

# Wantage and Grove STREET PASTORS

Registered Charity 1134429



## Annual report 2020-21

June 2021

*This annual report is based on a financial year rather than calendar year and covers the period April 2020 to March 2021.*

### Thanks to . . .

#### . . . our members

- All members of Wantage and Grove Street Pastors
- members who are SPs (trained or training Street Pastors) or PSVs (Prayer/Support Volunteers), or who pray at other times and places;
- members who make occasional or regular donations
- members who help with events
- members who are our representatives in our partner churches
- members who are trustees

Thank you once again to all those volunteers for your ongoing hard work, flexibility and perseverance whether on the streets, at the base, on the committee, in churches, in prayer at the base or at home and in many other ways. Thank you!

#### . . . our participating churches

Providing people, premises, prayer and financial support are:

- Ss Peter and Paul, Wantage
- Holy Trinity Charlton
- St John Vianney
- Wantage Baptist Church
- Wantage Christian Fellowship
- Wantage Methodist Church
- Wantage Community Church
- St John the Baptist, Grove
- Grove Methodist Church
- Vale Elim Church
- Grove Free Evangelical Church
- St Mary's, Uffington

#### . . . other organisations

Also supporting us with grants and donations were:

- Oxfordshire County Council
- Penuel Trust

# What we achieved

## Caring Listening Helping

We have now been operating on the streets of Wantage and Grove for 11½ years. However, as a result of a national lockdown imposed in March 2020 the trustees decided to suspend patrols in order to protect our volunteers and help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

We recommenced patrols in September 2020, patrolling 13 times before another national lockdown imposed on Boxing Day 2020. Having received reports of young people out in town, we patrolled once in March 2021 as lockdown began to lift.

We hosted two 'online patrols' in March 2021 using Zoom. However, no one from the public joined us for those sessions.

## A challenging year

Coronavirus and subsequent lockdowns have impacted so much of our lives and prevented many of us from doing things we used to do. Not only have we not been able to patrol for much of the year, but we have also had to cancel face-to-face activities such as training, fund-raising and social events.

Of course, pubs and restaurants have been forced to close for much of the last year and, when they have been allowed to open, they have had to drastically change the way they operate at different times. This has included reduced opening hours, advance bookings, table service only, outside service only and socially distant layout etc. All this has affected the number of people out in Wantage and Grove in the evenings. Fewer people, and generally much less inebriated at that, has meant that our Street Pastor teams have had much quieter patrols.

Following the introduction of UK Government's furlough scheme, Trustees gave due consideration to temporarily closing Wantage & Grove Street Pastors and putting our Coordinator (a part-time paid role) on furlough. Trustees decided against this course of action enabling the Coordinator to:

- maintain local contacts (with the police, publicans, etc.) to monitor the development of the COVID-19 situation and respond to local needs
- prepare for restarting patrols. In particular, the preparation of risk assessments and procedures relevant to COVID-19 and to procure appropriate PPE
- respond to the needs of members and volunteers during the pandemic
- complete the reports for the financial year 2019/20 and monthly reports of our activities in February and March.
- support the Trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities, especially as we transition to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

This decision was reviewed on a monthly basis throughout the pandemic bearing in mind that a decision to furlough would have delayed re-starting patrols by at least a month.

## During the pandemic

Although we were not able to patrol, the time was not wasted. As well as attending to the tasks outlined above, our Coordinator carried out a much-needed review of all our documentation and processes including:

- Thames Valley Police Protocol
- Patrol Risk Assessment
- Patrol Guidance Notes for Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Health & Safety Incident Report Form
- Membership and Street Pastor Application forms
- Improvements to our Safeguarding DBS Spreadsheet

A number of our volunteers had to shield for their own sakes or for the sake of family members or those with whom they work (eg. in a care home, etc.), however, we did encourage those that were able to volunteer in other ways within the community to help meet local needs. Some members took on new roles in the community (often on top of other forms of volunteering) and others continued to serve the community as they had done before the pandemic. Some of the ways (that we know of) that our members volunteered are:

- The Ray Collins Charitable Trust Coronavirus Support Group
- A Helping Hand
- The Mix Community Fridge
- Foodbank
- prescription deliveries
- hot meal deliveries
- and shopping for those who have been self-isolating

## Preparing to patrol again

Over the summer we began work on re-starting patrols. This necessitated a significant amount of work to determine how we could safely patrol in accordance with Government guidelines and regulations and how best to implement necessary changes to our practice and procedures.

