

# **Samaritans of South Cheshire in Crewe**

## **Annual Report**

1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

FOR HELP 24 HOURS A DAY

**116 123 (FREE CALL)**

**Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto: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 61st year of service here in Crewe.

## Samaritans at a glance

Statistics for the UK & Republic of Ireland 2024:

- 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
- The average emotional support call lasts around 24 minutes
- Sams main website had over 1.8 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 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](mailto:research@samaritans.org))

## Director's Report, on behalf of the trustees

This marks the end of my third and final year as Branch director and I thank all our wonderful volunteers for the support our callers and I have received during those 3 years. Our overall friendly and supportive branch atmosphere continues, and I would like to offer my special 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 61st year in Crewe and will celebrate the occasion 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 2024-2025:

- 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 70 x volunteers in the branch (55 x active listening; 5 x temporarily off rota; 7 x support volunteers, 4 x Honorary). This shows that despite, sadly, losing several volunteers, our branch is maintaining listening volunteer 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.

We had one accident this year when a vehicle hit the apex of our building. Happily nobody was injured in branch and structurally this caused minimal damage and repairs were carried out to remedy matters.

OnLine Chat continues in our branch and although it was hoped that a further shift could be set up this has proved to be a slow burner as Samaritans Central Office (SCO) continue to work on extending the hours OLC is available to callers, though we do occasionally do chats if call demand is low but chat demand is high.

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.

Our method of taking calls has been updated this year, involving new equipment, new software, and new phone access via Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). VOIP seems to have improved the sound quality of our calls, and it's to our volunteers' credit that all have taken to these changes so well, despite some initial concerns.

Fund-raising activities within the local community and the opportunities for the involvement of our Support Volunteers continue 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 24-25 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 now been extended to enable more time to be spent on this important initiative – in particular future proofing the organisation.

I would also like to welcome our new incoming Branch Director, Neil<sup>1</sup> who will take over the role from 12.7.25. Many thanks to Neil for stepping forward, and who brings a wealth of experience, energy and enthusiasm to our branch that I feel sure will serve us well for the future.

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 the last year. 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 2 Hall O'Shaw Street, Crewe, on June 25th at 7pm followed by light refreshments.

***Carol<sup>2</sup>***

**Chair of Trustees and Branch Director**

\*Branch Leadership team consists of 12 members, 9 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)

<b>Income</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Donations	£ 5375.70	£ 4052.94
Gift Aid	£	£
Fundraising	£ 2772.87	£ 4772.08
Grants	£ -	£ -
Memoriam	£ -	£ 24512.81
Bank Interest	£	£ 241.68
Other	£ -	£
	<b>£ 8148.57</b>	<b>£ 32979.51</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
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
	<b>£ 15564.67</b>	<b>£ 12665.35</b>

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

## 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

Branch fundraising activity continues to be a challenge, given the competition from so many other charities all seeking funds. Our service offer is universal, 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

Despite these challenges we have had some notable successes this year in our fundraising efforts. Our branch has established links with a range of local agencies, individuals and organisations who are keen to support and promote our work. As ever we are grateful to these, and fellow volunteers who have made some of these donations possible through their professional or social networks and by signposting and promoting our service offer.

Some highlights for 2024/25 include:

- £250 from Nantwich Rotary Club for the Christmas Santa collection when myself, Neil, John 2 and Janet helped with their street collection
- £3000 from the Rausing Trust to help cover our operating overheads between December and February
- £730 from Eaton Golf Club Ladies Team -the Team have chosen Samaritans of South Cheshire as one of their 2 Charities for 2025 so more funds are coming our way -including around £5000 from a pro-am charity golf club tournament that recently took place.
- £1000 from Nantwich Town Council, who reached out after our sixtieth birthday celebration last year at Crewe Vagrants
- £847 from Miles Consultancy (a local Business in the Crewe area). Their staff chose Samaritans of South Cheshire for fundraising and they raised this from car valeting and a cake sale
- £6000 from the National Lottery Fund following a successful grant application
- £2500 from Attendus -an anonymous, annual donation that our branch has benefitted from for a number of years

Finally, I will be stepping down from the fundraising role and BLT when our new director takes up duty next month. After 6 years Its time to give someone else a chance, but I am always happy to speak to fellow branch volunteers who may be interested in this important work

**Simon 1**

**Outgoing Deputy Director, Fundraising**





# Training Report

## Training Report 2024/2025

### Training Team

We are currently a team of 5 trainers plus a training/class mentor – huge thanks as ever to the team for all the sessions that have been delivered this year.

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. We hope to re-look at roles and processes in the near future to ensure we continue to provide the best level of support we can to our New Samaritans.

### Core Development and Embedding Training

Six potential volunteers started core development training in September 2023 – five of them are due to complete their embedding training very soon. We then welcomed six more potential volunteers in our March 2023 intake – they are all due to start embedding training at the end of June.

### Ongoing Training (OGT)

This year's mandatory training is a digital module on the topic of equity, diversity and inclusion – all volunteers must complete this by the end of June.

As a branch we plan to offer some safeguarding refresher trainings during October/November.

### Future plans

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

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, 24<sup>th</sup> 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 had water ingress in the Ops Room and remedial action was taken.

Poor pointing and blocked gutters were the likely cause of this.

We also had a car drive into our outside wall causing a crack in the wall in the ops room. Again this was fixed.

We had change of telephony and broadband and full training was offered to the branch.

There have been no reported Health & Safety incidents or accidents this year, and all Health and Safety/ statutory checks have been carried out.

Maxine 61

Deputy Director, Facilities

## Recruitment and Selection Report

The recruitment team consisted of Kate, John 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 2024, 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 16 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 5 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 10% of the people who call Samaritans for help are first time callers.
- In 2024, 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 2024, 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 David Edwards

**Chair & Director**

Carol Layton

**Treasurer**

Danilo Oliynik

**Legal Consultant**

Jane Wilson

**Thanks to:**

Dains Ltd. Chartered Accountants, of Stoke on Trent, for auditing Samaritans of South Cheshire accounts 2024-25

**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](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- Write us a letter at: FREEPOST SAMARITANS LETTERS

**The Samaritans of South Cheshire**  
**Statement for the period ending 31.03.2025**

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Bank Current Account

Balance at 01.04.2024	28,155.15
Receipts for the year	35,834.75
Transfer from Deposit Account	19,155.06
	<hr/>
	63,989.90
Payments for the year	-19,171.45
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Balance at 31.03.2025	<u>44,818.45</u>

Deposit Account

Balance at 01.04.2024	19,040.71
Interest received	114.35
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	19,155.06
Transfer To Bank Current Account To Close	-19,155.06
	<hr/>
Balance at 31.03.2025	<u>0.00</u>

Gift Aid Account

Balance at 01.04.2024	1,131.31
Movements	0.00
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Balance at 31.03.2025	<u>1,131.31</u>

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



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

Date : 