



HARK!

THE NEWSLETTER OF GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE CHAPLAINCY



GTCC have had a busy Summer and Autumn. Inside Hark we hear of awards, grateful thanks, fond farewells and much much more. So look inside!

Double award winning GTCC and lots of new Angels commissioned
Look inside to find more

From the Chaplain



We hear a lot of news from across the globe about war, power struggles, greed, entitlement, the 'important' people. In a way this is old news. Even 2000 years ago, at the time of Jesus' birth, Rome and the Emperor were so powerful that at a word everyone in an entire nation had to travel back to their place of birth to be registered in a census. No nation was more powerful than Rome.

Yet, it is against this big backdrop we find the coming of the principal character of all time and it couldn't be more different. A defenceless baby in a stable with all the smelly animals in a little village on the outskirts of Jerusalem? Everything is turned upside down, God has come to earth in the most unexpected way. The weak, the insignificant are seen and valued, God didn't come to judge, dictate, condemn. Instead, we see in that baby God drawing us into a safe, loving dialogue where we can hear his words and respond to them. It could be very easy to miss what is the greatest importance at the heart of our life. So often tucked away in a dark corner, there we find what is the true treasure.

Chair of Guildford Business forum

Noelle has been made the new chair of the Guildford Town Centre Forum. This was set up to provide a voice for all businesses in collaboration with Guildford Borough Council and other bodies to support a strong and sustainable town centre. One of the last meetings it held was with the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby at the Yvonne Arnold theatre.

Noelle is delighted to have been offered this position as she and GTCC are keen to serve the community. She said 'I am amazed and humbled that I have been chosen to chair this forum. I hope I will be able to do it justice and help enhance communication on a range of topics that are important to Guildford'.

ROC Conference

Susanna and Noelle spent a couple of days at the Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) 'Go Higher' conference in November. This was an opportunity to meet with other Street and Festival Angel leaders, as well as chaplaincy projects from around the UK. It was good to meet Paul Blakley who supports Street Angel projects in the UK. He came with lots of insight and wisdom to share, as well as chocolates!

Thoughts we came away with: how helpful it was to meet with others doing similar work and share good practice. The realisation that GTCC has grown into a charity that has good governance with strong, committed volunteers. Amazed at some of the other stories shared. The life experience that has inspired so many to give unreservedly, in challenging situations and places. An acknowledgement that one life helped can make all the difference.



GTCC win top Customer Service & Special Awards

In September GTCC received notification that we had been nominated for the prestigious "Experience Guildford Customer service awards". These awards are based on suggestions from the general public and our nominated category, for best service provider, had four finalists. Representatives for GTCC were invited to the award ceremony at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and were delighted to find out that we were the overall category winners.

Sue Clarke and Mike Smith as Street Angels, along with GTCC staff and Trustees, attended on behalf of the Chaplaincy. We received a lovely glass trophy and certificate pictured below and to the left and enjoyed a delicious buffet during the evening.

The award reflects how the Chaplaincy cares for our community through Chaplains, Community Angel visits and of course our most visible project, Street Angels.

This is not the first award for the Chaplaincy. We were honoured when in 2015 we were awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary services - the equivalent of the MBE for volunteer groups.

Guildford's pubs, bars, clubs and restaurants celebrated the return of the town's Best Bar None Awards at the Electric Theatre on Wednesday 12th October. Our Street Angel co-ordinator Ben Pitt received the 'Outstanding Contribution to the Evening & Late Night Economy' award from Experience Guildford's Pete Lambert, in recognition "of the influence that he and his team of volunteers have in keeping evening revellers safe in the town". Ben responded afterwards saying, "The partnership working model that we have here in Guildford is really positive. We work closely with all of the town's venues to ensure that anyone in need during a night out receives our help. We're here to make sure that people stay safe whilst in the town, and get home safely too, and the great relationship we have with door staff and managers of our late night venues is paramount to this." "Best Bar None" is an important demonstration of the huge impact that can be made on the safety of the town through the collaboration of so many involved parties. Street Angels is proud to be one of those partners, and I am more than grateful to have won this award on behalf of all of our volunteers."

