



Newsletter

Spring - Summer 2018

Welcome to our Newsletter for Spring and Summer 2018!

Since we last wrote – was it really a year ago? – there has been a lot to thank God for in the work of the Chaplaincy.

We continue with all the regular visiting, listening to and encouraging the folk with whom we come into contact. Most areas of the town centre, The Malls, Festival Place and the Top of Town are covered, plus, of course, several other locations – the Police Station at Viables, ASDA etc. The faithful commitment of the Chaplains is very humbling! Some of the stories that emerge from conversations are amazing and exciting. Please do pray for those in this encouraging ministry.

There are also exciting new areas of ministry that have begun or are on the horizon.

In January, we started to provide Chaplaincy in the Law Courts in Basingstoke. We provide a listening ear to all Court users – Court staff, probation staff, security and, not least of course, those who are there to appear before either the Magistrates or a Judge, along with their family and supporters and witnesses, too. The feedback we have received from the Court management and other users is very encouraging indeed and the Chaplains involved, whilst initially feeling a little daunted by the prospect, are realising how valuable is the service they provide. At present, we are covering two sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays and both we and the Courts would like to do more. But to do that we shall need MORE CHAPLAINS!

The other exciting development is that we are preparing to start a project to provide Platform Pastors at Basingstoke Railway Station. We have had conversations with the Senior Management of South Western Railway, the Train Operating Company which recently took over the franchise, and the Railway Mission. British Transport Police are also supportive of this. It will require much planning and training and we would hope to start in the Summer. But to do that we shall need MORE CHAPLAINS!

Finally, a word of thanks to all involved in the work of the Chaplaincy – Chaplains, Trustees, Administrator, Donors and Supporters – your importance to the work cannot be over-estimated. Thank you!

Blessings!

Bob Bowskill
Chair of Trustees



The Team!



Obituary

Sadly, we have to report the recent death of our former Chair of Trustees, Cllr Nigel Pierce.

Nigel brought vast experience of all kinds for our benefit, over the years he served, and we shall miss him greatly. We thank God for him and send our condolences, love and prayers to his family.



Chaplaincy at Basingstoke Law Courts

Discussions about the possibility of a team of Chaplains visiting the Basingstoke Magistrates Court began nearly two years ago. Reports from other Chaplaincies in Luton, Winchester and Salisbury were that chaplaincy teams were working extremely well in their respective courts. Having visited some of these to see how they worked, it was felt it would be good if we could do the same in Basingstoke. However, initial thoughts were that as a Chaplaincy (BTC) we did not have enough Chaplains to be able to form a viable team. It was important first and foremost therefore to pray and ask the Lord to lead and guide in this matter and for him to show us what to do.

Since that time the Lord has answered prayers in the most amazing ways. Little did we know that the Law Courts themselves had also seen the benefits of having such Chaplains serving amongst them. So after various positive discussions and meetings in 2017 the Courts invited Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy to provide a Chaplaincy service from the beginning of January this year. The initial aim was to commit to two days each week and see how it progressed.

A small team of six of us now visit the courts on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9.30 to 1.00 pm. (the team consists of Pam, Dave, Sandy, Tim, Shelagh and Bob). It is a wonderful opportunity to have a real presence as Chaplains in such an official public space. Not only can we talk to people who have been summoned to court, but

those attending are frequently accompanied by friends or family members. There is usually a lot of waiting time, and experience so far has shown that many are willing to talk and that they appreciate our care and interest in them. We are there primarily to listen, to show love and support. Some come to the courts anxious and nervous. Some are remorseful and scared. Others, for whom it is not their first offence, may show more outward resilience, even toughness! But in all cases so far we have been courteously received. We have also been hugely encouraged by the acceptance and welcome received from the staff, especially the ushers, solicitors, security, probation staff and others. It is good to have the opportunity to be amongst them and talking with them too.

We have had numerous and significant conversations with many people, and there have occasionally been opportunities to accompany individuals into the court or to meetings with their solicitor. Sign-posting, help with form filling and prayer have been other practical ways we have been able to support people. It is an enormous privilege to have this opportunity and to sense God's hand in this. Please continue to pray for this ministry.

Tim Sanders
Chaplain



Statistics for 2017

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	1590
Chaplain Hours	1730
Lead Chaplain Hours	316
Total Hours	2046

Our needs for 2018:

- To find a replacement for the Lead Chaplain role .
- To recruit more chaplains (two 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 increase our income, enabling us to raise our profile and to fund a paid Lead Chaplain.
- To continue to pay our rent and our Administrator, Libby Ham.

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