

A year in a new-build community

Just over a year ago, the Circuit of Wantage and Abingdon launched a Community Chaplaincy scheme. Unlike most chaplaincies, Sarah and Libby are chaplains to a new-build area, and support the schools, uniformed groups, Residents Association, shops, construction workers, residents, retirement home, SEN group and residents through an unobtrusive ministry of presence.

Every day is different. We've been asked to lead mindfulness sessions for primary school aged children, make candyfloss for the annual activities week, set up prayer spaces, appear on BBC Oxfordshire and offer additional support in safeguarding cases.

Every day is special. We've been blessed by the number of people who have adopted them as "their chaplain", sharing worries, concerns, faith encounters and stories of life with them. They are widely known across the area, having had over 500 conversations in our first year, with 60 conversations with people at a 'crisis moment' in their lives.

Every day is humbling. We're constantly amazed at how God takes our simple offerings of being present with open hands and an open heart and takes us into life-changing moments, significant encounters and moments of deep connection with people from all walks of life across the area.

In some ways, it's such a simple ministry - drive into the area with their 'mobile chaplaincy' (a campervan called Hope), walk around, let the 'hello's and smiles develop into conversations, and pray for all the people in the area. In some ways, it's so effective.

I wonder what you can do that effects real kingdom building stuff where you are? We'd love to hear your stories. Contact us at 07860 805387 (Libby), 07860 804588 (Sarah), libby.community.chaplain@gmail.com, sarah.community.chaplain@gmail.com.