To receive two such awards in such a short space of time truly shows the appreciation and growing reputation our staff and volunteers are generating in our town. With such special recognition we know we are positively impacting many people's lives.



Dear Ben,

My experience with the Street Angel team last Saturday night was really positive and I just wanted to thank you all for the opportunity and the warm welcome. It is clear that the Street Angels are well known and hugely valued by those out for the night in Guildford and their presence is an integral part of the success of Guildford's night time economy.

I managed to stay for the whole shift and Lorraine, Nick and Mike were a pleasure to work alongside and I appreciate how they made me feel part of the team. I really enjoyed the experience and would like the opportunity to repeat it later in the year if possible?

Kind regards,
Julia

CLlr Julia McShane
Westborough Ward
Lead Member for Community, Housing & HR
Deputy Leader (*Currently leader*)
Guildford Borough Council



Reflections on my time at GTCC

GTCC has been blessed by Ben Pitt's contribution to the team as Street Angel coordinator. Sadly, he is moving away from the area with his family at the end of December 2022, leaving behind a legacy of improved communications, a cupboard-full of new hats and a big gap to fill!

We send our thanks and best wishes to Ben as he starts the next stage of his life, and pray that he soon finds a new role to benefit from his many talents and his organisational skills. We will probably never have such a tidy office again! We asked Ben to reflect on his time with us and this is what he said:

"Joining the organisation in winter 2020, I was not sure what to expect but I certainly did not think I would be utilising my creative skill set as much as I did.

Producing promotional videos for each project was both a stretching and exhilarating venture. Not to mention this was highly cost effective for the charity due to Mike Smith's generosity in lending us his camera equipment, along with other film makers across Guildford lending their equipment at no charge in support of the work the Chaplaincy does.

I have absolutely loved getting to know our Street Angel volunteer family, including the many new Angels that have



come through the training journey during my time as coordinator.

Bringing new volunteers into the fold has been a great joy and another opportunity to stretch my skill set in the running and presenting of training courses which gathered volunteers from across the Guildford, Woking, and Camberley Street Angels projects.

During my time as coordinator I have made efforts to nurture relationships with our partner agencies across the town. This year, Guildford was again successful in achieving the Purple Flag award with Street Angels being a key component in the assessment process. The assessors were very impressed with our project and keen to hear from me personally on how we work with our local partners to keep the people of Guildford safe at night. I was particularly honoured to be invited to present an award at the Best Bar None awards in October, where I was rather unexpectedly presented with my own

award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Guildford Nightlife'. I will miss everyone and will be thinking of them as they continue their great work."

Many thanks, Ben, for being part of GTCC It has been wonderful to have Ben on the GTCC team. He will be greatly missed. We wish him and his family well as they start a new chapter in their lives on the Isle of Man.

Noelle Coe

Best Bar None

By Laura Nightingale journalist with
getsurrey.co.uk

streetAngels



Guildford's best nightlife spots have been announced at an awards ceremony in Surrey this month. Pubs, bars, clubs and restaurants were recognised in the town's Best Bar None Awards at the Electric Theatre on October 12.

Following a two-year absence due to the coronavirus pandemic, the awards, delivered by Experience Guildford, the town centre's Business Improvement District, celebrate best practice amongst the licensed trade, showcasing the hard work and commitment of Guildford's venues to create and run safe, responsible and inviting town centre evening economy businesses.

In total, 34 venues gained Best Bar None accreditation across nine different categories this year. Covering national and independent operators, each venue was assessed and judged on criteria including prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm. An overall Guildford Best Bar None winner was also announced, this being Casino. The nightclub also picked up the award for Best Late Night Venue (Large) and will go on to represent Guildford in the national Annual Best Bar None Awards held at the House of Lords.

Ian Forward, general manager at Casino, said: "It's absolutely fantastic to have won both awards this evening, and it's testament to all the hard work of the team at Casino, demonstrating that our continued collaboration with Pub Watch, Experience Guildford and the council's licensing team has paid off. We're really grateful.

"These awards are such a benefit to the town and to the people who come here for a night out. They're a stamp of approval to confirm that the venues are operating safely, and that all the

national schemes to ensure public safety are being adhered to here in Guildford."

