

# Across Town

Issue No. 18, January 2012



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

What a great start to 2012—STP have been asked to provide patrols in Yarm; the new website has been launched; the 'Love Stockton' project continues to gather pace and—speaking of love—one of our volunteers has just become engaged! On top of all of this, did you hear the Queen's Christmas speech, and what did you think of the Prime Minister David's Cameron's comments about the UK being a Christian Country and we should not be afraid to say so?

There is more about each of these events later in the newsletter, along with the more usual items of information.

On top of all of that—there is no snow (yet)! I do miss trudging around the town centre in the white stuff, but it is good to be offering flip-flops to those in need for their original purpose, rather than as mini-ski's.

Having moved into 2012, it is not too soon to start thinking about next Christmas and lots of people have suggested an open air Carol Service for the town. I will be looking at the possibilities of this with the council, churches and local businesses over the next few weeks, and will let you know how things go. Wouldn't it be great for the community of Stockton to celebrate the birth of Christ together in what is a fantastic High Street, surrounded by tasteful festive lighting against the back-drop of a historic town hall?

## STOCKTON TOWN PASTORS

*Care and Compassion in the Night-Time Environment*

Registered Charity No. 1143017

### STP Website

Our new website is now available for all to see, at [www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk](http://www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk). Many thanks to Neil McDonald who designed and developed the original site at short notice more than two years ago, which provided for all of our needs at that time. However, STP has grown significantly in that time and it was necessary to reflect this in our 'window to the world'.



There is in-depth information about STP, our aims, volunteers and details of the churches involved. There are also links to other Christian websites, to local public and third sector services and a 'What's On' information page.

Please take the time to have a look around the site, and if there is any other information you would like to see on it then please let us know. There is also a pass-worded 'Members Area' containing a blog, duty sheets etc., and if you would like access to this then please contact the project manager.

Also, don't forget that you can follow STP on the social media sites of Twitter and Facebook.



## The Queen's Speech

No, this isn't a sequel to the much acclaimed film starring Colin Firth, but is the annual Christmas message to the nation. It can be viewed on line at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=olEp\\_3Spc1g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olEp_3Spc1g), but for those who don't have access here is a summary of part of her message:



*"The world is going through difficult times. All this will affect our celebration of this great Christian festival.*

*Finding hope in adversity is one of the themes of Christmas. Jesus was born into a world full of fear. The angels came to frightened shepherds with hope in their voices. 'Fear not', they urged, 'We bring you tidings of great joy, which will be to all the people for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.'*

*Although we are capable of acts of great kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves—from our recklessness and our greed. God sent into the world a unique person, neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour with the power to forgive. Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.*

*It is my prayer that, on this Christmas day, we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels, and for the love of God, through Christ our Lord."*

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In addition to this, in a speech to celebrate the 400th birthday of the King James Bible, the prime minister David Cameron said the New Testament had helped give our country "a set of values and

morals which make Britain what it is today."

The prime minister said we should "actively stand up and defend" these Christian values. "The Bible has helped to shape the values which define our country," he said. "Responsibility, hard work, charity, compassion, humility, self-sacrifice, love, pride in working for the common good and honouring the social obligations we have to one another, to our families and our communities, these are the values we treasure," he told an audience of Church of England members at Christ Church Cathedral. **LONG LIVE TRUE HOPE!!**

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## Minimum Pricing for Alcohol

Remaining with a political yet extremely important theme, there is a lot of pressure being brought to bear on the drinks industry through a national minimum pricing campaign on the unit-price of alcohol. Further details can be found on the website: [www.minimumpricing.info](http://www.minimumpricing.info)

National figures indicate a 400% increase in the North East of the number of people in their 30's who will be hospitalised through alcohol related diseases, compared with just a few years ago. Jessie Jacobs, the CEO of 'A Way Out' a local charity supporting at-risk women and youths, has been involved in recent publicity around this, and her organisation regularly sees the damage done to young lives through alcohol mis-use.

The issue of 'top-loading' - consuming quantities of cheap alcohol at home before coming into the town to seek entertainment in local pubs and clubs—is recognised as a major national issue, and the government are currently examining the possibility of imposing a minimum price for a unit of alcohol in order to price cheap high-alcoholic content drinks out of the market.

The issue is also seriously affecting local businesses, with pubs clubs and restaurants not being able to compete on price with supermarket purchases.

## Spikeys—The Safe Way To Drink

How often have our volunteers come across people much the worse for drink, who think they have been ‘spiked’ (something extra added to a person’s drink without their knowledge or approval)? This is usually achieved by dropping a substance into someone’s drink whilst it is left unattended or the person is not watching. It is increasingly popular (and fashionable) to drink directly from glass bottles and, as the result of one girl having had her drink spiked—leaving her seriously ill—her father has developed a cheap product (a spikey) which plugs into the neck of the bottle, allowing a straw to be passed through yet which cannot be removed, therefore reducing the risk of spiking.

