



Wantage and Grove STREET PASTORS

Quarterly News

JUL
2020



At the time of writing this, some people feel that we are coming out the other side of a nightmare, whilst others are feeling they have had the time to do something really valuable within the community. We will all have experienced these past four months in very different ways.

Many Street Pastors and Prayer Support volunteers, whilst not being able to undertake their 'normal' duties, have none the less been demonstrating their faith in action within the community during daylight hours as opposed to within the night-time economy.

I have heard some conversations based on questions such as "What is God trying to show us?" & "Is God challenging us to look at our faith through different eyes?"

Have those of us who profess to have faith been given a once in a lifetime chance to show others what our faith means to us? We know that God is with us every step of the way, and we know that God will use us to his glory when we allow his Spirit

to work in us and through us. I perceive that many people in this community have allowed that Spirit to do some awe-inspiring work through them in these strange times.

There will, of course, be much need for a healing touch as we seek to find out what life is going to be like in the coming months. We may not be able to physically give a healing touch to those in need, but we can ask God to envelop them with his love.

I pray that as Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers consider a return to their familiar duties, they will be acutely aware of God in their midst, guiding them to those in need. We go forward trusting in God's protective love.

Helen Carter, Trustee

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Wantage Mayor, Major Jim Sibbald nominated us for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service back in the summer of 2019. This is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of The Queen's coronation. We were audited by Deputy Lieutenants Jane Cranston and Marion Stevenson and, following a successful audit, they recommended us to the National Assessment Committee, whose job it is to assess all the nominations and provide a shortlist that goes before the Queen for approval.

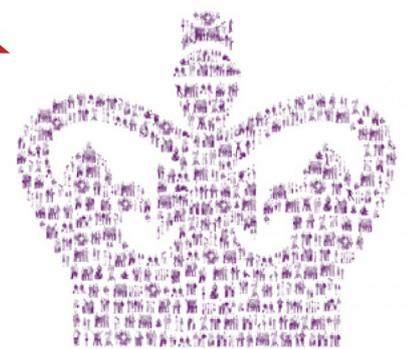
In May we received a letter from Sir Martin Lewis CBE, Chair of the National Assessment Committee to say that they very much admired the work we do, but that we had not been selected to receive the award this year. Sir Martin asked us to convey to our members their warm appreciation of the excellent work we do and the enormous benefit it represents to the local community. He said that to be nominated is a tremendous achievement and that everyone involved, and particularly our volunteers, should feel immensely proud of this adding, "...particularly in these difficult times when your great community work is needed more than ever!"

Although disappointed not to have received the award, we are proud to have been nominated and our thanks go to Cllr Major Jim Sibbald for his nomination and his support of our work. We are also grateful to all our volunteers, without whom we would not be able to serve our local communities together.

Our congratulations go to Aberdeen Street Pastors who received the award this year; and locally we congratulate Sinodun Players & Corn Exchange in Wallingford and Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails Volunteers in Oxford. Well done!

Apparently, our name stays in the hat for another two years, so we could still receive the award but we are sure there will be many more deserving charities next time around, especially in such difficult times for many people.

We do hope to return to Street Pastor patrols towards the end of August or beginning of September. We're working hard to put things in place to ensure we can do this safely. Watch this space!



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Championing prayer together

Communicate – Connect – Support – Build – Train

Prayer really is at the heart of what we do in Wantage and Grove Street Pastors and we would love to grow this important part of our ministry locally, and maybe you can help us do this - we are looking for several people to help us 'Champion Prayer'. There are five areas we would like help with:

Communicate: Draw together prayer points from various sources and keep our members, patrol teams and those who pray from home informed about prayer needs.

Connect: Connect with our partner churches and Ascension Trust to understand their prayer needs.

Support: Support our patrol teams and our members who pray at home in developing our prayer life.

Build: Grow our prayer base by bringing more people to the team and explore new prayer initiatives.

Train: Help us benefit from prayer training sessions locally and by training provided by Ascension Trust.

If you would like more information about championing prayer or if you feel you could help us in some way, please contact us. Nothing is cast in stone and so we would love to talk about how we can Champion Prayer Together.

Going CIO

Each year the Trustees set goals to help progress what Wantage and Grove Street Pastors does as an organisation. Many of these goals are about recruiting volunteers, Street Pastor Sundays and planning events to raise funds and awareness of our work. This year we also have a goal regarding progress towards becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - CIO.

This new way of operating charities was introduced in 2013 to simplify how charities are run and to enable a charity to become a legal entity. The change enables the charity to own assets and it provides additional legal protection for trustees and members. Changing into a CIO is something which Ascension Trust encourages and their legal department will help us with our transition.

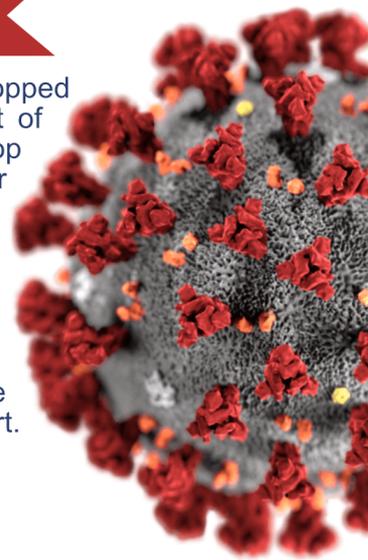
Before this change can start, the members of a charity would need to consider and formally agree to the change, and so the WGSP Trustees will be asking our members to consider this change and will take a vote at the AGM in October. More information will be provided to the membership well ahead of the AGM, but should you have any comments or questions, please speak to a Trustee or contact us using the details below.

How our members helped during the pandemic

We have not been able to patrol our streets since the end of March but that hasn't stopped many of our members from helping in the community. Some continued their support of different local organisations during the lockdown and some took on new roles, often on top of what they were already doing. Here are some of the projects and activities that our members are supporting:

The Ray Collins Charitable Trust Coronavirus Support Group; A Helping Hand; The Mix Community Fridge; Foodbank; prescription deliveries; hot meal deliveries; shopping for those who have been self-isolating. And I'm sure there is more we don't know about.

Of course, it's not just our members; there are lots of people around Wantage and Grove who are involved in many different projects and organisations that help to make life here better. We are so blessed by such a great community of people who put in so much effort. Well done everyone - keep up the good work!



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.