



# HARK!

## THE NEWSLETTER OF GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE CHAPLAINCY



### Thousands visit heart-rending Knife Angel sculpture

For the month of March 2023 the 27' high Knife Angel sculpture made a poignant visit to Guildford Cathedral. Made from over 100,000 seized metal knife blades, it was created to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour whilst signposting the critical need for social change. Not only does the Angel act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, but it is also acts as a beautiful memorial designed to celebrate those lives who have been lost through these violent and thoughtless actions. The sculpture was designed and created by Alfie Bradley in collaboration with the British ironworks in Shropshire and 43 police constabularies. Many families affected by knife crime supported the project and some of the sculptures' knives tell these families heart-braking stories.

Street Angels were recognised at the end of March for the part they play in reducing violence and aggression, along with the Surrey police and a host of other community minded individuals and organisations by being awarded appreciation certificates by Tim Wates, the High Sheriff of Surrey. Our Angels attended many of the events put on around this historic visit.

As part of this initiative our chaplain Noelle organised two meetings, one at the Cathedral and the other at The Keep pub to share the good work that goes on behind the scenes in Guildford at night. She, with her Street Angel hat on along with, Ryan from Surrey police, Ian from the Casino nightclub, Jane from Guildford PubWatch and Pete, Town Safety & Venue Liaison Manager from Experience Guildford, formed a panel to share the positive initiatives that were in place. They highlighted the good team work from across the different agencies and the effort that goes into making Guildford as safe a place as possible. They also took many great questions from the floor.

We are currently in the process of creating a small team of Ambassador Angels that will be happy to visit groups and churches to share about the work of GTCC or one of our projects that you may have a particular interest in. Do get in touch with Noelle if you would like us to visit.



## GTCC Angels turn Crystal

Guildford Street Angels (SAs), and parent Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy (GTCC), are celebrating their 15th anniversary in 2023. In that time we have become well known for our positive presence in the town centre between 11.00pm - 4 am every Friday and Saturday night. SAs offer caring support to vulnerable people on the streets of Guildford, no matter who they are, and whatever their situation, without judgment. In its 15 years the Chaplaincy has made a real positive impact on our town.

Did you know that a year after the SAs started out in Guildford in 2008, the Police estimated there was a 33% reduction in public crime rates on the streets of Guildford on the nights that SAs were operating in town? By helping people separated from friends, often after being excluded from night clubs. By supporting homeless people on the streets, people with mental health problems, those who are physically unwell after taking too much alcohol or drugs. People who have missed their last train home or have no means of getting home. Sometimes we are called upon to give first aid, be a listening ear, signpost people to local services and often we ensure that town visitors are supported to get home safely at the end of their night out. The difference we make has been recognised through many awards and commendations, including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the MBE for volunteer groups). The Guildford Mayor's Award and Social Enterprise of the year in the local Biz awards.

In 2022 our volunteers gave over 5,300 hours of their time, on befriending visits, patrolling the streets and visiting workplaces and GP surgeries. We picked up around 3,200 glass bottles, had 50 encounters with homeless people and encountered over 3500 people in our three projects. With over 100 trained volunteers we have helped make Guildford a safer place by showing practical love and care to those in need.

As you will see from this newsletter, GTCC has not rested on its laurels and has continued to bless the town by continuing to work in new ways to meet the changing environments we now operate in. So thank you all our volunteers, Trustees, staff and supporters who have helped us along this journey. May you be richly blessed as we celebrate this milestone and look forward to what God has planned for our future.



## Message from our Chaplain



GTCC staff along with Street Angel David (pictured on the right) attended a First Aid course offered to local businesses by Experience Guildford. We are pleased to say we all now are official First Aiders.

It has been great to have two people training to be church ministers, join us for a while this last year. They happily joined in with our three projects and hopefully saw the tremendous value of chaplaincy as a means to reach out and come alongside people in all walks of life.

February found the chaplaincy hosting a special meal for church

leaders in and around Guildford. It was a great opportunity for us to come together and

thank them for the support they give to GTCC and also all that they have done over the last few years in the community. Our thanks go to Ruth (one of our trustees) and her team at Open Ground café for their wonderful cooking and care.