The Star Inn and The Guildford Tup scooped Best Pub National and Independent, Best Bar went to The Jubilee Club (Independent) and The Rodboro Buildings (National), the Best Restaurant categories were won by Tattam's (Independent) and Turtle Bay (National), and GLive claimed Best Entertainment Venue.

A special Outstanding Contribution to the Evening and Late-Night Economy award was also presented to Ben Pitt, Guildford Street Angels co-ordinator, to recognise the influence that he and his team of volunteers have in keeping evening revellers safe in the town.

Mr Pitt said: "The partnership working model that we have here in Guildford is really positive. We work closely with all of the town's venues to ensure that anyone in need during a night out receives our help. We're here to make sure that people stay safe whilst in the town, and get home safely too, and the great relationship we have with door staff and managers of our late night venues is paramount to this.

"Best Bar None is an important demonstration of the huge impact that can be made to the safety of the town through the collaboration of so many involved parties. Street Angels is proud to be one of those partners, and I am more than grateful to have won this award on behalf of all of our volunteers."Winners

- Overall Best Bar None Winner – Casino
- Best Bar Restaurant/Café Independent – Tattam's
- Best Restaurant National – Turtle Bay
- Best Pub Independent – The Guildford Tup
- Best Pub National – The Star Inn
- Best Entertainment Venue – G Live
- Best Bar Independent – The Jubilee Club
- Best Bar National – The Rodboro Buildings
- Best Late Night Venue Small – Alley Bar
- Best Late Night Venue Large – Casino
- Outstanding Contribution to the Evening and Late Night Economy – Ben Pitt from Guildford Street Angels
- Most Improved Venue – Alley Bar



Getting to know you

We asked long standing Street Angel Sarah Trute why and how she became involved with GTCC and to share some of her experiences. Here's her story...

"I had some free time and asked God how I could best use it in His service. Soon after, I was invited to a friend's dedication at a Church I'd never been to before, outside of Guildford. There I met an inspiring vibrant lady in her 80s over jam and cream scones. She told me she is a Street Pastor serving her community into the wee hours of the morning in Kingston, what that entailed, and how it worked and I was enthralled. I took that conversation as the answer to my prayer and signed up to volunteer as a Guildford Street Angel, attended the training, and joined the monthly rota!

Over the last 7 years or so, come rain or shine, there hasn't been a single shift the same...from the amusing, to the hurting, and the bizarre... encounters with night time revellers, rough sleepers, the stranded, and the injured really does vary - and is always worthwhile.

In our SA pairs, we've had conversations with Unicorns, Scientists, Military personnel, Musicians, and even an asparagus-holding woman at one point... Some are coherent and others are in need of medical attention, a listening ear, a safe escort to the taxi rank or train station, police intervention, or just help to find a lost phone or friend.

It never ceases to amaze me how God uses our specific professional or life experiences when we meet people in the streets. As a nurse, on one occasion I remember finding a young man having a seizure behind Wetherspoons. We were able to protect his head and keep him safe from harm until the ambulance arrived. I can recognise mental ill health and arrange for urgent psychiatric assessment, or talk down young men with suicidal ideation and signpost to helplines and appropriate support.

It's hard to watch physical fights on the occasions they break out. The joint working of door staff, paramedics, CCTV personnel and the police do a fantastic job to keep the peace and maintain public safety. We are all in communication on our town link radios.

Some hours, even whole shifts at times, are far less dramatic, quiet even, when we can take the opportunity to enjoy getting to know our SA buddy, stroll the night-lit streets checking in with the door men/ women, sweeping up any broken glass, reporting burst water mains, engaging in social banter with the public, declining drunken marriage proposals and receiving high fives or requests for selfies.

It can be such fun, I mean really belly laugh fun, sometimes emotionally tough, always physically tiring but so worth it. What a privilege!"



