



# Wantage and Grove STREET PASTORS

## Quarterly News

JAN  
2025



Rev Katherine Price  
Vicar of Wantage

Happy New Year!

For many of us, New Year is a time for over-indulgence followed by a resolution to do better in the next twelve months! At Wantage Parish, we were delighted to be joined by Nigel on behalf of the Street Pastors at our 'Discipleship Day', encouraging folk to make a 'new year's resolution' to give their time and talents to a good cause.

But this week our Bible reading is the Wedding at Cana, and a particularly inappropriate miracle for anyone observing Dry January: the turning of water into wine! This has always been one of my favourite bible stories. For the Street Pastors, this might be a parable of Jesus meeting people 'where they are'. He is responding to wedding couple's immediate practical need, which in their case is for more wine. Okay, giving out alcohol is not advisable behaviour for Street Pastors! But he sets us an example in the practical, low-key and non-judgmental way he responds to an ordinary human situation.

It's also a reminder that Jesus loved a party! It's perhaps too easy for us to see the night-time economy or people hanging around in groups outside as a problem or a threat. But first and foremost these are people celebrating and socialising. Just as Jesus turned water into wine, using a party as an opportunity to transform ordinary human goodness into a pointer to God's kingdom, so he can transform our ordinary human acts of kindness – our lollipops and flip-flops - into a sign of God's love.

## How we helped on the streets

Street Pastors patrol in all kinds of weather. Of course, winter brings the coldest cold, the iciest ice and probably the wettest wet; if that's even a thing! In November we spent some time chatting with a number of young people who had attended a funeral earlier in the day. The atmosphere in town all night was one of peace and respect.

Halloween is always a busy night in Wantage. We met lots of people and gave flip-flops to a young woman who was walking barefoot and had got blisters. Her partner asked us if we came from Heaven!

One night we found a handbag in Wantage, which we were able to return to the owner via our social media channels and we gave some assistance to a man who we found lying on the grass by the Parish Church.

New Year's Eve was busy and noisy! Thank you to the Street Pastors who volunteered for this extra patrol. The team chatted to lots of people, returned a lost shopping trolley to its rightful home, helped people with flip-flops, bottles of water and wet-wipes. They cleared up broken glass and encouraged a young man to get off King Alfred's statue!

Our afternoon patrols have been progressing. We're currently patrolling once a month. Lots of young people say that they follow us on TikTok and now they are beginning to get used to seeing us in the daytime. Please do pray for these patrols as they continue to meet lots of young people in Wantage each month.



## Front page news

Our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations hit the headlines with a front page article in *The Herald* over the Christmas period. The news article was picked up by lots of other news outlets such as Oxford Mail, Yahoo News, This Is Oxfordshire, MSN and wantage.com.

If you missed it, check out the article and wonderful photos on the Oxford Mail website...

Visit [bit.ly/wgsp-news1224](https://bit.ly/wgsp-news1224)



## Answered prayer!

We are so grateful for answered prayer!

At our AGM in July, Marj Lunn retired from her role as Secretary, although we are very happy that Marj continues to serve as a Trustee.

Our prayers for a new Secretary have been answered as Andrea Randall has joined the Management Committee as our new Secretary. Andrea has been a Street Pastor since our beginning in 2009 (original *Team 6* Street Pastor), so she's brings a lot of experience with her.

Welcome to the team Andrea!

## 2024 in review

Fifteen years, a milestone bright,  
Guiding hearts through day and night.  
With pasties warm, October's cheer,  
We marked a journey held so dear.  
A Post Box Topper proudly shown,  
A symbol of how seeds have grown.

Prayer and training set the goal,  
And afternoon patrols took their stroll.  
Four Sundays shared in churches near,  
With love and faith that drew us here.  
Tea and prayers, a quiz, a curry—  
Moments cherished, sweet yet merry.

The town, the parish, the Mayor's call,  
We showed up strong to serve them all.  
From first teams formed, two hearts took flight—  
Betty and John, now in God's light.  
Though teams are fewer, still we stand,  
With hope and peace across the land.

A Deputy watched our mission unfold,  
Through streets of Grove, both brave and bold.  
Fifteen years, the past still guides,  
As we walk with grace where hope abides.



## Thank you!

Huge thanks go to Wantage Methodist Church who donated the proceeds of their Christmas Tree Festival to Wantage & Grove Street Pastors. The festival, held over the weekend of the Dickensian Evening in December, raised £580 for our funds. The church was full of wonderful Christmas trees, presented by different local groups. Refreshments were served all weekend in the hall, surrounded by different stalls.

Thanks go to Wantage Methodist Church again, who hosted a singing workshop for International Day of Peace raising £165 for our funds.

And thank you to everyone involved in our Curry & Quiz night, back in November. It's always such a fun event and raised us over £700. Watch this space for information about the 2024 Curry & Quiz Night later this year.

For all your encouragement, generosity and support - thank you so much!



## Thank you to Gill Skidmore

We recently said 'farewell' to Gill Skidmore who has served as a Prayer Support Volunteer (PSV) for 15 years. Gill has been such an encouragement for her team of Street Pastors over the years, often serving and praying at our base on her own - not something that everyone is very keen to do. We asked Gill a few questions about being a PSV:

**What made you decide to be a PSV?** I never felt that I was the right person to be out on patrol, but I thought that being a PSV was a way of offering support to those incredible people who go out month after month. In some ways it was less of a sacrifice for me than for some others, as we have always been night owls, so staying out until 3.30 am was less difficult than it sounds.

**What kept you going all those years?** It was always interesting when the SPs phoned in to ask for prayers for particular situations. You could never be sure what was going to happen. I remember one night when the team phoned to say they were on the way back to base at the end of the shift. When they got there, there was a young man actually on the steps of the church in need of help. It was quite some time before they finally got in! Another time I was making hot drinks, soup and snacks, looking out warm clothing and charging phone batteries for a young man, while the SPs and the emergency services worked together to find temporary accommodation to get him out of the freezing temperatures that night. Those were the sort of occasions when you knew for sure that it was worth those very quiet nights when you felt as though you were missing your bed for nothing. I also welcomed the opportunity to get to know a lot of people from the other churches in Wantage and Grove. Over the years I have worked with quite a few different teams and it has been a joy to make new friendships. I think the variety has helped to keep me going.

**What will you miss?** I'll miss the feeling that I was part of a team who are making a real difference in our town, together with the companionship and friendship. Even coming home during the midsummer months as day was starting to break. I won't miss going to bed at 4 am and having about four hours sleep before having to be awake to do church duties!

## Wantage & Grove Street Pastors

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*Thank you*

To all our supporters!



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