



# Newsletter

## Autumn/Winter 2016

### Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter

Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy continues to operate very effectively under God every day. We have ministries all over the town and I could not begin to tell you of the amazing work all our fifteen chaplains are doing: I just see God working through these people.

Whenever we hit a problem, when we have running costs to find, we have trusted and He provides. I want to thank all the churches and individuals who are supporting us both financially and in prayer.

BTC has coped with some changes over the years and we now have a challenge to meet as our founding member, Mandy Bowskill, has retired as Lead Chaplain, after six years. We recognise how the Chaplaincy has grown under Mandy's gentle leadership and I want to pay tribute to Mandy for picking up the vision for the Chaplaincy and running with it with total and complete commitment. As Chair of the Trustee Board our work has been made so much easier with Mandy at the helm and our deepest thanks go to her for all the work she has done to build up the Chaplaincy. We are certainly going to miss her leadership, but as she has agreed to become a Trustee, we will still be able to benefit from her wealth of experience and wisdom.

We will see what 2017 brings us and how the Chaplaincy will develop in our lovely town, not least as we now seek a new Lead Chaplain. We know that the right person will step forward, but it will be in God's time!

I wish everyone connected with us and who reads our newsletter a very joyful Christmas and an exciting New Year in 2017.



**Cllr Nigel Pierce**  
Chair of Trustees

### Our prayer requests for 2017:

- ◇ That God will provide the right person to be our new Lead Chaplain.
- ◇ That God will sustain the Chaplaincy during this period without a Lead Chaplain.
- ◇ That God will provide more Chaplains so...
- ◇ That we will be able to offer chaplaincy to more venues within the town. (If you know of somewhere that needs a Chaplain, please let us know.)
- ◇ That we will be able to continue to pay our rent and our Administrator, Libby Ham.
- ◇ That we may increase our income, enabling us to raise our profile and to fund a paid Lead Chaplain.

### A View From Two of Our Trustees

When we were approached to see if we would like to become Trustees of The Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy, we were eager to find out more about what the Chaplaincy actually did and were surprised at the breadth of activities undertaken by them.

The service they offer as part of their Christian ministry is not however just for other Christians. Indeed they offer a supporting ear and a hand of friendship to everyone and are well recognised in our town. They each have specific areas within our town known as their "patch" and it is through regular visits that they forge these important relationships. We have been privileged to hear about the work that they do at our Trustee

meetings and also at the monthly prayer meeting and we have witnessed first-hand the high esteem shops hold them in, having been in a particular shop when one of the chaplains was doing a regular visit.

They share a common aim to make Christ known to everyone, and within the context of their weekly visits they may get the opportunity to speak about spiritual matters and offer to pray for those they are talking to.

On a personal level as well as officially, as members of the Board of Trustees, we want to see this work continue and develop. We actively pray for our Town Chaplaincy daily and pray that the love of our Lord Jesus will be reflected in this work and that it will continue to be blessed. What a fantastic service they offer to

our town... Not just the shopping centre and local businesses, but also places such as a Doctor's surgery and our local Police Station to name but two! Finally we are actively praying for more churches to be involved in this unique ministry. Currently there are fifteen Chaplains working in Basingstoke, but with more Chaplains, more could be done to support the people of Basingstoke. Could you be part of this fantastic team...? May God continue to bless this ministry



**Martin and Liz Perry**  
Trustees

## A Chaplain's View

I started as a Chaplain back in April this year. I hadn't really intended being a Town Centre Chaplain. I'd had one previous experience of chaplaincy (hospital)—and pretty much felt like a fish-out-of-water for the whole time. Chaplaincy feels outside my comfort zone. It's not really my 'thing'. So I was all ready to say 'no' to the person who had asked whether I would consider being a chaplain. Except... I happened to be thinking about this when driving in my car one night, listening to a track on a Christian CD. I have no idea which track it was. All I know is, at that precise moment, I heard lyrics that were along the lines of: if you don't tell them, how are they going to hear? Good point. It felt like a 'nudge' from God. So I said 'yes'. I ended up on the top level of Festival Place, with my 'patch' being from the slope by Laura Ashley, up to the top, and everything between Debenhams and what will be the new Next.

For me, Challenge Number One of being a Chaplain is simply remembering people's names. There are twenty-five units that I visit, usually spending one morning a week on the patch. I've spoken to well over 150 different staff members in that time. Some I may see only once or twice—maybe they don't usually work on the days that I tend to go in, or usually work on a different shift, or only stay for a short length of time. Shops may have a large number of members of staff, only a handful of whom are

full-time. There are probably around 60 people I see on a regular basis (though that may be once a week or once a month). For me, trying to remember their names and details of their lives that they have shared with me is a challenge! Relationships, for me, grow out of those remembered details and remembered names.

Challenge Number Two is to remain prayerful and open to God's Spirit as I go around. Which member of staff should I speak to today? How can I show care for them and take an interest in them? Is what they're telling me something that I can offer to pray for? For much of the time for me, being a Chaplain is about being a friendly face, and being a regular presence. And it is out of those things that opportunities arise from time to time, often out of the blue, to talk about spiritual matters, to share about Jesus, to offer to pray, or to actually pray with someone, then and there. And that is a huge privilege and joy.

Not that it's always easy. There is sometimes a feeling of being deliberately avoided - but that is quite rare. But the Chaplain's uniform gives us a right to be there and an identity that is the starting point for initial conversations. The rest is by the grace of God!



**Corinne Brixton**  
Chaplain

### Statistics May to August 2016

Conversations with people can be about anything, but often there is something specific and significant they need to talk about.

The Chaplains have supported people with issues ranging from work and health to family and relationships, faith and loneliness.

<b>Significant Conversations</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Chaplain Hours</b>	<b>592</b>
<b>Lead Chaplain Hours</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>761</b>

### Places the Chaplains Visit

- ◇ Festival Place and The Malls including Debenhams, Boots, Sainsbury's, Wilkinson and Superdrug
- ◇ The Library and CAB
- ◇ Restaurants and Eateries in Festival Square, and the Cinema
- ◇ The Sports Centre
- ◇ The Bus Station
- ◇ Top of Town including Market Traders
- ◇ The Council Offices
- ◇ The Police Station
- ◇ Age Concern at Church Cottage
- ◇ Oasis Café at the United Reformed Church
- ◇ Matrix House
- ◇ Asda at Brighton Hill
- ◇ BCoT
- ◇ Car Boot Sales at the Vyne School
- ◇ Multi-faith Forum at Chute House
- ◇ Gillies Health Centre
- ◇ The Bus Maintenance Depot at Houndmills

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