The reasons for carrying out this despicable act are many-fold, but date-rape drugs are believed to be one of the concoctions available on the internet.

Police and club owners in Stockton do not believe there is an unusual amount of ‘spiking’ of drinks



happening in the town, and the reporting of such incidents are rare. However, with the strong possibility of STP patrols starting in Yarm around an event

aimed mainly at young students, we would very much like to minimise the likelihood. As a result, we will be handing out ‘spikeys’ to those waiting to get in to nightclubs.

Club and pub owners all encourage others to drink responsibly, and are aware of our activity through their ‘Pubwatch’ forum.

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## Inter-Denominational Church Service

The next meeting of the Stockton Churches Together inter-denominational service is to be held at **6.30pm on Sunday 29th January 2012 at the Parish Church, High Street, Stockton**

## STP Patrols in Yarm

As you may already be aware, STP has been approached by the police to see if we might be able to offer help and support to revellers attending ‘Cannonball’ events taking place at ‘The Keys’ pub in Yarm High Street during out-of-term Wednesday evenings. The event attracts a huge amount of students who live locally but who are away at university, and provides them with an opportunity to meet up with friends and colleagues when they return home.

Recent events have seen the 600-capacity pub with long queues along the High Street waiting to get in, and at closing time a number of these are found to be in need of assistance to find taxis, meet with pre-arranged lifts and to cope with the effects of too much alcohol.

The STP project manager has met with Yarm church leaders at their ecumenical group and as a result an open evening has been arranged for **7.30pm on Tuesday 31st January 2012, at Yarm Methodist Church (TS18 9BW)**, for those in Yarm who might be interested in volunteering or supporting STP in this venture.

Please encourage anyone you know who may be willing to help in this to come along.

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## Volunteers —Tilery Lantern Parade

The Tilery school at Portrack will be holding its annual lantern parade around the estate on **Thursday 2nd February 2012, starting at 6pm**. STP, along with Portrack Baptist Church, have provided marshalls and stewards for this in the past, and it is a truly delightful event. We are looking for volunteers to help out in 2012, so please let the project manager know if you are able to come along—why not bring family and friends also—it is a great spectacle with hundreds of residents taking part.

## Announcing the Engagement of.....



**Adam Newsham  
And  
Danielle Massey**

Adam, who has been a volunteer with STP since May 2010, became engaged to Danielle on 27th December 2011. The happy couple have known each other for a while, having met at a friend's party, and have been dating for several months.

They have no plans to set a wedding date any time soon, and it was clear from activity on his Facebook account that Adam was in love, but he certainly kept this as a surprise for us at STP. He was on patrols with us on Christmas eve and made no mention of his intentions then—scared she would say 'NO', Adam?

Adam attends Norton Baptist Church and is learning to play the drums, whilst Danielle attends a church in Newton Aycliffe.

Many congratulations to you both, from all at Stockton Town Pastors.

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### **Vol. Training— Assessment Night**

All of those volunteers (from Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool) who attended the accredited training day in October are invited to an assessment evening at Stockton Baptist Tabernacle at 7pm on Monday 30th January 2012.

## Hartlepool Town Pastors

Volunteers have been patrolling Church Street in Hartlepool since May 2011, and have now been invited by the police to extend their patrols into the main Victoria Road and town centre night-time environment, such as has been the success of their 6-month pilot.

The Elim Living Waters church in Whitby Street will remain as their operating base, and the building refurbishment (to include accommodation for vulnerable females) is almost complete.

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### **Christian Nightlife Initiatives**

The January edition of the CNI newsletter is now available on line: [www.cninet.weebly.com/newsletters.html](http://www.cninet.weebly.com/newsletters.html). Visit the site to catch up on what is happening across the UK in more than 100 other street angels projects.

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### **Bridging The Gap—Middlesbrough**

A one day seminar "Tackling Poverty Together" is being held at the Trinity Centre, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough (TS3 6LD) on Thursday 23rd February 2012—9.30am start. If you would like to attend please contact the conference administrator at: [office@st-barnabas.net](mailto:office@st-barnabas.net)

Speakers include:

**Doctor Paul Crawshaw**, Teesside University Director of Social Futures Institute. Paul is an internationally recognised medical sociologist with particular interests in public health.

**Canon Paul Hackwood**, Chair of the Church Urban Fund. He has extensive experience of social justice issues from a faith perspective.

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Visit our Website:  
[www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk](http://www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk)

