



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **NEWMARKET TOWN PASTORS CELEBRATE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

The first year of the Newmarket Town Pastors Scheme has been hailed as a success by organisers.

During the past year the Newmarket Town Pastors, with the help of Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers, have been active on the streets engaging with the community to keep the town safe. The Pastors have disposed of 1196 potentially dangerous items such as bottles and glasses, helped 130 people to receive medical assistance and alerted police to 28 incidents.

The Pastors also ensured that 210 people found their way home safely, disposed of alcohol on 252 occasions and diffused 70 potentially volatile situations. They also offered pastoral support to 149 vulnerable individuals, offering them the chance to discuss any personal issues affecting them.

The scheme was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009 by 'Churches Together in Newmarket and District' (CTND) with the support of Newmarket SNT. The scheme aims to look after people who are in a vulnerable state late at night, particularly those who have been out drinking in the town centre. In total the volunteers have dedicated more than 1,500 hours to the scheme.

Sergeant Mark Shipton of Newmarket SNT says, "Newmarket Safer Neighbourhood Team would like to thank the Town Pastors for their hard work and contribution to crime reduction over the past 12 months. They are a moderating influence in Newmarket and offer essential support to those who are vulnerable whether through alcohol, emotional trauma or other issues.

"Newmarket is one of the smaller towns to have a Town Pastor scheme and we very much look forward to another year patrolling on weekend evenings with the Town Pastors. Newmarket is a generally safe town with low levels of disorder but there are issues of late night nuisance and the police deal firmly with offenders when they are caught."

Robin Hardy, Chair of Newmarket Town Pastors says, "It's amazing how quickly a year passes. I'd like to thank all who have supported us up to now. A special thank-you to all my Christian brothers and sisters who have stepped forward to help show God's love on our streets. We currently have 32 Town Pastors and another 47 members of the prayer support team. Here's to the next year, we hope expand our service to the community and cover more nights per week."

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John Borda, Chair of Churches Together Newmarket and District says, “While some of the nights have been physically tiring, we have been spiritually uplifted by the number of people we have been able to help, many in small ways not covered in the headline statistics. The six month statistics, showing a 35% decrease in drink/drug related violence, and a 21% decrease in public order offences, came both as a wonderful surprise and an answer to many hours of prayer. As we are now covering some Friday nights, as well as the under18’s discos on school holidays, we hope this trend will continue downwards. However, we do need more people to come forward to help us cover more nights. This could be as a Town Pastor or Prayer Team member. Town Pastors patrol in male/female pairs; Prayer Team members either man our base or pray from home for an hour.”

“I would like to add my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us in making this project a reality, from corporate, local government and private sponsors, to the police and CCTV operators we work with every weekend, as well as ministers from all the Newmarket churches who have encouraged their congregations to get involved.”

The Newmarket Town Pastors are looking for more Christian volunteers to help them and are aiming to start a training course in early June. To find out more and obtain an application form please visit [www.newmarkettownpastors.org](http://www.newmarkettownpastors.org)

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**Note to Editors: For media enquiries about the above, please contact the SNT Communications Officer: Natalie Kingsford ph. 01473 613568.**