

# READING STREET PASTORS



WELCOME to our autumn update. As Christians our faith determines our actions and I believe that following Jesus means getting involved in “messy” situations, and being the good Samaritan; offering very real practical, immediate care and support to people who find themselves in vulnerable situation. Our street pastor teams still enjoy making friends with the town centre folk, especially building friendships with the door staff as they increasingly call on us for help as well as our usual work of helping those who are vulnerable and inebriated keeps us busy. Our team leader Paul told me recently that:

*“ Twice in one night we were asked by different ladies if they could stand with us as they felt safe around us”*

This, I believe, shows how much we have become accepted by the town and now form a vital part of the night time economy. To stand with someone and be a refuge for them reminds me of the verse where Jesus says “I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.”

## 15 New Street Pastors Hit our Streets

We want to congratulate the 15 new street pastors who have or are joining our teams as they finish their training this month. The training has covered alcohol & drug awareness, listening skills, police protocols, personal safety, workshops on mental health awareness, the probation service & looking at youth culture as well as lots of carefully designed role play exercises.

We’ve seen a few volunteers leaving street pastors recently for various reasons, all of whom will be missed. The newbies will be joining 46 other dedicated street pastors who commit one night a month to walk the streets between 10pm & 3am on either a Friday or Saturday night. They are also joining 12 committed & valued prayer pastors who pray throughout the night for Reading at St Laurence’s and many others who pray at home. We are all deeply thankful for all our prayer pastors encouragement and support.



Team supporting lady at

## Crime rate down at Reading Festival



Reading street pastors were privileged to be invited onto the festival site for the 1st time this year to partner with various agencies to ensure the safety of festival goers. During the festival weekend we had 24 street pastors on patrol either on-site, around the site or in the town centre. It was a great weekend for all involved; especially

being a part of the Police’s success of cutting crime by 50% compared to last year. It was a good learning experience for all of us involved, and we hope this to be a regular annual event for us. We dealt with many lost festival goers, helping people get to the first aid & welfare tent, generally making friends with our lollipops & helping people through the inevitable copious amounts of mud— where wellies were an essential part of our uniform!



### The Stats:

- 183 days patrolled
- 5838 hours volunteered
- 287 aggressive situations calmed
- 813 vulnerable people supported
- 700 flips-flops given out
- 591 bottles of water given-out
- 75 1st aid incidents attended
- 362 emergency blankets given
- 5456 glass bottles binned

## Thanks for all the Support

Reading street pastors solely operate on donations and we are very grateful for the all the financial support we’ve received from many places this year, especially: Reading Borough Council, Sound Foundation Ltd, CCA, Stoneham Trust, the Churches of Reading, Catharine Morris for running the BUPA London 10k and the many individuals who donate monthly. If you would like to support us with a one off donation or on a regular basis please contact Matt for more information.



Well Done Catharine!

Contact Matt Hearn for more information:

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