

Award of Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant – Town Pastors (April 2026 – March 2027)

Subject: Award of Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant – Town Pastors (April 2026 – March 2027)

Originator: Commissioning Officer

Decision Number: 31 - 2026

Reason for Submission: For Decision

Submitted to: Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Summary

1. In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
 - a. secure, or contribute to securing crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
 - b. are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by offences and anti-social behaviour.
2. This report seeks approval to award a Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant to Town Pastors for £20,000 to contribute to delivery of their activities in the night-time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
3. The funding will enable crime and disorder reduction activity and support Theme 2 in the Police and Crime Plan by investing in an initiative which reduces demand on the police in the night-time economy and reduces crime and disorder in Suffolk's towns.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) awards grant funding of £20,000 to Town Pastors for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.

Approval by PCC

The recommendation as outlined above is approved.

Signed: Tim Passmore

Signature: 

Date: 26 October 2026

Detail of Submission

1. Objective

- 1.1 In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
- a) secure, or contribute to securing crime and disorder reduction;
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by offences and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2 In applying this provision, the PCC will ensure that the services commissioned are also consistent with the [Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029](#).
Town Pastors specifically deliver on the following:
- Support problem-solving in local communities, by investing in solutions which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder, or improve community safety.
 - Consider initiatives which reduce the demand on the police.
- 1.3 As such this report seeks approval to award a Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant of £20,000 to Town Pastors enabling their work in the night-time economy across Suffolk for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Suffolk Town Pastors scheme began in June 2006 in Ipswich, expanding thereafter to several other towns in Suffolk. The Town Pastors (central body) has been a registered charity since 2019. The Town Pastors administer the distribution of the PCC grant and maintain the quality of the schemes across the county.
- 2.2 Town Pastors are Christian volunteers from local churches who are out in town centres on Friday and/or Saturday nights, being a positive influence on the streets and providing help and support to vulnerable people. Street patrols are supported by a Prayer Team at a local base or home.
- 2.3 Fear of crime is a serious issue and Town Pastors have an important role in making people feel safe and improving the atmosphere by being a friendly presence on the streets. As trained volunteers they support people in need, help people to get a taxi or wait with vulnerable people, defuse potentially aggressive situations, provide advice, and encourage safe behaviour for all. They work as a team alongside the police, taxi drivers, door staff, CCTV staff and others who are involved in managing the night-time economy.

- 2.4 The presence of Town Pastors as a capable guardian prevents crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour in Suffolk's towns at night.
- 2.5 The Town Pastors have received funding from the PCC since 2014/15 to deliver the service, and regular data and information has been provided to monitor the delivery and the impact of the grant.

2025 – 2026 Service Delivery and Impact

- 2.6 In 2025/26 PCC funding supported Town Pastors activity in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Leiston and Felixstowe. The funding also supported the work of Town Pastors at Latitude Festival.
- 2.7 During the 2025/26 funding period Town Pastors undertook 6,720 actions compared to 7,687 in 2024/25; 5,487 involved directly helping a person or group of people (6,016). This made a positive impact and directly contributed to the personal safety and wellbeing of 179 people (201) while also reducing the risk of them becoming a victim of crime.
- 2.8 Town Pastors continue to play a significant role not just in crime reduction and prevention, but also in preventing paramedic/ambulance calls and A & E admissions (as well as saving police time in looking after vulnerable intoxicated people). Many situations involve Town Pastors caring for those involved in or affected by drunkenness and anti-social behaviour. Even in difficult situations Town Pastors continue to value and appreciate each person, treating them with dignity and respect whatever their background and circumstances.
- 2.9 In 2025/26 Town Pastors:
- contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 179 people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations helped reduce the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
 - alerted CCTV and/or police to 39 incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
 - were able to prevent/reduce crime on 39 occasions often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
 - reduced the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,007 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.

- 2.10 The presence of Town Pastors in Suffolk towns is widely recognised by Suffolk Constabulary as making a valuable contribution to community safety. Western Area Commander Matt Carney said:

“The presence of the Bury St Edmunds Town Pastors within our night-time economy is vital in helping to keep people safe while they enjoy all that our town has to offer. The personal connections they establish, together with the compassionate support they provide, have undoubtedly helped to protect many vulnerable individuals and ensure those most in need receive appropriate assistance. Our officers greatly value seeing the Bury Town Pastors out on patrol and appreciate the important role they play in helping to keep Bury St Edmunds a safe place.”

