

# FRIENDS OF BIG ISSUE NORTH

SPRING 2017

## READERS TURN SELLERS FOR #VENDORWEEK

More than 20 people across the north gave an hour of their time last week to sell Big Issue North alongside our regular vendors, as part of #vendorweek.

From Liverpool to Hull, and everywhere in between, our readers and supporters of the magazine got an insight into the highs and lows of life selling the magazine – from sub-zero temperatures and being ignored by passers-by, to the heart-warming small acts of kindness that punctuated their hour.

Among the people who sold the magazine alongside their regular vendor were Julie and John McGall, from York. For the husband and wife duo, their hour was particularly emotional, as it took place on the pitch previously occupied by Peter, a much-loved vendor who passed away before Christmas. John and Julie led an appeal to fund Peter's funeral and a memorial service (which you can read more about on page 3).

Narun, one of our guest sellers in Liverpool, commented on the experience: "It's really a tough job, my fingers are frozen and my nose is frozen! It's tough to be homeless and if you can get something you can do to earn a little bit of money to pay your rent and have some food it is better than to have to sleep outside.

"I know, when I buy the magazine, I am helping



somebody to get some food and get some shelter. I would encourage everybody to try to buy a copy every single week, the people are not begging they are working so try to help them earn a living."

William, who sold the magazine in Leeds for an hour, said: "I've bought the magazine for a long time. I agree with the BIN principles and what it stands for. It was quite hard - you feel vulnerable on your own, and not many people acknowledge you. But it was a good experience."

You can watch the guest sellers in action and hear their thoughts on our #vendorweek YouTube playlist, at [www.youtube.com/bigissuenorth](http://www.youtube.com/bigissuenorth).

Clockwise from top left: Guest seller Cllr Jayne Dunn with a customer (Sheffield); Guest seller Danny Murphy with regular vendor Chris (Manchester); Guest seller Sharon Ashley with regular vendor Mark (Leeds); Guest seller Harun with regular vendor David (Liverpool)

### Letter from Fay

Welcome to the Spring 2017 issue of the Friends of Big Issue newsletter. It has been a busy start to the year for us, with an amazing group of readers taking part in #vendorweek.

You can read much more about the week in the newsletter, but I would like to thank everyone who sold the magazine alongside a vendor, and the many more people who expressed an interest in helping us out.

Thank you also to everyone who supported our vendors over Christmas – through buying a magazine, or through donations to the Big Issue North Trust. I hope that you will continue that support in the year to come.

Fay Selvan, Big Issue North Chief Exec



# AROUND THE REGIONS

Staff in our **LIVERPOOL** and **LEEDS** offices are starting to create a lending library, so vendors in the cities have access to books to borrow.

If you have any books that you would like to donate, and give our vendors a good read, then get in touch with us or drop into one of our offices – you can find the addresses for Leeds and Liverpool on our website: [www.bigissuenorth.com/contact-us](http://www.bigissuenorth.com/contact-us).



In **MANCHESTER**, insurance company MCM donated thermos flasks for vendors in the city, as well as committing to a regular monthly donation – thank you to everyone at MCM, especially to Dale Edwards (pictured), who also took part in #vendorweek! If your business is interested in supporting us in any way, then please get in touch with us at [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com).

Academics at **LIVERPOOL** John Moores University have been getting the thoughts of our vendors as part of a research project looking at life and work in Roma communities.

Five vendors took part, answering a wide range of questions on their history, what makes their community unique, the support they get and how they feel about the work they do.

A kind-hearted customer of **SHEFFIELD** vendor Rob gave him a £25 voucher to celebrate him moving into a new home – organised with the help of staff in our office. Rob used the voucher to buy a new kettle, so whenever he has a brew, he can remember the generosity of his customers!



## FROM 'ROCK BOTTOM' TO PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

**Mick, originally from Liverpool, has been selling Big Issue North for around 18 months, in Preston outside Marks and Spencer.**

He buys his magazines and gets support from staff at the Foxtan Centre, who work with marginalised people and communities in Preston, and act as a sub-office for us, selling the magazine to vendors and providing advice and guidance in the same way our main regional offices do.

In Mick's words, that support, and the income he gets from selling Big Issue North, have helped him to recover from 'rock bottom'.

