



**Orkney Street Pastors**

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
**2012 to 2022**

**LISTENING • CARING • HELPING**

## 50 years ago

Thursday, June 4, 1964

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**DEN OF INIQUITY** — SIR,—A den of iniquity, which with its levity, licentiousness and drinking is a disgrace to the fair name of Orkney, was having one of its many sessions recently and one client, a habitual drunkard, was making his unsteady way home in the early hours when he crashed on his cycle and was knocked unconscious in the roadway, where he was found by a local doctor who, fearing that a hit-and-run motorist had been responsible, immediately dialled 999, bringing out public officials and an ambulance, all to no avail, because in the interval the victim had been mysteriously spirited away.

When will action be taken against this evil and wickedness. What is the Church doing to deal with this menace which appears to be increasing in Orkney?

Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 25 verses 31 onwards that the King will separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep represent those that had met the needs of Jesus.

“Truly when you met the needs of one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me”.

***Hebrews 13 v 16 says “do not forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God”.***

## **Street pastors ‘well received’ by revellers**

The team of street pastors, who were out and about in Kirkwall on Saturday night for the first time, were well received by revellers according to the Orkney group’s co-chairman Andy Fraser. Although there was a level of trepidation as to how the concept would go down in the county, Mr Fraser said that they did not receive any negative comments.

“One or two people asked what on earth street pastors was and, once we explained, thought it was really good. Another big question was ‘Do you get paid?’ We don’t, and their response was ‘wow, you are doing this for nothing?’”

Mr Fraser said they had been surprised by the level of awareness of street pastors, with many having watched television programmes featuring volunteers, or experienced them first hand themselves in Inverness and Aberdeen.

“A lot of people thanked us for what we are doing. We did not get a single negative comment”.

There were 15 trained volunteers out on Saturday out of the 18 currently available in the county.

“We would have to have more volunteers. At the moment, we will be sending out four people on a Saturday night, from midnight until 4am, so it is a commitment of roughly once a month. If we were to get more than we have at the moment, we could consider putting a team out to Stromness some of the time.”

Street pastors, he stressed, are there to help reduce disorder and offer help to people in need, not to preach the word of God.

“Having said that,” Mr Fraser said, “If people ask, we are quite entitled to have conversations but we do not take leaflets with us.”

The deeply embedded alcohol culture throughout the country, including Orkney, is well documented, and the co-chairman admitted that their stint on Saturday night had been an eye-opener.

“We got an opportunity to see what it is like and understand a bit more about some of the problems. There is nothing wrong with folk having a good time on a Saturday night, but it

is a small step from being a little bit merry to things going wrong. Our desire is to be there to prevent these situations tipping over into aggression, or to look out for someone being left on their own or who is vulnerable.”

He admitted that the team is still learning the ropes, and how to deal with being around people who may have had too much to drink.”

“We have to be careful that we do not cause anything to happen. We are learning the skills of conversation when people are maybe a little excitable. We need to learn wisdom.”

Street pastors first arrived in Scotland in 2007, and the Ascension Trust was established in 2010 to support the growing network of street pastors.

There are 412 trained street pastors in Scotland.

The trust trains the volunteers who wear distinctive uniforms and caps.

There are seven churches involved in the street pastor scheme in the county.

Mr Fraser continued, “We have done our training process, up to 50 hours training to make sure all the volunteers are up to date and have an understanding of what you can and cannot do on the street, working closely with the police who have done some of our training with us.”

The group have also been working alongside Orkney Islands Council.

“We fill the gap between people coming out of the pubs and clubs and getting home at night.”

Asked why they would give up their time during unsociable hours to deal with often difficult situations, Mr Fraser said “We are commissioned to love God and love thy neighbor- this is one way of loving your neighbor. We all know that more needs to be done about the dangers of alcohol, we are another part of the practical solution. Quite a number of us are teachers or people in the caring profession, we like people and care for them. It’s also a way of keeping a connection with people.”

Mr Fraser continued, “We are not here to do the job of the police, but to do a job that connects with the police.”



Commissioning - 21 July, 2012



# Reminiscences of a young lady

It is midnight on Saturday night. Young people are moving in small groups from the bars to the Night Club full of good humour with drink slowly coursing through their veins. Already abit unsteady on their feet.

It is two o'clock and some of my friends are rushing to catch the last bus. How can they run in such high heels and will they make it in time?

The Night Club is packed with over four hundred gyrating souls. The over indulgence earlier in the evening is starting to take hold. Maybe I should not have had that last drink? Too late now to do anything about it.

It is a quarter past two and over four hundred of us are expelled onto the back streets of Kirkwall. Now that the pounding music has stopped, we have time to catch up with all the gossip. Never mind the rain. Never mind the wind. This is Orkney after all and we are made of stern stuff! The cold strikes like a hammer blow to the head and the full effects of the alcohol kick in.

Is that a Street Pastor I see? What a blessing. A space blanket to keep me warm and a pair of flip-flops for my tired feet. I wonder why I chose to wear such high heels but fashion dictates. The battery on my mobile has gone flat but thankfully the Street Pastors call a taxi for me. Finally a lollipop to see me on my way. The only food available at this time of morning. How can these people be so happy and helpful at this unearthly time of day?

***I wonder if this is God at work?***



Wet ones







Abbey Road, Kirkwall!





Sweeping up broken glass!

# Report on patrol 19th December 2020

We had a prayer time prior to going out. We had a blessed night. Young folks have missed us. All very well behaved with many good conversations. Only one broken glass and gave out 28 lollipops. Asked if we had flip-flops but they were not needed. Good conversation between two girls about how they had had flip-flops in the past and were so grateful for them. A young man ran up to us and requested his usual apple lollipop, he said that has made his Christmas.

