



# Taunton Street Pastors PRESS RELEASE

for immediate use

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## **Taunton's Street Pastors tackle spiked drinking**

**Taunton volunteer Street Pastors are launching a campaign to alert the town's clubbers to the risks of leaving their drinks unattended whilst dancing in pubs and clubs this Christmas. To reinforce the need for vigilance Street Pastors will hand out packs of 'spikeys', brightly coloured stoppers, free of charge.**

Whilst instances of spiking are few and far between the teams of Street Pastors drawn from many of the community's churches are concerned that anyone wanting to guarantee a good outcome to their town centre entertainment should take care and make sure they have planned their journey home even before they set out.

The 'spikeys' are a simple device making it difficult to insert any substances into bottles, but leaving room for a straw. The day glo colours also draw attention to any interference with the container although they are no substitute for cultivating a habit of not leaving drinks unattended.

The latest gift from the Street Pastors joins 'space blankets', bottled water and the now famous flip-flops. Aware that many young women now have a number of pairs of the free flip-flops, Street Pastors are asking for clean pairs to be returned to them in order that they can be reissued to others who find themselves without shoes in need of the basic footwear late at night in the wet Winter weather. Any Street Pastor team will happily receive back a pair of flip-flops as part of a seasonal 'amnesty' for those who are feeling compassionate at Christmas.

The Reverend Vince Carrington is co-leader of the Taunton initiative and spoke in anticipation of the Christmas campaign to make Taunton's clubbing experience even safer, "Thankfully Taunton is generally a safe and happy place in which to enjoy a night out at the weekend and Street Pastors want it to stay that way. In partnership with the Police and Local Authority we hope that our small contribution by means of the gift of 'Spikeys' will make a big difference to the outcome of a few people's night out. We positively look forward to our encounters with young people on the streets and the opportunities to convey some Christian goodwill as they celebrate and party in our town centre.

**Continues...**

### **Taunton's Street Pastors tackle spiked drinking contd...**

"Taunton's Street Pastors have built up a great rapport with the regular clubbers and want to wish all of our young friends a safe and happy celebration of the season. As Christians we regularly pray for the peace and safety of all those we encounter so we shall be particularly keen to see them all go home happily in order to be able to return to meet us again in the New Year."

Over 50 members of local churches give up a Friday or Saturday evening once a month to patrol the streets and befriend patrons of pubs and clubs, helping many, especially young people, who find themselves in need of help in the town centre late at night. The trained volunteers whose ages range from mid twenties to mid seventies, listen and offer practical care, helping arranging to arrange a safe journey home wherever possible. Street Pastors will be mounting additional patrols over the Christmas holiday period including Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

The founder of Street Pastors, the Reverend Les Isaac, cites Taunton's scheme extensively in a new book detailing the remarkable development and successes of the Christian initiative. Entitled 'Street Pastors', it contains numerous anecdotes supplied by members of Taunton's team with particular mention of the contribution made by Taunton Street Pastors' leader. Les writes, "...experienced people, such as Adrian Prior-Sankey, who has advised us about policies and procedures, are working with us to help manage what God has given us."

The book is available locally, priced £7.99, from The Good News Bookshop in East Reach, Taunton.

Over 160 towns and cities across the UK have now introduced Street Pastor projects. Crime levels have reduced, often dramatically and in nearly seven years of operation nationally, no Street Pastor has been injured.

The progress made by Street Pastors has been commended by Chief Inspector Yan Georgiou of Somerset West Police District,

"We are committed to working with our partner agencies in making Taunton Town Centre safer at night and we welcome this community initiative by local churches.

"A friendly face for help and advice, at times when someone may well be vulnerable, often helps to reduce incidents of crime and disorder, which can only be good for the town's night time economy and the community at large."

A training programme to recruit additional Street Pastors from among the local church congregations will commence in early the New Year and a Friends Group is being developed for others who wish to lend their support to the popular phenomenon late at night on the streets of the County Town. Anyone interested in learning more is asked to email for further details from [taunton@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:taunton@streetpastors.org.uk) or telephone 07773 038 622.

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**Notes to Editors**

Further information is available from:

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