

Samaritans of South Cheshire in Crewe Annual Report

1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

FOR HELP 24 HOURS A DAY

116 123 (FREE CALL)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

How Samaritans started nationally and locally

Samaritans was founded just over 70 years ago by Dr Chad Varah, a priest, who became concerned about suicide after conducting a funeral service for a 14-year-old girl, who had taken her own life after she started menstruating and thought she was gravely ill. When he learned there were 3 suicides a day in London, he decided to launch a confidential, emergency service for people in despair and contemplating suicide, which at the time was illegal. The first call to the service was made on 2 November 1953, using the crypt of Chad Varah's parish church, St Stephen Walbrook, London. Chad died in 2008 and a fund was established in his memory to finance a new caller telephone and information system (Connect) for the entire Samaritans organisation. In the UK and Republic of Ireland, there are now over 200 Samaritan branches.

In February 1964, the first steering committee met to plan a local Samaritans branch here in South Cheshire, and in May 1964 Chad Varah addressed an open meeting held in the Council Chamber, Crewe. From this, the first base of Crewe Samaritans was established at Christ Church, Crewe, with volunteer recruitment and training taking place, fund raising activities and the registration of our charity. In 1970, permanent premises were purchased in Edleston Road, Crewe, followed some 24 years ago by the purchase of our current base at 2 Hall O'Shaw Street, Crewe.

We are one of the town's largest and oldest charities and answer around 800 calls every month via the telephone and OnLine Chat (OLC) and we are involved locally via our Outreach program with schools, colleges, businesses and charities. We hope to continue offering support to people locally and nationally for as long as this service is needed, and we are proud to be in our 60th year of service here in Crewe.

Samaritans at a glance

Statistics for the UK & Republic of Ireland 2023:

- We have over 200 branches
- There are more than 23,000 volunteers
- It is free to call us on 116123
- We are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Around 1500 people in prison volunteer as listeners across 150 prisons
- Sams main website had over 1.9 million views to its contact pages
- We responded to over 3.3 million calls for help
- We respond to a contact every 10 seconds
- Someone dies by suicide every 90 minutes

Some facts about suicide

Suicide is complex and multi-faceted. Suicidal feelings and behaviours are usually the result of the interaction of multiple psychological, social, economic and demographic factors.

Here are some important facts about some of the groups at increased risk of suicide:

- 1 in 15 adults in England have attempted suicide
- 3/4 of deaths by suicide are male
- Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50
- Suicide is the biggest killer of women aged 20-34
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people under 35
- People with a diagnosed mental health disorder are 5-15 times more likely to die by suicide
- It is estimated that for every suicide, 135 people are exposed, and knew the person who died
- 1 in 3 people who die by suicide have been in contact with mental health services in the year before their death

(For sources and full references, email: research@samaritans.org)

Director's Report, on behalf of the trustees

This marks the end of my second year as Branch director and I thank all our wonderful volunteers for the support I have received during what has been a personally challenging year. Our overall friendly and supportive branch atmosphere continues, as borne out by our branch survey results (see below). I would like to also offer my thanks to the BLT, who do so much to keep our branch operating as best it can, and who are so supportive and professional. We have reached our 60th year in Crewe and will celebrate the occasion initially at our AGM, when we hope to welcome many supporters and volunteers.

The Branch Leadership Team* (BLT) has successfully maintained its commitment to the overall branch objectives in 2023-2024:

- To ensure an optimal and consistent service is provided for all our callers.
- To reflect the needs and wishes of our volunteers and to maintain a friendly and cooperative working environment within the branch.
- To generate greater awareness of Samaritans and our services across South Cheshire.
- To build closer relations with West Midlands Region and Samaritans Central Office.
- To continue as an affiliate branch of Samaritans, governed by a national Operating Agreement with Samaritans national charity.

Following further successful recruitment and training programmes (see separate reports), there are currently 77 x volunteers in the branch (55 x active listening; 7 x temporarily off rota; 13 x support volunteers, 2 x Honorary). This shows that despite, sadly, losing several volunteers, our branch is maintaining numbers. Also, around 63% of listening volunteers undertake duties within the branch in addition to their listening duties (e.g. training, recruitment, Leading duties, mentoring, outreach) indicating the strong commitment of our volunteers, for which we are continually and profoundly grateful.

