

HARK!

*Newsletter of Guildford
Town Centre Chaplaincy*



streetangels 
communityangels 
volunteerchaplains 



Chaplaincy Commissioning Service Celebrates New Volunteers

In November, volunteers from our three projects came together with GTCC staff, trustees, friends and supporters to give thanks for the work of GTCC and to commission our new volunteers at our annual Commissioning Service. We are very grateful to St Joseph's Catholic Church for opening their doors to us and were delighted to find GTCC volunteers from the Catholic Parish of Guildford among the welcomers, hospitality team and choir, who all helped to make us feel very welcome.

We were honoured to be joined by:

The Bishop of Brighton & Arundel, Richard Moth (recently announced as Archbishop-designate of Westminster and, as such, head of the Catholic Church for England and Wales, pictured right)

HM Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Mr. Michael More-Molyneux,
The Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Howard Smith.

Representatives from Surrey Police and other community-based organisations & charities

This special service, held in a different Guildford church each year, celebrates the heart of GTCC. We remain rooted in the shared vision of local Christian churches who came together to walk alongside those in our community who need a little extra support.



Counsellor Fiona Davidson Backs £1,000 Grant for Chaplaincy

Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy has been awarded £1,000 from Surrey County Council’s ‘Your Counsellor Fund’, made possible through the support of former Surrey County Counsellor, Fiona Davidson, to purchase a laptop for office-based staff and volunteers. This will support two key projects—Community Angels and Volunteer Chaplains—which provide support to clients in need across Guildford.



The new laptop will enable volunteers to give office-based support to project staff, increasing the reach of services such as befriending, mental health support, and outreach in clients’ own homes, as well as in doctors’ surgeries, schools and workplaces. Last year alone, Community Angels provided over 580 visits and outings, boosting confidence and mental wellbeing, while Volunteer Chaplains engaged with more than 570 people, offering a listening ear and support in a variety of settings.

This funding highlights how small agencies can make a big difference — helping residents in need, tackling health inequalities, and spreading kindness throughout Guildford.

Anne Thornton, Community Angels Coordinator, said, “We are truly grateful for the generous support of Fiona Davidson at Surrey County Council. Grants like this enable our Volunteer Chaplains and Community Angels to continue making a real difference—whether it’s offering a listening ear to someone in distress, providing companionship to those who feel lonely, or offering support in challenging moments. This funding helps us be there for our community when they need it most, promoting kindness, reassurance, and a sense of belonging for all.”

Sunday 18th October 2026

Could you run 10k for GTCC, from Guildford to Merrow and back? Maybe you or some work colleagues would relish this opportunity to be part of a big initiative raising money for a good cause. Please start the conversation



now and get in touch with the GTCC office for further details, and be part of the run for fun and funds! 🏃🏃🏃🏃

volunteer chaplains

Welcome to Kay, the new GP Chaplain for St Lukes Surgery

I started as a GP chaplain at St Luke's surgery in November 2025. I first heard about GTCC when I saw a call for volunteer GP chaplains in my church newsletter in Spring 2025. I'd been thinking about chaplaincy for a while and liked the idea of being part of the GP Chaplains team at GTCC. I was attracted by the opportunity to spend 1-2-1 time with patients, the sense of belonging from being based at a specific surgery, and the chance to listen to those who might not otherwise have anyone to tell their story to.



In turn, I offered skills in coaching from a career in university careers/employability work, counselling skills in eating disorders, voluntary work at The Lighthouse in Woking and life experience as an advocate for family

members with health issues. GTCC training has helped me to clarify the role (which sits somewhere between counselling, coaching and prayer ministry), think about real life scenarios and has provided vital peer support.

I immediately felt comfortable at chaplaincy prayer and training sessions. The community is supportive, pragmatic and experienced in managing real-life situations in a compassionate way. I've learnt about the diverse settings chaplains work in and what works well in building strong relationships with placement providers.

There is good follow-up from my immediate team, and I genuinely feel the wider chaplaincy team 'has my back'. I'm really looking forward to developing the service at St Luke's in 2026.

communityangels

Len's GTCC Years: Stories, Lessons, and Lasting Friendships

These are my reminiscences as a GTCC supporter, gaining some T shirts on the way (well, maybe heavy coats and fleeces but you get the drift!).