Mick said: "I used to run two pubs, but it didn't work and I got myself into a lot of debt and stuff. I hit rock bottom about eight years ago and ended up with a problem on the drink and that led me to being homeless and then ending up in prison.

"Lying in a prison cell, I thought: 'I've got to do something here, because if I don't, this is going to be forever'. And that's when I learned to ask for help. When I was released, after five years, I was homeless again but I wasn't ready for the rehabilitation work I had done to go by the wayside. So I went to the Foxtan Centre and asked for help, and if it wasn't for them, and for Big Issue North,

I would be back to square one.

"I had a short stint of selling Big Issue North in Liverpool before I went inside. So I knew there was an avenue there where I could get myself back in to some employment, earning a bit of money, get my self-confidence back, and meet new, interesting people from all walks of life.

"I'm housed now in my own flat here in Preston, which was organised through the staff at the Foxtan Centre. And it wasn't just a case of 'here's your flat' – it came with support getting furniture and stuff like that."

Mick would like to find permanent employment one day, and no longer sell the magazine. As he says, "it's not a job for life – it's a stepping stone. I want to work with people who are from similar backgrounds. I'm looking at some ways to do that."

For now though, Mick is continuing to sell Big Issue North outside Marks and Spencer, and is grateful to have such fantastic customers. "I have the best customers in the world. I've made some great friends. I particularly want to thank Marks and Spencer. The people there are absolutely fantastic. Some of the staff buy the magazine from me and they have all made me feel very welcome and have been non-judgmental towards me. I love them to bits."

# Vendors make international connections

In recent months, our vendors have been making friends across the globe.

Colin, who sells the magazine in Manchester, came face-to-face with a customer who had travelled a long way to get hold of her copy of Big Issue North – all the way from Japan!

Yuko, who lives in Tokyo, explains: “It was in October and I was on my way to a hospital in Tokyo when I saw a vendor who was selling Big Issue Japan. When I was flipping over the pages, I found Colin's photo with the word, “Manchester”.

“I was surprised to see it because I was exactly planning to visit Manchester for the first time in November to attend a horror movie event and catch up with some of my friends there. I also found that the hotel I've booked was close to the place where Colin sells the magazine.

“I decided to meet him and buy some copies from him in person and I wanted to let Colin know that he was on Big Issue Japan. I asked



Clockwise from top: Vendor Stephen talks to Patty; Colin with Japanese customer Yuko; Colorado-based vendor Raelene.

Big Issue North on Facebook about Colin's schedule but I was worried whether I could see him for real until the last minute, so it was fantastic when I found him standing and selling the magazines!

“He welcomed me with open arms and he even gave me a back issue as a gift. I

promised Colin to come back here next year. I'm very much looking forward to meeting him again. When I was talking with him, I felt that Colin is known and loved by many people in this town. It was a great pleasure to meet him.”

Meanwhile, as part of #vendorweek, the INSP

(International Network of Street Papers) have been giving vendors from different street papers across the world the chance to talk to each other via Skype.

Two of our vendors, Steven and Dave, had wide-ranging conversations with their American counterparts. Steven spoke to Patty, a Street Sense seller in Washington DC, talking about everything from life on the streets and recovery from addiction to hopes for the future and Steven's signature dish!

Dave spoke to Raelene, who sells Denver Voice in Boulder, Colorado. While they shared stories about their own lives and the feelings they share about selling street papers, no conversation with an American seller this winter would be complete without finding out how they feel about the political situation in the country.

You can read both interviews on our new website, at [www.bigissuenorth.com/our-work/vendor-stories/](http://www.bigissuenorth.com/our-work/vendor-stories/).

## Ken and Bailey reunited

Shortly after Christmas, Big Issue North vendor Ken lost his pet Bailey, when the dog saw a fox one night and chased after it.

Ken explained: “I'd been staying in York over Christmas; when I came back to Manchester my tent got trashed, and I ended up sleeping rough again. Not long after that, Bailey, my dog, saw a fox one night and ran off after it. I lost him and he ended up getting hit by a tram.

“Bailey is seven years old. A mate of mine gave him to me because I've had dogs before and he knew that having a dog would help keep me out of trouble.”

The next day, Ken came to our office and spoke to staff member Martin, who helped Ken to get in touch with Manchester Dog's Home. Sure enough, Bailey was there. He had a damaged leg and eye socket, but was OK and ready to be reunited with his owner.