Our branch annual survey took place last year and, overall, a positive response was received and we will build on those suggestions – some of which have already been implemented. For example, our Volunteer Care team have arranged talks with socialising to follow, which have been very well attended and received. We still have to complete our Hours of Need push, but this will be looked at over the next 12 months in league with our Rota team. Our building's future is under continuous discussion, and we hope to start some continuing maintenance works over the next year. Our hopes for face to face clinics are still being worked on via Outreach, and we are considering the return of email to our branch possibly early next year.

The survey results were as follows: (Answers to Qs 10-16 show only those responses with the highest numbers of replies):

Crewe Branch Volunteer Survey (Listeners)

Results based on survey completed by 31.2.24

Question	Average score (out of 5)
Q1 – How happy are you as a listening volunteer with Crewe Sams?	4.7
Q2 – How happy are you with the shifts you currently fulfil?	4.4
Q3 – How do you rate our operating facilities?	4.2
Q4 – How do you rate the BLT's accessibility to volunteers?	4.5
Q5 – How do you rate the BLT's communication with volunteers?	4.2
Q6 – How do you rate any training you have received in the last 12 months?	4.7
Q7 – How important do you see Hours of Need (HON) cover being (2am-6am)?	4.6
Q8 – How do you feel, personally, about seeing face to face callers in branch?	3.5
Q9 – How much do you feel supported by the branch as a volunteer?	4.8

Question	Response	Number of comments
Q10 – Is there anything you would like to be improved about our building?	Nothing	20
	Car parking	16
Q11 – What would you change about our branch and the way it works for you?	All ok	28
	Rota (flexibility and swaps)	8
Q12 – If you don't do a regular hours of need shift currently (2am-6am) what is your barrier to doing this?	Work	15
	Health/sleep issues	17
	Already do one	6
Q13 – Would you be able to do an HON shift once or twice a year?	Yes	28
	No	12
	Maybe	3
Q14 – If yes to above what night would best suit you? What night would least suit you?	Any night	8
	Tues and Thurs = best suited	
	Sat, Sun and Mon = least suited	
Q15 – Would you be interested in taking part in an organised pre-arranged 'clinic' in branch, or at a community venue, to allow local face to face interaction (probably daytime)?	Yes	28
	No	18
	Maybe	5
Q16 – What social events would you like to see in the future?	Happy with current events	23
	Daytime drop in/coffee mornings	9
	Talk and social afterwards	6

There have been no serious incidents or accidents this year.

OnLine Chat continues in our branch and it is hoped that a further shift can be started in the next year as Samaritans Central Office (SCO) roll out more evenings available to our online callers. We hope to build on our OLC team over the next year in preparation for this opportunity.

New Leaders who support volunteers during duties have been successfully recruited and trained, though we are always looking to recruit more. Ongoing mentoring took place and was a well organised and informative exercise – thanks to our Volunteer Care team.

Fund-raising activities within the local community and the opportunities for the involvement of our Support Volunteers continue to slowly increase but we are very aware that many folk are struggling in the current economic climate. Our Outreach team have been active in the community (see separate report) and have also taken part in the Suicide Prevention Forum Panel initiated by Cheshire East, which helped put together a local overall suicide prevention strategy and gave us some interesting insights and contacts for the future.

Efforts have continued in 23-24 to maintain closer ties with both the West Midlands Region and Samaritans Central Office with national forums and regional meetings being attended and regional training being supported. Our Regional Director, Pam Rutter, and her many Regional Officers, are very conspicuous with their offers of help and consequently we hope to continue to collaborate with other branches where appropriate.

The national Samaritans strategy for the period 2022 to 2027 governing our organisation's access, reach, impact, capacity and sustainability is currently being rolled out within the Tackling Suicide Together umbrella and has been extended to enable more time to be spent on this important initiative.

