



# Newsletter

## Spring - Summer 2017

### Welcome to our Newsletter for Spring and Summer!

It may come as no surprise to some that I am back in the role of Acting Lead Chaplain after my "retirement" last year. Chaplaincy is in my blood and so together with my husband Bob, who is also a Chaplain, we decided that until a replacement can be found to lead the Chaplaincy into the future we would "job share" in order that the Chaplaincy might be compliant and continue to serve our town. This is not ideal and it probably does not mean we are going to volunteer to do this forever! We would both like to "retire" soon and do some of the things we've been putting off for a while.

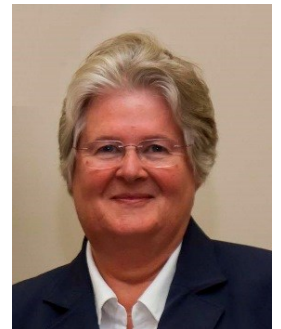
So come on, those with a heart for our Town, come and join in with a great bunch of people who need

someone with vision and drive to take the Chaplaincy into the future.

You have already heard it said that we are an appreciated and trusted agency in the town and we are encouraged by local businesses and stake-holders to continue to offer a service to the community. We are committed to doing this, and as the opportunities grow we need to grow with them. So, we need more volunteer chaplains! Why not come and have a chat? Your town needs you!

**Mandy Bowskill**

Acting Lead Chaplain



### Recent News

- Our Trustees have negotiated a new lease with Festival Place which means we now have the offices for another 3 years from November 2016.
- The Trustees have also managed to negotiate a reduction in the rent we pay for our offices in Paddington House. This will allow us to devote more of our income to serving our Community.
- We welcome Peter MacPherson who has joined the Chaplaincy as a Trustee.

### A Chaplain's View

As an older man, troubled with weak joints, I am not able to walk for long around the shops and businesses in Festival Place, but I'm grateful that God has given me the privilege to be used as a Chaplain with Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy. I can spend time, as I sit, talking, helping, or praying with folk I meet most weeks in the URC's Oasis Café, or in the Age Concern Café.

Early morning in the Oasis Café is often quiet and I may wonder why I'm there, but trade usually picks up from mid-morning and I can meet several people. Some are URC church folk who have come in for a mid-morning cup of coffee or a midday

meal, but I have also spent time and got to know other particularly needy men, with whom I have been able to speak more regularly, talking and sometimes praying with them. In the Age Concern Café, which meets in Church Cottage, the numbers of folk coming in for coffee are usually larger and more varied, with a number of regular visitors with whom I can begin to build a relationship and, occasionally, pray with them.

It is a real privilege to be able to befriend these people, to be able to speak with some who have fallen on really hard times, to some others who have been recently bereaved, to an elderly lady blinded by macular degeneration who can just make out shadows, to others caring for

relatives suffering with dementia - to mention just a few. These are all folk who need the opportunity to talk with someone who will sit and listen to them, who see my uniform and come to chat with me, and with whom I can share my own story and what Jesus means to me.

As a Chaplain God has given me a fulfilling occupation and I'm thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve Him.

**Alan Casebow**  
Chaplain



## View from a New Chaplain

I had been considering three very different things to do in my spare time and Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy kept coming to the fore. I am not ordained, just a foot soldier, and the decision took time to make. I kept bumping into Mandy, Lead Chaplain, and wondered, prayed and felt strongly that this is what God wants me to do.

I started as a Chaplain in September 2016, so I am the new girl. My 'patch' is the lower ground floor in Festival Place from Santander Bank to Next (although not including Next).

After a couple of months I wondered why the Santander Bank did not have a visit from a Chaplain. I happened to meet the Manager of the Bank one day and asked him why this was so. He offered a meeting which Bob and I attended. The outcome was positive and we were invited to go back to a staff meeting to do a presentation to the staff about what a Chaplain does. This went well and I was invited straight away to call in on the Bank each week. So now I am getting to know the staff, which is slow work as they are always so busy.

I am pleased that some staff wear name badges as there are so many people in the 20+ units I visit. Most of the staff in the shops are very welcoming; however, some look

quite worried and turn away from me. Maybe they think that I am going to get the Bible out and start preaching. If they haven't retreated to the stockroom and have time I try and explain that I am just supporting them, a listening ear, visiting them and that I actually care for them.

It has been slow building up trust and it is a real privilege to meet the staff, hear problems – sometimes quite alarming - but also share the joys of their family news and holidays. Some have agreed to me praying.

I appreciate that retail workers all work long hours for not a great wage, but they are cheerful and friendly. I was very pleased that one day when I was shopping on my 'patch' and out of uniform I was recognised and had quite a long chat with the staff. I also chat and signpost to the shoppers. Hopefully soon I will add John Lewis and Waitrose to my patch. I am very excited about this.

We need more Chaplains as there are so many places in the town we are not visiting. I am very proud to wear my Chaplain's uniform and be part of Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy.



**Tricia Williamson**  
Chaplain

## Statistics for 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.

The Chaplains don't have targets but they do make a difference.

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Significant Conversations | 1734 |
| Chaplain Hours            | 1834 |
| Lead Chaplain Hours       | 448  |
| Total Hours               | 2282 |

## Our needs for 2017:

To find a replacement for the Lead Chaplain role .

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

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 understanding amongst churches of the purpose of Chaplaincy and the benefits it brings to the local community and also to the churches themselves.

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

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