In preparation for returning to the streets, each of our Street Pastors has been risk assessed with respect to COVID-19 to determine their suitability to patrol. This risk assessment included consideration of the following items:

- Willingness to patrol
- Age
- Shielding
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Spiritual health
- Practical details, such as transport to and from patrols
- Flexibility and availability

This highlighted that a number of our volunteers were not able to return to patrols immediately, which necessarily had an effect on the number of patrols that were able to put on the streets.

A COVID-19 Risk Assessment was developed, taking in to consideration guidance provided by Ascension Trust. We also devised 'Socially Distant Patrols Guidance Notes' for Street Pastors and Senior Street Pastors (team leaders).

### Emergency PPE

We are grateful to Reading Street Pastors for their support and encouragement, especially with respect to what to expect on the streets and for their guidance on PPE for emergency use. We purchased PPE for use in emergencies and trained our Street Pastors in donning and doffing. Street Pastor teams now carry a designated (red) rucksack of emergency PPE for use in life-and-death situations where it is not possible to maintain a 2-metre distance. The PPE comprises:

- Face masks
- Face visor
- Gloves
- PVC apron
- Overshoes

## Changes at Base

As well as devising 'Socially Distant Patrols' we have made changes to the way we use our base (Wantage Baptist Church premises), and how we store and use equipment. Individual items of equipment are sanitised before and after use and items that cannot easily be sanitised (eg. rucksacks and other items) are segregated and left until the following week to prevent spreading the virus. Worktops, door handles and other items are sanitised before, during (as necessary) and after patrols.

We are very grateful to Wantage Baptist Church for their continued support of our ministry and are working with them to ensure that we are able to use their premises safely and in accordance with Government guidelines, regulations and their local risk assessment and operating procedures.

## Award nomination update

As Mayor of Wantage, Major Jim Sibbald nominated us for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). 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.

As part of the nomination, Deputy Lieutenants Jane Cranston and Marion Stevenson visited us in Wantage in October 2019 to audit our work to ensure that we are well run and carry out excellent work. At the end of the audit they informed us that they would be recommending our nomination to the Independent National Assessment Committee, whose job it is to assess all the nominations and provide a shortlist that will go before the Queen for approval. Sadly, we did not receive the award. Sir Martyn Lewis CBE, Chair of the QAVS National Assessment Committee said in a letter to us, "...please convey to your volunteers and our warm appreciation of the excellent work they do and the enormous benefit it represents to the local community. The Award is the highest accolade given to local volunteer groups and your nomination represents a tremendous achievement for your organisation. Everyone involved, and particularly your volunteers, should feel immensely proud of this and we wish you all the best for the future – *particularly in these difficult times when your great community work is needed more than ever!*"

## What changed from the previous year?

**Coronavirus** The Management Committee met on 17 March 2020 and decided to suspend patrols until further notice with the aim of protecting our volunteers and preventing the spread of Coronavirus.

Patrols were re-introduced on 4 September 2020 and ran at reduced capacity until another national lockdown came in to effect on Boxing Day – our last patrol being Friday 18 December, which is sometimes known as 'Black Friday'; the last working day before Christmas. We did not patrol on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve.

In spring, having received information that groups of young people were starting to gather in the early evenings, we patrolled on Saturday 27 March.

**Numbers available** As a result of Government guidance on controlling Coronavirus, many of our Street Pastors and Prayer Support Volunteers were unable to patrol either to protect their own health or the health of family members or those they come in to contact with during their working day.

**Online 'patrols'** With many people struggling due to the effects of lockdown and unable to go out to meet those in need, we hosted two 'online patrols' in March, via the Zoom conferencing software. Using the 'Waiting room' feature, we would be able to chat with one person at a time, a bit like walking down the street, spending as much time as we need with each person. With two Street Pastors on screen and prayer support volunteers a phone call away, we were available for anyone to chat to us for an hour on Saturday 6 March and Thursday 11 March. Events were advertised by Facebook, however no one joined us on those occasions.

Although it's early days, this is something that we would like to continue with, as it could grow to be a valuable way that we, as the local church, connect with and care for those in our community who need a friendly face and someone to talk to.

Perhaps you've thought of training as a Street Pastor but don't fancy being out and about in town – why not join us as a 'Screen Pastor'? Do contact us if this is something that interests you.