Finally on behalf of the Branch Leadership Team* I would like to thank all our fantastic volunteers for their support to our callers and to one another throughout what has been a slightly calmer period. I would also like to thank both our Leaders and the Branch Leadership team for all the work they do, often unseen, in keeping our branch going and very much up to standard. Thanks to everyone's cooperative spirit it has been yet another successful year for Samaritans of South Cheshire!

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at Crewe Vagrants, June 1st at 12.30pm together with our 60th anniversary celebration.

Carol2

Chair of Trustees and Branch Director

*Branch Leadership team consists of 12 members, 7 of whom are trustees and act in accordance with the Charities Commission recommendations and guidelines. This means also that they resign each year end and must be re-elected by branch members for the following year if appropriate.

Treasurer's Report (Unaudited accounts)

Income	2022/2023	2023/24
Donations	£ 5375.70	£ 4052.94
Gift Aid	£	£
Fundraising	£ 2772.87	£ 4772.08
Grants	£ -	£ -
Memoriam	£ -	£ 24512.81
Bank Interest	£	£ 241.68
Other	£ -	£
	£ 8148.57	£ 32979.51
Expenditure	2022/2023	2023/24
Utilities -Gas and electricity	£ 2027.82	£ 2551.30
Water	£ 158.13	£ 192.30
Phones /internet	£ 2157.87	£ 2370.84
Cleaning	£ 1745.10	£ 1773.79
Repairs	£ 307.24	£ -
Postage	£ -	£ -
Stationery/Leaflets	£ 443.15	£
Expenses	£ 98.65	£ 1220.22
Equipment	£ 977.64	£ 22.80
Household maintenance	£ 2270.19	£ 690.00
Household goods/refreshments	£ 146.59	£ 219.09
Fundraising	£ 726.00	£ 926.83
Insurance	£ 892.09	£ 930.21
Professional charges	£ 2191.00	£ 1188.40
Miscellaneous	£ 1423.20	£ 619.57
	£ 15564.67	£ 12665.35

Bank balances	Opening 2022/2023	Closing 2023/2024
Current A/C	£ 7810.06	£ 28155.15
Gift Aid	£ 1131.31	£ 1,131.31
Deposit A/C	£ 18598.00	£ 19040.71
TOTAL BALANCES	£ 27539.37	£ 48327.17

Outgoings

Branch expenditure reduced by 19% compared to the 2022/23 accounting period, with fortunately relatively little in the way of capital expenditure on our rather old building compared to previous years. Our biggest areas of expenditure were telephone and internet services and utilities, both up on the previous year reflecting general price increases in these sectors. The biggest single items of expenditure were our Annual insurance Premium (£930) and catering for our annual quiz (£881).

Income

Our income is up fourfold from 2022/23, an exceptional increase which is unprecedented for the branch for many years. Our income comes from donations, fundraising, bank interest and bequests. Some highlights were:

- 1) An extremely generous bequest of over £24,000 from the Estate of Barbara Beech
- 2) Our annual quiz which made a profit of around £900
- 3) An anonymous donation of £2,000 from the Rausing Trust
- 4) £980 Profit share from an event organised by Rotary Club of Wyche Malbank
- 5) £502 cash collection from a Sarah Millican concert at the Crewe Lyceum.

After successive operating losses, the net position is that thanks to that fantastic bequest we made an exceptional surplus of £20,314. We don't expect this to be repeated for many years so we are still monitoring our position with a view to maximising our income streams. The Branch will continue to need plenty of money spending on repairs as well as the monthly overheads outlined above. Total cash in Current, Gift Aid and Savings accounts was £48,327 compared to £27, 539 previously.

I'm pleased to Confirm that Danilo Oliynik (Danilo 1) has kindly agreed to take over the Treasurer role and I would like to wish him good luck and thanks to BLT and the Wider Branch for their support as I was covering this role for the last year.

