

COMPASS

NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY PASTORS

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Building for the future

Community Pastors has marked two important first anniversaries this year, celebrating on 15th June our first year of serving our community, and it's also been one year since the devastating arson incident at the Billericay Hub on 4th April 2024

Whilst we are still some time away from a complete refurbishment, we have been able to use the Hub as a base for night-time economy patrols and community events in the town.

Meanwhile, Saffron Walden Community Pastors have been using the town's Community Link (above) where 'customers' can pop in for a chat over free tea, coffee, hot chocolate, biscuit and, of course, those famous Community Pastor lollies. Saffron Walden co-ordinator Dave Law said; "If you need to offload and talk to a listening, non-judgemental ear or want to know more about Community Pastors ... please come and say hello."

The domestic abuse charity J9 has also designated the Link as an official J9 Safe Space, where people experiencing domestic abuse can safely and discreetly get information and use a phone to contact a support service.

It's certainly a bright and inviting

space, and sets the standard for what the Billericay Hub might look like when refurbished.

The vision is to use the Billericay Hub for a variety of uses including a warm space for senior citizens, and a post-school project, providing a supervised safe venue for 'latchkey' school pupils, offering free WiFi, a hot drink and a friendly environment. The plan is that the new 'Love Billericay Centre' will also be able to provide extended daytime activities. We can't wait!



Community Pastors have been regulars at Saffron Walden Town FC's Catons Lane stadium this season. Dave and Karen Law (above) are always pleased to catch up with Gemma (centre), the Clubhouse and Bar Manager. Our volunteers enjoy engaging with supporters and staff during the matches and have reported some great conversations. We thank SWTFC for their warm welcome. It seems they are big fans of the 'Sky Blues'!



Rail project branches out

It's not all serious work for our rail teams. Whilst they have been, unfortunately, very active offering comfort following several incidents with people taking their own lives on the network, there's also some lighter moments to share, as volunteer Pedyr Roberts (above) found out with this couple of party-goers!

Pedyr can be seen patrolling our rail networks regularly, and his vision is to see the positive

Christian influence of Community Pastors spreading throughout the Essex rail network, into every branch line, and into East Anglia. We have already seen rail teams venturing as far as Ipswich and Cambridge.

Our patrol reports are revealing an interesting trend. About one in four interactions with staff, passengers or law-enforcement officers are leading to what we call a 'sigcon', a significant conversation, where the discussion upgrades to important life matters, such as illness, mental health, employment, relationships or spirituality.



Women on a mission!

Billericay Community Pastors can now be seen in the town's High Street at monthly 'Mission Saturdays' during the afternoon.

The project was the vision of volunteers Jayne Northcott and Jen Shelley (above) and they

certainly seem to be in their element here. Patrols have been extended to take in the town's park, Lake Meadows, and it's great to see volunteers praying with people who request it, in this beautiful open space.

COMMUNITY PASTORS
Serving where it matters



CPs on the right wavelength!

At our AGM on 8th June, it was noted how many new contacts were already aware of Community Pastors, knew what we did and, importantly, supported the concept of what we are trying to achieve.

Community Pastors is a small charity with no budget for a full-scale public awareness campaign, so this must be down to word-of-mouth and the quality of the service we are providing. As CP Chair of Trustees Phil Norton noted; "We seem to be punching above our weight".

One way we can get the message across is through community radio. Andy Robb, co-pastor of Billericay Revival Church, and 'Big Phil' are regular guests on Danny Lawrence's Drivetime show on Gateway 97.8 FM (above left, broadcasting live from Billericay Summerfest). You can tune in on FM, DAB or online at gateway978.com/live. We are grateful for Danny's ongoing & enthusiastic support for the Community Pastor project.

Meanwhile, Dave Law from Saffron Walden was delighted to

meet Richard Hayward of Touchpoint Radio for North Essex and East Herts (above, right). Dave reports the interview about the work of Community Pastors went very well.

They are discussing the possibility of a regular fortnightly spot to talk about issues such as mental health, homelessness and drug awareness, and updates about CP work. There is also a proposal for Richard to do live interviews during rail and street patrols. It's all getting the word out there.



You might think Community Pastors are most needed in inner-city and busy town centres. However, we have identified a definite need for us to work in rural areas too. Dedicated Saffron Walden volunteers (above) are already reaching out to new areas such as Dunmow and Thaxted. It seems the countryside is a growth area for us!

Serving with those who serve

Community Pastor representatives had a very encouraging day at the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex Conference on 18th June, at Colchester United's Community Stadium. It was good to meet, engage and network with other charities, professional bodies and our emergency services.

The theme for the day was "Delivering a safer Essex for

everyone through collaboration, opportunity and change." We had significant conversations throughout the day as we shared what we provide for our communities, and how we can support not just the public, but also those who serve.

As well as inspiring keynote speakers, representatives also attended break-out seminars on a range of important issues.

The most moving part of the day was an interview with Luke Squire, who had suffered abuse as a child, and we are grateful for his courage in sharing his story with the delegates. On that subject, we were delighted to meet Caroline Judd of domestic abuse charity J9, who confirmed the Saffron Walden Community Link would be approved as an official J9 Safe Space.

There were also two sessions of 'Lightning Talks' from various contributors, including our very own Phil Norton. We are delighted, if surprised, to report he did stick to his three-minute slot... well, almost.

We are extremely grateful to Essex PFCC, particularly Commissioner Roger Hirst, and a number of other organisations including Greater Anglia and Essex Community Foundation, who provide vital financial support for us.



CPs at Life Expo

Community Pastors were pleased to work alongside Schools Ministry Billericay (SMB) and a team of Christians from various denominations hosting Life Expo in March, at Billericay Baptist Church. The Expo provides an exciting, interactive presentation of the Christian faith for Year 5 and 6 schoolchildren. Our 'man in the pod' can be seen (above) with Father Dan Mason, Billericay's Catholic priest and a governor of Crays Hill Primary school. More than 1,000 children passed through the Expo doors.



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