Ken decided it was better for him and Bailey



to go and stay in York instead, where he now has more stable accommodation. He said: “I've just moved into a room. It's brilliant. I've paid some rent up front. I have to pay my own rent, I don't get any housing benefit, so I need to make sure I sell enough magazines.”

And Bailey is still with his friend, and is a hit with Ken's customers. “Bailey gets treated better than me! Someone came and asked: ‘Is it all right if I give your dog this?’ It was sausage and mash. They didn't ask if I wanted it!”

## Fundraising to give Peter a fond farewell

More than 200 people have attended a memorial service in honour of Peter, a vendor who passed away in York in November.

The service, held in his memory at Trinity Church in Monkgate, York, was paid for by a crowdfunding effort organised by John and Julie McGall, regular customers of Peter. The couple encouraged donations online, raising more than £5,000 to give Peter the send-off he richly deserved, through the well-attended memorial and funeral.

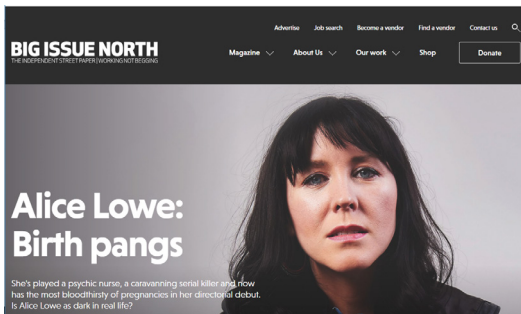
Thank you so much to John, Julie and everyone who contributed. A collection at the funeral also raised a further £215, which is being given to Big Issue North Trust, and will be used to support vendors like Peter.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remember vendors Brian, Tony and Stefan, who also passed away in 2016

# New website launched

The new Big Issue North website is going live on 6 March, at [www.bigissuenorth.com!](http://www.bigissuenorth.com!)

With a fresh design created to look great across mobiles and tablets, as well as on desktop computers, the site has even more of the magazine's high-quality editorial content, as well as information on the work of the Big Issue North Trust and stories from our vendors.



The new website comes at a time when we are bucking the trend across the media, by increasing our readership! While many publications are reporting a reduction in readers, more of you bought and read Big Issue North in 2016 than the previous year. New figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation show that we sell on average 12,455 a week.

## How to donate

We are so grateful to everyone who donates to us, if you haven't donated already, here are some ways to support our vendors.

To set up a standing order to support our vendors please fill in the form enclosed with the newsletter or call 0161 848 2420.



You can also donate by mobile phone, just text BITN16 and the amount you wish to donate e.g. £20 to 70070



To make donations by cheque please make it out to Big Issue North Trust and send it to 463 Stretford Road, Manchester, M16 9AB.



For more ways to raise funds for us please contact [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com)

Raise vital funds for free when you shop online with **easyfundraising**.org.uk

It's really easy to raise funds for the Trust with EasyFundraising while shopping online. Just remember to set the Big Issue North Trust as your chosen charity and start raising at no extra cost!

Go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) today!

# BIG ISSUE NORTH HITS THE ROAD

We are delighted to announce that we will be the official media partner for Sick! Festival ([www.sickfestival.com](http://www.sickfestival.com)), taking place in Manchester throughout March. The festival uses the arts to explore questions of physical and mental health in the modern world.



As summer approaches, we'll also be at festivals and events across the North, with the Grassington Festival ([www.grassington-festival.org.uk](http://www.grassington-festival.org.uk)) and the Manchester Day Parade ([www.manchesterday.co.uk/parade](http://www.manchesterday.co.uk/parade)) already in our calendar.

If you have an event that you would like us to attend, give a talk at or be involved in, then please get in touch at [fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com](mailto:fundraising@bigissueinthenorth.com).

## Why set up a standing order?

Long-term, regular donations are more cost effective. Regular gifts mean a consistent, predictable income so we can plan and budget better and be more efficient. More of your money goes towards supporting our work as they generate less administration and carry cheaper bank charges.

There are also benefits for you. A regular gift provides you with the reassurance that you are actively helping to improve the lives of Big Issue North vendors.

To set up a standing order please fill out the form enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you.



## THE TRUSTEES

Big Issue North Trust is supported by the Zochonis Charitable Foundation  
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