

HOT TOPIC

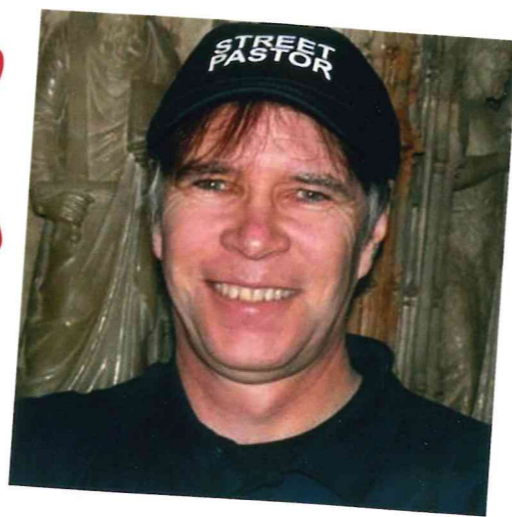
Our Hot Topic in this issue is written by Paul S. Waugh who coordinates Street Pastors working around the streets of Newcastle

STREET Pastors was pioneered in London in 2003 by Les Isaac. On that first night, 18 volunteers took to the streets of Brixton – 15 women and three men. They went about their task with three main aims:

- To care – about our community
- To listen – to anyone who needs to talk
- To help – practically, emotionally and spiritually

Street Pastors are there to care, listen and help. We come from right across the Christian community and can be anyone who has been committed to a church fellowship for more than one year, with a personal reference from their minister or church leader.

Today in Newcastle, our Street Pastors give up their Friday and Saturday evenings to go out onto the streets between 10pm-4am. We take items with us to help practically such as flip flops, water, food items, plasters, bandages, space blankets etc. We find ourselves dealing with situations from simple first aid, from encouraging local street cleaners to sitting and praying with the homeless, from giving directions to getting a vulnerable female home safely. We simply look to be Jesus to those we meet. The values we hold to can be identified in the following scripture, Luke 10:25-37 and 1 John 3:18. We seek to love our neighbours, regardless of age, race, religion, behaviour, sexual orientation, gender or social standing.



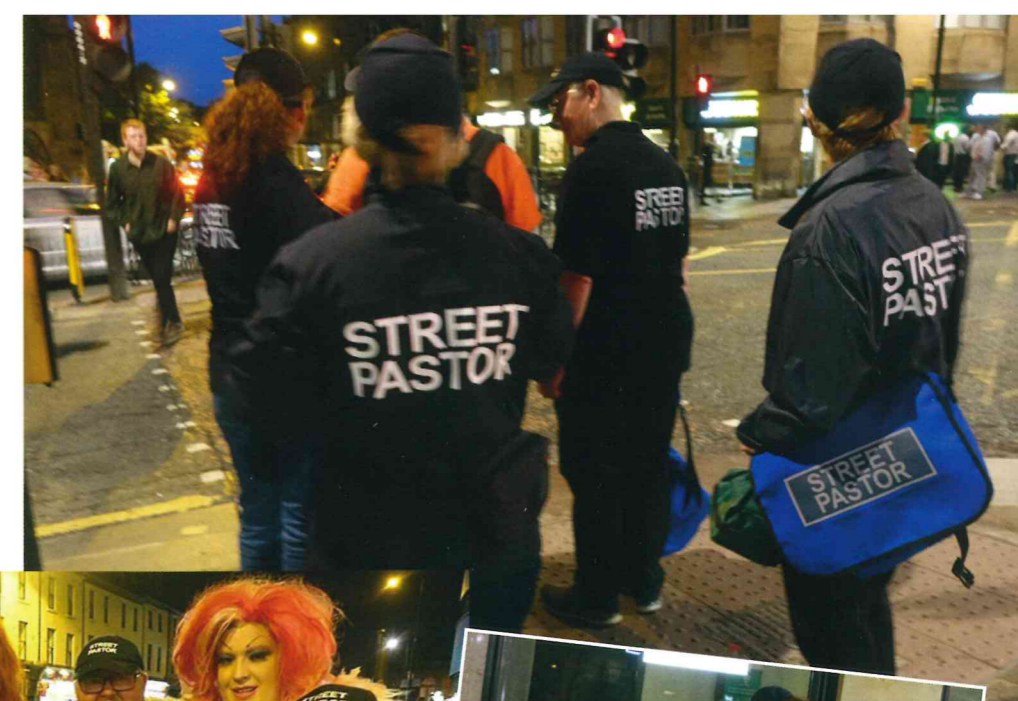
The main groups we serve are the revellers, the police, the door staff and the homeless. We've received praise from all quarters and many have said that their perception of the church has changed since encountering a Street Pastor.

There are two main aspects to this ministry. The first is the practical assistance we offer, which has already been mentioned. The other is the pastoral support. We find that many people are hurting and simply need a listening ear and an arm around their shoulder. This is not only the homeless, although we have a great relationship with them, but also revellers who often have had far too much to drink or have been partaking

in substance abuse. We don't claim to provide a practical solution to all their problems but we are able to signpost agencies who can help further. For many we are simply people who are willing to care and offer advice and support at their time of need.

We have the full backing of the police, local council and the local church. We feel that the church should be living without walls and engaging with people within their communities and this is what we seek to do through Street Pastors.

Paul



An Interview with John: on being a Street Pastor

When did you become a Street Pastor?

Since 2015 I have been honoured and privileged to be part of Newcastle Street Pastors.

What attracted you to Street Pastors?

For me Street Pastors are at the coal face of engagement with a cross section of people in society. They play a critical role when individuals find themselves in places of vulnerability and risk; particularly over the weekend night time economy and party culture in the City! Throughout my Christian walk I have been passionate to try and reach out to those in need, to come alongside others, to value, encourage and to try and see the God given potential in people and ultimately for God to make a difference! Newcastle Street Pastors, through their consistent, dedicated, prayerful and professional approach are having an impact, both on the people who get help and support in time of need but also the establishment of mutual respect with the police, emergency services, door staff and general public.

How do you recover from the shift?

The normal Street Pastor shift from around 10.30pm to around 4am in the morning can leave you feeling a bit drained, due to the many situations the team has had to deal with but I often come away feeling both a bit tired and exhilarated knowing that a positive difference has been made. Then I need a snack and a cuppa before bed.

John

Some Thank You's

Thank you from a Mum:

"I would just like to say thank you for staying with my daughter last night and keeping her safe until her brother arrived really appreciate you giving her your time"

"Great to hear about the increase in pastors. On behalf of the partners working to keep people safe in our city at night we value the essential service performed by the pastors."

Chief Inspector David Pickett

"just wanted to ask you to pass on my thanks to the team. My Son had his drink spiked a couple of weeks ago and quickly realised something was wrong. Found your team and they stayed with him until my Husband picked him up. He can't remember their names but wanted you to know how much we appreciated it xx"

"I just watched the documentary on Channel 5 featuring Jim the street pastor. I was homeless in Newcastle back in 1995/6/7 and lived on the streets and in hostels. I saw Jim doing his work for God and remembered how he used to come to the 'Boneyard' and try to help me and the people I drank with. They are all dead now, life's forgotten people who never escaped their addiction. I was lucky and was able to escape the endless spiral of addiction, homelessness, prison and misery. I found a way to climb out of the quicksand that had held me for five years, I found redemption. Now I live in Cumbria and am happily married."