison died after running towards the horses during the 1913 Derby. Perhaps she wished to attach a suffragette flag or sash to a horse's bridle. The House of Commons bought what was thought to be her flag. The size does not match the flags pinned in her jacket. History can be uncertain?

I might leave one of my blue and gold ties to the parliamentary archive. The blue and gold bring smiles and appreciation from Ukrainians, including a warm greeting from one of their women MPs in the House of Commons this week.

Tactics needed to resolve problems should involve debate. The trans issues would have benefitted if the campaigners seen as extreme had not chosen 'no debate'. I am firmly on the side of J K Rowling and Professor Kathleen Stock. They and I are keen to discuss issues. So are many women who contribute to Mumsnet comments.

A linked question is on whether and what 'conversion practices' need to be added to activities banned by law as criminal offences. Few think it right to try to convert a sexual orientation. Some think discussion on gender identity could be illegal. I ask constituents to let me know confidentially or openly if they have experience of offensive practices in this country that are harmful and that are not already potentially criminal.

Vulnerable individuals must be able to discuss distress without clumsy law requiring only social affirmation. I want to protect legitimate and necessary roles for parents, teachers, social workers, clinicians, therapists and religious groups who support people of all ages.

I have reread the relevant passages in my university tutor's memoir *Some Day I'll Find You*. The distinguished Harry Williams was most known for writing *True Wilderness*. He described how the better therapist helped him come to terms with his homosexuality. Government and MPs should listen to people who are straight, gay and lesbian. We should have understanding and sympathy for trans without excluding everyone else.

Compassion should lead to effective, helpful action. Debate, decide and do not duck difficult problems.