

COMPASS

NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY PASTORS

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A sea of sky blue in Billericay High Street as newly-commissioned Community Pastors show off their new uniforms on a sunny afternoon in June.

Community Pastors launch gets Bishop's blessing

Saturday 15th June was a big day for us with the launch of the new Community Pastors at the Community Hub in Billericay High Street.

We were honoured to welcome Bishop of Bradwell Adam Atkinson to the event and delighted he was on hand to pronounce the 'official' blessing on our new project. 'Bishop Adam', as we affectionately know him, is a strong supporter of initiatives across all Christian denominations and we welcome his endorsement.

The launch was severely hampered by the unfortunate arson attack and devastating fire at Chantry House on 4th April. Although we were fortunate not to be as badly affected as some of the businesses and charities operating in the building, soot stains, water damage and smell were clearly in evidence.

However, our nighttime economy street patrols have continued with minimal disruption and we are determined that the proposed Day Centre will open next year.



Left; We are always grateful for the support we receive from Cllr Louise McKinlay (Deputy Leader Essex County Council) and Danny Lawrence (Gateway fm). Right; Bishop Adam and Mr Holden; both ministerial roles, albeit in slightly different spheres!



Tragedy on the tracks

Community Pastors reported another tragic day on the Greater Anglia network on 14th Nov. As soon as the team arrived, they were informed that a person had been hit by a train in the Northumberland Park Area. This followed another suicide at Ely the previous day and a tragic incident at Romford earlier in the month. Community Pastor Dave Law noted that we see a rise in suicide on our railways from mid-December to the end of January. Dave and others have received specialist training from Samaritans and were able to use their expertise counselling and praying with families and friends of those who have died by suicide. We also work with rail staff and Land Sheriffs who have to deal with the consequences of these horrific incidents, and are often traumatised.



Mixing politics with religion!

Community Pastor Chair of Trustees Phil Norton was delighted to meet with Basildon and Billericay MP Richard Holden, elected earlier this year, at the Remembrance Service in Billericay High Street. Phil would undoubtedly prefer the word 'faith' to 'religion' but we certainly feel it important that Christians engage with their MPs and Councillors, seeking to have a positive influence on issues affecting our community. It's also encouraging to see politicians engaging with the church at a local level and we're delighted that Mr Holden has voiced his support for the Community Pastors initiative.

COMMUNITY PASTORS
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Two occasions to remember

Lake Meadows Fireworks

"Remember, remember the fifth of November", the rhyme goes. Well, actually it was the 2nd Nov for us, with Community Pastors out in force at Billericay's Lake Meadows for our first major public event following our June launch. A team of about a dozen were pleased to support organisers Rotary Club, event stewards and emergency services by providing wristbands for small children, enabling parents/carers to be

contacted should their offspring become separated. Our gazebos, stationed at the car park entrance, also acted as a vital rendezvous point. There were many positive comments about our friendly sky blue uniforms welcoming visitors to the park. We're delighted to report there were no lost children. However, we were able to reunite an expensive smartphone with its owner! A spectacular evening featured a

Sci Fi theme and some volunteers were spotted posing with Darth Vader. We trust they weren't going over to the Dark Side!

Remembrance Parade

Once again we were at the annual Remembrance Service in Billericay High Street. But we offer much more than just handing out orders of service and assisting with stewarding. We're there to talk in confidence with members of the public, perhaps those who have lost a loved one in combat, or are

worried about current conflicts. If you were there you would also have seen our sky blue uniforms leaping into action attending several medical incidents. Two of our volunteers are trained First Responders operating out of a first aid centre in St Mary Magdalene church. They reported no less than seven cases, mostly youngsters fainting during the parade. Thankfully, there were no serious incidents. As always, an honour to serve and remember those "who shall not grow old".

Saffron Walden joins Community Pastor family

A dedicated team of volunteer pastors has faithfully patrolled the streets of Saffron Walden for the last eleven years. We are delighted to announce the team will now operate under the Community Pastor banner. The launch service took place on Friday 15th November with the

local press in attendance and a Community Pastor team up from Billericay to cheer them on.

We would like to thank all those who took part, the band, the audiovisual team, and those who helped in the kitchen. We are grateful to the Mayor, Deryk Eke, and his wife Jan, who were able

to witness the team being commissioned. Thanks to Phil Norton, our Chair of Trustees, for his 'two minute' (that'll be the day!) encouragement and to our 'cake pastor' Denise for her delicious contributions.

There was a special time of prayer and fellowship before the newly-appointed Pastors were straight out on late patrol, reporting several significant conversations on their first night.

The Saffron Walden team is also a presence on the rail network and the fact they will now operate rail and street ministry as a unified operation with a single uniform is very much in line with our philosophy. We know the Saffron Walden team's valuable experience will be an asset to the Community Pastor project.

Getting the vision

Community Pastors met on Saturday 19th October for its first Vision Day. Volunteers from all over Essex gathered for an inspiring day of prayer and 'think tank', to find out our vision for the future and share their own ideas on how we can better 'serve you where it matters'. Our thanks to Ramsden Bellhouse Baptist Church for providing the venue.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Billericay Christmas Market, Sunday 1st December
- Training: Youth Culture, 8th January 2025 at 7:30pm Billericay Baptist Church
- Training: Drug Awareness, 11th February at 7.30pm, Venue TBC
- Training: First Aid, 15th March at 9:30am, Triple L, Basildon



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