



Evesham Street Pastors

7 years in
Evesham!



Annual Report 2019–2020

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

Church of England Publications

Chairman's Report

Revd Dr Edward Pillar

The key to Street Pastors is in the name: 'Pastors'. Traditionally a pastor is a shepherd, someone who ordinarily looks after sheep, caring for them, guiding and finding food for them, protecting them and ensuring that their lives are safe and secure, and that they are able to flourish. A Street Pastor performs the task and role of a shepherd, but with people. Much like sheep, who often have a clear mind of their own but will follow and receive help from someone they trust, so too the experience of the Street Pastors is that people respond as they meet, trust and are helped by the street shepherds.

As the Co-ordinator's report makes clear, the past year has been strange. The first six months were straightforward. Continuing the work of previous years, developing relationships, making new friends, helping whomever they met on the streets, caring and sharing and supporting. But then with Covid-19 everything changed and there was a period of rest, away from the streets, but continuing with prayer for all those in need.

Once lockdown was lifted, care was taken in reinitiating patrols, taking care both for the Street Pastors and for those they meet. Street Pastors in Evesham continue to care, listen and help in whatever way necessary and practical. We believe God has accompanied us through this process, providing new Street Pastors to patrol with us. We trust that as we continue this shepherding work in relationship with, and alongside, many other organisations and groups, we will shine the light of compassion and kindness.

As we continue this work, we are grateful to all those who support what we do. We are grateful to those individuals who patrol, pray, work and serve. We are grateful for the churches that support us and for the Councils and the police that work alongside us. We are grateful for the relationship with publicans and restaurateurs. Evesham Street Pastors has the immense privilege of working with many other gifted, capable, generous and compassionate people. On behalf of the Trustees, thank you to you all.

Co-ordinator's Report

John Darby

What a strange, difficult and challenging year. From October 2019 until March 2020 our work continued much as in previous years. We continued to meet people who had become our friends, almost from the beginning. However, the majority are new friends, generally younger, and going through a period of their lives before responsibilities for family and jobs take over. There continues to be a need and 'Caring, Listening and Helping' remains fundamental to all we do. Practically helping people who maybe have had too much to drink; are new to drugs or who have experienced some personal emotional upset in their life — maybe a personal fall-out, employment or lack-of-employment problem. There are others who have longer-term challenges, where the 'listening' aspect of our work is needed and it is a real privilege to share in their journey. Sometimes months, years later, we meet with people who express their thanks for the help we have given. We give thanks to our Lord who takes us to those people at just the right time and in the right place.

The growth and development of our work continued well during these first months. Ideally each patrol needs a lady, and a leader — this has been a challenge to us in recent years. However, early this year our three new lady trainees completed their training and joined patrols and Sandie Davies also took on the role of leader. This has made a big difference and is of real benefit to our work.

And then 'lockdown' arrived. Our first thoughts were that those challenges, described above, would still be there, so during the first couple of weeks we looked around the town to see who was about — virtually no-one. Recognising the problems would still exist and the employment and business aspects would be a real challenge, we decided to continue to pray, weekly and on a rota basis, for the town and the people we would usually meet. Each week a duty prayer team prayed. For me, it has been encouraging to receive comments from our teams about their prayer time. We are also grateful to Chris Sheehan who provided a guide to help us through these prayer times.

In July, pubs, restaurants and clubs opened again. We thought and

prayed hard about this situation, recognising the need for caution and care, but agreed that it was appropriate for only those who felt able, to patrol on a limited basis. We undertook risk assessments and decided that social distancing would be a top priority. The patrols should be shorter; we would not meet in Church House; Prayer Partners would be at home but in telephone contact and if at any time anyone was uncomfortable patrolling, the patrol would stop immediately. This has worked well – instead of hugs we have promised a hug in the future – we owe lots of hugs (!) and everything we give out is wiped with a disinfectant wipe.

In practice we have patrolled twice a month. Our ability to care, listen and help is severely limited, but we

have been of practical help. More importantly we have been able to show that we do care and share something of the love of Jesus to those enjoying the nightlife of the town; to door staff, the police and other emergency services.

For all those involved with the Evesham Street Pastor team it is a great privilege to serve in this way. I am grateful for all of the contributions made particularly during the lockdown. I recognise that, understandably, not all have felt able to patrol but I am encouraged by the commitment to pray weekly for the town and its people.

These reports were written before the November lockdown — once again we have stopped patrols, but we continue praying.

*We are building bridges between Church and the world;
We reach out to people who need drugs and drink
to escape the reality of their lost and desperate lives.
We reach out to people who just find life tough.
We build bridges of hope, of inspiration, of care, of love.*

Revd Les Isaac

Prayer Partners Report

Sheila Himsworth

As for the Street Pastors, in the early part of the year, we continued with a rota for two prayer partners to meet at the base and spend time with the patrol for that night, sharing and catching up with each other's news and praying together for that night's Patrol and the town.