Over the years GTCC has partnered with various agencies and churches to enable different initiatives. At this present time, we are supporting 'Real Change' to organise an inter faith forum on 26<sup>th</sup> September at St Saviours church. We will be looking at ways we can continue to respond positively to those who are homeless or on the edge of becoming homeless. Before Covid we hosted a similar forum, which made a tremendous difference to those in need throughout the pandemic. Statistics have shown that rough sleeping has increased in England by 26% since Covid. We are thankful that this has not been the case in Guildford and it would be good if we can continue to help in a positive way. If you would be interesting in attending then please contact me.







## Volunteering as a Community Angel.

I did the training to become a Community Angel during 2022 and was introduced to my first client early in 2023. I had asked for someone without mental or severe emotional problems and met David\* with Susanna in mid-January at his house just outside Guildford. David is a delightful 66-year-old married gentleman who lives at home with his wife [who is out at work during the day] and is supported by grown up children and regularly meets his grandchildren. He has some health problems, a bad back and knees but I was asked to meet up with him because he is **blind**. I did have a few worries initially, how would I guide him, toilets, that sort of thing, but all those have been spoken about and are no longer a problem. He is open and friendly and I sometimes forget he cannot see. He lost his sight at 29 years of age and with that his profession but most certainly not his life. Whenever we meet, we go out for a walk, the first one was just around his estate. I needed to learn how to guide and help him but within fifteen minutes understood that. Soon we were visiting Guildford Cathedral refectory, Clandon Garden centre, a tea shop in Puttenham, other places and walking where sighted people walk. On one visit to the Cathedral, we stopped alongside the church and looked out over Guildford towards the Mount. "Stick out your arm," I said. "Move it a bit to the left... that's it. You're pointing at Henley Fort."

"Oh yes, I went there as a boy." On that day he just stood looking out for long minutes. He has an excellent memory, not only the location of buildings and sites but can guide me to most places better than a SATNAV.

Because of his health problems I have missed a number of weeks. I just hope I can fit a few extra visits in at the end. It is a thoroughly rewarding experience.

*\*Named changed to protect confidentiality*

And a few words from David:

"Anton is such a lovely person. He was a bit worried at first about supporting someone who is blind but he's been brilliant and has just slipped into it with no problems at all. I'm very, very happy with the support he's giving me. We're very compatible and share lots of the same interests – particularly history. I think it's fantastic what Community Angels is doing".



We are getting more referrals than ever before and could support more people if we had more volunteers. If you have a couple of hours spare each week and would like to know more about becoming a volunteer befriender with Community Angels, please do get in touch with Anne or Susanna on 07825 799309 or [communityangels@gtcc.org.uk](mailto:communityangels@gtcc.org.uk) We will give you training to get started (2 x 3 hours sessions at a time to suit you) and ongoing support while you are volunteering with us.

## Meet our new Street Angel co-ordinator

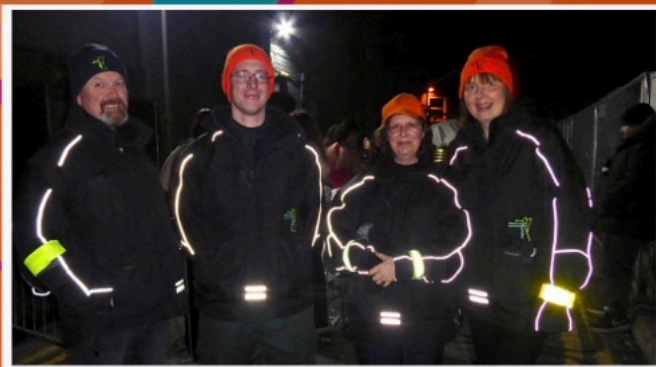
Let me introduce myself. My name is Angela Gammage, I was born and raised in Moldova, and lived there most of my life before moving to England. I speak a few languages: Romanian, Russian and English and have started learning Ukrainian.



When I relocated to England I began to work in Local Government for 17 years. After the COVID pandemic I realised that I needed to do something else that reflects my beliefs and fulfil my purpose in life. That's why I came to Street Angels where I could offer help and support in our local community and show empathy for anyone in their time of need.

Over the years I've visited many countries and discovered that in times of distress, you really see how tight each community becomes. If someone needs support or is injured, others are ready to help. I'd love to see that kind of community support everywhere. For now, I am delighted to be providing support and encouragement for all of our volunteers so that they are able to help others. It's vital that we remember our responsibilities lie not just with ourselves, but also with our neighbours.

