



HARK!

THE NEWSLETTER OF GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE CHAPLAINCY



A joyous start to the Christmas Season

Our GTCC family continues to grow as we commissioned over a dozen of our newest angels and chaplains on Sunday 26th November at the Guildford United Reformed Church (URC). This annual event allows us to affirm our new recruits, gives an opportunity to thank our current team of 104 volunteers, and showcases the wonderful work of the chaplaincy in the past year. This year, we also had the great joy of introducing our very first Ambassador Angels (AAs), who are assigned to be our voice in the wider community. Our AAs share the vision of our projects as well as real life experiences on the ground to give anyone a great flavour of what we are about.

The commissioning service was wonderfully led by our fabulous Rev Noelle Coe, URC's minister Revd Wayne Hawkins and PC Jonny Smale from Surrey Police who spoke about how care on the streets and kindness with the listening ear stretches far. We were joined by our special guests the Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Masuk Miah, Guildford MP Angela Richardson, Peter Rudkin, representing Guildford Philanthropy, and other local organisation as well as supporters from partnering charities and businesses. Thank you to Guildford URC in helping us celebrate this annual event and the staff team who have worked so hard in hosting us with a fantastic worship team and delicious refreshments. Onwards into the next year!



From the Chaplain

2023 going into 2024 has been a very busy time at GTCC. It finally feels like we are back to 'normal' after the pandemic. There is still a big push on recruitment across our three projects as the demands for our services continue to increase. We are so grateful to all the volunteers who are prepared to give of their time in such a selfless way as they walk alongside others at times of need.

We have undertaken a lot of training in all three of our projects, from drug awareness, listening skills, safeguarding, to training with Surrey police. Don't worry about the last one; it's to help raise our awareness of potential dangers when out with Street Angels and how to keep ourselves safe and know our boundaries. Not an assault course!

If you or anyone you know would like to go on a taster night with Street Angels, do consider if it is something you would like to do. Please get in touch. Likewise, if you would like to know what is involved in becoming a Community Angel or a chaplain we are always happy to have a chat.

Thank you for your continued support, prayers and practical help.

Noelle



Ambassador Angels

Welcome to our Ambassador Angels. We are delighted that five of our Angels have stepped forward to offer talks or information to groups, schools, churches, work places etc. If you know of anyone who wants to know more about what we do, get in touch with Noelle.

Fundraising News

Over the years, GTCC has been blessed by many faithful churches and individuals who support us financially for which we are so very appreciative. With our projects and staff team growing since 2008, regular giving now only accounts for about 40% of our total income. The balance comes from a mix of generous grant funders, rare legacies, and fundraising events, which is becoming increasingly challenging in these difficult times. Encouragingly, our projects have been recognised by several new funders this year, even though, at the time of writing, we are still budgeting for a planned deficit of some £30k. 2024 will be equally challenging, so we are always happy to explore new funding opportunities – do get in touch via the office, if you think you can help.

I'd like to give a special shout out of some of the local organisations that have supported us this year – Guildford Poyle Charities, The Community Foundation for Surrey, Guildford Philanthropy, TKMaxx, Surrey County Council, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioners, Tesco's Community Fund, Guildford Cathedral, The University of Surrey, The Assura Social Impact Fund and Guildford Scottish Country Dancing Club – many thanks to all. We could not continue to operate without such generosity. Our volunteers will be pleased to hear that thanks to our Surrey County Councillor, Fiona Davidson, we have been able to invest in new phones for our Community Angels team and new uniforms (including some much needed extra winter hats) for our Street Angels – great news, these are really appreciated and will help us deliver our services more effectively.



We held two successful fundraising events in 2023, the Tea Tent at St Martha's on the Hill in May and our annual Quiz Night, this year held at St Saviours Church (see article below). Plans are already underway for a range of special events in 2024, please "save the dates" on page 6 as we really do need everyone's help to balance the books!

Louise Kenyon, Trustee, Fundraising Lead



Ways to donate to GTCC

It will cost over £100,000 in 2024 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 available now

GTCC have published the latest Annual Review. You can read all about our finances and more by clicking here for a copy of our Annual Review 2022

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



GTCC picture album

It's been a busy few months for the Chaplaincy. As well as the regular Street Angel patrols, home and work place visits, our staff and volunteers have been seen in the local and national media. When Guildford MP Angela Richardson hit the streets with us we were mentioned in Parliament a few days later. Rev Noelle has attended several local business award ceremonies in collaboration with Experience Guildford. Volunteer Alistair was interviewed by the Surrey Advertiser (see p8) and Mike S by Guildford Borough Council social media team ahead of the students Freshers week.