Guildford Street Angels
Guildford Community
Angels



@AngelsGFD
@ComAngelsGFD

Some of our feedback on social media this year



Hi
Just wanted to say a huge thank you for the help with our friend Dan tonight. I can safely say he is home and doing a lot better than when you last saw him by Subway.
Would you possibly be able to tell us if he had his phone with him when you contacted Zara as it seems to be missing?
Thanks again for all your help, Elisha and Zara (and Dan)

I just wanted to say thank you so much for helping with my friend last night, you are absolute angels thank you xxx

Welcoming and Commissioning our new Angels



We were delighted to welcome and commission seven new Angels and Chaplains at our annual celebratory service, held this year by the kind invitation of Emmanuel Church in Stoughton. Rev Thom Jee, vicar of Emmanuel, welcomed the many friends, supporters, dignitaries, staff, Trustees and volunteers to the special service. Mayor and Mayoress Dennis and Mary Booth joined temporary Surrey Police Assistant Chief Constable, Alison Barlow, who spoke warmly of her and the forces gratitude for the work we do in supporting the community on the street, in peoples home and in the workplace.



After the event, Fiona Davidson from Surrey County Council wrote, "I really enjoyed last night's service. It was heart-warming and uplifting, and a wonderful way of inducting new volunteers, as well as thanking all those who gave their time to help others." Noelle Coe, Chaplain, said "It was an absolute pleasure to welcome new volunteers to the GTCC family from all three of our projects at our Annual Commissioning Service. Following the uncertainties of the pandemic it is such a joy to acknowledge the compassion of our 100+ volunteers whether they are working as Community Angels, Street Angels, or as one of our growing Chaplaincy team. I feel



blessed to be able to lead this team and look forward to the challenges that 2023 will bring. We make a big difference to some of the most vulnerable people in our town, we value the precious relationships that we enjoy with partner organisations



and we thank all those who play a part, however small, to enable GTCC to serve our community well. A particular mention must go to the Churches of Guildford and their congregations – we were established by the town churches as a gift to the people of the town in 2008 and we are proud to still be serving those who live, work or visit, on your behalf in a variety of ways. Thank you!"





Volunteer Chaplains Update

Welcome to our new volunteer Chaplains!

We have welcomed newly trained Bob and Jean to the team as they start visiting The Clockhouse on London Road, a development of retirement flats. They visit together and fortnightly, giving their time to support the residents, joining them for a drink and a chat in the coffee lounge and providing one to one appointments. Our clients often find it easier to open up to chaplains about what is on their mind rather than friends and family.

Barbara is also new to the team, joining as a GP chaplain in the summer, working at Dapdune Surgery. Do read her thoughts on page 9.

We are very thankful to Ben who has produced our new promotional video. You too can find it on the GTCC website on the VC page. We will use it to raise awareness of our work and encourage new volunteers. We have placements currently waiting for their first chaplain and we are really keen to find volunteers for each of those settings. Please do join us in praying for the right people to come forward and for us all to be prompted as to who may need some encouragement to apply.

New for 2023...Our first monthly prayer group will be held on February 7th 12pm, St Mary's, Quarry Street and every 1st Tuesday of the month after. There will be the opportunity to stay for a coffee and chat afterwards. We particularly want to support our chaplains but all involved in the chaplaincy are welcome as we pray for our work across the borough, our volunteers and those we support.

I continue to be so encouraged by the response of those I speak to about the project, and look forward to bringing news of new placements and initiatives in the next edition....!

Susanna



Our Chaplains are making a real difference in organisations and work places around Guildford. You can watch the new Chaplains promotional video here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnIWFc9Aijc>



Second GP surgery gains GTCC Chaplain

I joined Dapdune House Surgery as their Chaplain in July this year. I see up to three people on a Friday for 45 minutes each, all referred by their GPs. Patients can access the support fairly quickly, sometimes in the same week of the referral.

Patients understand I am there for them, whatever their faith or no faith, and that I provide a confidential listening place with no judgement. They can talk to me about anything.

A friend encouraged me to apply and to be honest I would not have applied without that encouragement. I assumed you would need to be ordained. My friend assured me I am a good listener and she believed that would be the main requirement. A few months later, after going through the application process and training, I was ready to meet the staff at Dapdune to chat about the practicalities of being a part of their team.

Reaction from friends and family has differed, depending on how they felt about the title 'Chaplain'. My family, most of whom are not Christians, thought my role might involve proselytising Christianity. I was able to reassure them as I would not have applied if that was the case. I have worked with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, faiths (and no faith) and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to support people whatever they are struggling with.