We chatted to the manager of the Gin Factory for a little while. They now have an area set up as an outdoor space with stalls and twinkle lights.

We spoke to the cook of skippers. My goodness that young man has lost 5 stone in weight, he looks tremendous. When he saw us, he came right out and chatted - he has missed us.

We walked down the harbour and chatted to various folks as they went down towards the boats to see the Christmas lights on the boats.

One young woman wanted to cuddle but no no.

We wore our protective gear, the visors steam up very quickly and had a residual rain back due to our breath. We had to take them off and carry them but would have put them back on if we had an accident. Thankfully we did not. We kept our face masks on at all times. The police wore their face masks too.

We spoke to two young men at the bus station who were enjoying fish and chips. They chatted freely to us and were glad to see us.

We washed and cleansed the visors at the end of the night.

All in all a blessed night. Yes we were meant to go out, that was apparent.

# OIC welcomes Orkney Street Pastors back into the fold

Orkney Street Pastors are hoping to restart their Saturday night patrols around Kirkwall town centre on Saturday 22 May which includes regular checks on anti-social behaviour hot spots.

The “listening, caring, helping” ethos of the Street Pastors is welcomed by the Council and the trained volunteer work of the organisation is of great assistance not just to the revellers who are out and about, but also when trying to curb anti-social issues.

The Council has highlighted a number of instances of vandalism and anti-social behaviour in and around public toilet facilities lately – Hayley Green, the Council’s Head of IT and Facilities is hopeful the return of the Street Pastors will have a beneficial effect.

“We have been very grateful to the Orkney Street Pastors for their work over the past nine years in helping to keep people safe and the knock-on advantages simply by their very presence on our streets. We have suffered a spate of vandalism within our public toilet facilities these past months and anything which can help deter this sort of behaviour is very welcome.



“The Street Pastors give their time and experience freely to the Orkney community and we are wholly grateful for this additional tool in keeping Orkney safe and beautiful.”

Barry Cockerham, Co-ordinator for Orkney Street Pastors, said they have been unable to patrol since March 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions but are planning to resume this month.

“We are proposing to restart night-time patrols on Saturday 22nd May in teams of at least three people. We currently have 18 fully trained volunteers available for the rota and so we concentrate our efforts on Saturday nights only. We will patrol the streets in the centre of Kirkwall and various areas of the town where young people have historically gathered.

“We carry flip flops, lollipops, survival blankets, raincoats and bottled water to distribute as necessary and a basic First Aid pack, wet wipes and sick bags.

“We make sure that everyone can either safely walk home or have made arrangement for onward transport either with friends and family or taxi. In a medical emergency, we call out an ambulance and stay with the patient until the ambulance arrives to make sure they keep warm and awake.

“We are not an extension of the police and can deal informally with many situations before they get to the stage that the police have to intervene. We are trained volunteers from local churches who care about our community. We listen to, care for and help people who are out on the streets of Kirkwall. We make sure the streets are clear of bottles and broken glass and that revellers are generally safe.

“A number of public toilets in the area will be part of our patrols as was the case pre-covid. If we come across any informal gatherings in and around the toilets, we will monitor the situation to make sure things do not get out of hand. Just our presence has, in the past, been sufficient for groups to move on. Handing out lollipops helps to defuse situations and lift the mood.”

# Orkney Street Pastors

Listening Caring  
Helping



***“Sometimes the simplest of acts meet the  
greatest of needs”***

In the early hours of Sunday morning, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021, we assisted an 18 year old lad who could not stand up after consuming too much alcohol. We kept him upright and awake until his parents arrived on foot to take him home. It was then decided to call an ambulance and we also flagged down a police patrol car to check that an ambulance was in fact on its way.

A text message received on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

He is doing fine – he’s at work today. He had a fright – we had all had a party at home before the youngsters headed out. A lesson to us all about alcohol – but especially \*\*\*\* who perhaps didn’t realise how too much and mixing is not a good idea. (Smiley)

We are extremely grateful for the care and completely non-judgemental way he – and we – were dealt with. Thank you so much to all of you who go out and make sure folk are tended to if needed – it must not be pleasant but it is such a wonderful thing to do. (Heart)

\*\*\*\* was very blessed to be in the safe hands of loving folk – thank you all again. (Smiley)

## Number of Patrols

Mark Berry	82	Hazel McKinlay	55
Barry Cockerham	128	Linda Ann Scott	95
Mary Cockerham	111	Cameron Stout	57
Margo MacPherson	102		

## Achievements

Calming aggressive	185	Lollipops	23210
Support vulnerable	460	Call out Police	37
Pairs of Flip-flops	2970	Call out Ambulance	18
Bottles of water	505	Call a taxi	114
Administered 1 <sup>st</sup> Aid	72	Spontaneous Thanks	2300
Survival Blankets	240	Prayed for	80
Picked up whole & broken bottles/glasses	5300	Spiritual conversations	360

***Overall we have helped over 4860 people and have contributed to making the streets of Kirkwall safe on a Saturday night.***

## Orkney's street pastors commended

The work of Orkney's street pastors has been commended.

The pastors, of which there are 16, began patrolling the streets of Kirkwall in 2012.

So far this year the pastors have provided support for 47 people, calmed 17 potential flashpoints, administered

first aid to 7 people, called taxis for 11 people, called an ambulance for one person and brought four incidents to the attention of the police.

Constable Simon Hay of the Prevention and Interventions Unit praised the 'excellent service' provided by the pastors.