I was a Street Angel in the early days of GTCC when crowds poured out of Cinderella Rockafellas at the top of North Street and flooded down the street to the taxi ranks. At that time the pop-up urinal worked and the CCTV operator was able to be a "voice from the clouds" occasionally!

I remember as a side line, on windy nights, trying to keep the market stalls' covers on and occasionally going outside of CCTV range (naughty Street Angel!) to visit the little "under the arches" night club that sprung up near the Farnham Road car park. Sometimes we needed to tell some Surrey police officers where to go (politely of course) because they did not know Guildford and could not find the more obscure clubs and pubs.



I spent a few years as a Volunteer Chaplain covering the shops in White Lion Walk and Friary Street. You get a real insight about how the retail trade operates and I established a few contacts that I still bumped into from time to time long after I had finished this role.

From well before the Covid pandemic I served as a Community Angel, which was a real privilege. Not all my involvement worked out as we hoped, but for a number of the clients I journeyed with them through life's darker and more challenging situations. The role is providing a regular presence slightly removed from their own small circle of contacts. Community Angels serve as a dependable support, a listening ear, a sounding board, a solace and an encouragement.

As I supported my first client through Covid it became clear that my regular phone calls were one of the few, if only, contacts he was receiving from anyone. Belatedly he started receiving calls from all over the country through a government initiative which was good, but did not continue. I spent time with one gentleman who was fit and able but had very challenging family medical issues. The HIVE in Park Barn provided a convenient meeting place but for other clients I have met at their home or with a regular walking group.

After many months of weekly visits we did see some very positive changes in the clients' situations which is a key objective for the ministry. It is a very regular commitment but also a privilege because you realise how much of their lives they have shared with you and how much your visits are appreciated.

I write "we" because Anne and Susanna provide invaluable backup and advice so you are not alone! If you have half a day a week to give, I have found that being a Community Angel is a very worthwhile contribution to the community and very rewarding.

Len Sheppard



Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, came out with Street Angels the weekend before Christmas



Out and About with our Angels last Autumn and Christmas



Jane Tyson, Guildford's Deputy Mayor, and volunteers Wendy and Ray Dunnett, who decorated our angel-themed Street Angels tree at the URC fundraising Christmas Tree Festival, with Anne Thornton in December.



Special guests at this year's Commissioning Service - see page 1 for full story.



Volunteers shared the Emergency Services' carol service at St Saviour's in December, whilst on the streets volunteers met all sorts of wonderful people. Top right revellers 'photo-bomb' Angels photo outside the Labyrinth Nightclub!

From the Chaplain

It is always a real joy to leaf through HARK and see such a wonderful cross-section of events, initiatives, stories and experiences connected with GTCC. Since our last edition, alongside our three main projects, there has been so much else happening that it's hard to know where to begin!

Our new volunteer fundraiser, Jules, has been incredibly busy submitting grant applications to a variety of funding bodies. We've also been encouraged by individuals choosing to support the chaplaincy financially on an annual basis, and by churches continuing to commit to GTCC as one of their mission partners. All of this enables us to keep doing the important work of gently coming alongside people — whether on a night out, in their homes, or in the workplace.



There are a few highlights I'd especially like to shout about. We've welcomed some fantastic visitors who have come to see our work first-hand, including the High Sheriff of Surrey and his wife, who joined Street Angels for a night out in Guildford. We also hosted the Police and Crime Commissioner and her communications colleague, who went on to produce a brilliant YouTube video about the work.

We've been delighted to have trainee church workers completing placements with us, and very grateful to two volunteers who sang with a barbershop choir at the Guildford Fringe and generously donated the proceeds to GTCC. Our Street Angels socials continue to grow and now include invitations to all our volunteers. These evenings often feature guest speakers on topics such as drug awareness, mental health, drink spiking and policing — with huge thanks to the local pubs who have hosted us.

Other highlights include our monthly prayer gathering on the first Tuesday of each month at 12 noon at St Mary's, Quarry Street. followed by tea and coffee; coffee mornings and afternoon teas; a tour of Riverside Hostel to help us better understand their work; the Emergency Services Carol Service (where Street Angels are affectionately known as the "fourth service"); TV interviews; presenting awards at the Best Bar None event — and so much more besides.