We were invited to the Best Bar None Awards evening and Purple Flag award celebration. A local TK Maxx employee nominated us for a £500 community award. Many volunteers took part in a Real Change conference. Volunteers Mary and Kathy took to the dance floor in Labyrinth! The Street Angel team leaders had a productive planning meeting with co-ordinator Angela Gammage. We also supported the local Emergency services carol service (see p12) And 2024 looks like we will be serving the community in many more ways. So a huge thanks to all our volunteers, supporters, staff and volunteers for the difference you are making 🙏❤️😊



Quiz Night Boosts Chaplaincy Funds



With a 'full house' of 150 people attending and such a lovely friendly party atmosphere, it was great to see so many of our Angels, friends and supporters at St Saviour's Church for our 2023 Quiz night. Everyone was So Generous! And we are delighted to report that we raised an amazing £3225. A great result!

This enables the important work of Street Angels, Community Angels and Volunteer Chaplains to continue, as the need never goes away. As GTCC

Trustee Chair Chris Britton reflected afterwards "I'm sure you will have picked up information on the night about ways that you can continue to support GTCC throughout the year, but if not, details are always available on the website <https://gtcc.org.uk/donate/> - like all charities, GTCC really appreciates regular giving, however small the amount. And of course, if you or someone you know might be interested

in volunteering, why not make contact to find out more? <https://gtcc.org.uk/get-involved/>

Thanks again to all those who attended, served and supported the GTCC Quiz night. You really are making a difference to people's lives every week in Guildford. Look out for our 2024 Fundraising events, listed on the next page (6)



Suzette, GP Chaplain

Our Volunteer Chaplain's project continues to grow, and we are delighted that we have recently placed our third GP Chaplain in a surgery in the area. Our GP Chaplains are now in much demand, working alongside the health professionals in Binscombe, Dapdune and Stoughton, providing the gift of a listening ear to a wide range of people. Here new volunteer, Suzette, shares her thoughts on her role as a Chaplain.

'To give your attention to someone in need, in pain or in distress is the first step, and sometimes it's the only thing, the only step you can take..... and if you pay attention to someone, you are loving them,'

These words by Fr Lawrence Freeman, sum up how much of a privilege it is for me to be a GP Chaplain allocated to a local doctor's surgery. Listening and being alongside people as they tell of lives, relationships, joys, and sadness. Tears, sighs, laughter often shared after an initial reluctance, verbalised as 'I'm not religious' 'not sure why I'm here', is very special.

As we sit together, I knowing nothing more than their name, it is in the silences, the laying down and the speaking out loud of expectations, fears, dreams that hope is found, the first step perhaps for them to find a way.

A working life in healthcare and a faith which sustains me, is a great foundation for this role, however it's the people. I love people, always have done, their uniqueness.

How, wonderful that since the world began, no two snowflakes are the same, and no two people are the same either. Isn't that fantastic! And to be a voluntary GP Chaplain is simply fantastic!'



Dates for your 2024 diary

First Tuesday of the month starting 6 February - GTCC Monthly Prayer meeting, St Mary's Church

Tuesday 13 February - Guildford High Street Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race, approximately 11-1pm – we have been chosen as the Charity of the Year & will need a team of Angelic runners and donation collectors. The organisers are keen to have lots of other teams sign up and sponsors, if you can help with this please get in touch!

Tuesday 12 March 'Chaplaincy - A contemporary tool for Mission' 9.30am – 1.30pm, at St Saviours Church This will be a key date in GTCC's calendar for 2024. We would love everyone who is involved, exploring or supporting chaplaincy in Guildford to come, be encouraged and inspired. Please do save the date in your diary and share with anyone you know who may also be interested in joining us. More details to follow

Saturday 11 May Cathedral fundraising Sponsored Tower Climb,, morning – please save the date

Social Media Links



Facebook

@AngelsGFD @ComAngelsGFD



X

@AngelsGFD @ComAngelsGFD



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/guildfordtownchaplaincy/>

ROC Angels comes of age

This year the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy has celebrated its Crystal anniversary and in those 15 years around 200 people have volunteered through our 3 main projects with many more becoming prayer partners supporters and trustees. But did you know that this year Street Angels nationally is celebrating its 18th birthday and so comes of age!

Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) Angels is the umbrella organisation for around 100 local projects working within the night-time economy, at major events such as music festivals or within communities across the UK and in America, Spain, Seychelles, Australia and Brazil. In that time they have helped change a culture with a UK reduction in alcohol related violence and A&E admissions. Indeed it was good to hear from Surrey police at the recent commissioning service that our projects are still reducing nighttime crime as well as saving police time.



The ROC Angels website reflects

"Street Angels - started in 2005 as a response to needs and issues in the night-time economy in Halifax. Street Angels has gone on to be replicated in over 100 communities across the UK and overseas and has contributed to significant reductions in violent crime and anti-social behaviour in many of the places we serve. Street Angels are teams of volunteers patrolling town centres with a heart to love the person in front of them. Our teams: look out for those who are or could become vulnerable; offer flip-flops, low level first aid, lollipops, water; give time for people to chat; work with the Police, Local Authority and pubs and clubs towards a safer and more vibrant night-time place; work within other areas of need and vulnerability such as transport hubs; become part of the wider community through volunteering at community events."



Paul Blakey MBE, (pictured left) the founder of Street Angels, says, "Eighteen years ago the original Street Angels didn't imagine that our simple response to an out of control Friday and Saturday night in Halifax would become a movement of projects around the world."

"People who care, simply loving the person in front of them, is a powerful act that makes a massive difference whether on the streets, at a music festival, in a shop or nightclub through chaplaincy or supporting some of the most vulnerable within our communities."

I am so thankful for everyone who has volunteered and stood with us throughout these last eighteen years."

To receive the ROC Angels newsletter and hear about other projects around the country visit <https://roc.uk.com/rocangels/>

Street Angel Alistair recognised for 'outstanding community contribution'.

A retired management consultant who swapped the international finance sector for a local volunteering role is the Guildford Resident of the Month for September.

Alistair Pearson joined the Guildford Street Angels in 2017 and is one of over 50 people who regularly give up their time to help anyone in need while out for the night in the town centre. Alistair said:

We complement the work of the emergency services at a time of night when you often have thousands of revellers milling around, some of them the worse for wear due to drink or drugs, or both.

"We provide a listening ear, helping to keep people calm and making sure that they remain safe and if necessary, receive any medical care they may need.

"I joined the Street Angels because I believe it's important that everyone plays a part in their community and I hope others will get involved, whether with the Street Angels or another local good cause."

Organised by the Surrey Advertiser and sponsored by Guildford based solicitors DMH Stallard, the Resident of the Month Award recognises unsung heroes who deserve recognition for their outstanding contribution to society.

Samantha Jago, partner and family law expert at DMH Stallard met Alistair this week to present him with a certificate. She said: "As part of his award, Alistair also receives a complimentary meal for two.



Christmas Tree Festival brings Generous Gift

GTCC are extremely grateful to Guildford United Reformed Church (URC) in Portsmouth Road, Guildford, who, once again made us a beneficiary of their annual December Christmas Tree Festival. We were both delighted and surprised to receive an amazing £1,130 towards our ongoing work. Many thanks to all at the URC and those who gave generously during the festival

A conversation with one of our longest-standing Community Angels, Julie.



What motivated you to become a Community Angel?

'After leaving my job as a project manager for a local charity back in 2016 to move in with and care for my parents, I experienced loneliness and isolation while being away from my home and immediate family. It was volunteers working with charities such as the Alzheimer's society and MacMillan who made such a difference during that time and helped to make things a little more bearable for me.

This inspired me to find a volunteering opportunity that would enable me to help others who, for whatever reason, were struggling with loneliness. I feel privileged to have been part of the first cohort of Community Angel trainees in November 2017 and since then have been fortunate to support 9 clients.'

Can you tell us about something you have found rewarding?

'The element of the role that I've found the most rewarding is seeing people make changes to their lives that have made a positive and lasting difference. I have really enjoyed getting to know all my clients and feeling that you're helping is really special.



One example of a befriending outcome that has been particularly rewarding is a gentleman who had become very isolated and depressed after ill health forced an early retirement. Since supporting him he has learnt to make some simple meals, taken up a new hobby to keep tropical fish, joined a gym and achieved some simple goals of gently increasing his activity level. My befriending relationship came to an end recently and it is heart-warming to know that he has connections in the community now and people he can chat to.'

Have you found aspects of the role challenging?

'One thing to mention that I've found challenging is the temptation to want to do things for your client rather than with them. There is a strong natural desire to want to help and while it is appropriate to make the odd call or accompany a client along to a community group for the first time, I have to remind myself that our help is temporary and that our aim is to step away after they have hopefully developed confidence and a greater sense of self-reliance.'

