

Stockton Town Pastors Evaluation Report

1. Stockton Town Pastors (STP) has recently commissioned an evaluation report to assess the effectiveness of their aims as stated in their business plan 2011-13. The evaluation report runs to 66 pages this report provides a summary of the findings; a copy of the full report is available on www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk.
2. The report describes the work of STP as; “Predominantly theologically motivated, the Stockton Town Pastors aim to provide appropriate care, assistance, direction and friendship to those who may unexpectedly find themselves marginalised, excluded and vulnerable, and whilst the majority of volunteers are from the Christian faith, they do not attempt to proselytise vulnerable individuals, but will however, readily engage in theological conversations with those who initiate such engagements.’ The author provides an informative and detailed description of the services provided by the volunteers who offer patrol services in and around Stockton High Street between 10pm and 3am on a Friday and Saturday.
3. STP was formed in September 2009 and their business plan cites the following aims:
 - i) Make a contribution to the safety and well-being of our fellow citizens
 - ii) Offer care, compassion and relevant practical and spiritual help where appropriate to members of the public
 - iii) Help those who find themselves marginalised and vulnerable
 - iv) Signpost services that are available from other organisations and Stockton Borough Council and help individuals access those services
 - v) Offer support, training and guidance to other groups in setting up or running similar projects in other locations.
4. The project is maintained, developed and coordinated via the management board which is a legally constituted body. They currently have 49 volunteers of which 55% are female; the group has an average age of 49 and 90% are from a church background. It is a not for profit organisation with the vast majority of funding coming from individual donations. Since July 2011 they have been a registered charity; the report states that to secure this status “the Charity Commission strongly advised that the Stockton Town Pastors replaced their initial aims and objectives with the following ‘object’:

‘To advance the Christian Faith in Stockton on Tees and in such other parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the Management Committee may from time to time think fit particularly but not exclusively by means of caring, listening and helping people on the streets and at various venues day and night.’”

5. The evaluation used a ‘mixed method’ approach to data collection which allowed the use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Semi structured interviews were conducted with partners and seven members of the general public. A summary of findings is shown below:
 - 67% of respondents felt that STP make the town centre a safer place
 - 83% felt that the initiative works
 - 96% of respondents were aware of the initiative
 - 100% felt that STC has a positive impact
 - 4 of the 6 police officers interviewed felt that STC helps to free up police resources

6. A summary of the work provided by STP during 2010 is listed below:
 - 3,121 patrol hours and 377 café hours were undertaken by the volunteers
 - 1,601 broken bottles or pieces of glass were recovered
 - STP volunteers witnessed 41 incidents of ASB/violence but only sought police assistance in 14 of these incidents.
 - There were 553 personal engagements of those 198 were cited as ‘Other help’ and 137 as ‘Other Significant Contact.’Also of the above incidents;
 - 59 involved some form of first aid.
 - An ambulance was called on 20 occasions
 - 40 individuals were placed in a taxi
 - 16 individuals were reconciled with friends/family

7. The report concludes: ‘Indeed it appears evident from the data gathered and presented within this document that the Stockton Town Pastors initiative has successfully achieved all of its aims as set out in its Business Plan 2011-2013. There are a number of recommendations cited:
 - a) A café style base within the town centre would help the project
 - b) Further funding would provide sustainability; this will be sought using their charitable status which opens the door to a number of funding opportunities.

- c) An extension into Yarm would be a good development
 - d) Volunteer recruitment should be undertaken to increase the number of patrols
 - e) Further research could be done to evaluate how successful STP is in facilitating engagement with other services and to assess whether STP is effective in reducing crime and disorder in the areas where they operate.
8. The Chair of the STP Board, Revd. Derek Rosamond, will be available at the SSP meeting to answer any queries from the report. A copy of the full report can be obtained from www.stocktontownpastors.co.uk or from the project manager Steve Brock either by email steve@stocktontownpastors.co.uk or telephone 07526641796.

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