Guildford is a fascinating place to live and work, and I'm so glad that GTCC has been planted in such a diverse, caring and vibrant community. It's a place that helps all of us flourish and grow. Psalm 127 reminds us, "*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.*" GTCC began as a vision of the Christian church, and it continues to flourish with God at its centre. We are deeply grateful for all our friends and partners who are walking this journey with us.

Lisa Townsend, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, Joins the Christmas Angels!

We were delighted to be joined by Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, the weekend before Christmas. We thank her for her generous donation, supporting our work into 2026. Here's what



she had to say about Street Angels volunteers work on her video (see here) <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1660226694939602>

"It was the weekend before Christmas and all around Guildford, people are out and about enjoying Guildford's pubs and clubs, and it's absolutely fantastic to see the night-time economy in Surrey doing so well. But some of those revellers will end up a little bit the worse for wear.

I'm Lisa Townsend. I'm Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, and tonight I'm out with a very special group of angels who volunteer their time to look after people who may have overdone it a little bit and find themselves vulnerable.

The amazing Guildford Street Angels, managed by Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy, give up their spare time to patrol here on Friday and Saturday nights, providing care and support to visitors to make sure they're safe. That could be to those who may have had a little bit too much to drink, may be homeless, or in a vulnerable state.

There are currently over 50 members of the Street Angel team. They encounter about three and a half thousand people here every year, helping to avert calls to the ambulance service and assisting people as they spill out of the various night-time spots in the town.

They are probably best known for their friendly approach and handing out lollipops and flip-flops to revellers as they make their way home.

It's gone midnight here and Guildford is pretty packed with people out and about enjoying the last Saturday night before Christmas. We've been out on patrol visiting some of the clubs and pubs and speaking to people about some of what they're seeing. We've also been to the train station and had a chat to staff there and seen some of those making their way to and from Guildford tonight.

If you're interested in learning more about the work the Street

Angels do or becoming a volunteer, please visit their website to find out more. I'm so proud to be able to support Guildford Street Angels through my community safety fund, which helps to support volunteer uniforms, first aid kits, water, and blankets. And I want to take the opportunity to say a massive thank you to those who give up their time to make a really good and positive difference in Guildford and also to keep our community safe."

And as follow up on our Facebook page Lisa wrote:

Lisa Townsend PCC

"It was, as always, an enormous pleasure to join the team out in Guildford on one of the busiest nights of the year as people celebrated the Christmas holidays.

Thank you for the phenomenal work you do, late at night and often in the cold and wet, supporting our residents as they enjoy our wonderful county town.

It's an honour to be able to support you and I look forward to coming out again soon!"

Peter Samuel Shares His Journey as an Ambassador Angel

My name is Peter Samuel and up until mid 2023 I was a regular Street Angel, walking the streets of Guildford on a Friday and Saturday night between 10.30pm and 4.00am making sure people were safe, happy and not in any trouble.

Since then I have been acting as an Ambassador for Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy (GTCC) which Street Angels is part of. We visit places like hospitals, jobs fairs, colleges and people's homes where we set up stands to spread the word about the work we do, which also includes our other volunteer work with Community Angels and Volunteer Chaplains.



On 18th September 2025 GTCC was invited to take a stand in Guildford College at the start of the academic year. The stand was manned by myself and a colleague. Guildford College has 2000 students and we probably chatted to about 100 of them. They enquired about the work we did, the equipment we carried, and were pleased to hear we were out late at night making sure they were safe. Some were interested in possibly joining us and one or two even signed up for a "taster" evening to come out with us and see what was involved.

It has been a real joy and pleasure to be involved in this essential work around Guildford Town for so many years.



Feedback from our social media posts



@AngelsGFD



Guildford Street Angels

Published by I... - 1h · 🌐

Here's another kind email that recently dropped into our mailbox:

"Hi, I just wanted to reach out to thank the street angels team for helping my 19 year old daughter ***** last night. I got a call from the police at 3.30am to tell me she had collapsed and was unconscious outside Labyrinth nightclub in Guildford. I'm not sure of the exact events that transpired but I do know that your team were involved in looking after her. So thank you so much for keeping her safe and getting her the medical attention she required. We got home from hospital a few hours ago and she is doing fine. Hopefully lesson learned as it could have been so much worse without yourselves and the other emergency responders there. Kind regards, ***** "

🙏🥰❤️ See less

Edit

Boost post

👍👍👍 You and 47 others

5 🗨️ 2 📱



Fantastic work, thank you so much for keeping our young people safe whilst they party,
Vanessa K 🤗