I'm excited to be part of Street Angels in Guildford, and I look forward to connecting with you more in the near future. I consider it an honour to work with a team who is equally committed to pushing the limits of achieving meaningful steps in life.



 **#VolunteersWeek**



## MP Angela enjoys night out patrolling with Street Angels

Guildford's MP Angela Richardson was invited to spend a night out with our Street Angels and we were delighted she took up the invitation. This is what she had to say about her experience in her constituency newsletter.

### On duty with Guildford Street Angels

In May I took part in a 10:30pm to 4am shift with Kathy, Peter, Jo and Tim from Guildford Street Angels.

I really enjoyed seeing first hand the work they do looking after those having a fun night out with their friends. Volunteer numbers dropped off after Covid though. Do you think you can help? Full training provided and a friendly team to join. It's a wonderful thing they do.



To start, all was fairly quiet and we had some good chats on the first couple of rounds around the town. On the 3am round, things became a bit more eventful as the nightclubs emptied.

As a parent of young adults it's reassuring to know they are there. The absolute disgrace is that the public loos have been closed by the Council. There was urine everywhere and for women it is unsafe. A massive shout out to the Street Cleaners who will have cleared up and made our fantastic town ready for the shops to open. Say thanks if you see them - I've seen what they have to clear up!

### Social media feedback



*"My name is Isabelle and about a year ago I was very kindly helped by two of your volunteers during a night out. I was alone and scared, and I can't emphasise enough how much it helped to be looked after by the volunteers at a time when I was feeling very unsafe. The contributions that you make to the community do not go unrecognised - my parents and I are very grateful for the work that you do and the impact that you have had - particularly on me. It is comforting to know that some people out there will still help you when you need it.*

*I hope you are having a lovely week and enjoying the beautiful weather in some way. Thank you once again!. Isabelle. (Message recently received in GTCC office)*

*16 June 23 - Facebook messenger - I would like to say a huge thank you to the guildford street angels for helping my daughter and friend Friday night after them being intoxicated and unable to get home x. Jade*



## volunteerchaplains

Since the first gathering in January, I have been joining others at the **monthly prayer meeting in St Mary's Church, Quarry Street** to pray for the work of GTCC and our town. It is a quiet time of reflection and prayer with different numbers of trustees, staff and volunteers from the 3 different projects coming each month. Numbers vary but there is always a warm welcome. Different people lead. It is very informal and tends to only last for 30 minutes although there is always time for a coffee and chat afterwards. It has been a huge encouragement for me to feel part of the larger chaplaincy team, to build on that sense of belonging and experience the non-judgemental kindness, friendship and reassurance. Prayer plays a very important role in chaplaincy and in being sensitive and listening to the needs of others, silent prayer is equally as powerful. It has been good to acknowledge God at the heart of our service, his calling to carry out his work, and the sense of discipleship. I leave feeling inspired and encouraged.

**First Tuesday of every month, next meeting 5<sup>th</sup> September**

**St Mary's Church, Quarry Street. 12pm**

**Bev Allon-Smith – Volunteer Chaplain** (pictured above left) 🙏

## volunteerchaplains in the Clockhouse

Jean and I have been visiting The Clockhouse fortnightly since October last year. There are about 50 flats for elderly people with communal facilities including a restaurant and lounge. Our role is to provide a listening ear with spiritual support where necessary.

Like in so many others areas and places, people are often lonely and looking for someone from outside their circle to talk things over with and who will listen to them in a non-judgemental way. Here, many are dealing with health problems, others have lost their partners or moved away from their familiar homes and now visitors are few. We give the residents the opportunity to have that confidential space if needed.

We are lucky that there is a morning coffee gathering of ladies where Jean and I fit in quite well (being somewhat mature ourselves!), giving fresh conversations and thoughts. It has been a great way to get to know them better and for the residents to be able to suss us out too! As a volunteer Hearing Champion, Jean is also able to share her expertise and offer help.

A few men will meet me on their own in the lounge when deeper conversation and prayers may be shared. Occasionally, I may visit the residents in their rooms.

I have been encouraged that despite everything that life throws at us, some are able to rise above it and have a smile on their face and encouragement for others.

