

Stockton Town Pastors

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk



STP NOW DOES SATURDAYS!!

Stockton Town Pastors has extended their patrols to include Saturdays, from March 2010. It is already clear that there is at least an equal amount of need for help and support on Saturdays, with pubs clubs and food outlets reporting it to be much busier than on a Friday. Certainly the experience of STP volunteers has been very positive, and my guess is that in course this will prove to be the busier of the two nights for us.

Since the start of our scheme in December we have built up a regular rota of volunteers for a Friday evening, to such an extent that we sometimes have more volunteers than we can cope with! The task now is to convert some of this enthusiasm into Saturday patrols..... However, this will always be more challenging as most are actively involved in church services on a Sunday, and having to get up early after having been out on the streets of Stockton until 3am is really difficult.

Town Pastors have quickly become established in the minds of those using and servicing the night-time facilities, and our reception is excellent with the police and licensed premises door-staff now referring those in need directly to us. We continue to have some heartening conversations and, of course, the one thing that we are able to offer is the time to listen to individuals and to treat them in a non-judgemental and understanding way. There have been a number of direct requests for us to pray for and with people right there on the street—even though this is not something we openly suggest— and it is humbling to be in such a position where we can at least bring some hope into the lives of others.

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STOCKTON CCTV CENTRE

Stockton Borough Council has offered to place an STP volunteer in their CCTV Control Centre on the nights we are on duty, in order to extend the CCTV and radio communications cover to our scheme. Any volunteer who has undergone STP training can volunteer for this, and will be given on-the-job training and support by their staff. However, the only sticking point at the moment is that a photo-ID card is needed in order to identify volunteers before they can be given access to the premises. A solution is being worked upon, and volunteers should be in a position to work within this environment by the end of March. If you would like to become involved in this, please contact Steve Brock.

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FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT FOR THOSE IN NEED

Our experience so far has highlighted that all we can currently hope to do as town pastors is offer immediate help and support to those who are in need. Although we are able to provide written contact details of a number of local charitable and public support agencies quite often it would be of real benefit to them to offer an opportunity to meet later in the week and offer more personal support, when it is requested.

Currently the STP Steering Group is looking at how we might work more closely with other charitable organisations who already offer a similar level of personal support to those in need. There are clear benefits to coordinating our activities, as opposed to duplicating a service already offered by others. Having said that, there is scope to extend this follow-up support into the areas which are currently not covered by the usual means—in particular where chaotic lifestyles are at the heart of the difficulty.

There are a number of STP volunteers who have already expressed an interest in becoming involved in this particular work—please watch this space for further developments.

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BISHOP TOM COMES TO STOCKTON

The Bishop of Durham, Dr. Tom Wright, will be visiting Stockton shortly as he continues ‘The Big Read’ series of talks, and has asked to come out on patrols with Stockton Town Pastors on Friday 2nd April—Good Friday. What an evening and what a privilege that will be for everyone, especially those revellers whose normal experience of a night out involves only pints and pizzas! We hope to report on this more fully in the next issue of this newsletter.

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Prayer Support

Please log into our website as a registered user (go to the bottom left of the home page) for access to our ‘Discussion Forum’ which allows you to read and add prayer requests. This is the most effective way of spreading prayer support across each of the local churches currently involved in the scheme, and keeps people in touch with up-to-date information. If you have difficulty registering please email Steve Brock for assistance.

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Requests for Prayer

STP Open Evening—please invite friends and family
7.30pm Tuesday 13th April 2010, Stockton Parish Church Hall.

Steve Brock meets with Safer Hartlepool Partnership—possible future ‘Street Angels’ venture there. 10.30am Tuesday 30th March

Steve Brock meets with Safe in Tees Valley to consider evaluation and training
10am Wednesday 31st March