Simon 1 - Outgoing Branch Treasurer

Fundraising Report

Fundraising activity continues to be a challenge which is not surprising given the cost-of-living crisis. As you'd expect, when finances and household budgets are tight charitable donations aren't high priority for many people. Our grant applications were unsuccessful, there is a lot of competition out there for limited funding. Our service offer as Samaritans has a truly national reach to all people regardless of socio-economic background, demographic status or location. Perhaps this makes applications harder compared to other charities with a smaller and more defined or localised user population.

However, there have been some highlights which I wanted to share:

- The quiz, held at Crewe Vagrants Sports Club in November for the second year, where over 100 people (including volunteers and their families /friends) had a great time testing their knowledge over drinks and a fish and chip supper. Including a raffle on the night we raised over £800 for the Branch, and I'd like to thank John² and Hazel¹ especially who helped with the organisation and sourcing raffle prizes.
- Nick Hilton (Nick ¹) who enabled a £500 donation for us.
- After his Iron Man heroics last year John¹s running club kindly contributed £574 from their raffle.
- We had £250 from the annual Rotary Club Santa collection around Nantwich.
- Wyche Malbank Rotary Club, generously donated half the profits (£980) from a musical extravaganza event showcasing local talent at the Nantwich Civic Hall in June.

If you have any ideas for fundraising please speak to Simon ¹ in the first instance.

Simon ¹ - Deputy Director - Fundraising

Training Report

Huge thanks to the training team for all their ongoing hard work and support. This year we have welcomed Chris 2 and Yvette 1 to the training team. We now have a team of seven trainers who provide core development, embedding training and ongoing training for our branch.

Thanks also go to the volunteers who help support skills practice during core development training – this makes the sessions much easier for us to manage and ensures our potential volunteers get the best training possible.

We continue to work closely with the recruitment, rota and volunteer support teams to ensure a smooth volunteer journey for our new recruits.

Seven potential volunteers started core development training in September 2023 – five of them have recently completed their embedding training. We then welcomed seven more potential volunteers in our January 2023 intake – five of them are just about to start their embedding training.

We have run ‘not giving advice’ training this year which was attended by sixteen volunteers.

Volunteers who do the online chat shifts have had to complete an updated digital module - ‘best practice for online chat’.

Five volunteers have completed mentor training via the regional training team and two volunteers have completed the training for becoming a leader.

There is no mandatory training in 2024 but we plan to run some refresher sessions in branch in the autumn. Look out for details and please do sign up – they will be a good opportunity to ensure your skills stay up-to-date and refreshed and are also a nice opportunity to get together with other volunteers.

We will continue to facilitate training for the outreach team, mentors and leaders.

If you have any requests for training topics please do let me know.

We also look forward to welcoming new potential volunteers in September and March and supporting them through their core and embedding trainings.

Julia 1 – Deputy Director – Training

Outreach Report

We have continued to expand our Outreach into the community and made progress against our objectives which are to:

- Support National activities and Partnerships e.g. Brew Monday, 24th July (24/7), Network Rail
- Help to provide emotional support in other settings (ESOS) to people that need it.
- Provide support, tools and tips to help and support others providing emotional support.
- Build awareness of Samaritans Locally
- Inform others about the role of a volunteer and encourage people to volunteer.
- Work jointly with fundraising where the opportunity arises.

We have continued our partnership with Network Rail and continued to support key activities including 24/7 last year when we had presence at the station available for people in distress and providing information and raising the profile of Samaritans. In addition to supporting key activities and key dates at the station we have provided some post-vention support to staff and commuters after a tragic incident earlier this year. We helped create awareness and spoke to members of staff who had been working and we have contacted their employees to see if we would be able to provide a more structured programme of support.

Three of our volunteers completed the **new school training**, and this has been used to good effect at a recent assembly at Shavington Academy to an entire year group.

We have provided training to The Miles Consultancy and delivered talks and support to several other local organisations including Nantwich Alms Houses, Buckingham University and Haslington Surgery. We have continued to support Reaseheath College and their students, many who are away from home for the first time and under the age of 18.

