



## Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy Newsletter May 2021

Chaplains are now back on the streets and visiting shops and other workplaces. We have been welcomed back and it is encouraging and humbling to hear how we have been missed so much.

For many people, including Chaplains, returning to a public social life has been a challenge. We have not been used to being around a lot of people, or engaging in conversation with others, and still must be aware of the possibility of spreading Covid-19.

Loneliness is widespread and an issue many people mention to Chaplains; it can lead to self-doubts and depression, and being unable to unburden these problems causes them to become more serious and distressing. The meaning of life and death become more significant and Chaplains are finding that people are more willing to discuss spiritual matters. We want to speak to all people - of faith and no clear faith. It has been good to encourage some Christians we meet. Chaplains chat, discuss concerns and pray with people as well as bring prayer requests to the team. It is very rare for anyone to decline an offer of prayer!

Chaplains can play an initial part in reassuring people and sharing the good news of Jesus, but people often also have needs to which churches and other organisations can respond. Since it is easier facilitate that connection if we have a named contact in a local church, we would like to improve our contacts with other Christian organisations and local churches. We are happy to make a presentation of this ministry to churches – on-line or in person.

What will Basingstoke look like in the future? This is a question on many lips. The closure of a number of chain stores and the loss of both Debenhams and John Lewis are likely to have a major impact on the town with many uncertainties created. The Borough has invited residents and businesses to offer opinions and suggestions for re-invigorating the area and, hopefully, there will be opportunities for town centre churches and other pastoral organisations to be involved in future plans.

**John Hayward**  
Chair of Trustees

# Prayer Points

## Thank God

- that Chaplains are out and about meeting people
- for opportunities to visit shop workers
- for the relationships that are being established and strengthened
- for Chris's service as Chaplain to the local police force as he retires

## Pray for people

- Covid Wardens and others patrolling the streets, for their helpfulness and protection from abuse
- the new manager and staff at the bus station
- taxi drivers having a hard time with little business

## Pray for organisations

- Basingstoke churches opening up and reaching out to members and outsiders
- Youth Cafe workers and customers and all active at London Road URC
- engaging with the Magistrates' Courts and Railway Station
- other Christian agencies that provide practical and spiritual support to people, and our collaboration with them

## Pray for ourselves

- Mary at Youth Café
- Chaplains moving away from Basingstoke
- Chaplains who have been isolating but are now preparing to go out
- seeking to build stronger relationships with Basingstoke churches

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