

The Newmarket Town Pastor open meeting was informative and entertaining. Approximately 50 people attended, coming from Newmarket and surrounding villages/towns.

Talks were given by Town Pastors from Ipswich (Liz Beaton) and Bury St Edmunds (Jo Copsey) bringing real-life experience to the vision we have for Newmarket. Hearing about their enthusiasm and experiences was a great testimony for Town Pastors, even more so in that being ladies they helped to allay any lingering fears which ladies or their families might have that it's not safe for them to be Town Pastors.

There were also talks from Ipswich police (Sergeant Neil Boast) and Newmarket police (Inspector Simon Clifton). Neil has been associated with the Ipswich scheme since its inception. Being a policeman with many years experience in the force "he still cannot believe" how positive and influential Town Pastor schemes are. Simon is the neighbourhood inspector responsible for Newmarket.

30 people signed the attendance register. Subject to receipt of applications, 5 were interested in applying for the prayer team, 10 to become Town Pastors (5 female, 5 male), and 15 others whose interest was not clear. Together with the management team this is seen as a sufficient number to launch on a reduced scale and we remain open to hear from others who wish to be involved. Anyone not at the meeting but interested in the scheme should contact Robin Hardy (01638 669361 robin.hardy4@ntlworld.com) or apply using the forms available on the Newmarket Town Pastors website.

The working party will now wait and see what actual applications are received. In the meantime they will start planning the pre-launch tasks such as - training programme - agreement between Town Pastor, FHDC, and police to operational protocol - selecting Town Pastor night base - Town Pastor interviews - Town Pastor CRB checks - funding sources - and many more.

Please pray that the energy, momentum, and enthusiasm generated by the open meeting are maintained over the coming months while preparing for the launch of the Newmarket Town Pastor scheme.

For more information or copies of application forms look at the website www.newmarkettownpastors.org.