- 2.11 Further detail of activities and outcomes is provided in Appendix A.

3. Areas for Consideration

Town Pastors 2026 - 2027

- 3.1 Town Pastors have requested PCC funding to support the Bury St Edmunds, Leiston and Felixstowe Town Pastors with their work in 2026/27 and their activity at Latitude in 2026, which includes:
- The Bury St Edmunds: Town Pastors patrol from 10.00pm- 4.00am on Saturday nights.
 - Felixstowe: Town Pastors patrol on the last Saturday of the month (payday weekend) 10.00pm – 3.30am.
 - Leiston: patrols are undertaken on three Friday nights each month 10.00pm – 12.30am
 - Festival Pastors: working at the Latitude Festival, these volunteers provide a visible, non-judgemental and friendly presence as capable guardians who help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and support vulnerable people when required.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the PCC supports the continued activity of Town Pastors in these locations considering levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, areas of deprivation and demand from night-time economy activity.

Monitoring and outcomes

- 3.3 Based on 2025/26 figures, Town Pastors anticipate undertaking around 6,500 actions across their schemes in 2026/27, including approximately 5,400 actions that directly support an individual or group of people.
- 3.4 Monitoring will be undertaken annually through written reports setting out activity and progress towards outcomes, case studies and financial expenditure. These reports will be supplemented by an annual meeting between the Town Pastors and the PCC to discuss progress against the grant. A final report will be submitted to the PCC by 31 May 2027.
- 3.5 Monitoring will indicate the extent of Town Pastors activities by all scheme areas and provide an overview of spend against the budget submitted to the PCC. Town Pastors will continue to evidence satisfaction with the service in a qualitative manner to indicate how the service has supported delivery of the police and crime plan, for example through examples of where activity has improved feelings of safety, reduced offending or improved mental health.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 Consideration was given to not provide funding or providing a reduced grant. However, this could result in a reduction in Town Pastor activity and the associated community safety and safeguarding benefits delivered through their volunteer patrols. Consideration was also given to alternative commissioned provision; however, this would likely incur greater costs and would not replicate the established volunteer network and community engagement offered by Town Pastors. Consequently, funding at the requested level is considered the most effective and proportionate option.

5. Strategic aims / objective supported

- 5.1 The Town Pastors project directly delivers on a number of commitments set out in the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029:
- Support problem-solving in local communities, by investing in solutions which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder, or improve community safety.
 - Consider initiatives which reduce the demand on the police.
- 5.2 Furthermore, Town Pastors are also prevalent in a number of 'Clear, Hold, Build' areas within Suffolk, therefore supporting one of the Constabulary's objectives within the plan.

6. Financial and other resource implications

- 6.1 Available grant funding from the PCC's commissioning budget to Town Pastors is a maximum of £20,000 in 2026/27, broken down as follows:

Town Pastors Area	Amount
Bury St Edmunds:	£10,500
Felixstowe:	£1,000
Leiston:	£4,500
Latitude:	£4,000
Total:	£20,000

- 6.2 The proposed funding represents a 16% reduction compared with the 2025/26 financial year allocation (£24,000). This decrease reflects the removal of funding for Ipswich, which is currently being supported through alternative sources, and the reallocation of resources to Bury St Edmunds. The revised funding request appears proportionate and reasonable in light of the 12% reduction in overall activity recorded over the past year.
- 6.3 Town Pastors have proposed payment in two equal instalments.
- 6.4 All Town Pastor schemes receive funding primarily from grants, and from donations made by local churches. Donations are also received from individuals. Grants may be accessed at a local level or through the Suffolk Community Foundation (for grants from funds such as The Suffolk Giving Fund, private funds and the High Sheriff's Fund). Funding also comes from a variety of other sources including councillors' locality budgets, support from local businesses (financially or in kind) and grants specific to the locality.
- 6.5 The PCC grant funding is used specifically for staffing (paid coordinators in Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe and Leiston), radio/telephone costs, admin costs, rent, training, insurance, equipment, and supplies for Town Pastor bags.
- 6.6 Whilst the PCC funding supports paid coordinators, most Town Pastors and support teams are volunteers bringing value for money to the service.
- 6.7 The funding will be allocated from the PCC's Crime and Disorder Reduction budget.

7. Environmental Implications

- 7.1 The award of the grant is not expected to have any significant direct environmental impacts. However, Town Pastors regularly remove broken glass and other minor

hazards from public spaces during patrols, contributing to cleaner and safer town centre environments.