Have there been any surprises for you during your time as a Community Angel?

'A pleasant and unexpected surprise of befriending has been how much I have learnt from my clients and how they have inspired me. To give an example: one client who, despite suffering from agoraphobia and extreme life challenges, was motivated to do some on line adult education and she inspired me to do the same. We were able to share our experiences and encourage one another.'

Do you have any tips for new volunteers?

'If I were to recommend one tip to help new volunteers in establishing their first befriending relationship it would be to concentrate on listening. Adopting all your active listening skills (which you learn about on the training) and encouraging your client to talk using open ended questions, empathy and showing a genuine interest in what they are saying, helps to establish a good rapport that provides the foundation for an ongoing relationship.'

Susanna and I are immensely grateful to all of our Community Angels volunteers for the time and dedication that you have shown to the project throughout 2023 and wish you joy and peace this Christmas and good health and hope in 2024.

Anne Thornton, Community Angels Co-ordinator, December 2023

GTCC welcomes new Trustees and thanks former Treasurer



At the most recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, Chair, Chris Britton thanked and made a presentation to Mike Gercke (pictured left) on his retirement as Treasurer of GTCC. Mike has given exceptional service as Treasurer almost from the start of the project, 15 years ago. His cheerful professionalism, creativity and involvement in so many things has been hugely valued by GTCC, keeping the charity's financial affairs in good order.

At the same meeting two new Trustees were appointed, our new Treasurer, Chris Burrows, and Toby Nicholls.

Chris says "I've always admired the work GTCC does in the community and its heart for helping the vulnerable. It's exciting to get to play a role in the charity continuing its good work far into the future."

Toby says "GTCC has been a part of my life since its birth 15 years ago when my wife and I became Street Angels until we had kids. Recently a need and opportunity arose for a Chaplain to the Casino (now Aux) at the same time I was asked to consider the Trustee role. It felt like God opening door to serve both where my heart and gifts lay."

Chris and Toby are warmly welcomed to the team, together they bring a wealth of experiences and talents to the Charity as we enter the next stage of the Chaplaincy's journey.

New Treasurer and Board member Chris Burrows (L)

New 'Aux' nightclub Chaplain and Board member Toby Nicholls pictured below with Susanna Hoar (project co-ordinator)





Connecting with our Community

We all want a peaceful place in Guildford and a healthy community, where people live and work together in harmony. As we know volunteers are necessary and extremely helpful part for our thriving neighbourhood. People from all walks of life donate their time and effort to Guildford night economy and we have recently started increasing number of people who volunteer for our organisation, which is great news! We feel that people who are connected to the community they are most likely to take responsibilities and commitment to the place where they live.

Our new volunteer Rosie mentioned the following:

"I joined the Street Angels as I'm passionate that anyone should be able to get home safely

without fear or harm, and wanted to do my bit to make the streets feel a safer place. It's a great community to be a part of and I drive home at the end of each shift knowing I've made a positive impact on people's nights out."

In 2022 alone, Street Angels volunteers provided 500 shifts where they encountered 3411 people, they have collected 3181 bottles and handed out 3500 lollies that diffused the aggravation and violence. These actions helped not only Police and other services but generally the people who live and work in Guildford.

Street Angel co-ordinator Angela Gammage

Angels join 7th Annual Emergency Services Christmas Celebration



GTCC were delighted to be invited to the recent Emergency Services Christmas Carol service at St Saviours Church. Amongst the distinguished guests were Tim De Meyer, Chief Constable of Surrey Police, Damian Watts, Area Commander for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. From SECAM Ambulance Service, Jo Crerar, Operating Manager Chertsey and Banstead area. Chaplains were also represented with Frances Novello, Chaplaincy lead for Surrey and Sussex joined by our own Rev Noelle Coe. The new Rector of St Saviour's, Graham Shaw led a talk on the theme of Choosing Hope, based on a piece of artwork recently seen for sale in a Guildford shop. Sgt Simon Berger from Surrey Police and the area Christian Police association (CPA) rep thanked Rev Kath Morris from St Saviours, the distinguished guests and congregation for coming and sharing in this special Christmas celebration. The service featured the wonderfully talented St Saviours worship group who not only led the carols but shared a performance of 'See Amid the Winter Snow'. Police cadets served minced pies and mulled fruit juices whilst the Surrey police band played seasonal pieces.

Around a dozen GTCC volunteers and Trustees shared in the service, many of whom reflecting they had enjoyed the service and the opportunity to network with colleagues and the services we support together.

