

How businesses can help others



The High sheriff of Herefordshire, Bill Jackson, is backing Vennture.
Photo: Sally Corrick Photography

13 Nov 2016 / **Ben Goddard**

BUSINESSES are being encouraged to play their part in helping those in need as public agencies face spending cuts.

The work of award winning charity 'Vennture' will be showcased at Hereford's Left Bank on November 14 and 15, for business of all sizes to see how they can make a difference to the city and local area.

Social enterprise Vennture is a unique initiative started by the county's churches to provide help to those most in need.

For nearly four years their volunteers have been in Hereford city centre every Friday and Saturday night to help the most vulnerable.

They have expanded to include a family pastors service and the launch of a recent initiative to help daytime shoppers.

High Sherriff, Bill Jackson, the events which are a 6pm evening event to include drinks on November 14, and a 7.30am light breakfast event on November 15.

In his time as High Sherriff, Bill has seen first-hand many hidden local needs - just last week he slept rough on the street with young people from SHYPP (Supported Housing for Young Persons Project).

"This is a great opportunity for businesses of all shapes and sizes to see how they can benefit from getting involved in helping make a difference in our city and local area," said Bill.

"It's important to me that businesses understand the challenges that some people are facing.

"Gone are the days when we can walk by on the other side and expect a public agency to solve these problems. We all need to play a part – no matter how small. I want business people to be inspired by the difference that Vennture's business-like approach is making."

Vennture has over 130 volunteers who are trained in everything from keeping young people safe in the night-time economy, undertaking street triage, to coming alongside struggling families and victims of domestic abuse.

Vennture's family pastors service received granted funding of £160,000 from **Herefordshire Council** to run the scheme from 2015 until 2017, as part of their families first initiative which aims to support over 1,000 families by 2020. Trustee, Rob McGowan, added: "Speaking as a business leader this is a win-win-win.

"People, often in a bad place, benefit from Vennture's support; our volunteers get a buzz out of making a difference and many testify to how the experience of volunteering transforms them as they see an often hidden side of life. This is a real opportunity for businesses to develop their people."