Each person comes to the Chaplaincy with a different situation, and it is a humbling experience to be trusted to hear their stories. I know I cannot offer solutions or 'fix' problems but the patients appreciate simply being in a safe place with someone who is listening attentively, offering kindness and compassion. At the end of every first session, I offer the option of booking another appointment with me. Some clients will revisit several times. Mostly people want to talk about everyday problems, for example work or relationships, and the majority don't mention their health. Anxiety and loneliness are common.

When friends ask me about the role, I tell them I am enjoying the work, which may seem a surprising answer as we live in challenging times and the current climate seems so gloomy. I prepare with one of the verses from my Lectio 365 app which always seems relevant to the day ahead. Inevitably I take a little of each session away with me and I may feel a little sad, but rather than feel negative, I often feel I have witnessed more strength, courage and resilience in the people who visit me than they see in themselves, and I pray for them on my way home.

If after reading this you are interested in becoming a chaplain I would encourage you to get in touch with GTCC. If like me, you feel you may not have the skills, you will be supported by GTCC and will meet with other Chaplains so you're not alone and we learn from each other.



Barbara, Volunteer Chaplain to Dapdune House Surgery

Showcasing the positive impact of Community Angels



Here at Community Angels we have been busier than ever this autumn, with referral numbers reaching new heights. As always, we are so grateful to our fantastic volunteers who offer care, companionship and encouragement to those whom they befriend.

To protect the confidentiality of the people we support, we can't show photos of Community Angels in action. But with their consent we can talk about recent befriending matches. Here is Gloria's story:

Gloria (not her real name) is in her 70s and was referred to us by a GP, via social prescribing. She had recently moved to the area and had no local friends or family. She lost her confidence during Covid and this was exacerbated by a fall which limited her mobility and stopped her driving.

At her home assessment with Community Angels staff, Gloria explained that she wanted to join some local groups and activities and thought having the support of a Community Angel would really help.

We matched her with Community Angel Judy. Gloria enjoyed her weekly visits with Judy right from the start.

'She is a lovely person and so easy to talk to.'

With Judy's encouragement, Gloria began attending a weekly knitting group. Judy accompanied her for the first few visits. They both felt welcomed and enjoyed getting to know the other members in the group and Gloria is now able to enjoy going to the knitting group on her own.

'My Community Angel has done such a good job to be honest. She has helped me a lot. I have started getting out again and meeting others. She has been so encouraging and has helped hugely with improving my confidence.'

Judy shares her side of the story:

'The motivation to become a Community Angel began during the pandemic. I had been made redundant from my very busy job, like the rest of the world I was stunned by the enormity of the situation while adapting to lockdown and the major changes to our everyday lives. I wanted to reach out and help others who were alone and in a less fortunate position.'

Judy became a telephone befriender with Community Angels in 2020 and as the pandemic eased we trained her in face-to-face befriending.

'When I started befriending Gloria she was lonely and alone, she'd been in hospital and lost a lot of confidence, and was feeling rather down and unsure about going out to try new things. She is an excellent knitter, so we started attending a weekly knitting and crochet group where she was comfortable talking about her crafting and gradually opening up to others. I got started on knitting too and Gloria was able to guide me when I got stuck. We both found the group extremely friendly and subsequently Gloria was able to attend the group confidently on her own. She's made friends and it's such a joy to see her flourish.'

'I would recommend becoming a Community Angel if you have a little bit of time each week to give to a stranger who might be feeling isolated and alone. Talking and making people feel better has a wonderful way of generating hope and spreading kindness. It makes me feel grateful for the positive things in my own life - appreciating my family, friends and loving pets.'

Do you have a couple of spare hours each week? There are so many people like Gloria who would love to have the support and encouragement of a Community Angel, and with more volunteers we could help more of them. If you'd like to chat about how you could get involved, please do give us a call on 07825 799309 or email communityangels@gtcc.org.uk

Wishing all of our friends and supporters a blessed Christmas,
Anne Thornton, Community Angels Coordinator



Volunteer Judy



Farewell to Patron Lizzie

In the summer we were sad to say goodbye to our first ever Patron, Lady Toulson (pictured left with GTCC Chair of Trustees, Chris Britton) as she moved away from the area.

