



**Basingstoke
Town
Chaplaincy**

Newsletter

Spring 2016

Welcome to our Newsletter for Spring!

Firstly I would like to give a BIG thank you to God and to all churches and individuals who have given sacrificially to our funds particularly over 2015 which has enabled us to remain in our offices in Festival Place. Your generosity is amazing and we thank you. At present we have enough money to pay for our rent until after Easter, so Praise the Lord with us!

We celebrated our fifth birthday last September and we are grateful to the URC church for hosting our celebrations, and to the Mayor, our MP and Bishop of Basingstoke for attending and helping us celebrate! What a wonderful testimony to the way God is leading us.

Bob and Mandy Bowskill along with others are also founding members of ATCC (Alliance of Town and City Chaplaincies) and are using their expertise and knowledge to help, support and encourage other towns nationwide to set up chaplaincies in their area.

In Basingstoke we currently have 17 volunteer chaplains. They give their time to visit businesses throughout the Town centre and other places of work around the town, chatting with folk, bringing God's love into situations and, where appropriate, talking about the Christian faith. We also have a big

pastoral role and, as you will see from the statistics, help many people who find themselves in need of a listening ear. Very often the people we meet would never darken the door of a church or even contemplate bringing God into the situation, but we do help to turn hearts to the spiritual aspect of life and we know we make a difference! We don't offer counselling but direct people to agencies which might help, and even offer to accompany them if they would like support.

Our office plays a vital role in being a central base for the Chaplains and a neutral space for pastoral conversations when appropriate. We are grateful to the owners of Festival Place that we are allowed to remain in the centre of Town.

There are so many more workplaces where the Chaplaincy could make a difference, if only we had the people in place. So if God is calling you to step out for Him, please don't hesitate, He has just the right opening for you!

Mandy Bowskill
Lead Chaplain



A Chaplain's View

One particular encouragement in the past year was a series of conversations, over a period of weeks, that I had with a Cambridge University Student who was temping in one of the shops. He was genuinely interested in raising some challenging questions, but honest and open to listen too. His responses were often followed up with other searching questions ranging from creation to the meaning of life. We didn't reach any final conclusions when he had to return to University, but I gave him a copy of Nicky Gumble's 'Why Jesus' booklet which he promised to read, and said as we parted... 'that I could test him on it next time!' Very encouraging to see God working in the lives of young people.

Tim Sanders
Chaplain



Message from Chief Inspector Simon Dodds

"I would like on behalf of the staff and officers of Hampshire Constabulary working in Basingstoke to say a huge thank you for the work the Chaplaincy undertakes in both the community and our workplace.

It is a sad fact that much of our own work is dealing with people when they are at a real low point of their lives, and some of the challenges we

face and things we see as police officers can have a profound and lasting effect on us. Add to that juggling busy home and family lives and there's a recipe for self destruction.

But I have seen first hand the benefits of my officers having that listening ear, somebody to share their thoughts with, as well as that all important opportunity to stop for a laugh and a smile.

At the bottom of the Chaplaincy's crest are the words 'supporting our community'; that you most certainly do, and I would like to finish by extending my utmost gratitude for the time you give up to help us maintain our focus and strength in keeping the communities of Basingstoke safe."

Chief Inspector Simon Dodds
Basingstoke & Deane District Commander

A word from the Director of Festival Place

“We welcomed the Chaplaincy into Festival Place a number of years ago now with an idea that this would be a useful addition to the facilities of the centre, but were really no clearer than that as to the benefits that may be provided. It soon became apparent that this was a very well organised, dedicated and outward looking organisation that was keen to work in partnership with the wider Basingstoke community. In addition to this they were keen to understand shopping centres better and the unique needs that this type of environment has - I'm sure we've added many headaches as to our paperwork requirements! But by working and listening together I think we have forged a very positive, proactive and friendly relationship that has proved beneficial to both organisations.

Part of the role that the Chaplaincy takes on is a relationship with the people working within the shops. Within Festival Place there are approximately 3000 employees which must be a daunting task to keep on top of. On many occasions I have been aware that the Chaplaincy has stepped in and helped individuals with a kind ear and sound words of encouragement. And sometimes they have done much, much more than this.

Basingstoke is very fortunate in having a facility like the Chaplaincy that is based in the heart of the town centre, that really believes in people and helping everyone of all denominations, that is a positive addition to what we offer and does all of this with such a high degree of professionalism and care.

Finally, I would like to mention Mandy, Bob and all the Volunteers. They are the heart of the organisation and without them and their personal dedication the successes that have been achieved would not have been as successful or so deeply felt.”

Steven Connolly
Centre Director,
Festival Place



Statistics July to December 2016

Conversations with people can be about anything, but often there is something specific they need to talk about. The Chaplains have supported people with issues ranging from work and health to family and relationships, faith and loneliness.

Significant Conversations	708
Chaplain Hours	873
Lead Chaplain Hours	306
Total Hours	1179

Our needs for 2016 :

To continue to pay our rent and our Administrator, Libby Ham.

To increase our income, enabling us to raise our profile and to fund a paid Lead Chaplain.

To find a replacement for the Lead Chaplain role as Mandy retires.

To recruit more chaplains (2 hours once a fortnight is all we ask).

To be able to offer chaplaincy to more venues within the town. If you know of somewhere that needs a chaplain, please let us know.

To increase awareness amongst local churches of the benefits of having chaplains in the congregation.

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