**Daytime patrols** We have explored the possibility of running some daytime patrols, however we do not have sufficient numbers of Street Pastors available in the day time. Again, this is something we wish to pursue, so if you could be available in the day time for up to 2 hours monthly, fortnightly or whenever you are able – in either Street Pastor or Prayer Support role, please do contact us for more information.

**Online training** Ascension Trust have developed an online training platform, which has been useful during lockdown to enable some Street Pastors to continue their training. Several courses will continue to be run face-to-face, including Roles & Responsibilities, Police, Knowing Your Community and Refresher Training.

## Who we are

**Teams: SPs and PSVs** We have 16 Street Pastors (10 female, 6 male) who patrol in five teams of mostly three Street Pastors.

We have 12 PSVs (Prayer/Support Volunteers) who mostly work in teams sharing shift times with a Street Pastor team. In addition, a few members have committed to pray for the teams from home and at other times.

**Coordinator and Prayer Coordinator** Nigel Watt is our part-time Coordinator. He manages the rota for patrols, arranges training, liaises with key stakeholders and other organisations, attends to most of our communications with Ascension Trust and with other Street Pastor initiatives in the area. He also writes reports and deals with much of our administration.

We continue to look for someone to take on the role of Senior Prayer Partner. If you are passionate about prayer and would like more information about the role, please do contact us.

**Trustees** The trustees (five at present) meet with the Coordinator monthly as the Management Committee for the work.

More about the trustees later in relation to the charity, on page 7.

## Contact and connect

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E: [wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:wantageandgrove@streetpastors.org.uk)

W: [wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk](http://wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk)

F: [facebook.com/wantageandgrovestreetpastors](https://facebook.com/wantageandgrovestreetpastors)

## On the streets in numbers

Who and when	2020-21	[2019-20]
Street Pastors	16 6 male, 10 female	16
PSVs	12	13
Monthly patrols	14 Reduced hours based on pub opening and closing times at different times throughout the year.	53
Other patrols	0	2
Nights out	14 6 Fridays, 8 Saturdays	55
Street Pastor hours	121	836

  

Types of encounter	Male	Female	Total	[2019-20]
Significant conversations (from a few minutes to an hour or more)	under 13 years	0	0	
	13 - 17 years	5	12	17
	18 - 25 years	18	14	32
	over 25 years	38	17	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>104</b>
Incidents classed as “supporting vulnerable people” — direct assistance given to vulnerable people			0	52
Incidents classed as “calming aggressive situations” — eg defusing potential fights			1	11
Flip-flops (pairs)			0	46
Lollipops			40 (estimated)	3,215

## The charity

**Members** Wantage and Grove Street Pastors is a member organisation; all our regular volunteers are members of the charity, and there are other members who help, donate or take an interest in other ways. At present we have 141 members (but see below as to why this has reduced since last year). One of the privileges and duties of the members generally is to attend the AGM and elect the trustees.

**Trustees** At least three of our members must be voluntary trustees, and we aim for the most allowed which is seven. At present the seven trustees are:

Michael Elliott, Wantage Community Church (Treasurer)

Marj Lunn, Wantage Baptist Church (Secretary)

Stephen West, Wantage Parish Church

Hilary Moore, Wantage Baptist Church

Sarah Goodall, Vale Elim Church

The trustees meet monthly, mostly with the Coordinator and as the Management Committee, normally with the leader of one of the participating church communities and three times a year with as many of the church reps as are able to attend.

Trustees are elected or re-elected at the AGM, and may also be appointed by the existing trustees at any other time.

## What changed from the previous year?

**Movements** Dave Coombs resigned as Chair and as a Trustee in October. Michael Elliott has since stepped in chairing Committee Meetings whilst we have not had a chair.

**Quarterly News** In January 2020 we published our first edition of Quarterly News, an A4 colour news sheet. This is something we have wanted to do for some time to bridge the gap between our monthly and annual reports and to help communicate all the good things going on in Wantage and Grove Street Pastors to a slightly broader audience. Issues are available on the News page of our website: [bit.ly/wgsp-news](http://bit.ly/wgsp-news)

**CIO Progress** The trustees' aspiration to change WGSP status from an *Unincorporated Group* to a *Charitable Incorporated Organisation* under the *Foundation Model* has been endorsed by the WGSP members who attended the last AGM in October 2020. We have agreed to accept the proposed constitution and licence agreement offered by Ascension Trust (AT) and will shortly be forwarding the necessary documentation to AT for them to carry through the process of applying to set up the CIO with the Charities Commission. The main advantage to us as an organisation is that WGSP will become a legal entity able to enter into contracts and that financial liability will fall onto the organisation rather than the trustees as individuals.

