



Hitchin's Christmas Shoebox Project - 2025

For more than 30 years Link to Hope have been supporting lives across Eastern Europe as people live with poverty and need, and more than 1 million Christmas Shoeboxes have been distributed as a demonstration of practical care and support, alongside many all-year-round community projects that have been developed. Since 2004, we at Walsworth Road Baptist Church in Hitchin have coordinated a townwide Christmas Shoebox Project, working for a number of years now with Link to Hope. For yet another year within the backdrop to the project is the Russian invasion of Ukraine (where various Link projects are based), but Link to Hope continue to be committed to supporting people in need, and again this year have delivered aid to people and projects across Ukraine. Partnering with them again, we have launched this project in schools and churches across the locality, in the hope that shoeboxes can be prepared and filled during the Half term break, and then sent on their journey from Hitchin by road to Eastern Europe.

Shoeboxes will be collected from your school after Half term, and then sorted and prepared for their onward travel. Link to Hope send Christmas shoeboxes, through their own community projects and through trusted local partners, to people known to be in need within Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. As usual, there are two styles of shoebox – *Family* or *Elderly* – so please choose which style you would like to create, and then wrap the box and lid separately with Christmas wrapping paper.

Please print out the **Print Me** sheet that comes with this letter, and use the **Contents** list attached to the box lid to fill the shoebox with good things, and *please mark with a tick* everything that you have included.

Link to Hope have clearly identified six categories on the **Essential Items** list, which is the same for both styles of shoebox:

Gloves or Scarf or Hat;

Chocolate/ sweets (dated after June 2026);

Soap & Flannel;

Toothbrush & toothpaste;

Candle & Holder (holder is for stability);

Small Game (eg Draughts, Dominos, Cards)

On the **Contents** list then there are further suggestions of items for you to include as **Extras** (ideally at least **five** of these, please), depending on whether you are filling a *Family* or an *Elderly* shoebox.

Please do **not** include any of the following items:

Food, Tea/ Coffee, Medicines, Books, Sanitary items, Underwear, Second-hand items

Donation

As a small charity and in order to assist with transport costs, Link to Hope ask for a donation of £3 per shoebox to be included with the box (cash or cheque), or by online transfer (See Print Me document). Link to Hope also encourage all UK tax payers to sign the Gift Aid declaration as well, please, to add value to the gift at no additional cost to the donor. The form and the donation can go inside the shoebox, and these will be passed safely but separately to the charity. The shoeboxes from Hitchin will all be cartoned, 'ready for the pallet', and then delivered to Link to Hope in Sussex in mid-November for their onward journey.

Questions?

Please feel free to contact the local project team in Hitchin with any questions, by emailing shoeboxes@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Thank you for your generous support!