



Volunteers from churches in south-west London have been credited by local police for helping cut crime

Street Pastors help to reduce violent crime in Kingston

One of London's biggest nightlife destinations, Kingston upon Thames, acknowledged the impact of Street Pastors Kingston at a celebration to mark five years of helping to combat street crime in the area.

More than 20,000 people attend nightclubs, theatre and restaurants in Kingston every weekend.

Street Pastors have been operating in the borough since 2005, walking the streets on Friday and Saturday nights and offering help to people, including giving directions and guidance for transport home; offering first aid; space blankets for cold bodies; flip flops and a

shoulder to cry on for those in distress. Teams have removed more than 22,000 bottles and glasses (potential weapons), given out 500 glow-in-the-dark bracelets and countless wet wipes and tissues.

In five years the Street Pastors claim to have met with more than 12,500 people and it appears that their efforts have contributed to a reduction in crime in the area.

Kingston Council recently reported: 'Violence against people has reduced significantly in the town centre – by almost 50% in the past few years and crime overall has dropped by around 25%.'

A Kingston upon Thames

report entitled, *Destination Kingston – 2010-2013* stated that Kingston is 'now considered a model for many other areas looking to rebalance their night time economy.' It went on to note that 'residents are now less worried about anti-social and threatening behaviour and fewer residents would now avoid the area at night at the weekends.'

Superintendent Paul McGregor at Kingston Police Station said: 'There has been tremendous work by the Street Pastors over the past five years and they have undoubtedly contributed to making Kingston a safer place. I am confident that Street Pastors will continue

to play a vital role in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in future years. They have won the respect and gratitude of both myself and other police colleagues.'

One email from a night-time visitor to Kingston sent to Street Pastors Kingston said: 'These good Samaritans were amazing, in the five minutes I was speaking to them they must have helped at least ten people, giving girls with no shoes flip flops, safety drink caps and advising on the dangers of being out late at night on the streets.'

Nationally, more than 5,000 Street Pastors have been trained and recruited and are operating in more than 100 town centres.