**Friends** At our 2020 AGM we voted to create 'Friend' as a category of engagement with Wantage & Grove Street Pastors for those who wish to connect with us and who do not attend a local church or do not wish to become Members. This could include people in the local community or organisations and those who move out of the area.

Members who have moved away were contacted at the beginning of 2020 and, after a period of notice, have transferred to being Friends.

## Trustee responsibilities

As well as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, trustees take on different roles and responsibilities within the Management Committee. These include: grant applications, fundraising, event management, health & safety, safeguarding, recruitment, publicity & social media and liaison with other organisations, among other things.

## Events

**AGM** We held our AGM on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October and 18 members were present. In line with COVID-19 guidance the meeting was held via Zoom. Our Chair, Dave Coombs and Deputy Chair, Helen Carter, who also led our fundraising activities did not stand for re-election and a request was made for nominations for these posts. We are very grateful for all the hard work put in by both Dave and Helen – thank you!

Members were updated on proposals to change the legal structure from an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and this was unanimously agreed. It was also proposed that we create a second category of supporter for Wantage & Grove Street Pastors called *Friend* to cover people who have moved away from the area or left a supporting church but still want to be kept informed of our activities. This was also unanimously agreed.

**Fundraising** Due to various lockdowns, plans for fundraising events were put on hold until such a time as we are able to physically gather together in large groups.

**Street Pastor Sundays** Street Pastor Sundays were put on hold during 2020 although we did release a short video in September for our partner churches to either use as part of their online meetings or send to their fellowship electronically. The video is available here: [bit.ly/WGSP-Sept2020](https://bit.ly/WGSP-Sept2020)

## Community involvement

**Community Alcohol Partnership** Wantage & Grove Street Pastors is a member of the Wantage & Grove Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP), which seeks to reduce underage drinking and the anti-social behaviour that so often goes with it. The project is managed by South & Vale District Councils and our coordinator is chair of the local group meetings. The CAP hasn't met during the pandemic.



**Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)** Wantage and Grove Street Pastors is a member of the local Neighbourhood Action Group, a multi-agency, problem-solving group that includes local partner agencies, key stakeholders and, most importantly, members of the local community. Meetings have been held on Zoom, which has enabled us to continue to respond to the needs of our communities.



**Missing People** From time to time we receive information about missing people who may be in our area. We also receive advice and support both for us, in the event that we meet a missing person, and for those missing individuals.



**Friend of Sweatbox** It has been a challenging year for Sweatbox with much of their activity going online. Friends of Sweatbox have not met this year.



**Friend of YoCO** Youth Challenge Oxfordshire (YoCO) is a charity that supports young people, aged 14 to 21, enabling them to overcome challenges in their lives by developing resilience, confidence and mental well-being. Street Pastors often get to know young people in our community and we are able to refer anyone that might benefit from this service. The pandemic and lockdown have prevented the Wantage YoCO from starting since its launch here in January 2020, although they hope to commence in July 2021.



**PubWatch** PubWatch meets quarterly and it has been invaluable in getting to know local landlords and understanding some of the issues they face, especially with respect to antisocial behaviour and damage to property. During the year PubWatch has used What's App to communicate, with one face-to-face meeting in the run up to pubs reopening in September 2020.



**Other Street Pastor Initiatives** Street Pastor initiatives in our region share training events, best practice and resources. Coordinators meet together twice a year to organise a training programme, share news from our areas and to support and encourage each other. The group includes, Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Burghfield Common (School Pastors), Newbury, Oxford, Reading, Wallingford, Wantage and Grove, and Witney.

## Looking ahead

**Goals for 2021/22** Each year our Management Committee sets goals to help focus our efforts and to ensure that we continue to serve our community well. Our 2021/22 goals are centred around delivering patrols, finances and relationships, as well as returning to operations following the Covid-19 lockdown.

Our Goals are:

### Delivering Patrols:

- Reinstate helping, caring, listening to support our communities in a safe way within government guidelines for COVID-19
- Increase the number of Street Pastor and Prayer Support volunteers
- Hold Street Pastor Sundays (online if necessary) in each of the participating churches • Pursue on-line patrols & daytime patrols

### Finance:

- Secure funding to cover our costs

### Relationships:

- Complete the transition of WGSP into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Recruit new Trustees, particularly Chair and Fundraising Lead

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. God 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 welcome 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, either physically or by video link. 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.

