

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. In October 2008 we launched Guildford Street Angels on Friday nights and expanded it to include Saturdays in June 2009. Street Angels seek to care for people who find themselves vulnerable late at night in the town centre.

Since January 2010, Rod Boreham has been in post as Town Centre Chaplain. In this role he aims to bring a spiritual dimension to town centre life and build bridges of understanding, trust and cooperation between communities of work, faith, leisure and society and, together with a team of volunteer chaplains, to provide a caring, listening presence for anyone who lives in, works in or visits the town centre.

Our history

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

Guildford Together 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).

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 enjoy the support of a wide range of churches and partners.

Street Angels

The Guildford Street Angels programme was launched on Fridays in October 2008 and Saturdays in June 2009. It enjoys considerable support from Surrey Police and Guildford Borough Council. Initially Guildford Street Angels will operate on Friday and Saturday nights from around 10pm until around 4am when all the bars and clubs are closed.

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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 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. 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

Since January 2010 a full time Town Centre Chaplain has been in post to represent the Christian Community of Guildford in town centre life, building productive and trusting relationships with the town centre community. He or she will 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 aims to bring a spiritual dimension to town centre life. It builds 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 represents the Christian 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 oversees the Guildford Street Angels programme.

The Town Centre Chaplain is 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 is 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 aims to complement existing provision and services including other chaplaincies in Guildford such as those at the YMCA (the Town Centre Chaplain is also chaplain to the YMCA), College, University, in the Police and at the hospital.