

About the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy

Welcome to the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy, a charity established by the Churches of Guildford to care for people in our town centre.

Our aim is to build bridges of understanding, trust and cooperation between communities of work, faith, leisure and society and to serve people by providing pastoral care for anyone who lives in, works in or visits the town centre.

We aim to do this through outreach work with volunteers who give of their time to care for, help and listen to anyone who is in need regardless of their circumstances. As a first step we will be launching the Guildford Street Angels programme later this year.

Our history

Since 2004 a consortium of voluntary, community and faith organisations in Guildford (known as *Guildford Together*) has been working to develop proposals for the use of the community space proposed for the Friary extension redevelopment in Guildford town centre.

Guildford Together has developed a business plan, endorsed by Guildford Borough Council, for the use of the community space as a voluntary sector resource centre and drop in facility for the public. Central to the business plan is the concept of a "Community Pastoral Team". It is this concept which has been developed by the churches of Guildford into the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy (including the Guildford Street Angels programme).

With the delays to the Friary extension redevelopment, Guildford Together has encouraged the churches to press ahead the Town Centre Chaplaincy including Street Angels in advance of the availability of the community space.

During the latter part of 2007 and early 2008 a great deal of work went into research into similar projects in other town and cities, development of the proposals for Guildford and partnership development. The Town Centre Chaplaincy and Street Angels programme now enjoy the support of a wide range of churches and other partners.

Street Angels

The Guildford Street Angels programme enjoys considerable support from Surrey Police and Guildford Borough Council. Initially Guildford Street Angels will operate on Friday nights from around 10pm until around 4am when all the bars and clubs are closed. In time we hope to expand the Guildford Street Angels programme to cover Saturday nights as well.

Street Angels (and similar programmes such as Street Pastors) have been springing up across the UK over the last 2-3 years. They make a really positive impact on crime

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and antisocial behaviour in town and centres (particularly in the vicinity of bars and clubs) by providing a calming presence on the streets late at night.

The Street Angels Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment (and checking), training, deployment and support for volunteer Street Angels as well as for publicity and fundraising. The Coordinator works in collaboration with the Police (who have expressed strong support for the project) and emergency services, Borough Council, Town Centre Manager, door staff and many other agencies in Guildford.

Town Centre Chaplain

In the next year we hope to recruit a full time Town Centre Chaplain to represent the churches of Guildford in town centre life, building productive and trusting relationships with the town centre community. He or she will, in time, be supported by a number of volunteer chaplains working with specific businesses or business/leisure sectors in the town centre (including companies, department stores, theatres, shopping centres, nightclubs, banks, civic offices and leisure locations).

Town Centre Chaplaincy will bring a spiritual dimension to town centre life. It will build bridges of understanding, trust and cooperation between communities of work, faith, leisure and society and to provide a caring, listening presence for anyone who lives in, works in or visits the town centre.

The Town Centre Chaplain will represent the Christian community (and perhaps the wider faith community) on groups such as the Town Centre Management Group and would work with businesses and organisations to ensure that the churches play their full role in supporting the well-being of the town centre. He or she will also oversee the Guildford Street Angels programme.

The Town Centre Chaplain and volunteer Chaplains will be available on a confidential basis for people in the town centre to support their emotional and spiritual well-being, including visiting local businesses with the agreement of the management and staff.

The Chaplaincy service will be open to all without discrimination. Chaplains are motivated by their faith to care for people and communities. Their role is not to preach but to offer care and comfort and a listening ear to people of any faith or none. The Chaplaincy will complement existing provision and services including other chaplaincies in Guildford such as those at the YMCA, College, University, in the Police and at the hospital.