**Recruitment** Having been founded by the churches of Wantage and Grove, our volunteers are the Christian community that worship locally. Over recent years we have sought to engage with the local churches and hold Street Pastor Sundays when we are able to share some of the stories of how Street Pastors have helped vulnerable people and to encourage individuals to support our work by volunteering, praying or giving.

These *Street Pastor Sundays* and other events arranged to raise WGSP profile are the main means of recruiting volunteers.

During the year we have gained 13 new members, 2 of whom have applied to be Street Pastors and a further 3 people who would like to become Street Pastors and are in the process of applying. We didn't recruit any Prayer Support Volunteers during 2019/20.

**Other churches** We will continue to arrange for some of the village church communities of the area to participate on the same basis as those actually in Wantage or Grove; that is, for people of those communities to become members and volunteers.

**Friends** We wish to create a new way for people to connect with us; for anyone that supports what we do and wants to be updated regularly on our work. This could be for individuals or organisations for whom membership is not appropriate. We would call these people *friends*. Friends would not have any voting privileges nor be able to volunteer as Street Pastors or Prayer Support Volunteers, but could be encouraged to support in other practical and/or financial ways.

We propose that anyone that has moved out of the area or who no longer meets the criteria for membership, be transferred from being a member to being a friend.

This matter will be formally proposed and dealt with at the 2020 AGM in October.

# Finances

## Income and expenditure

We ended the 2020-21 financial year with a deficit of £1,787 compared with a surplus of £3,329 in the previous financial year.

The table on the following page summarises our income and expenditure.

## Grant income

Our income from grants fell from that received last year. This was partly due to one -off gifts received last year and also Covid-19. The grant of £2,500 from Oxfordshire County Council was lower than last year because it was only paid when we were patrolling. We also received some smaller but welcome grants from other supporters of WGSP

## Donation income

Covid-19 restrictions reduced the income from individual supporters as we were unable to hold fundraising events or visit our supporting churches.

However, we are grateful to those supporters who give by standing order (18 in total) who have maintained their giving at the same level as last year.

Income from collection boxes has also reduced as the venues where they were located have been closed for much of the year. Collection box locations around Wantage and Grove include:



*Cornerstone, Grove  
The King's Centre, Wantage  
The Swan  
The Blue Boar and  
The Kings Arms public houses in Wantage*

We are grateful for the continuing support we receive from members, the public and charitable bodies, especially at this time when many are experiencing reductions in their income together with greater demands on available charitable funds. Our work continues to be recognised and valued at all levels within the community. Thank you!

## Financial overview

Income		2020-21	2019-20
<b>SP training contributions</b>	Uniform and training fees from new Street Pastors	0	0
<b>Church support</b>	GFEC, Wantage Methodist, Wantage Christian Fellowship	2,870	2,637
<b>Grants</b>	Oxfordshire County Council, Penue! Trust	2,900	8,090
<b>From individuals</b>	18 standing orders, and one-off donations	3,350	4,118
<b>Events</b>	None	0	2,191
<b>Collecting boxes</b>	Cornerstone, Kings Centre and various pubs	134	276
<b>Gift aid recovery</b>		629	521
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		0	0
<b>Total income</b>		<b>£9,883</b>	<b>£17,833</b>
Expenditure		2019-20	2019-20
<b>Staff costs</b>	Salary and related	9,629	9,305
<b>Cost of fundraising</b>		250	962
<b>Training and safeguarding</b>	SP training and safeguarding checks	38	310
<b>Operating costs</b>	Covid-19 related kit, flip-flops and lollipops, refreshments for those on duty, kit, mobile 'phone top-ups, printing, etc.	512	1,410
<b>Ascension Trust fee</b>	15% of income (except OCC grant) paid to Ascension Trust	1,173	2,456
<b>Bank charges</b>	Bank charges £5 per month	69	60
<b>Insurance</b>	Additional premium for SP's over 80 years of age	0	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>£11,671</b>	<b>£14,503</b>
<b>Closing bank balance</b>		<b>£15,437</b>	<b>£17,225</b>

**Note:**  
**Reserves policy** To maintain reserves of half our annual cost of operations.