

Factfile

Preston Street Pastors began in December 2008 with 24 volunteers and are part of a national independent Christian initiative.

Volunteers go on to the streets of St Matthews and St Georges every Friday night to care, listen and dialogue with people.

Volunteers are ordinary men and women from churches of all traditions from across Preston and South Ribble.

All Street Pastors undergo a thorough training programme developed to respond to the local community issues.

Breaking News

We are currently in discussions with churches about launching a second team in the south of the city.

9 new volunteers have recently been undergoing initial training and hope to join the team on the streets this Autumn.

Contact Details

Preston & South Ribble SPI
c/o Fulwood Free Methodist Church

FREEPOST

Lightfoot Lane

Preston. PR2 3LT

01772 861597

preston@streetpastors.org.uk

www.streetpastors.org



STREET PASTORS™

Preston & South Ribble (North)

Issue 1
Sept 09



Welcome to our first newsletter. As a project, we wanted to keep you informed of what is happening within Preston through your Street Pastors project. In the first six months we have seen over 600 hours of time on the streets at night and spoken with 1200 people, 1 in 5 of whom were aged under 18 (21%).

Our teams have met with people from across the spectrum, from shopkeepers threatened by gangs of young people with nothing to do; to the street worker trying to get through a night unscathed and the residents in whose community she works.

Some of the stories that our teams have come across are truly heart breaking (the following names have all been changed). For example, one team encountered 4 young gang members doing drugs. Adam's birthday will be on the first day of Ramadan and

so he could not drink, take drugs, have women and was feeling a bit put out. He mentioned that we fasted during Lent, but we had to mention that we usually gave up just chocolate! He was a gang member so did not stray off his patch. He wanted to get a proper job, because up to now, he had not had any work. His friend Yusuf wanted to be in the medical industry and they both appreciated the time taken to listen to them.

Or Jane, a local young lady who visits the chip shop every day as it seems that the staff there give her some support. She wanted to talk to lady Street Pastors, and so Shiranee and Nina sat with her for a while. She was on tablets for losing weight and said if she did lose weight she might get a boyfriend who would like her. She was lonely. It seemed that she had all the professional help possible, it was a case of willpower and was in need of encouragement from others to keep her positive.

“ We are making a difference ”

Or John, who was behind the counter of a taxi firm who said it's always quiet when Street Pastors are out – could we go home, so hopefully it will get busy!

Scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) strategic objectives highlights the need for partnership development, preventative work, and the encouragement of community cohesion. With this in mind, Street Pastors is a very practical way for the church to serve the city we are part of, showing through early intervention the love of God in real, tangible ways. And all this in a time when for many, the church seems an irrelevant answer to some of the tough issues facing people in Britain in the 21st Century.

As we move forward we are being appreciated by the police, local council & community more and more and partnership remains an important value for our work. Good relationships with the different faiths in the area are being established, and there has been fantastic feedback from recent Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings within the area. Police have advised that street workers presence has significantly reduced over the last 3 months, and whilst this may not be just because of our presence, we have certainly contributed to it.

Preston is seeing the church on its streets in a loving and practical way. And most of all we are making a difference!





Nerissa Warner-O'Neill is the conservative party's prospective parliamentary candidate for the next election.

At the end of June she joined our team on the streets one Friday night, and afterwards wrote:

"I live in the area that we patrolled and know it pretty well during the day. At night I drive everywhere – to walk at night gives a completely different perspective. The city changes.

As we walk along we speak with people waiting for the bus to see that they are ok to get home. We walk to a games court where a group of about 25 children ranging in age from 10 to about 19 are 'hanging out'. The initial reception is frosty but within a few minutes the Street Pastors have diffused that tension with a combination of charm and chocolate and have started the long work of building a rapport. As we leave we ask them to remember the neighbours and keep the noise down.

A little later we meet up with another pair of Street Pastors who have been covering the other half of the patch – they tell us that they have spoken with two homeless people, they have signposted shelters and agencies who work with the homeless but one at least has already exhausted the help that these can offer.

As we set off again we encounter some street girls, they are in a group and hope not to be out too long. A little while later we come across a girl on her own – like the others she hopes not to be out too long, she is worried about being caught by the police.

Being out with the Street Pastors is both an interesting and a humbling experience – it is obvious from observing them at work that they have spent considerable time building up a rapport with a number of the people that we met through the evening. As people become aware that Street Pastors are trustworthy, and non judgmental they know that there is someone to turn to if they need to."

“ As people become aware that Street Pastors are trustworthy, and non judgmental they know that there is someone to turn to. ”

Team Time



Jason Buckler is a member of team 3 that goes out on the 3rd Friday of every month. He is a married to Lorraine, has 2 children and is a member of Fulwood Free Methodist Church.

In May he was appointed as the Volunteer Area Coordinator, and now works one day a week (Mondays) for the project. In the first of our focuses upon the team, he writes here what Street Pastors means to him.

"Street Pastors is an opportunity for me to give something back to God. The idea of using my life skills to help others really appeals to me. Sometimes when I've just got back from work on a Friday evening, I do think to myself I'd rather be in my home, feet up watching the TV! But once I am out there on the streets it's as if God has renewed my energy and I'm buzzing! The satisfaction I get from being a Street Pastor is enormous.

Sometimes it can be quite on the streets, but we will always meet at least 1 person on our walk that is thankful for our help, and going home knowing I've helped 1 person ,even if it was just lending them an ear to talk to or making sure someone gets home from the pub safely ,it's enough for me. For me Street Pastors is a great way to take the church out onto the streets, to offer my love and understanding as a Christian to people who have not experienced the love of Jesus and to offer practical help as well. The question I often pose to myself is If Jesus was here in physical form right now. Would he be a Street Pastor?...I think he would."



First night team photo

Prayer Pointers

We value your support, and if you would like to pray for our work then we would welcome your prayers for:

- ✓ The safety & protection of our volunteers on the streets
- ✓ The development and effectiveness of the project
- ✓ The people we come into contact with, that we would offer them real hope
- ✓ Continued good relationships with the other agencies working in the area

You can join our prayer support team—contact us for creative ideas and more information.

To Get Involved

Our volunteers go out in teams on to the streets of St Matthews and St Georges every Friday night between 8pm and 1.30am and we are always interested in welcoming more people to join the team.

For an application pack, or to find out more information on our work, please contact us at:



Preston & South Ribble SPI
c/o Fulwood Free Methodist Church
FREEPOST
Lightfoot Lane
Preston. PR2 3LT