**The Clockhouse, London Road, Guildford**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month**

**10.45am -12.30pm** for pre-arranged one to one appointments and social time in the lounge.

Bob and Jean





### Dates for your diary

13 October 2023 - Quiz Night at St Saviours - tickets available in August  
 Sunday 26 November 2023 5pm - Commissioning Service at the United Reformed Church



### Did you know we are part of ROC?

Our projects are part of a national organisation called Redeeming our Communities or ROC for short. ROC has been transforming communities by empowering local people of goodwill to work together for safer and stronger communities. There are ROC cafes, gardens, ROC centres, wellbeing projects as well as Street and Festival Angels. ROC also delivers training conferences which some of our staff have attended and ROC also provides support and resources to those who are looking to start similar projects elsewhere. The figures below show the amazing impact projects like ours are having across the UK and beyond.

To find out more about the amazing work ROC do you can visit their website and sign up for newsletters <https://roc.uk.com/>

# 350

PROJECTS

# 3000+

VOLUNTEERS

# 10000+

COMMUNITY IMPACT



## The Highest High Tea in Guildford!

GTCC staff, volunteers and friends joined together on May 13 at St Martha's on the Hill to give walkers the highest 'High Tea' experience in Guildford. The hill reaches a height of 574 feet (175m), making it the 18th highest in the county and probably the highest place to have your tea or coffee in Guildford.

The event brought together Street and Community Angels along with some of our Chaplains and Trustees. The location and the weather were superb, encouraging a lot of walkers and visitors to stop and enjoy a nice cuppa along with some seriously tasty homemade baking. It was also a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and colleagues in a beautiful and relaxed environment. It was lovely to see some of our canine supporters wagging their tails and posing for our cameraman.

The volunteers were kindly joined by Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson for part of the day. By the end of the day around £500 had been raised, some of which will go to St Martha's as a thank you for allowing us to use their church and facilities.





Our Angels projects featured in a recent edition of the Guildford Magazine and our new orange baseball & beanie hats have gone down well with many young visitors on SA nights.





## News

Former Street Angel co-ordinator Ben Pitt, along with his wife Gina recently shared the joy of welcoming their second son Ethan into the world. Congratulations to them and big brother Asher. We wish the whole family the very best as they enter this new chapter of family life.



GTCC is enormously grateful to have received donations and grants from Tesco, The Erica Leonard Trust, The Borrows Charitable Trust, Poyle Charities, Surrey County Council, and the Guildford Scottish Country Dancing Group in the first half of the financial year. We are budgeting a deficit of some £30k in 2023 so further much needed funding applications are in progress. Please put the date of the fundraising quiz on Fri 13 October in your diaries to help close the gap!



## Easter Outing & Baptism

The Chaplaincy was represented at several events over the Easter weekend including the Good Friday walk of witness from the Friary Centre to Holy Trinity in the High Street. Then a number of our volunteers made it to the Easter morning sunrise service starting at 6am up at St Martha's on the Hill. Congratulations to SA Tim Ward who was baptised at Bookham Baptist Church on April 16th, as a result of his faith being rekindled through a GTCC commissioning service.





## Ways to donate to GTCC

It will cost around £100,000 in 2023 to run all of our three community projects. Outside of our generous church donors, much of our income comes from individual supporters who have set up monthly standing orders with Gift Aid declarations, so we can claim back the tax on their kind giving.

If you can help us out in this way, have links with local businesses which might like to nominate us as their chosen charity or want to see how you can support us in other ways please visit our giving page here: <https://gtcc.org.uk/donate/>



## Gift Aided Regular Giving

To find out more about how to give electronically and set up a regular gift download a Gift Aid donation form here: <https://gtcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GTCC-Trifold-Leaflet-2021-v.4-3.pdf>

## Easy Fundraising

Easy Fundraising turns your everyday online shopping into free donations for your favourite cause. How? Just start your online shopping first at easyfundraising, then shop as normal. The retailers will then make a small donation to say "thank you". So if you online shop at Sainsbury's, Argos or many other retailers, you can help us raise funds. Our page link is here: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/guildfordtcchaplaincy/?q=Guildford%20Town&cat=cause-autosugges>

## SMS Text

To send a donation by text via your mobile provider please send an SMS message starting with the word

**ANGEL** followed by your donation amount of either 5, 10 or 20,

e.g. **ANGEL10** would donate £10  
Text Giving to the number 70085

## Annual Review just published

GTCC have just published the 2022 Annual Review. You can read all about our finances and more about our projects by clicking this link:

<https://gtcc.org.uk/annual-review-2022/>