

Across Town

Issue No. 46 February 2015



The STP Board meeting earlier this month has been one of great significance to the project, with a number of matters resulting.

The first of these is the **Retirement of our Chair, Revd. Derek Rosamond**, who has led the project from its earliest days. As well as being the vicar at Saint Paul's in Newtown, Derek is the Community Priest for the Borough of Stockton and is engaged in many other projects in the town. He retires from the ministry later in 2015, and is in the process of stepping down from several of these.

The community is likely to gain a successor to his role, and it is hoped that person will take the same passionate interest in STP that Derek has done.

The role of STP Chair is currently vacant, with an interim chair holding the reins until the next Board meeting on 25th March, when Board members will elect someone into this position.

A pressing concern of the Board is **Future Finance**. STP currently has sufficient reserves for the next 3—4 months and we can no longer be reliant upon a range of small local grants, as we have in the past. Funding across the whole voluntary sector is extremely tight, and as our project is now into its sixth year it is unable to take advantage of 'start-up' funds.

When STP was born, it was generally acclaimed by the Christian community to be a 'gift from the church to the residents of Stockton.' Of course, 90% of our volunteers are from a range of denominations covering 18 congregations and the ongoing commitment and passion of these individuals is a real blessing.

However, monies assigned in many churches to local outreach in Stockton now fails to reach STP. We

remain grateful to the small number of churches who continue to support us in this way, and of course we are pleased to have a small number of individuals who make gift-aided donations.

The STP Board must continue to encourage the local Christian community to support this work, and funding will be the main focus in coming weeks if our project is to survive this latest challenge.

Several steps are currently being taken to reduce our expenditure and increase income, including:

1. Encouraging individuals to consider gift-aided donations
 2. Continuing engagement with local churches
 3. Reviewing mobile unit running and servicing costs
 4. The possible hiring out of the mobile unit (together with driver) to local initiatives
 5. The post of project manager to become unpaid, as from 01.03.15
 6. A nominated Board member to identify and pursue financial grants.
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The list of **Category C1 Drivers** is to be enhanced by providing training free-of-charge to two of our younger volunteers—Adam Newsham and Sam Clark. Under-25's with the appropriate licence are now able to drive the vehicle, and Adam & Sam will soon be undergoing theory and practical tests. Should this process prove successful it may be possible to extend the invitation to other younger volunteers—they are the future of STP and being able to drive our unit is a valuable asset.

Volunteer Training starts again next month, with a session on alcohol awareness and addiction being

delivered by the Lifeline Project—7pm on Thursday 5th March 2015 at Stockton Baptist Tabernacle. Please do try to attend this, you will be surprised at how valued we are by those suffering from addiction and those agencies engaging with them. Several other sessions, including radio procedures leadership training and sexual abuse and rape crisis treatment will give volunteers a greater level of understanding. Look out for further information.

The biggest change in STP will be the commencement of **patrols in Yarm High Street on Fridays**, which will run for a three-month period starting on 10th April 2015.

The STP Board have agreed that our mobile unit, along with a minimum of five volunteers, will be available in Yarm from 10pm through until the end of the night-time economy there—expected to be anywhere between 1am and 2am.

There will be no Friday patrols in Stockton town centre during this review period. However, our regular Saturday evenings in the town will continue.

A lot of consideration has gone into this decision, not least of which is the confusion which may be caused to those we help and work alongside if, for example, were we to alternate between the two locations on a weekly basis. By simply saying Friday—Yarm and Saturday—Stockton we will send out a clear signal.

Most STP volunteers have indicated a desire to work in Yarm. However, if you do not wish to do so then please let the project manager know.

A full review will be undertaken at the end of this period and a decision made as to our continued presence in Yarm etc.

The Mobile Unit offers the opportunity to **reach out into smaller communities**—for example have you thought of running an ‘Alpha’ course in your neighbourhood but don’t have a venue? The van is indeed a Gift to be used for His Glory, and consideration is being given as to how we can best use it. Do you have any ideas?

Finally, **project manager Steve Brock** has given notice that he will be stepping down from that position by December 2015 at the latest. He has led the operational administrative and training support elements of the project for more than five years, and would like to take a step back—although he will remain as a volunteer.

The project manager role may need to be more clearly defined, and although the Board has a desire to once more make this a paid part-time post this will depend entirely upon future funding.

If you would like to take up this position, or a part of it, please speak with Steve who will provide training and will always be on hand with practical guidance.

Finally, it is important for volunteers to remember that we work as a team, taking direction from the evening’s coordinator or team leader. This keeps us safe and provides all volunteers with the confidence to work within the night-time environment.

We do this without judgement and regardless of circumstance. *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* John 13:34-35

Blessings,

Steve



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