8. Other implications and risks

- 8.1 An assessment of risk in delivery of the service has been undertaken considering the value of the grant sought, the duration of delivery and the grant recipient's history of delivery and ability to deliver. The monitoring arrangements outlined in the conditions of award reflect the fact that Town Pastors continue to deliver the service and regularly report on activity and outcomes.
- 8.2 Town Pastors are required to notify the PCC should there be any risk to the service being delivered.
- 8.3 An equality impact assessment has been carried out to assess and document how equality has been considered and improved in the delivery of the service.
- 8.4 There are no other implications or risks to be considered.

Originator Checklist (must be completed).

Please state 'yes' or 'no'

Checklist Item	Yes / No
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered, including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with Police and Crime Plan objectives?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
Have environmental factors been considered?	Yes
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks section of the submission?	Yes
Is this report a Confidential Decision?	No

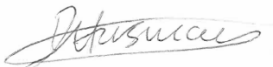
If yes, please state reasons below:

Approval to submit to the decision-maker

Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report, that the recommendation has been reviewed and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.

Signed: Darren Horsman

Signature: 

Date: 21 October 2026

Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

I certify that:

a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,

Or

b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,

Or

c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves,

And

d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

Signed: Colette Batson

Signature: 

Date: 22 October 2026

Public access to information: Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential'. Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.

Summary of Town Pastor activity during year April 2024-March 2025

Town Pastors have successfully continued their work across the county in four towns from April 2025 – March 2026.

Based on figures that have been submitted from the schemes, Town Pastors have noted 6,720 (7,687) actions. Of these actions, 5,487 (6,016) involved directly helping a person or group of people. These figures represent a 12% reduction in activity compared with the previous year and are likely to reflect a decrease in the number of people visiting town centres during weekend evenings.

Figures for 2025-2026 still demonstrate that Town Pastors made a valuable contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder in Suffolk towns:

- Town Pastors contributed to the personal safety/wellbeing of 179 (201) people. This included making sure vulnerable people got safely to their transport, were walked home, or were reunited with friends. The presence of Town Pastors in these situations thus reduces the risk of assault, theft and sexual assault.
- Town Pastors alerted CCTV and/or police to 39 (61) incidents/potential incidents or persons of note.
- On 39 (46) occasions Town Pastors were able to prevent/reduce crime often by diffusing fights or calming potentially aggressive situations. This reduced personal injury, the need for police intervention and the need for police to make arrests.
- Town Pastors reduce the risk of injury by removing bottles and glasses (potential weapons) from the streets. During the year, Town Pastors removed 1,007 dangerous items from the streets of Suffolk towns; the majority of these were bottles and glasses.
- Festival Pastors recorded 9,732 (6,634) situations over four days in July 2025 involving 21 personal safety/wellbeing interactions, and 12 interactions related to pastoral care and/or mental health needs. They also offered care and support to four people who were intoxicated and incapable of looking after themselves. They

alerted security on one occasion, prevented/reduced crime on one occasion and also removed one dangerous item.

During the year, Town Pastors have offered help, care and support in a non-judgmental and non-confrontational way:

- Town Pastors have given pastoral care and a listening ear in 93 situations where a person wanted to discuss problems they are facing in their lives i.e. marriage or relationship issues, drug issues etc. or where Town Pastors have dealt with a person who has/or is suspected of having mental health issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (often military/ex-military personnel), depression, feeling suicidal etc.
- Town Pastors cared for 60 people who were excessively drunk and incapable of looking after themselves. The necessity for ambulance callouts for highly intoxicated individuals is greatly reduced when Town Pastors are on duty and able to care for these people. Each person was kept safe from theft of personal belongings while drunk and incapable. In addition, they were also protected from becoming the victim of a physical and/or sexual assault. In some of these situations Town Pastors will have called an ambulance if necessary.
- 4,846 people were provided with water/refreshment. Water improves hydration and general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour. Providing chocolate raises blood sugar levels, which are frequently significantly lowered by excessive alcohol consumption. This also improves general attitude therefore reducing the risk of intolerant or aggressive behaviour.
- There are 104 recorded encounters with people who are homeless or presenting as homeless during the year. These encounters often contribute towards the safety and wellbeing of these particularly vulnerable people.
- There are 5 recorded situations of domestic tension or violence. These include any incident between a couple that could become or has become violent where Town Pastor intervention takes place, or the situation is referred to Police or CCTV.