Then in late March along came 'lockdown' and we had to remember not just to abide by the government rules but to be conscious and aware for the safety of all including ourselves.

A new pattern was developed from July with shortened patrols about twice a month and one Prayer Partner to pray at home for the town and the Patrol both whenever the Street Pastors were going out and also when there was to be no patrol. This seemed to be the only way to show that Street Pastoring in Evesham was still alive and caring. It was not easy, and we seriously missed the time of sharing at base.

Training Report

Carol Sheehan

Probation and Education training undertaken in November, led by Kay Wall.

Jim Slimmon attended a *Roles and Responsibilities* (R&R) training session arranged by Cheltenham Street Pastors.

Robin Mace from Wychavon led training on *Youth Culture and Sociology* on the Wychavon Youth Bus in January.

Mentoring Training taken in February by the three new trainees led by Mike Powell.

Drugs and Alcohol Awareness training taken in February by the three new trainees, and other Street Pastors joined as a Drugs Awareness refresher course.

Suicide Prevention Course was taken on-line by most of the Street Pastors and trainees.

Jim Slimmon has almost finished his training and will be able to join patrols when lockdown is resolved. John Nicholls and Kika Urbánová have a few more sessions to complete.

Ascension Trust have arranged some on-line training which we have reviewed. There is a cost and being physically present for training had many advantages. We have decided to use the national

course for Mental Health and Safeguarding, both of which we have found difficult to arrange ourselves.

We have developed ways of doing most of the training using our own team; these seem to work well.

Treasurer's Report

Derek Markie

We never cease to be grateful for the financial support we receive from so many sources around the district. Our founder churches, personal and small group donors, the police whose Police & Crime Commissioner is now our main funder, and Wychavon District Council who are the conduit for that and a generous supporter and partner. As a result, we did not need to ask John Martin's Charity for help and the Town Council also reasonably cut back their support as they could see things were going well for us.

That 'going well' was due to two other key factors as the year began; the ever-generous work of our co-ordinator John Darby who, despite health issues throughout the year, has continued to do all that was necessary to lead and administer the work. We maintain a reserve now for the day when it may be necessary to move to

a paid part-time administrator. Careful management of expenditure by everyone involved and the long service of our Street Pastors is the second key contributor. In future we will need to recruit, equip and train a new team and costs will rise.

Our achievements matched those of the previous winter, and we maintained the increased proportion of Saturdays, versus Friday patrols, contributing to the calmness of the busiest evenings. We resumed patrols in July.

'Going well' after March, of course, was mainly financial, as patrols ceased and lollies, water and flip-flops stayed in store, only trickling out in August. However, the Street Pastors and Prayer Partners never ceased to pray for those we seek to serve and continues every weekend.

We owe a big thank you to our 'suppliers' as well: the radio service which immediately refunded our payments beyond March and All Saints Church who likewise have not charged us since then.

Can I therefore assure our funders and all those who give so generously that we will look after all that you have given us and use it to build the service stronger than ever when the night-time economy returns.

Evesham Street Pastors

A Charity registered in England and Wales: Number 1156750

Trustees: Diane Bennett MBE; Revd Ralph Bolland; John Darby; Sheila Himsworth; Tom Meldrum; Revd Dr Edward Pillar (Chairman); Revd Andrew Spurr; Kay Wall.

Our Trustees are supported by: Representatives of Evesham Police and Wychavon District Council and by Derek Markie (Treasurer).

Current Street Pastors (Patrol Leaders shown in bold):

Peter Barry*; **Simon Brown**; Simona Bujdošová; Trevor Burton; Andrew Capel; **John Darby**; **Sandie Davies**; Lee Fisher; Andy Foster; Silvie Jelínková; Chiara Pelazza; Mike Powell; Carol Sheehan; **Chris Sheehan**; Andrew Spurr; **Graham Wells**; Steve Wilderspin.

(* leads when able)

Street Pastors in Training: John Nicholls;

Kristina Urbánová; Jim Slimmon.

Prayer Partners:

Diane Bennett MBE; Stuart Brown; Robert and Heather Bryce; Diane Capel; Joyce Davey; Anne Evans; Lee Fisher; Margaret Fuller; Sheila Himsworth; Jackie Johns; Derek Markie; Rachel Powell; Kay Wall; Heather Walsh; Paul Wingert; Anne Yelland.

This report, together with the year's financial report will be presented for approval to the AGM in early 2021.

Evesham Street Pastor Co-ordinators

Lead Co-ordinator – John Darby

Prayer Partners – Sheila Himsworth

Fundraising and Finance – Derek Markie

Administration and DBS – Diane Bennett MBE

Rotas, supplies and training – Carol Sheehan

Web site, Social Media & Publication Design – Simon Brown

All patrol leaders