



# Wantage and Grove STREET PASTORS

## Quarterly News

JAN  
2024



Paul Gander  
Chair

A new year has arrived! With this new year and new season there are always opportunities to step into something different. At Street Pastors we have been delighted with the new initiative with our Online Social Networker that we embarked upon just over a year ago. This has meant that our messages and name has spread to more people and especially to young people who are venturing out into the night time economy.

This year our focus for Street Pastors is for Afternoon Patrols, just this week in January the leading article in the Wantage Herald was about girls not feeling safe when they are out and about. We want to respond to the needs of the town and be a presence on the streets on Friday afternoons. I am personally getting involved in this new initiative and hope that others will come and join me as we seek to listen, to help, to care and to be a reassuring presence for young people on the streets.

Blessings!

*... 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew Ch 25 v 40*

## How we helped on the streets

A member of the public alerted us to an incident in Wantage town centre. Street Pastors attended and found a young woman being comforted by her friend. The upset lady had been in an argument with a man who appeared to be part of their friendship group. Street Pastors were able to bring calm to the situation and put a little distance between the two parties. Later in the evening we saw that the friendship had been restored and all was well between them.

Street Pastors met a young man who was homeless and had slept on the streets for 4 nights. Being the beginning of a very cold spell, we attempted to find emergency accommodation for him. The Police joined us and also attempted to find somewhere for the man to stay, unsuccessfully. We used our mobile power pack to put some charge into the man's phone. He was able to call a friend and arrange to sleep in their shed for the night. We gave him some soup,

snacks, a jumper and a pair of gloves to help keep him warm.

Street Pastors were out and about on New Year's Eve in Wantage. Apart from a few scuffles it was mostly a peaceful night that the Street Pastors enjoyed. As one scuffle began to break out Street Pastors decided to offer lollies in an attempt to calm things down - and amazingly, it worked!



For more information on how we helped, check out our Reports page on our website:  
[www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk](http://www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk)

## Online Networker

Sky Shoemark has been working with us as our Online Networker for just over a year. Through regular posts on social media Sky has helped us grow our following on Facebook and has achieved good followings with new accounts on Instagram and TikTok. Posts include pictures and videos of our Street Pastors out and about, helpful information such as taxi telephone numbers and thoughts on how to stay safe out at night. Of course, the best way to find out what's going on is to follow us (see over)!

We recently renewed Sky's contract for another year and look forward to seeing more people connect with us and support our work in the coming year.

*Thank you Sky!*

## County Lines Training

Several of our Street Pastors recently attended 'County Lines' training in Wallingford.

County Lines criminals target children, young people or vulnerable adults, often getting them involved in drug gangs or using them to transport drugs to different places. Sarah Shewring attended the training. She was surprised just how easily people get ensnared and said, "It raises the need for us all to be vigilant in our communities to safeguard the most vulnerable from abuse".



## Curry & Quiz Night

A huge thank you to everyone who put in so much work towards our Curry & Quiz Night last November, from those who cooked curries, to those who set up the room, welcomed the guests, served the food, hosted the quiz; to those who tidied up after and counted the money! Talking of counting money, they counted a whopping £762.88. So, thank you to all our quiz teams too. And we hope to see you for another Curry & Quiz Night later this year.



NOVEMBER

Saturday

23

### Curry & Quiz Night 2024

Get it in your diary now, so you don't miss out!

**Saturday 23 November 2024**

Watch this space for more details!

### Spring Get Together - Sunday 19 May 2024

Another date for your diary is our Spring Get Together on 19 May 2024. More details coming soon!

## Interview with Andy Smith

Andy Smith has served as a Street Pastor since our beginning in 2009. He hung up his cap for the last time in January 2023 but at our July AGM he decided to stand as a Trustee.

**What made you decide to be a Street Pastor all those years ago?** While visiting a friend's church in Nottingham, we saw a presentation on Street Pastors. We were hooked! When Wantage and Grove Street Pastors began, friends said, "you'll be good at this Andy" as I worked in a prison with teenagers. Put it that way, there was no excuse; so I joined.

**What will you miss?** The fellowship of Christians from different churches. Chatting with people and helping them on the streets. Crawling into bed at 4am on a Sunday morning – ready to be at church at 9.15!

**Tell us about one of the most memorable moments:** We were chatting to some lads in Betjeman Park. They went off to get a bus in the Market Place. We discovered one had left his wallet. We went to the bus stop and reunited one very happy young man with his wallet, now he could get home. Job done!

**What advice would you give to someone thinking of becoming a street pastor?** Pray before and during patrols. Be prepared for all types of weather! Accept compliments with humility; drunken conversation with patience. Don't ever argue, no matter the subject. Share your faith when asked, "why do you do this?" Stand well back from potential or actual violent situations'.

**What made you decide to stand as a Trustee?** Now I'm 'retired' from the streets, (in the dry and warm), I felt I could still serve God through Street Pastors and become a trustee.

It's faithful individuals like Andy who keep Wantage & Grove Street Pastors on the streets of Wantage and Grove serving God by serving people. *Well done Andy!*



## CIO Progress

At our AGM in October 2020, our members agreed to go ahead with changing our charitable status to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Three years later and the first steps are complete in that Wantage and Grove Street Pastors now exists as a CIO registered with the Charity Commission on 6 November 2023 (Registration number 1205598).



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Trustees will set up a working group to plan and implement the next steps, which will include opening a bank account, transferring employees and assets, and updating documents, resources and publicity materials. The final step will be to close the current charity (number 1134429).

If you are interested in helping with this activity, please do contact us (see below).

MAY

Sunday

19

## Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

**Website:** [www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk](http://www.wantageandgrove.streetpastors.org.uk)

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**TikTok:** [wantage\\_grove\\_pastors](https://tiktok.com/wantage_grove_pastors)

**Registered Charity:** 1134429

**Supported by grants from**  
Oxfordshire County Council  
TVP PCC Community Fund  
Wantage Town Council  
Grove Parish Council

*Thank you*

To all our supporters!



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.