



Left: Lucy Zeal (2nd right) with Reading Street Pastors before going out into torrential rain in October

clubs and other hot spots, and liaised with club security as well as police CCTV operators. We helped the drunk and vulnerable, offering first aid or assistance home, calling a parent or even contacting the emergency services with which the volunteers work closely.

The Street Angels and Street Pastors work tirelessly and make such a positive impact, dealing with events where the safeguarding of the vulnerable is required and freeing the police to concentrate on the more serious incidents in the town centres. The issues the police face every weekend night, when most of us are asleep, and the strain that this puts on the emergency services truly opened my eyes.

It was a great privilege to spend time with these two organisations and to see the voluntary sector and emergency services working so well together. I have witnessed so much that is good in our county in the past year. There is so much to admire and applaud, and much to give us hope for the future. It was humbling to walk with the Street Angels and Street Pastors on their beat and I will always treasure the work they selflessly provide for the community.

### ◆ Lucy Zeal

*High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire 2019-20*

## Walking with angels

**AS I come to the end of my shrieval year, people ask what the highlights have been. There have been many, but I particularly value the evenings I spent with the Windsor Street Angels and the Reading Street Pastors. I had the opportunity to go out with the volunteers, to meet and help their users, experiencing a typical weekend night in two busy town centres as well as witnessing the impact on the emergency services. So much of the shrieval role combined into one experience.**

The faith-based Reading Street Pastors and the Windsor Street Angels share a common goal: to safeguard the vulnerable and offer support to those in need within the night-time community. I joined a small team of trained volunteers who patrol the streets of Reading and Windsor town centres from 10.00 pm until 4.00 am every Friday and Saturday night. They care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets whatever their needs. This might include assisting intoxicated young adults who are placing themselves at risk, helping those who are unwell or have suffered an injury, or supporting the homeless and addicts. Both organisations also have a drop-in hub at a local church, with first

aid and a quiet space with a paramedic in attendance for vital medical emergencies.

These nights spent in Windsor and Reading town centres were a privilege for me, to walk and talk with such extraordinary volunteers and to hear their individual stories. Equipped with walkie-talkies, first aid equipment, hot drinks and snacks, water, flip flops and lollipops, we spent the first part of the evening checking on the homeless. Then as the night progressed we visited bars,



PCSO David Bullock with Windsor Street Angels which he set up