2024 will provide more opportunities and with more volunteers we will be able to extend our reach, so if any other volunteers want to join the Outreach team they would be more than welcome. In addition to our existing links and commitments I have listed some contacts we are planning to build in the next twelve months:

- Crewcial Crisis Café – an organisation who work with vulnerable member of society
- YMCA
- Crewe Alexandra FC
- Nantwich and Rural Care Community

If anyone has any other initiatives they would like to support then please reach out and we can agree the best way to do it.

John2 - Deputy Director – Outreach

Building, Health & Safety Report

During the last year, we have had water ingress in the Ops Room and in the hall. Remedial action was taken to fix both and they had been caused by poor pointing and gutters not working properly. We have since had pointing work done on the building and the gutters have been cleaned.

We have also had a new electrical consumer unit installed.

A move of premises was discussed last year and a decision taken by the BLT not to move. This decision has not changed and whilst we are not actively seeking alternative premises the BLT does keep abreast of property in the area and keeps an open mind on our current premises. In the meantime we continue with maintenance.

There have been no reported Health & Safety incidents or accidents this year, and all Health and Safety/ statutory checks have been carried out e.g boiler service and PAT testing.

Maxine 61 - Vice Director & Deputy Director - Facilities

Recruitment and Selection Report

The recruitment team consists of Kate, Janet and Sharon and all three have assisted with the process throughout the year. We conducted face to face interviews at the branch. This ensured that I could get a real feel for the core values of the potential Samaritans and also go through the required commitments.

The main commitment being the ability to conduct anti-social shifts within the monthly pattern. This has been slightly problematic as most of those potential volunteers were very keen to complete either evenings or weekend shifts. It would be beneficial to provide more options at weekends.

I wanted to adopt the two-tier strategy, but this was not possible due to the number of applicants. We put through 11 PV's to the training phase. There are currently 27 potential candidates that have applied to be listening volunteers. I have recently e-mailed them via the Branch Management Tool and confirmed they are still interested.

John1 - Deputy Director - Recruitment

Our callers

- When people contact Samaritans for emotional support, they often mention several concerns. In 2023, some of the primary concerns raised related to mental health or illness, family, isolation and loneliness, physical health or illness, and relationship problems.
- Self-harm was discussed in almost 1 in 15 calls for help that involved emotional support. Where callers currently self-harm, in 1 in 4 of these contacts, the caller said they were talking to Samaritans to avoid self-harm.
- Suicidal feelings were expressed during 1 in 4 calls for help that involved emotional support.
- In telephone calls where support is given, callers are more likely to express suicidal feelings in the early hours of the morning (one in three calls mention suicidal feelings). During the hours of 9am-5pm, suicidal feelings are expressed in one in five support calls.
- Each month, around 40% of the people who call Samaritans for help are first time callers.
- Almost 40% of calls to Samaritans are from a mobile phone.
- In 2023, 49% of calls for help that involved emotional support were from women, 46% from men, 0.4% from transgender callers, in 5% the caller's gender was unknown.
- In 2023, 93% of calls for help that involved emotional support were from adults, 2% from children under the age of 18, in 5% of calls the caller's age was unknown.

How our service helps

People who've used our service say that simply having someone to talk to can be of great help. While you may be in distress, you don't have to be suicidal.

Talking can begin to sort out confused feelings, relieve the pressure, and encourage callers to believe that there is a way forward.

We know that life today can be unbelievably tough, particularly in relation to relationships, health concerns, employment and money issues. Whilst we don't have a magic wand to make people's problems disappear, given the chance, many people are able to find a way through their problems themselves, if there is someone there giving them time and space to talk.

We can help people to explore their options and come to their own decisions about what's best for them. Our support may help people to find their own way forward.

We're always here

We never know when you might want to talk to us. That's why we're always open, round the clock, every single day of the year.

Confidentiality

We want you to feel safe while talking to us, so you can tell us how you're really feeling. You only need to tell us as much information as you want to.

You can be yourself

Whoever you are, however you feel, whatever life's done to you, you can be yourself with us.

We're trained to listen

As volunteers, not paid professionals, we're trained to listen to you, not to 'fix' or 'cure' you.

