

Hereford Times

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Hereford awarded 'Purple Flag' for evening and nighttime economy



5th July Jessica Phillips

TRIBUTES have been paid to the 'unsung heroes' who have all played a crucial role in helping Hereford to be awarded the 'Purple Flag' for its nighttime economy.

Similar to the 'Blue Flag' for beaches, areas with the award are recognised for providing a vibrant and diverse mix of dining, entertainment and culture while promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local residents.

The achievement, those involved with the project believe, is the result of much hard work which often goes on behind the scenes – including door and bar staff, street sweepers, Street Pastor volunteers and Hereford BID staff.

Mayor of Hereford, Councillor Sharon Michael, said: "We have something very special going on in Hereford's night time economy.

"So many people work so hard to make Hereford a great place to have a good night out."

John Jones, chairman of Hereford's Business Improvement District (BID), said the achievement puts Hereford alongside around 70 other cities with Purple Flag status and is another indication the city is headed in the right direction.

Purple Flag accredited areas have all reported a consistent increase in footfall and a decrease in crime within the evening and nighttime economy.

Councillor Harlow, cabinet member for economy and corporate services, said: "This is a great endorsement for Hereford, for our vibrant, yet safe nightlife. It is a great example of local partners coming together to achieve this award and also champions the 'unsung' heroes of our city's night time economy, who are always there looking out for our residents and visitors, keeping them safe whilst they enjoy our city."

Some of those unsung heroes are found in Mark Richards Buadramo's customer services team at the Old Market who work hard to make people feel 'welcome and safe'.

Meanwhile, doorman Andy Welch, chairman of Hereford Against Night Time Disorder, said the role of door staff has changed from what it once was, with teams playing a 'vital role' working with the Street Pastors to ensure people get home safe.

CCTV commissioning officer, Debbie Stringer, said her team are secreted away in a room watching a bank of 40 screens through the early hours – not the easiest task. But on many occasions they are the first to spot vulnerable people and make sure they are cared for.

Meanwhile, Steve Sully, from the Street Pastors team, said: "So many of our volunteers are parents themselves – anxious to make sure young people have a good time and to make sure care is on hand when it is needed. The Sixth Form's Lean on Me volunteers have made a big difference keeping people, who become vulnerable, safe."

Dan Guerche, OPCC Ambassador, added: "The Purple flag assessors recognised the exceptional way that everyone in Hereford works together. This has not happened by accident.

"It's the outcome of years of hard work between businesses, bar staff, door staff, the small army of volunteers in the Baptist Church, Street Pastors and Lean on Me – all of which I know are very much supported by our PCC John Campion."