



Wantage and Grove STREET PASTORS

Quarterly News

APR
2020



Nigel Watt, Coordinator

How quickly our lives have changed, and in ways that none of us could have imagined only a few weeks ago. On 17 March, our Management Committee met and decided to suspend Street Pastor patrols until further notice, with the aim of protecting our volunteers and helping to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. It seems that, as individuals, families, communities and as a nation, we are in uncharted waters; heading out in to the unknown together. Whenever Street Pastors go on patrol, they go out in to the unknown - and often in to the dark. They have with them a few supplies, mostly to help other people. But they don't go unprepared; with the help of Prayer Support Volunteers, they start in prayer, seeking the Lord's guidance, protection and provision. And they head out, turning to prayer as different situations arise. More now than ever, this should be the daily pattern of our lives: start in prayer - head out in prayer. Maybe even, as it says in 1 Thessalonians Ch 5, "Pray without ceasing"! Like Street Pastors, we are all here to be a blessing, to bring hope - a light in the dark, a listening ear, a friendly face.

Ascension Trust

Ascension Trust (AT) is the governing body for 8 church-led initiatives, the most well-known of which is Street Pastors. Their mission is to empower Christians to work together within their local community to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Other AT ministries are School Pastors, Rail Pastors and most recently, Response Pastors - who are deployed in times of major incidents and crisis such as the Grenfell Tower Fire and terrorist attacks in London. In 2009, Eustace and Sharon Constance came to Wantage to start our training and we were delighted that they were able to return and join in our 10th Anniversary Celebration in October 2019. We don't like to show off, but we were rather pleased when they presented us with this beautiful plaque recognising our 10-year achievement. The inscription reads: *"Presented to Wantage and Grove Street Pastors in appreciation from Ascension Trust for 10 years of dedication, commitment and loyal service given to the work of Street Pastors"*.



How we helped on the streets

We met a group of three young men who were supporting a fourth man who had had too much to drink. We gave a bottle of water and stayed with them while they decided what they were going to do with their drunk friend. The drunk man didn't want to go in a taxi and was insistent on walking home. Our team walked with them some of the way until it was clear that they could make good progress on their own.

We met a couple and asked if they were okay as the woman was injured. They said they were fine so we left them but made sure to go back that way soon after. When we went back, the lady confirmed that she was fine

and safe. We later saw the couple trying to get a taxi. The man stopped a passing car and got the lady in it and walked off. We spoke to the driver and, realising that he was not a registered taxi, got the lady out and found a genuine taxi for her. It turned out that she knew the driver, which we were all very glad about.

One night we found a lost phone and wallet. The phone rang in our hands and the person on the other end asked, 'who are you?' We explained that we were Street Pastors and had found the phone and wallet. With the help of the caller we were able to re-unite the phone and wallet with a very grateful young lady.

One of our teams offered help to an older man who was staggering about in town with the aid of a walking stick. Our help was declined, but we ran to his aid after he fell while standing in a doorway - having let go of his walking stick. Thinking that he had probably relieved himself, our team (now wearing gloves) got the man to his feet and bravely assisted with doing his belt up. Unfortunately, it took two more falls and two more attempts at getting the belt buckle in the right hole before the man's trousers were adequately secured and he was able to make his way home in moderate safety. All in a night's work for our brave Street Pastors! Well done!

For more information on how we helped, check out our Reports page on our website:
www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk

Management Committee Goals

Each year our Management Committee sets goals to help focus our efforts and to ensure that we continue to serve our community well. Our 2020/21 goals are centred around delivering patrols, finances and relationships.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do - we would not exist without all those who so generously give their time to serve. We would love to have more volunteers to build resilience within our teams and to extend how we serve the community. King Alfred's Academy has asked us to be a presence in the town when children and young people finish their day, as some youngsters can be most vulnerable outside of the formal school day. Efforts to start some afternoon patrols have yet to come to fruition - we don't quite have enough volunteers to make it happen. We do need people to join as Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers to maintain our level of service in Wantage and Grove, to improve what we are already doing and to branch out into new opportunities.

Finances are needed to run any charity and we need about £15k per year. The Lord has been faithful in providing what we need and we are very thankful for individuals and churches who regularly contribute. More support in this way would be fantastic as we know that the few grants we receive may not be sustainable in the future.

Our member churches are our core community of support, so we endeavour to hold a *Street Pastor Sunday* in each church this year. By this, Christians in our community can hear first hand what God is doing in our town and the difference it makes to have people gathering to pray over the area while others are out on patrol. We also plan to hold other events this year, which seek to increase support in prayer, volunteering and finance.

Thank you for the ways that you help us to achieve our goals. We can't do it without you - **Thank you!**

How we helped on the streets

Street Pastors patrolled 5 times in January, 5 in February and 4 times in March. Fourteen patrols providing 64 hours of cover. Giving lollies is not only a nice way of saying 'hello' but they also put some sugar back in the blood stream - which helps reduce aggression and confusion in those that have had a lot to drink. They sometimes come in handy for helping to quieten down noisy individuals! We've not patrolled since the end of March but we hope to get back to the streets as soon as we are able!

	JAN 20	FEB 20	MAR 20
Flip-flops	2	4	2
Water	7	7	7
Space Blankets	0	0	0
Lollies	160	240	325
Litter	62	69	64

Welcome Zack



We are very pleased to welcome Zack Smith, who is training to be a Street Pastor. Zack is a talented young athlete who, following a mission trip to South America, is passionate about helping people with his life. Of course, he'll bring our average age down a bit too! Welcome Zack, it's great to have you!

£300 Gone!

That got your attention! ...but it's a good news story! The £300 fee for training as a Street Pastor has gone! While we have sufficient funds there is no need to ask Street Pastor recruits to pay anything. So, now is a great time to join and begin your training as a Street Pastor. And, with afternoon patrols on the horizon, there's a patrol to suit everyone. For more information check out our "So, what's involved in being a Street Pastor?" Leaflet, speak to your Church Rep, or contact us using the details below:



Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

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Street Pastors is an initiative of Ascension Trust, a Christian, inter-denominational organisation with a passion to empower individuals to work together within their local community and nation.