



Q&A WITH **MARGARET SMITH** Town Centre Chaplain

Tell us about your role in the Town Centre:

I am here to support, encourage listen in a confidential pastoral way to all those who work in our town centre primarily in the shopping centres but I am available for anyone who wants to contact me. I try and get around the shops that I can manage every 2-3 weeks but will call more often as and when they need me.

We face a challenging time at the moment, firstly, how are you doing, and how can any town centre businesses reach you?

I can be contacted on 07845767591 or revmesmith@gmail.com

I am aware that this is a very anxious time for many people in the town centre. Apart from their own health concerns, people are worried about the welfare of their family members and friends. There are also immediate concerns over job security and the loss of income.

I am still visiting the centre though maintaining safe social distancing as I am aware it is important for me to support them as much as I can.

The Town Centre is about to go through one of its most positive transformations for years. When we do get back to some normality, can we presume you be on hand to support businesses and their employees?

When the lockdown is eased, and life starts to return to a 'new normal', I will be glad to continue serving

our town, and all who usually work here. To raise the profile of the support which is available I will be producing some information sheets that I will deliver to all the shops



What's the best way to contact you?

07845767591 or revmesmith@gmail.com

What's your favourite thing about Rochdale Town Centre?

My least favourite things are the two slopes up Yorkshire Street and Drake Street! Apart from I like the fact that the great variety of shops and I'm sure the new shops which form part of Riverside will increase footfall around the town.

What strikes me about the shop staff I talk too is their dedication and willingness to go that extra mile to help customers.

What's the most unique/odd thing a client has asked you?

I've had a few! It was a privilege to be asked to take the funeral service of family members of shop staff and one time I was asked by a shopper to join him and his wife at their wedding anniversary so I could help them renew their vows. I have also covered the counter while an assistant made a desperate dash to the toilet, fortunately no customers came in that point!