Well done.
So reassuring to know you are looking out for vulnerable young people in town at night, Rachel N

100% Grateful for Street Angels. On streets at night. The Lord bless you all. Thank you Janet P

You do an amazing job that not many of us would be willing to do. Well done 🙌
Julie A

Three cheers for Street Angels!
James T

High Sheriff of Surrey Backs Street Angels with On-the-Ground Visit

Peter Cluff, the High Sheriff of Surrey, recently joined a Street Angels shift in Guildford to experience first-hand the work carried out by volunteers late on a Friday night. In his blog post, he reflects on the evening spent patrolling the town centre alongside the Street Angels team and witnessing the challenges and needs that arise after dark.

Overall, he describes the shift as an eye-opening insight into the dedication, compassion and quiet effectiveness of our volunteers who work each weekend to support Guildford's night-time community.



My Night as a Street Angel

"Having lived in Guildford for over 25 years I have been aware of the wonderful Street Angels and the part they have played keeping people safe

and with their presence helping to prevent incidents from occurring. Last night Suzanne and I joined them on their patrol. They go out every Friday and Saturday night from 10.30pm to 4am in two patrols of two or three volunteers, covering all areas from the station up to G-Live, checking in with the pubs and clubs and looking out for people who may need assistance.

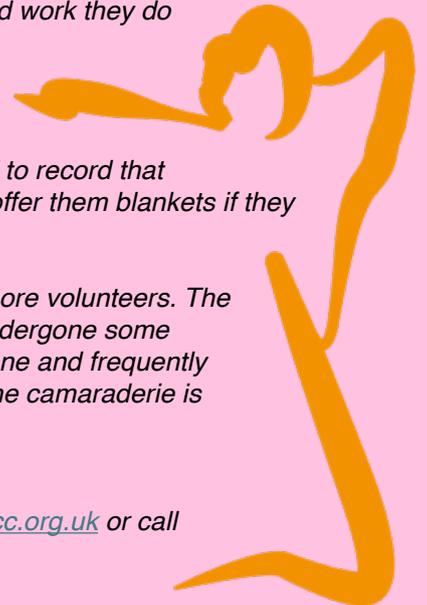
Friday night was especially busy with many people coming into town from the Oktoberfest event in Stoke Park. A number of friendly greetings and words of thanks from people out enjoying themselves demonstrated the respect the Street Angels have and a recognition of the good work they do especially towards the end of the night as people start heading home.

I learned that lollipops defuse a lot of aggressive or emotional situations, everyone likes being offered a lollipop and also offering flip-flops to young ladies who have removed their painful heels is especially welcome. It was sad to record that there were five people we came across sleeping rough but the Street Angels offer them blankets if they do not want other support.

Everyone is a volunteer and the Street Angels are always on the lookout for more volunteers. The commitment is to be available one Friday or Saturday a month after having undergone some training sessions. It is very rewarding when you know you have helped someone and frequently letters or social media posts praise the Street Angels for their interventions. The camaraderie is great and McDonalds even offer you free food!"

If you would like to enquire about volunteering, please email streetangels@gtcc.org.uk or call 07717 876853

Photo from left to right – me, Tony, Sharon, Susanna, Suzanne and team leader Jo.





Events coming up in 2026:

Tuesday 3rd February **GTCC prayer meeting** 12 noon St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

Tuesday 3rd March **GTCC prayer meeting** 12 noon St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

Wednesday 4th March **Community Angels drop-in** 1:30-3:30pm Open Grounds Cafe GU2 4BE

Tuesday 17 March **GTCC's Annual Conference**, 9:30am-2pm St Saviour's Church, Guildford
'The Importance of faith and reflective practice in Chaplaincy'

Tuesday 7th April **GTCC prayer meeting** 12 noon St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

Date to be confirmed **Tea Tent fundraiser**, St Martha's on the Hill 10:00 - 16:00

Date and Venue tbc **Street Angels informal gathering**.

Tuesday 5th May **GTCC prayer meeting** 12 noon St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

Tuesday 2nd June **GTCC prayer meeting** 12 noon St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

Sunday 18th October **Guildford 10k Fundraiser Run** - Help us raise £1k for each 1km & keep fit!

Sunday 26th November **GTCC Annual Commissioning Service** - Burpham Church GU4 7HW