Lizzie has been brilliantly supportive. She has walked, quizzed and climbed to help us raise funds, shared her contacts and knowledge, and been a constant encourager to volunteers, staff and Trustees. We are most grateful for her support and wish her well in her new home.



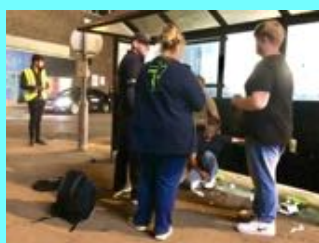
Until the middle of January you can help GTCC raise up to £1500 just by gathering 'bags of hope' blue tokens from local Tesco tills and putting them into their community fund raising collection point. Three chosen charities will benefit from a sum between £500, to £1500. Please encourage friends and family to support us and thank you Tesco!

Coming Up/ What's On

December 4 - 18 Christmas Tree Festival at the Portsmouth Road United Reformed Church in aid of Cherry Trees and GTCC. Check their website for opening times <http://www.guildfordurc.org.uk/christmas-tree-festival/>

Keep checking our website <https://gtcc.org.uk/whats-happening-2019a/> for the latest events, fundraising and training information.

Out and About Picture Gallery



St Martha's tea bar Fundraiser

On one of the hottest days of the summer a host of volunteers, staff and Trustees could be found on the top of St Martha's Hill in the Surrey Hills, offering refreshments to weary walkers. Cake and ice pops proved very popular, as did the chance for visitors to enjoy free guided tours of the stunning Pilgrim church provided by Verger, Simon Harrold.

We were extremely honoured that our tea tent was formally opened by the Mayor of Guildford, Dennis Booth, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, Mary. The Mayor said "On behalf of the people of Guildford, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who are involved in the work of the Chaplaincy making Guildford a safer and more caring place to work, rest and play." The tea tent raised nearly £400 for the work of the Chaplaincy, many great conversations were enjoyed and a good time was had by all!



Witley Sponsored Walk

Thanks to the meticulous planning and organisation by our partners, the Surrey Hills Society, the walk went like clockwork. A group of 18 walkers enjoyed beautiful autumn weather, stunning Surrey countryside and excellent companionship as we trekked the 14-mile route from Guildford to Witley. The route took us along the Wey Navigation, we had coffee in Bramley at a pop-up stall provided by the Surrey Hills Society on the disused railway platform, we saw rare pigs at Wintershall, and admired the decorative interior of Hascombe church, all along a path interspersed by spectacular views. We completed the walk without mishap, and thanks to your contribution have already raised over £4100, which is a brilliant outcome.

A big thank you for your support to enable our 100+ angelic volunteers to continue to provide a listening ear to those who are at work, rest or play in our town – their patient, compassionate work really does help keep people safe, keep them connected to their community and enables the lonely and desperate to build confidence and overcome difficulties.

Louise Kenyon, Trustee, Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy



Fundraising update



Our fundraising team has been busy to help cover the growing costs of the Chaplaincy. It now costs some £110,000 a year to run our projects. Nearly half of this cost is generously donated by supporting churches and individuals, but the balance has to be found from other irregular sources, such as grants and fundraising events.

Since the last edition of HARK we have raised over £4500 from our wonderful sponsored walk and raised £400 from running the St Martha's tea bar. We were excited to receive a grant of £750 from the Arnold Clarke Community Fund specifically to enable us to provide more winter beanie hats and new summer baseball caps to Street Angel volunteers. These are currently on order. We are very grateful to have received grants from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, from the Community Foundation for Surrey, and from the University of Surrey. We are very thankful for this vital support.

We are delighted to be one of the current chosen charities on the Tesco Community Grants scheme – so please visit one of the four local Tesco stores before the end of February and vote for us with a blue token!

So, we have been blessed with another successful fundraising season which will enable us to cover our costs for 2022. As 2023 starts, with finances squeezed, we know that it will not be easy to make the books balance, but we are confident that we can continue to deliver our projects, which are needed more than ever in our community.

Ways to donate to GTCC

We rely on regular donations to continue our life changing work.

Please visit our website to donate online www.gtcc.org.uk/donate or text **70085** using the code **ANGEL** and the amount e.g **ANGEL20'**

You can also give through Amazon Smile and Easy Fundraising'