**SAMARITANS OF SOUTH CHESHIRE IN CREWE
BRANCH OFFICERS DURING 2023/24**

Patron

Richard Roundell of Dorfold Hall, Nantwich

President

The Mayor of Cheshire East Councillor Marilyn Houston

Chair & Director

Carol Layton

Treasurer

Simon Koefman

Legal Consultant

Jane Wilson

Thanks to:

Barringtons Ltd. Chartered Accountants of Nantwich, for auditing Samaritans of South
Cheshire accounts 2023-24

**SAMARITANS OF SOUTH CHESHIRE IN CREWE
2 HALL O'SHAW STREET CREWE CW1 4AE**

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1170339

Talk to us any time you like, in your own way, and off the record, about whatever's getting
to you. You don't have to be suicidal.

We have different ways for you to get in touch:

- Call us on 116 123 (free call)
- Email us jo@samaritans.org
- Write us a letter at: FREEPOST SAMARITANS LETTERS

The Samaritans of South Cheshire
Income and Expenditure Account - Period ending 31st March 2024

Mar-23	Income	Mar-24	Mar-23	Expenditure	Mar-24
5,375.70	Donations & Covenants	4,074.03		Cost of Reaching Callers	
-	In Memory	24,512.81	-	Publicity	-
			2,157.87	Telephone	2,370.84
2,772.87	Fund Raising Events	4,172.08	2,157.87		2,370.84
-	Grants	-	2,027.82	Cost of Premises	
-	Refunds Including	-	892.09	Electricity & Gas	2,551.30
	HMRC Charities in Gift Aid Account		4,395.14	Insurance	930.21
-	Other Income including Prison Expenses	-	1,497.18	House Keeping	2,642.88
-	Bank Interest	480.22	158.13	Repairs & Maintenance	655.07
			977.64	Water Rates	192.39
			9,948.00	Technical Equipment	22.80
					6,994.65
			98.65	Central Operating Costs	
			443.53	Volunteer Expenses	1,220.22
			1,235.00	Admin, room hire, Postage & Stationery	-
			956.00	Professional Fees	595.40
			2,733.18	Levy to Samaritan HQ	593.00
					2,408.62
			726.00	Sundry Costs	
			726.00	Fund raising Costs	881.40
					881.40
7,416.48	Excess of Expenditure over Income	-	15,565.05		12,655.51
15,565.05		33,239.14	-	Excess of Income over Expenditure	20,583.63
			15,565.05		33,239.14

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2024

Capital Reserve	19,974.74	Property at Valuation	92,000.00
Revaluation Reserve	28,313.89	Bank Current Account	28,155.15
Central Reserve Fund	71,454.91	Bank Deposit Account	19,040.71
Excess of Income over Expenditure	20,583.63	Gift Aid Account	1,131.31
	92,038.54		48,327.17
	140,327.17		140,327.17

In our opinion the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance sheet are in agreement with the accounting records kept by the Samaritans of South Cheshire.

DocuSigned by:

Dains Accountants Limited

Dains Accountants Limited Chartered Accountants
Suite 2 Albion House, Etruria Office Village, 2 Forge Lane

The Samaritans of South Cheshire
Statement for the period ending 31.03.2024

Bank Current Account

Balance at 01.04.2023	7,810.06
Receipts for the year	33,000.60
	<hr/> 40,810.66
Payments for the year	12,655.51
	<hr/> 28,155.15
Balance at 31.03.2024	<hr/>

Deposit Account

Balance at 01.04.2023	18,802.17
Interest received	238.54
	<hr/> 19,040.71
Balance at 31.03.2024	<hr/>

Gift Aid Account

Balance at 01.04.2023	1,131.31
Movements	0.00
	<hr/> 1,131.31
Balance at 31.03.2024	<hr/>

In our opinion, the statement above is in agreement with the accounting records kept by the Friends of the Samaritans of South Cheshire.

DocuSigned by:

Dains Accountants Limited

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Dains Accountants Limited Chartered Accountants
Suite 2 Albion House, Etruria Office Village, 2 Forge Lane
Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5RQ

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			956.00	Professional Fees	595.40
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Suite 2 Albion House, Etruria Office Village, 2 Forge Lane
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