

## **Parental Information Session**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

**5pm – 6pm at Hans Price Academy**

### **Drugs, Gangs and Knives**

School assemblies fall into silence when Paul Hannaford talks about the violent realities of gang life. The former drug addict's life story is a shocking one which he delivers without pulling any punches. Paul will be visiting schools across North Somerset in a bid to educate pupils about the horrors of drugs and the dangers of carrying knives. Paul will also be speaking at a series of community talks, where parents and members of the community are encouraged to listen to his presentation.

Paul came to the former Hope House rehabilitation centre in St Georges in 2006 from West London after a lengthy battle with narcotics and alcohol. He believes he committed more than 5,000 crimes to fund his habit including credit card fraud and armed robberies and stole in excess of £5million.

At his lowest point, Paul only had two working veins left in his entire body and robbed his mother of her wedding ring, using the money from selling it to buy crack cocaine. His veins thrombosed due to injecting crack cocaine, which resulted in two needle heads snapping off in his arms, which are still there today with doctors unable to remove them. Maggot therapy and 20 skin grafts stopped Paul from losing both his legs after he handed himself in to police.

Since then he has turned his life around and been sober for 11 years and now campaigns for education and early prevention for youngsters across the country. Speaking about his life, Paul said: "I served my whole sentence in hospital handcuffed to the bed as I was too ill to stay in prison. I had a blood transfusion and contracted pneumonia, the doctors told me 'if you leave hospital you will die', I had nowhere else to go apart from a crack den so I came to Weston. I can honestly say coming to this town saved my life but what happened to me is happening to a lot of young people right now."

Paul added: "Drug dealers love vulnerable kids because they are easy targets but if we give them knowledge about this issue then their opinions will change. We will never stop addiction but we can reduce it through early intervention as one drug leads to another, harder drug. If we can give as many children in Weston awareness to this problem then we will save lives."

PC Nick Falconer from the Bournville and Oldmixon local policing team, who is co-ordinating the talks, said: "We really believe in the way in which Paul engages with young people to share his story and better inform them of the consequences of gangs and drugs. I would highly recommend parents to come along and see this presentation for themselves."

*Entry is free. Due to the graphic content of the presentation, the evening community presentation is not recommended for children under the age of 10.*